

ISLAMIC TERRORISM, THE CONSEQUENCE OF FOREIGN INTERVENTION IN THE MUSLIM WORLD: THE CASES OF ASL AND ISIS

A Thesis

**Submitted to the Master's Study Program of Political Science at the
Faculty of Social Sciences in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of**

Master of Arts (M.A.)



by:

Nouha Khelfa

02222120001

UNIVERSITAS ISLAM INTERNASIONAL INDONESIA

DEPOK

2023

Islamic Terrorism, The Consequence of Foreign Intervention in The Muslim World: The Cases of ASL and ISIS

Thesis

**Submitted to meet the graduation requirements of
a master's degree (M.A. in Political Science)**



**Universitas
Islam Internasional
Indonesia**

Author

Nouha Khelfa

02222120001

**FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCE
UNIVERSITAS ISLAM INTERNASIONAL INDONESIA**

DEPOK

2023

ISLAMIC TERRORISM, THE CONSEQUENCE OF FOREIGN INTERVENTION IN THE MUSLIM WORLD THE CASES OF ASL AND ISIS

Nouha Khelfa

02222120001

MA in Social Science

ABSTRACT

Although there is significant available literature on the study of the origins of Islamic-inspired terrorism, little is known about the origins of the Islamic State in Syria, and Ansar Sharia in Libya, and this is a gap that this study will attempt to fill. In addition, the two existing streams of IR theory on terrorism: Traditionalism and CTS lack analytical and problem-solving power, respectively. This study, therefore, will attempt to synthesize insights from both schools of thought to overcome their weaknesses and combine their strengths. This study aims to explain the origins of Islamic terrorism by using the narrative approach to collect data and process tracing and the organizational theory as a methodology. This study argues that foreign intervention, whether direct or indirect, in the Muslim World, causes state breakdown and subsequent failures in the areas of economy, defense, and ideology, leading to the rise of terrorist groups. This study only focuses on two case studies that are rarely investigated: the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), with a focus on Syria, and Ansar Al-Sharia in Libya (ASL). The results show that indirect foreign intervention of the United States and Russia in Syria in 2011 onward led to the social construction of sectarianism in the country, turning the Arab Spring into a sectarian civil war. This latter would lead to the state deconstruction that would lead to the creation of different insurgent groups, including ISIS. The direct military intervention of NATO in Libya in 2011 would lead to the transformation of the Arab Spring into the First Libyan Civil War, causing the dissolution of different state institutions, including the army, and creating different militia groups, among which is ASL.

Keywords: *Foreign Intervention, Arab Spring, Terrorism, ISIS, ASL*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

STATEMENT OF AUTHENTICITY	
ANTI-PLAGIARISM STATEMENT	
ATTESTATION	
THESIS REVISION COMPLETION DECLARATION	
<i>Thesis Defense Internal Memo</i>	
ABSTRACT.....	i
TABLE OF CONTENTS	ii
LIST OF TABLES.....	v
LIST OF FIGURES	vi
ABBREVIATION DIRECTORY	vii
CHAPTER 1	1
INTRODUCTION	1
1. The Research Problem	1
2. Authenticity of Research	3
3. Research Objectives.....	4
4. Research Significance	4
CHAPTER II.....	1
THEORETICAL FOUNDATION.....	1
1. Literature Review	1
1.1 Terrorism Studies, from Traditionalism to Critical Theory	1
1.2 Critical Terrorism Studies (CTS)	2
1.3 About the Roots of Islamic Terrorism	2
1.4 ISIS and ASL.....	4
2. Theoretical Framework	5
2.1 Post-colonialism.....	5
2.2 Social Constructivism	6
2.3 State Deconstruction Theory	7
2.4 Conceptualization.....	7
3. Hypothesis	9
CHAPTER III	10
RESEARCH DESIGN	10

1. Place and Time of Study	10
1.1 Research Place	10
1.2 Research Time	10
2. Research Materials and Tools	10
3. Research management.....	11
3.1 Case Selection.....	11
3.2 Method.....	13
CHAPTER IV	16
RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	16
1. The Islamic State	16
1.1 Inside ISIS: An Organizational Analysis	16
2. Overview: The Decay and the Revival of ISI.....	18
2.1 The Year 2011	19
3. The Process Tracing of ISIS	22
3.1 The Revolution from Below: Syria in 2011	22
3.2 The Metamorphosis of the Revolution from Below and the Intervention	24
3.3 Who Militarized the Uprisings?.....	28
3.4 The Imperial Implications of Western Intervention in Syria.....	29
3.5 The Opposition: Between Moderation and Radicalism	30
3.6 State Institutional Destruction	30
3.7 The Construction of ISIS: The Product of Intervention in Syria	33
3.8 Sectarianism: Between ‘Social Construction’ and ‘Othering’.....	34
4. The Process-Tracing of Ansar Al-Sharia in Libya (ASL).....	35
4.1 The First Libyan Civil War and Foreign Intervention	35
4.2 The Pre-Intervention Period: The Revolution from Below.....	35
4.3 The Period of Intervention	36
4.4 The Legitimacy of Foreign Intervention in Libya.....	37
4.5 NATO’s War on Civilians.....	38
4.6 Anti-Gaddafi Rebels	38
4.7 The Implications of NATO’s Intervention in Libya: A Post-Colonial View	39
4.8 State Deconstruction: The Product of Intervention	40
4.9 State Deconstruction and ASL.....	43
4.10 ASL: An Organizational Analysis.....	44
5. The Case of Tunisia: A Witness.....	44

CHAPTER V	46
CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS	46
1. Conclusion	46
2. Suggestions	48
REFERENCES.....	50

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: The development of terrorism index since the Arab Spring: Source..... 45

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: How foreign intervention makes terrorism.....	9
Figure 2: Process tracing of the development of ISIS.....	15
Figure 3: Process tracing of the development of ASL in Libya.....	15
Figure 4: Economic resources of ISIS	18
Figure 5: Armed forces personnel, total, Iraq	20
Figure 6: Syrian uprisings, major geographical areas (December 2011).....	23
Figure 7: A map of Syria's religious and ethnic distribution in 2011	25
Figure 8: Ethnic and religious distribution in Syria in 2000	26
Figure 9: Freedom of Religion Index in Syria and the World	27
Figure 10: GDP growth (annual %), Syrian Arab Republic	31
Figure 11: Employment to population percentage (total %), Syrian Arab Republic	32
Figure 12: Armed forces personnel, total, Syria	33
Figure 13: GDP growth (annual %), Libya	40
Figure 14: Oil Rents (% of GDP), Libya	41
Figure 15: Employment in industry (% of total employment), Libya.....	42
Figure 16: Arms Exports of Libya (SIPRI Indicators)	43

ABBREVIATION DIRECTORY

Abbreviation	Meaning	Page
AQI	Al-Qaeda in Iraq	6
ASL	Ansar Sharia in Libya	1
CTS	Critical Terrorism Studies	4
Daesh	Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant	10
FSA	Free Syrian Army	22
GTI	Global Terrorism Index	1
GWOT	Global War on Terror	1
ISR	Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance Task Force	16
LOAC	Law of Armed Conflict	23
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization	13
PKK	Kurdish Workers' Party	16
PT	Process Tracing	11
SMC	System Management Controller	24
WMP	Weapons of Mass Destruction	16

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1. The Research Problem

Although there is a significant controversy about the definition of terrorism, given its changing “means, motives and actors,” the author will solely adopt Bruce Hoffman’s definition, according to which, terrorism consists of “a) the use or threat of violence; b) the targeting of civilians, property, or government; c) the intent of creating fear aimed at altering the status quo; and d) a group activity”, (Gregg, 2014, p. 37). This definition considers terrorism to be a “tactic” to radically distort the status quo of politics, society, and army by using extreme means. The focus of this thesis is on religious terrorism. Gregg argues that religion is the ultimate driver of violence for this category of terrorism. However, Mark Sedgwick argues that while the ultimate goals will be religiously constructed, the immediate goals are frequently found to be almost entirely political (Gregg, 2014, p. 37). In this study, the author will consider Sedgwick’s aims of religious terrorism. Terrorism is ultimately of a political and economic purpose, at least in the short term. In other words, the ultimate goal of religious terrorism is religious in nature (religiously-motivated terrorism), but the immediate goals are political and economic (religiously-justified terrorism).

Terrorism is always a relevant international security threat because terrorist groups have the ability to mutate and to relocate to different geographies wherever the environment is hospitable. This makes the study of terrorism relevant at all times. The 2022 GTI¹ demonstrates how terrorism is converging into nations already experiencing violent conflict and growing more and more concentrated. Ninety-seven percent of all fatalities occurred in conflict-ridden areas. All 10 of the nations most impacted by terrorism are located in violent regions. Compared to 55 nations in 2015, just 44 countries in 2021 reported a terrorist fatality (*Global Terrorism Index 2022*, 2022).

Following the September 11, 2001, attacks, the United States launched The Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) as a global counterterrorism military operation. One hundred and ninety-six new countries have joined the financial counterterrorism war. One hundred

¹ The 2022 Global Terrorism Index

and forty-two countries have been involved in seizing terrorists' assets; 153 identified terrorists, terrorist organizations, and terrorist financial hubs have had their assets frozen in the United States alone, and significant terrorist financial networks have been dismantled (*The Global War on Terrorism: The First 100 Days*, 2009). Al-Qaeda, the Islamic State and their foreign affiliates were the prime targets of the campaign because they were leading military insurgencies to topple governments in several countries with Muslim majorities. Although the War on Terror was declared over on different occasions, including in 2010, in 2013, and again in 2021, many consider the war to be ongoing. For instance, A top Islamic State leader was killed by US Special Operations soldiers in a dawn helicopter operation in Somalia , according to US sources (Schmitt & Cooper, 2023). US Special Operations Forces carried out a raid in northwestern Syria on February 3, 2022, in which ISIS caliph Abu Ibrahim al Hashimi al Quraysh was murdered (*ISIS Leader Killed in US Raid in Syria*, 2022). Such raids and other similar US military interventions overseas prove that GWOT is not over yet.

The War on Terror, as declared by President George W. Bush in 2001, “will not end until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped and defeated,” (*Global War on Terror*, 2003). Today, after more than 20 years of the implementation of the GWOT, terrorism remains a severe threat, especially with a fatality concentration of 48 percent in Sub-Saharan Africa. Four of the ten countries where terrorism-related fatalities have recently increased are Niger, Mali, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Burkina Faso (*Global Terrorism Index 2022*, 2022).

Although the index shows a decline in terrorist attacks in the West, Steve Killelea, Founder and Executive Chairman of the IEP, argues that this is strictly linked to Covid-19 measures related to travel and movement restrictions. It is predicted that once these emergency measures are removed, the terrorist threat in the region will be revived (*Global Terrorism Index 2022*, 2022). Hence, even in regions where terrorism index shows a decline, it seems that the War on Terror has little to do with it.

Statistics shows that terrorism has even increased after the implementation of post-9/11 foreign policies. The dramatic increases in deaths from terrorism between 2001 and 2007, from 2011 to 2014, and from 2020 to the present, coincide with the War on Terror in Afghanistan and Iraq, Syria and Africa, respectively (Ritchie et al., 2022). It seems the terrorism index has shown an upsurge.

Global counterterrorism measures mainly rely on the traditionalist approach. Traditional theories are centered on problem-solving approaches; they orient the topic of terrorism away from the suicide bombers and their irrational choices and toward a more complex theoretical commitment to rational calculations made by the groups adopting this method. Thus, this scholarship serves political agendas of “dominant states”, and holds “hegemonic implications,”(Narozhna & Knight, 2009). For instance, traditionalists depart from the claim that Western countries’ intervention in the Middle East is to spread democracy. These problem-solving approaches dominated terrorism research for a long time, yet the threats of terrorism continue. In their study on the origins of terrorism, such theories give little focus to “political, material and discursive factors,”(Narozhna & Knight, 2009, p.24), and this exclusive view makes the proposed counterterrorism measures heavily rely on the hard approach, which is mainly military. It seems that the failure of the status quo counterterrorism measures is strongly linked to the theoretical understanding of the origins of terrorism. Treating terrorists as mere barbaric radical groups inspired countermeasures that are mostly military in nature. Therefore, counterterrorism measures can be improved if we re-answer the question about the actual origin of terrorism, or why did terrorism develop at the first place?

2. Authenticity of Research

This thesis has two novel contributions: at a theoretical level, and case selection level. In terms of theory, in IR, research on terrorism is mainly divided into two schools of thoughts: traditional and critical terrorism studies, each with its strengths and weaknesses. Critical scholarship finds three conceptual gaps in traditional theories: suicide terrorism's rationalization and securitization, as well as the politics of naming (Narozhna & Knight, 2009).

Although critical scholarship is criticized for being focused on critical analysis, giving less attention to problem solutions, K. M. Fierke argues that the requirement for critical analysts to disclose the inconsistencies in their historical context as a point of origin for resistance and change is referred to as the “immanent critique” of critical literature (Fierke, 2005). Moreover, critical theorists propose a policy that should shift from an exclusive concentration on military reaction to a larger emphasis on terrorism politics (Fierke, 2005). However, critical scholarship overemphasizes analysis, and it needs to be supported by problem-solving research.

Gunning claims that what is needed is an amicable but open discussion about how to make terrorism research more contemplative and critical while remaining policy relevant within the field of terrorist studies as well as with colleagues in related fields, decision-makers, and 'suspect groups' (Gunning, 2007). Thus, this study will adopt a mixed approach to terrorism, aiming to balance between critique and policy, putting Gunning's suggestion into practice. Therefore, the issue of terrorism will be analyzed in a new way.

In addition, in terms of case selection, the choice is on two case studies: the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), with a focus on Syria, and Ansar Sharia in Libya (ASL). These two cases, despite their importance, are rarely studied, and if studied, the focus is ultimately on their ideology, motives, and strategies. This study will use a thick analysis to understand the origins of these two groups to fill the research gap.

3. Research Objectives

This study aims at analyzing the relationship between great power intervention in the Muslim World and the rise and expansion of Islamic-motivated terrorism. The main focus will be on foreign intervention, whether military or political, including GWOT, and how it relates to the widespread of terrorism. In order to test the previous relationships, a qualitative comparative analysis of two case studies – ISIS and Ansar al-Sharia in Libya (ASL) – will be conducted, relying on the strengths of the process tracing methodology and organizational theory. Further, this study serves as a critique of the binary classification of terrorism studies into traditional theory and critical terrorism studies. It aims to show the possibility of synthesizing schools of thought that seem to be opposed in order to provide long-term structural policy prescriptions to overcome terrorism. In addition, this study gives a brief explanation of why the Arab Spring failed and turned into a humanitarian tragedy.

4. Research Significance

Unlike other terrorism studies, rather than focusing on traditionalist problem-solving methods and mere critical analysis of critical scholarship, this study examines the causal chain that links great powers' foreign intervention in the Muslim World and the rise of terrorism by mixing two schools that are thought to be opposed. This study will contribute to reassessing traditional approaches to terrorism and critical theory, will weigh the pros and cons of each realm to draw conclusions about which theory gives better prospects for

eradicating terrorism. Hence, this study will show that a bridge between the problem-solving approach and critical analysis is possible. It will demonstrate how great powers' counterterrorism policies are themselves the trigger of the development of new and more complex terrorist groups and hence will redirect policy-making to a different route toward counterterrorism. This study will shed light on terrorism groups that have not been given enough attention before.

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

1. Literature Review

1.1 Terrorism Studies, from Traditionalism to Critical Theory

Horkheimer classifies the modern sciences as belonging to a body known as “conventional theory,” and he grasps the possibility of an independently oriented “Critical Theory”. Horkheimer asserts that traditionalism is the essence of contemporary science, which adopts a homogeneous operation in collecting facts (Heath-Kelly, 2010, p. 237).

Traditionalist scholarship, which emphasizes problem-solving as its primary approach, has been criticized because it has long dominated terrorism research. Instead of trying to understand the "other" through inter-subjective understanding using interpretive or ethnographic methodologies, the problem-solving reasoning is positivist in nature. Accordingly, the terrorist is perceived as the "other" within a paradigm with the state as a center, dividing reality into good vs. evil without actual evidence (Gunning, 2007).

There are a number of other criticisms, along the problem-centric issue, of traditional or mainstream terrorism theory. First, a theoretical lacuna characterizes this scholarship for neglecting historical context and cases (Silke, 2019, p. 45–46). Further, traditionalism views terrorism as a sort of violence or tactic whose meaning is self-evident and not a representation product, an objective reality and not a social construction (Jackson, 2011). Traditionalists view terrorism as a tactic, an act of violence against civilians; however, it is, “of far greater historical and contemporary significance” (Jackson, 2016a).

Another criticism is the deficiency of the methodology of traditionalists. Numerous writers have noted a limitation of primary empirical research in this topic, as well as the resulting recycling of assumptions and truisms (Jackson, 2016a). Third, conventionalists generally disregard the role of interest states in the development of terrorism, usually intentionally because they have financial and professional ties with them (Jackson, 2016b). Terrorism studies genuinely delivers an official judgment on who the state may lawfully murder, torture, render, or imprison in the name of counter-terrorism (Jackson, 2007).

These arguments are significant because they prompt us to reconsider the nature and underpinnings of the origins of terrorism.

1.2 Critical Terrorism Studies (CTS)

Since 2006, the field of CTS has expanded quickly. Initiatives like the founding of the CTS academic journal, the establishment of a CTS professional working group within BISA², and regular academic occasions have all gained popularity (Jackson, 2016, p. 69).

Epistemological, ontological, and ethical-normative principles serve as the cornerstone of CTS. First, CTS's epistemological foundation is the idea of the social construction of knowledge is achievable thanks to language, discourse, and intersubjective behaviors. Though severe physical violence is regarded as a brutal fact, terrorism isn't a brute but social fact. Its broader cultural and political meaning is established by social consensus and intersubjective activities. Third, ethically and normatively, CTS is openly normative in direction simply by determining and affirming who the "terrorist other" genuinely is, deciding and confirming which persons and groups may legitimately be labeled "terrorists" (Jackson, 2007).

However, critical terrorism studies have also their own critics, according to whom critical scholarship fails to provide a clear map to political action or solution to actual problems as they overemphasize the discursive component in critical terrorism studies scholars' analyses appears to be a recurring theme (Sense, 2016). Therefore, it seems that both Orthodox and Post-modern literature have their own flaws. For this reason, this study will attempt to bridge the strengths of the problem-solving approach of traditional theory and the analytical power of CTS to overcome their shortcomings.

1.3 About the Roots of Islamic Terrorism

In the years following 9/11, IR researchers, political scientists and the foreign policy community, struggled to comprehend what had occurred. This inevitably evolved into an attempt to explain the jihadists³ reasoning. Essentialists such as Oren Kessler argue that jihad⁴ is the manifestation of the very violent nature of religion in general and Islam in

² the British International Studies Association

³ Jihadists or terrorist are synonyms.

⁴ Jihad, Islamic terrorism, Islamic inspired terrorism are synonyms.

particular. Kessler says the debates about religion as a tool come to an end after the 2013 PEW survey that showed that a vast majority wanted to implement sharia law in countries such as Iraq and Afghanistan, where the Islamic terror was concentrated (Kessler, 2016). Bernard Lewis explains that because they refuse their loss of historical hegemony to the West, Muslims are irate and anti-Western (Kuru, 2009). This view is one of most extreme of traditionalist views as it gives a clear invitation for Western intervention in the Muslim world for its dark portrayal of Muslims.

Scholars like Fred Halliday argue that Islamic terrorism is the product of people's current social and economic circumstances, unlike what Edward Said advocates that civilizations and identities cannot be divorced from historical currents and countercurrents (Turner, 2014). Samuel Huntington argues for a transhistorical understanding of civilizational identity as the source of conflict between the Islamic and Western cultures (Huntington, 1996). "Relative deprivation" theory stipulates that economic circumstances produce political outrage and rebellion, including radical Islamic violence that is labeled as terrorism (Gurr, 2011).

Other scholars disagree with poverty being the key factor of the rise of terrorism and suggest that dictatorial states of the Muslim region practice aggression that is countered by radicals in their own ways (Hafez, 2003). Aidan Hehir refutes the direct link between failed states and global jihad and says that democratic states' claimed potential to trigger a drop in terrorism is overblown, if not entirely wrong (Hehir, 2007). Opposition to these traditionalist views is certainly linked to the role of imperialism and Western intervention in creating radical Islam and eventually Islamic terrorism. Especially in the speech of Islamists themselves, there is a globalization driven by the United States that is evocative of a new Manifest Destiny that evolves as a ruthless hegemonic regime. The only legitimate option to this international injustice is jihad. Further, notions like otherness and Islamic Orientalism have led to the exclusion of Muslims from the global picture, and this sentiment of being the other has led to the rise of jihad as a form of resistance (Turner, 2014, p. 13). Traditionalists refute this point of view and argue that the United States has a "liberal grand strategy" (Turner, 2014) that aims at creating a global democratic order.

Further, the central premise of the justification for the GWOT is that failed states are a significant contributor to the global terrorist network and necessitate an international

intervention as well as carefully planned democratization (Hehir, 2007). This indicates that failed states and terrorism are directly related. Hehir argues that international terrorism has in fact been somewhat linked to some ostensibly failed states, but this connection is not causal. Terrorists are not drawn to or produced by state failure in and of itself, and a state's appeal as a haven for them depends on a particular confluence of factors. Additionally, there are many causes of state failure, and this diversity casts doubt on the accuracy of the assumption that failed states are all similar (Hehir, 2007). Hence, suggesting that imposing democracy on these failed states is flawed. Michael Mousseau argues that there is little proof that liberal values are caused by democracy. History demonstrates that illiberal democracy and the ascent of antidemocratic regimes result from the absence of liberal values in democracy (Mousseau, 2002). This also puts interventionist policies to counter terrorism into question.

1.4 ISIS and ASL

Most research about the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) revolves around its tactics, strategies, recruitment process and motives. Speckhard et al. interviewed a group of defectors to learn about the tactics and recruitment process of ISIS. They found out that the group relies heavily on former Iraqi Baathists⁵ (Speckhard & Yayla, 2017). Similar research has been done by other scholars such as Gerges who investigated the relationship between former Baathists and ISIS (Gerges, 2021a). McBride has analyzed how Secular Baathists could collaborate with radical jihadis (McBride, 2019). Merone has studied the Sunni ideological power of ISIS that was formed as a result of the fusion of Ba'athism and radicalism (Merone, 2021).

Further, most of the literature available about the origins of ISIS is focused on the early establishment of Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) that will later transform into ISIS. Little is known about why and how AQI expanded to Syria. Hove, for instance, investigated how ISIS developed from AQI, with a major focus on the war on Iraq. He gives little attention to the case of Syria and attributes the expansion of the Islamic State to Syria to the outburst

⁵ Baathism is an ideology that is founded on the ambition of constructing a shared identity, based on Arab nationalism. This nationalism is secular in nature, built on Arab independence, unity, and pride. It is in core the renaissance of the Arab civilization. Aflaq is the first chairperson of the early Baath Party between 1954 to 1965 (Ahmed, 2013). The most important cotemporary Baathists are Saddam Hussein, in Iraq, Hafez Assad, and Bashar Assad, in Syria.

of the Arab Spring (Hove, 2018). Yet he provides no evidence to link the rise of ISIS to the Arab Spring, especially that ISIS in Syria would emerge at a later stage. Gerges argues that the Arab Spring itself has nothing to do with the rise of ISIS but that the consequences of its failure do (Gerges, 2021b). Gerges as well puts more attention on the case of Iraq as he considers ISIS to be an “Iraqi phenomenon” (Gerges, 2021b). Other research focuses on the time following the formation of ISIS. For instance, Mishali-Ram focuses on the motivations and methods of foreign fighters who join transnational jihad in Syria rather than the history of terrorism in that country (Mishali Ram, 2017).

Answar Sharia in Libya (ASL) is one of the least studied terrorist groups, and most of the available literature mainly focuses on its ideology and strategies, and little has been done about its origins. Gråtrud et al. solely study the pre-formation phase of ASL, with a focus on its ideology and strategy (Gråtrud & Skretting, 2017). Zelin also reviews the group’s strategies to gain support through social work, and he gives little attention to the cause, leading to the foundation of the group and its strategies (Zelin, 2012). Gaub studies the difficulties that ASL and other groups face to survive in comparison to the Islamic State (Gaub, 2015). Enamorado analyzes the relationship between ASL and other terrorist groups (Enamorado, 2014). Very limited research is made about ASL in general, let alone the study of its origins.

2. Theoretical Framework

This study will be based on a synthesis of three schools of thought: post-colonialism, social constructivism, and state deconstruction theory. The main theory will be post-colonialism, which belongs to CTS. This study will use two traditionalist theories, social constructivism and state deconstruction theory.

2.1 Post-colonialism

The critical writing that examines and attempts to interpret the sociopolitical and cultural bequests of Western imperialism is referred to in this study as post-colonialism (Ingram, 2018). Post-colonialism also challenges traditional humanistic and social scientific ideas that knowledge is timeless and uncontextualized. Rather, it holds that, as Horkheimer and Adorno stated, truth has a "temporal core" and that its purpose is to investigate both the complexity of the past and current power relations (Ingram, 2018). Post-colonial theory revolves around, but is not limited to, issues concerning the relationship between The West

and the rest of the world or the Other (Hussain, n.d.). In this study, I will adopt Edward Said's original post-colonial theory. Accordingly, all post-colonialists are concerned with representation, especially with how the colonial encounter produced the identities of "the West" and its "others" or the Orient largely through Western imposition (Ingram, 2018).

This study will primarily employ the concept of the otherness. This can be defined as an outcome of the process of producing a variety of dominated groups, known as the other or "them", through stereotyping real or imaginary traits of identity to make them a product of discrimination, by a dominant group or the self (Staszak, 2020, p.25). Power disparities are critical to the emergence of otherness. The power at stake is discursive; it is dependent on the ability of a discourse to enforce its categories. However, this ability is determined not only by the rational force of the language, but also by the sociopolitical and economic power of its users. Only the dominant group has the authority to impose additional discriminatory acts, devalue the uniqueness of others (their otherness), and defend the uniqueness of its own (Staszak, 2020, p.25).

The otherness process produces the dichotomy of "the West and the Rest". Although all societies create within themselves the self and the other, the Western societies are more prominent for one reason: colonialism. Colonialism permitted the West to export its principles, which became recognized practically everywhere through the process of cultural assimilation. Western conceptions of identity and otherness are passed through religion and science, which are forced beyond the Western geographical limits through colonialism (Staszak, 2020, p.26). Geographical otherness is when a geographically distant identity is thought to be radically different from one self to be considered as the other. This type of otherness will be discussed in this study.

2.2 Social Constructivism

This study will use constructivism to explain how many facts about the Muslim World were in fact socially constructed because of imperial powers. The author will show that if those facts were reconsidered from a constructivist perspective, mixed with critical scholarship, our ways of problem solving would be more effective.

This study will adopt Wendt's assumptions that many fundamental facets of IR are socially constructed, which is at the heart of constructivist thought. He establishes two pillars of constructivism:

- Instead of material forces, shared ideas dominate the structures of human association.
- Instead of being predetermined by them, these common beliefs influence the identities and interests of purposeful actors (Wendt, 1992).

2.3 State Deconstruction Theory

Alternatively, failed state theory has a traditionalist orientation. According to this theory, failed states have been a major player in international politics over the past 20 years as a threat to international stability. However, since the threat of terrorism was added in 2001, failed states have appeared to be even more dangerous and have been open to outside intervention, purportedly for counterterrorism reasons. The connection between failed states and terrorism has frequently been accepted and put into practice without the careful consideration it needs, taking into account the inferences for both the world and the failed states themselves (Pašagić, 2020).

A failed state has three features. Firstly, it suffers from internal or national problems and difficulties, yet transnational issues might result as well. The features of power and authority are diminishing in status, with institutions deconstructing. Secondly, law starts to break down, not because of civil wars that have rebels involved in the middle, but because of the dissolution of the structure that is responsible for law and order. Thirdly, the state loses the capability of representation abroad. It witnesses a dissolution of the institutions responsible for foreign affairs (Thürer, 1999, p.733-734). These features make a failed state an international security threat.

2.4 Conceptualization

“Colonialism” comes from the word “colony”, which comes from the Latin “colonus” or small farm. Thus, it refers to the practice of expanding and cultivating a piece of land. Many early civilizations occupied colonies that were treated as marginal and barbaric cultures, connected to a superior central imperium. However, different variables construct the post-Renaissance imperialism. Edward Said clearly distinguishes between imperialism, which is the practice, the theory and the attitude of a metropolitan center that dominates another territory, and colonialism, which is the result of imperialism and signifies settling on that territory (Ashcroft, 2012). Said's formula, which employs "imperialism" for the ideological impulse and "colonialism" for the practice, is an important differentiation in this study.

Said describes imperialism as all the practices of a "great metropolitan center", aiming at international supremacy. This center deals with the dominated by appealing to power and national interests (Said, 2012). This description is applied to the American war on terrorism. In other words, US foreign policy relies on the use of abstractions such as "terrorism" and "freedom" by the US administration to excuse its systematic exploitative, militaristic, and oppressive operations across the world and to conceal its sordid material interests (Ghosh, 2009). To justify these actions, the United States, like other imperial powers, relies on different methods, which will be discussed in later chapters, one of which is intellectual support, i.e., traditionalists advocate the "just war" in their scholarship, Said explains that some intellectuals' use of the just war language is in the service of US foreign policy (Ghosh, 2009). This traditionalist approach plays an important role in the imperialist agenda.

James N. Rosenau defines foreign intervention with two criteria: convention-breaking and authority-oriented. A significant number of observers tend to label the state's transnational behavior as interventionist, regardless of the form of this behavior, i.e. it does not matter if this behavior aims to alter or maintain the political structure of the target state (Rosenau, 1968). The two criteria should be present simultaneously to call an actor's behavior interventionary. This study distinguishes two types of foreign intervention:

Direct military intervention: Military intervention, as opposed to economic and other non-military forms of intervention, involves the movement of troops or forces to targeted country (Pearson, 1974, p. 259). In this study, this type of intervention defines NATO's foreign intervention in Libya in 2011 during the First Libyan Civil War.

Indirect military intervention: This is equipping local forces in the target country with military tools and other funding, with no military presence of the foreign power in the target country. For instance, In the Sahel, US counterterrorism goals were preventative. The Bush administration agreed to train and fund, as well as arm local forces to do the fighting themselves instead of launching a military campaign (Tankel, 2020, p. 882). This type of intervention describes foreign intervention in Syria in 2011 until 2013, before the war on ISIS.

In addition, foreign intervention is not limited to Western intervention; it could be any foreign power intervening in another country's matters. It is not only limited to the two categories, mentioned above; it also can be economic, political, diplomatic, etc.

3. Hypothesis

Foreign intervention, whether it is direct or indirect, leads to the transformation of manageable conflicts into unmanageable civil wars, when then result in state failure, which creates a fertile environment for the rise of different insurgent groups, including Jihadis. The figure below summarizes the hypothesis:

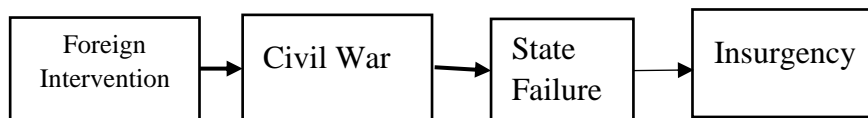


Figure 1: How Foreign Intervention Makes Terrorism

This study considers jihadis to be one of the many types of militias or insurgent groups. Each of these militias has its own ideology that distinguishes it from the others. For jihadis, the ideology happened to be inspired from radical Islam or Salafi-jihadism. This claim will be tested in further chapters.

This study argues that state failure in the Muslim world happens after foreign intervention in the region and not before it. This claim will be tested in the following chapters.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH DESIGN

1. Place and Time of Study

1.1 Research Place

Indonesia

1.2 Research Time

Research Stage	Period
Research Preparations	August 2022- October 2022
Data Collection	October 2022- December 2022
Research Proposal	November 2002- February 2023
Data analysis	February 2023- April 2023
Thesis Writing	February 2023- May 2023

2. Research Materials and Tools

This study will rely intensely on the narrative approach to qualitative research. The story or history itself is the primary data. These stories describe individual experiences, which usually show the individuals' identities to the researcher. Interviews might be the most used source of data, but other data sources can be utilized such as documents and observations (Butina, 2015, p. 190). To collect these narratives, this study will rely on archival review (reports, newspapers and other periodicals, TV news, letters, images, graphics, videos, histories, testimonies). In addition, this study will use an extensive literature review as a source of data.

3. Research management

3.1 Case Selection

3.1.1 The Case of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria

ISIS⁶ has for a long time been the ultimate leader of the global jihadist movement. The group was founded by Jordanian Abu Musab al-Zarqawi in Iraq in 2003, following the US invasion of Iraq and the collapse of the Baath Party. The group was originally an extension of Al-Qaeda Central, and it was originally Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI). AQI and other Iraqi insurgents created the Mujahideen Shura Council in January 2006. On October 15, 2006, they fused to create the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI) (Negus, 2015). In 2011, ISI members spread in Syria, exploiting the political turmoil that accompanied the aftermath of the Arab Spring uprisings. In 2013, ISI fused with the Nusra Front to form ISIS or ISIL. This latter is the case study of this thesis.

I will analyze the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria for the abundance of data about it because it is considered to be among the “deadliest terrorist groups in the world in 2022” (*Global Terrorism Index 2022*, 2022). Despite the huge amount of research that has been done on ISIS, it is an ongoing problem (*ISIS Is a Problem of Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow*, n.d.). Further, although many scholars have investigated the rise of the Islamic State, very few have studied the fusion of the Nusra Front and ISI in Syria. And this is one reason to choose to study it in this thesis.

The main focus is the year 2011 because that is when ISI members reached Syria and the Arab Spring began, in addition to the period before 2011 and also after that. The author will focus on the time period between 2007 and 2013, from the beginning of the US withdrawal from Iraq to the creation of ISIS, respectively, but also beyond these dates in some occasions for argumentative reasons.

This study is not about the rise of ISI following the war on Iraq in 2003. It is about the expansion of ISI to Syria and the fusion of ISI with Al-Nusra Front in Syria in 2013, following the Syrian Civil War.

⁶ Synonyms are the Islamic State of Iraq and wa-Sham or Levant (ISIL) and Arabic Acronym Daesh,

3.1.2 The Case of Ansar al-Sharia in Libya (ASL)

ASL emerged following the First Libyan Civil War in 2011. The group also belongs to the Sunni, Salafi- jihadi movement. They want to impose sharia law and get rid of Western influence in Libya. The Libyan cities of Darnah, Ajdabiya, Sirte, and Benghazi are where the group is most active, though it probably also operates in other parts of the nation (*National Counterterrorism Center, n.d.*). Muhammad al-Zahawi served as its "Amir" from January 2014 to January 2015 (R. Staff, 2015). The group has more impact on the national and regional level than the international level. Yet its victims are both nationals and foreign individuals in Libya and others. Although the group acts independently, it has pledged allegiance to Al-Qaeda Central, which shows that this group would work at an international level if possible, and yet limited literature is dedicated to the study of this group.

The focus on ASL, despite limited related research, is fruitful because of the abundance of data on Libya after of the outbreak of the First Libyan Civil War. In this study, the contextual framework is crucial, and hence it is methodologically meaningful to focus on terrorism in Libya in general and ASL as only an example of the different Salafi Jihadi groups in Libya, because it is impossible to cover them all.

This study will show how direct military foreign intervention in Libya after the outburst of the Arab Spring in 2011 has created both the motives and the fertile environment for terrorist groups to emerge, as Ansar al- Sharia in Libya or ASL was born just after foreign powers intervened in Libya. The focus will be on the period between 2011 and 2014, which coincides with the beginning of the first and second Libyan civil wars and the birth and the beginning of the death of ASL, after the expansion of ISIS to North Africa, in addition to the period before 2011 for comparative reasons that serve the study's argument.

The author has chosen to study foreign intervention in Syria and Libya, in particular because the two cases are methodologically comparable. Both countries witnessed the emergence of the Arab Spring at the same time, which would transform into civil war in both cases. Both states witnessed the deconstruction of state institutions following the civil wars. Finally, both cases have experienced foreign interventions, led by the United States, with the claim of protecting civilians and democratic transition of power, yet the kind of intervention is different. In Syria, it is an indirect intervention while in Libya it is a direct military intervention. Nevertheless, the two types led to the same results: the rise of terrorist

groups. The study argues that foreign intervention, regardless of its type, leads to the rise of terrorism.

3.2 Method

3.2.1 Process Tracing

This study will employ the “theory testing process tracing” methodology on each case individually (ISIS and ASL), then it will compare and contrast the results of the tracings.

Theory-testing PT develops a theory from available literature and then evaluates if there is evidence that a postulated causal mechanism exists in a given event. The case study in theory-testing PT determines whether or not the observable implications of the existence of a more general, parsimonious postulated causal mechanism are evident. Theory tests can be nested inside mixed-method designs as a more general causal mechanism is discovered in the case study (Beach & Pedersen, 2011).

In theory-testing PT, we know both X and Y and have either a) existing conjectures about a viable mechanism or b) are able to derive one reasonably simply from existing theorization. In theory-testing PT, conceptualization is a deductive activity in which we create a causal mechanism by which X generates Y using logical reasoning. In reality, theory testing involves inductive features, notably with empirical test operationalization, in which we use current empirical study to generate predictions about particular cases and the kind of expected evidence to detect if our hypothesis is valid (Beach & Pedersen, 2011, p. 7).

3.2.2 Organizational Theory

To perform these two instances of process tracing, the author will utilize “organizational theory”. In business, this is a series of interrelated concepts and explanations that describe how individuals act when they work together to complete tasks that are intended to further a common goal (Malreddy, 2015). Organizational theory is the study of how organizations function and how they affect and are affected by the environment in which they operate (Jones, 2013).

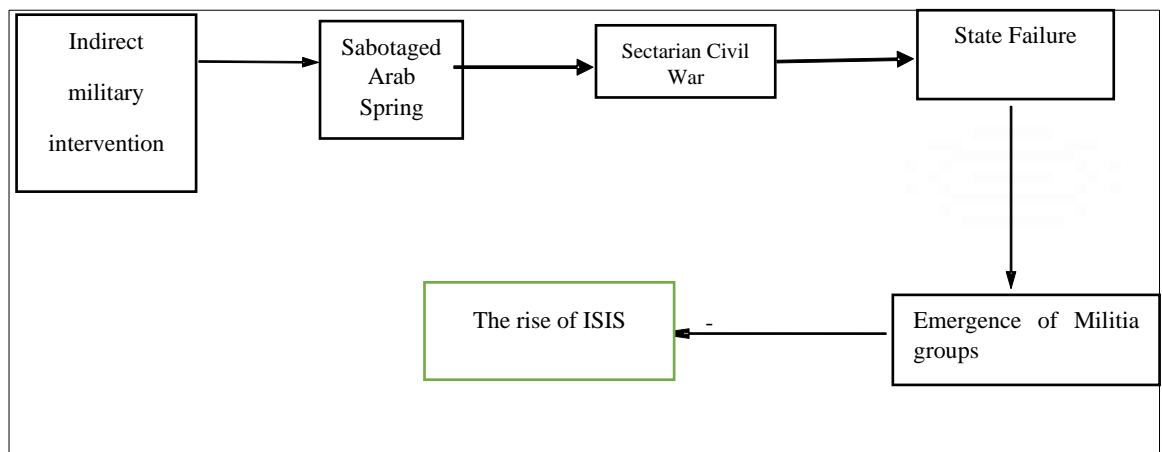
Instead of being the result of strategic activity, terrorist behavior is the result of organizational dynamics at an internal level. These organizations provide a political agenda

while also offering rewards to followers (Malreddy, 2015). Terrorist groups can be treated as “organizations”, similar to those of business.

3.2.3 Process tracing of the Origins of ISIS

This section will focus on the causes that led to the fusion of the Islamic State in Iraq (ISI) and Al-Qaeda in Syria or Jabhat an-Nuṣrah li-Ahl ash-Shām⁷, forming what would be known as ISIS on May 9, 2013. We can only understand the rise of ISIS if we understand the contexts of both Syria and Iraq, the nest of the Islamic State. However, this study focuses on Syria and will only offer a short overview about Iraq, which is not a part of the process tracing.

This process tracing will show how indirect military intervention – the US with its Arab Sunni allies, Russia with its shia allies in Syria after the outburst of the Syrian revolution in 2011 and onwards – has led to the transformation of the revolution from below⁸ into a sectarian civil war. The civil war itself has led to the dissolution to state institutions, which created an institutional vacuum that many insurgent groups whether secular or Islamist try to fill. This led to various transformations, including the fusion of Al-Nusra Front with ISI, forming ISIS (Figure 2)



⁷ Al-Nusra Front or Jabhat al-Nusra, also known as al-Qaeda in Syria or al-Qaeda in the Levant. In service of the global al-Qaeda movement, the Nusra Front is a jihadi organization that is engaged in an armed war against the Alawite regime in Syria. Since the front is an openly admitted member of al-Qaeda, it directly contradicts American efforts to support a moderate opposition to ISIS and Assad (Cafarella, 2014).

⁸the “entrance of the masses into the realm of the rulership over their own history,” (Brownlee, 2015)

3.2.4 Process Tracing of the Origins of ASL

This process tracing will show how foreign powers – NATO, including France, the US and the United Kingdom, in cooperation with Qatar and the United Arab Emirates – motivated by a thirst for Libyan hydrocarbon resources have intervened militarily, directly, after the peaceful uprisings of 2011 to turn the Arab Spring⁹ into the first Libyan civil war, dividing the country into three regions controlled by different insurgent groups. The civil war led to the total deconstruction of Libyan institutions, especially after the fall of the Libyan

rise of different insurgent groups, including but not limited to ASL (Figure 3).

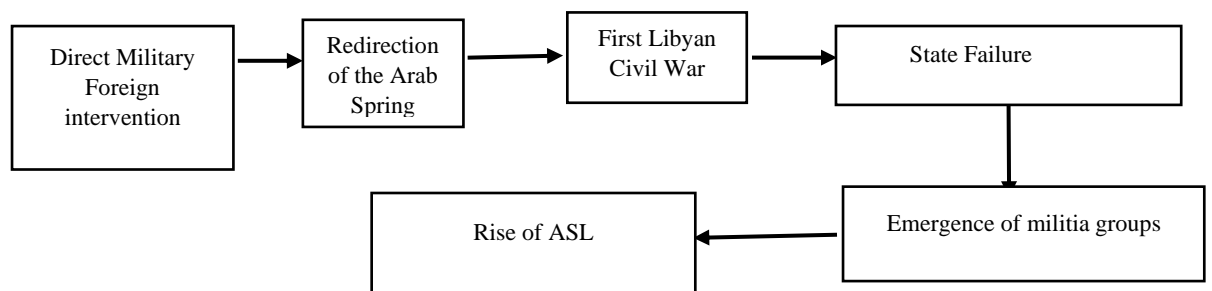


Figure 3: Process tracing of the development of ASL in Libya

⁹ A wave of anti-regime uprisings and demonstrations that swept a huge number of Arab countries in early 2011. This study considers armed rebellions as the first symptoms of the transformation of the revolutions from below into civil wars (sabotaged Arab Spring).

CHAPTER IV

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. The Islamic State

This section will first analyze the organization of ISIS using organizational theory. It will provide an overview of the historical development of the ISI, specifically its temporary collapse in 2007 and the aftermath. It will process-trace the origins of ISIS to the indirect military foreign intervention of Washington and its Sunni allies, and Moscow and its shia allies.

1.1 Inside ISIS: An Organizational Analysis

4 The Ideology of ISIS

Ideology is the beliefs, tenets, principles, and objectives – real or imagined – by which a group pronounces its unique political distinctiveness (Abedin, 2019, p. 145). The ideology of ISIS is the most important foundation of the group because it is the support of its economic and social survival.

It is well-known that ISIS is another wave of Salafi-jihadism, a Sunni projection, exactly like Al-Qaeda Central.¹⁰ However, ISIS has other distinct core ideological pillars that it stands on. Gerges explains that Al-Qaeda Central's ideological pillar stands on a far enemy, the West. Contrarily, the near enemy or the Shia and Arab regimes, have been the primary targets of AQI and its successor, ISIS, up until this point (Gerges, 2014, p. 340). Both Zarqawi¹¹ and Baghdadi¹² maintained that the Shia were infidels and demanded they either convert to the "correct" Islam or be killed. They even considered eradicating Shia far more important than fighting Israel. This ideological pillar would be the key to the success of ISIS throughout the region, not only in Iraq and Syria.

¹⁰ Founded by Oussama Bin Laden and others

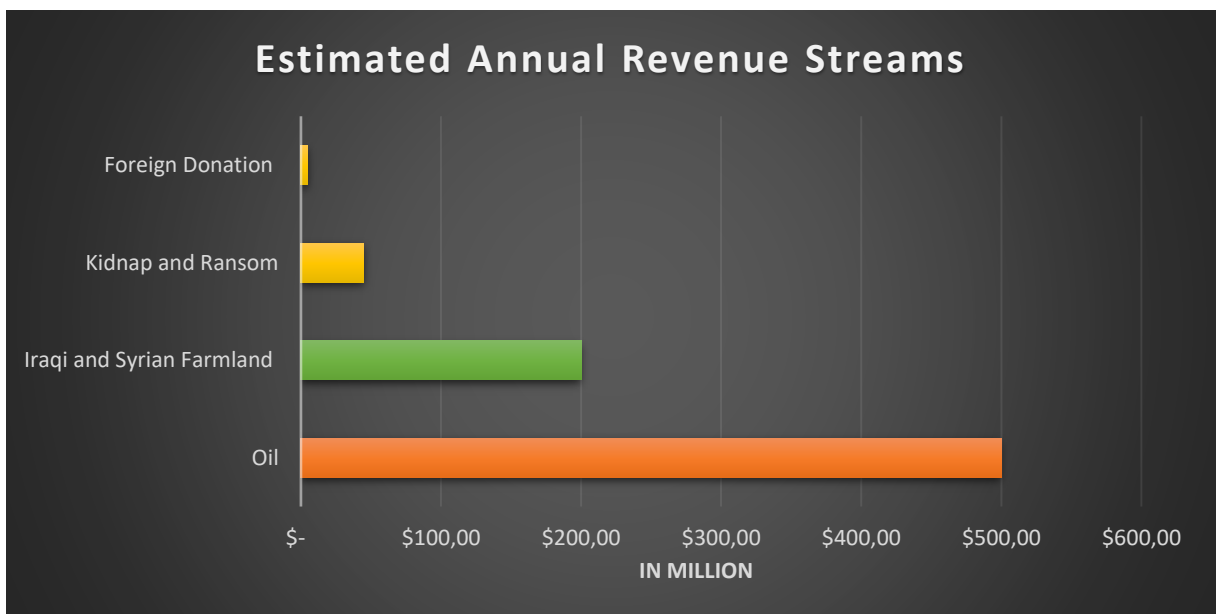
¹¹ The founding father of ISIS, formerly known as Al-Qaeda in Iraq or AQI.

¹² The first caliph of the Islamic State, from 2014 to 2019.

1.1.2 Economic Structure

ISIS has different funding resources, including kidnapping for ransom, extortion, foreign donation, and, most importantly, extraction from the natural resources of Iraq and Syria (see figure 4). Control over oil and gas reserves offers Daesh a potentially sizable source of income. Al-Omar, Jafra, and Jeribe in Syria, as well as Ajil in Iraq, were among the significant oil fields under its control as of March 2015. According to reports, the group's potential oil production could reach 80,000 barrels per day, producing US\$ 3 million to \$8 million in revenue each day (Hansen-Lewis & Shapiro, 2015, p. 143). The question is, how does ISIS manage to maintain the production and trafficking of these oil resources?

The answer lies in its recruitment approach that links its “near enemy” ideology and economy. ISIS is the projection of Sunni; they appeal to disaffected Sunni communities around the world and try to show that the group is able to achieve salvation and Islamic utopia on earth (Gerges, 2014, p. 342). This appeal was able to largely succeed in Iraq and Syria, given the contexts of the two countries. The Shia-dominated government in Iraq and the Alawite regime in Syria turned into sectarian administrations that fueled sectarian conflict in the region; and given the fact that ISIS’s ideological foundations stand on the total war against Shia, Sunni groups excluded from the political arena are the main source of manpower. In Iraq, ex-Baathists would merge with insurgents while in Syria, it fused with rebel groups against the Assad regime, mainly al-Nusra Front. These groups are dominated by experts about state institutions or former state officials. This helped ISIS



control the state's resources for a long while. Figure 4 shows that oil constitutes most of ISIS's monthly and yearly income.

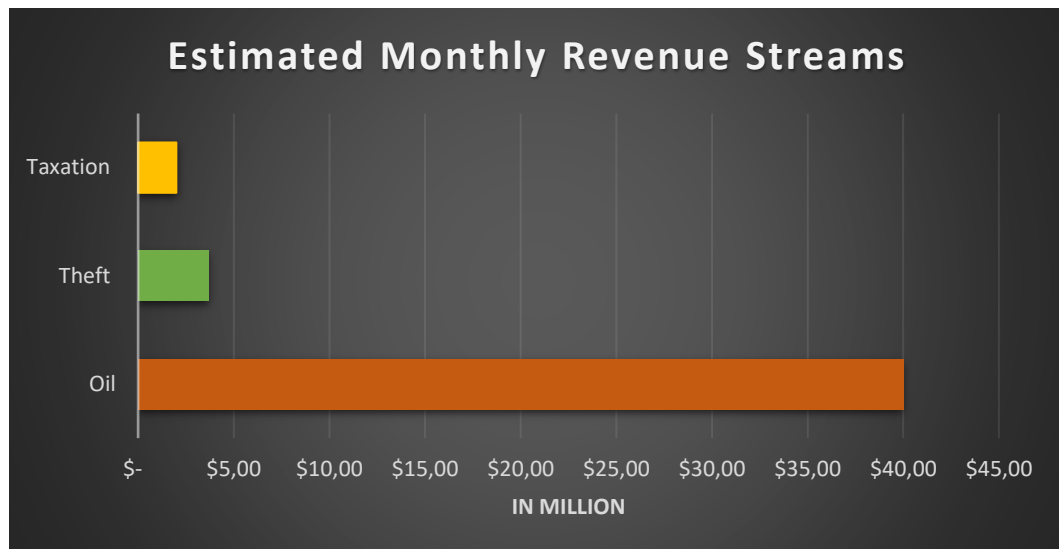


Figure 4: Economic resources of ISIS , Source: reproduced from (The Financing of the 'Islamic State' in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), 2017)

2. Overview: The Decay and the Revival of ISIS

Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, a Jordanian extremist, created AQI, the precedent group of ISIS. When the US and Iraq's intelligence agencies assassinated Zarqawi in 2006, Abu Ayyoub al-Masri, originally from Egypt, became the new emir and promoted the creation of a state based on Islamic teachings (Gulmohamad, 2014, p. 1). The 2003 start of the Iraq War led to the emergence of AQI. The occupation that followed the invasion lasted until 2011 (Matini, 2022, p.14). Following the Sunni Awakening¹³, the number of US troops on the ground rose from 130,600 in 2004 to 172,000 in 2007 (Belasco, 2009). Fallujah, where AQI had its headquarters, was taken back by US forces in 2004 (Kagan, 2007). The US announced in January 2007 that it would send 20,000 more troops to Iraq and extend the tours of duty for the remaining troops. Violence decreased after the surge of 2007 and the

¹³ or the Anbar Awakening, or Sahwa. Sunni Arabs joined forces with American forces to fight a common enemy during the Sunni Awakening, also known as the Iraqi uprising against al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI). According to the majority of American accounts, in February 2005, a tribe known as Albu Mahal engaged in combat with al Qaeda and requested assistance from the US (Al-Jabouri & Jensen, 2010, p. 3).

insurgency started to disperse (Griffin, 2016). Baghdad in this period was the safest since the fall of Saddam Hussein.

2.1 The Year 2011

5 Overview: The Revival of the ISI

Sunni Arabs were severely excluded by Maliki's government after the withdrawal, and ISIS has since exploited the "failed social contract", according to Ned Parker. Awakening militias were uncertain about joining Maliki's government's national security forces, and his critics accuse him of persecuting Sunni political rivals and inflaming sectarian polarization for political gain, according to Ned Parker (Laub & Masters, 2014).

Experts warned beforehand that the withdrawal from Iraq would have many implications for regional and global security. Between 2007 and 2011, Iraq and the US went through a crucial transition. Even though there was still a war to be won, it was only one obstacle that both nations had to overcome. No one can predict with certainty whether Iraq will be able to achieve a stable level of political accommodation to deal with its internal problems. Iran wants to become more powerful, and Turkey won't allow a safe haven for rival Kurdish groups like the PKK. Iraq's Arab neighbors are worried about Shia dominance and the potential repercussions of Iran's involvement in Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq, and there is still insufficient Arab support for Iraq (A. H. Cordesman & Mausner, 2009).

2.1.2 The Fragility of the Iraqi Security Forces

In addition to a significant sectarian component in the Iraqi army and national police, the Iraqi army forces face a number of serious qualitative issues. Both the 174,268-strong Iraqi army and qualified officers and NCOs are in short supply. In the absence of embedded advisors, the majority of the army remains a collection of mobs rather than a force prepared to maneuver as full task forces and divisions (ISR). The majority of this mob is in form of category II units that cannot stand without American support. Only 10 percent or less of the units "in the lead" are ready to work independently. The Navy and Air Force still don't have detailed acquisition plans for the combat systems they need. Despite their significant progress, they are still personnel that must be developed over time (A. Cordesman, 2008).

Figure 5 below shows a slump in Iraqi armed forces personnel (% of total labor force) from 2003 (The beginning of the war on Iraq) until 2011. It also shows a total destruction of the

army in 2004 and a critical slump in 2007, coinciding with the climax of the crisis of the disarmament of Iraqi forces¹⁴ and the beginning of the US withdrawal from Iraq, respectively. All of these inadequate features of the Iraqi security forces would make it impossible to overcome any possible surge in terrorist activity. However, the Iraqi army started to recover starting from 2017, coinciding with the Iraqi victory against ISIS, after losing the battle of Baghuz Fawqani in the same year. This victory was followed by the end-2017 Western Iraq Campaign to fight ISIS, marking the end of foreign intervention in Iraq (Najjar, 2019).

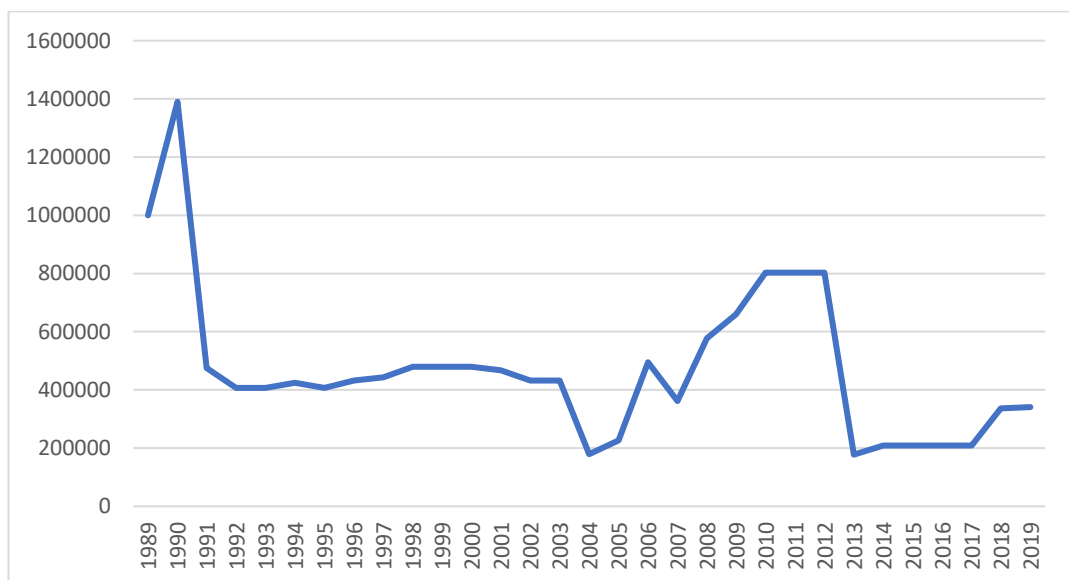


Figure 5: Armed Forces Personnel, Total, Iraq , Source: created from (World Bank Open Data, n.d.).

The dynamics of Shia politics have changed as a result of the prime minister's emphasis on Shia dominance in state institutions. Maliki took advantage of holes in power-sharing agreements¹⁵ during his second term. As chief executive, he used the strong patronage at

¹⁴ The mission to decontaminate Iraq of its WMD, which includes radiological, chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons. Following the Baath downfall in the War of 1991, the Security Council decided to compel it to stop producing WMDs (Towle, 1996). The procedure continued until the War on Iraq in 2003, the army of the Baath Party was deconstructed and replaced by a new army.

¹⁵ A coalition led by the former prime minister Ayad Allawi and supported by Sunnis received the most votes in the inconclusive March 7 parliamentary elections, but not enough to form a majority government. Allawi's attempts to become president and prime minister were thwarted by religious Shiite parties by forming a coalition and outwitting him as a result (*Rival Factions Reach Power-Sharing Deal in Iraq*, 2010, p. 24).

his disposal to pursue a "divide and rule" approach to dealing with other parties. In order to establish a sort of "shadow state"¹⁶ within the government, he filled open positions in the military and administration with his loyalists, maximized the authority of his office, and increased connections with him personally. He increased the influence of independent commissions such as the Iraqi Central Bank and the Iraqi Media Network., the Communication and Media Commission, and the De-Baathification Committee¹⁷(Al-Qarawee, 2014, p. 6). This exclusive government refueled sectarian rage that had decreased during the Anbar Awakening. It did not only exclude Sunni groups, who fought and eliminated ISI, but also other Shia groups such as those led by Cleric Muqtada al-Sadr¹⁸. Iraq would drown in sectarian conflict again, paving the way for ISI to revive itself.

2.1.3 Al-Maliki: The American Hand in Baghdad

Americans did not create Maliki. As a member of the Dawa, a covert shia dissident group, he spent years in exile while avoiding assassins from Saddam Hussein's Sunni-led Baath Party. Americans did, however, contribute to the 64-year-old premier's eventual success.

Shia Iraqi Prime Minister Ibrahim al-Jaafari discovered that Sunni, Kurdish, and Shia leaders, as well as Washington, did not trust him in 2006 as a Sunni insurgency raged. Bush administration officials looked to Maliki as a compromise candidate in an effort to increase public support for the war and the future of Iraq. Maliki and other Iraqi leaders were met by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice when she paid a surprise visit to Baghdad.

According to *The Atlantic*, Obama ran for office in 2008 on a platform to end the war, but he only visited Iraq once. He then carried out Bush's plan to withdraw American troops and quickly turned his attention elsewhere after giving his approval for Maliki to

¹⁶ a form of government established by a coalition of national leaders, regional middlemen, and foreign corporations, where the real power is not concentrated in the formal state apparatus. Private armies are a defining characteristic of the shadow state (Cheeseman et al., 2019).

¹⁷ The committee responsible to carry the decision to prevent Iraqis who held positions in the top three levels of each ministry or who were in the top four levels of Saddam's Baath Party from working for the government (Pfiffner, 2010).

¹⁸ is a politician, militia leader, and shia cleric from Iraq. He is the head of the Sadrist Movement and the Peace Companies. Al-Sadr's personal militia, known as Jaysh al-Mahdi, eventually consolidated control over the Iraqi Shi'a community with the sole purpose of driving Coalition Forces out of their homeland (Bayless, 2012).

hold to power. He stopped Maliki and Bush's frequent video conferences and gave Vice President Joe Biden control of Iraq. The White House repeatedly turned down requests to speak with them about American relations with Maliki (Rohde et al., 2014).

The success of the Anbar Awakening, supported militarily by the US forces, in limiting the expansion of ISI in Iraq did not last long, thanks to the US uncalculated withdrawal from Iraq. The group AQI, from which the Islamic State was born, came as a consequence of the US invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq (the War on Terror). The group could also expand and mutate due to US policies in the region. Very close to disappearing, the Islamic State in Iraq was able to reorganize after the widespread sectarian conflict in Iraq, thanks to the US-backed Maliki government and the destructed Iraqi security forces after the Invasion.

3. The Process Tracing of ISIS

3.1 The Revolution from Below¹⁹: Syria in 2011

The orientalist misunderstanding and the miscommunication of the uprisings of 2011 in Syria against the Assad regime played a major role in their failure and the subsequent civil war that would soon turn into a proxy war among global and regional powers.

The Arab world had endured in the Western imagination, which is built on the dichotomy of the West vs. the rest, as being under the influence of some kind of curse that had held up the time and altered people into passive subjects incapable of reacting to the authoritarian rulers who had been living in golden palaces for such a long time. It wasn't just the way the West viewed the Arab world that had changed; there had also been a significant shift in how people saw themselves and how they understood their political lives (Brownlee, 2015). In other words, the way the Syrian uprisings were perceived and were made to be understood by the world facilitated foreign intervention in the country and later the transformation of the revolution from below into a civil war.

The need to demonstrate that the 2011 uprisings were peaceful popular demands for values like freedom and dignity that originated in rural areas is crucial. According to Asef Baya, the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) needs to foster a "scholarship of silence", or a study of those without a voice, of those who operate outside of formal institutions and,

despite not having the institutional capacity to exert pressure, pose a serious threat to those in positions of power (Brownlee, 2015).

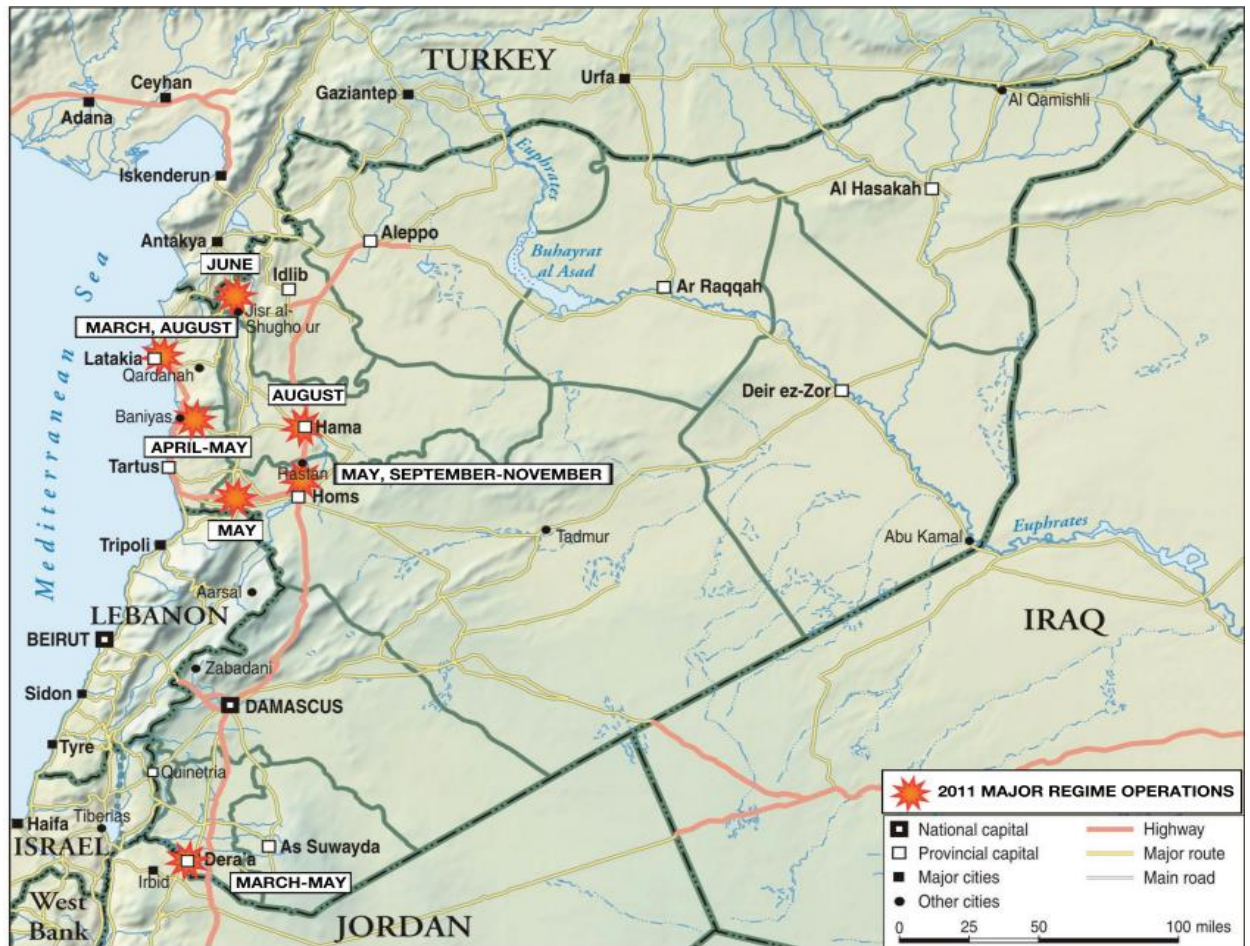


Figure 6: Syrian uprisings, major geographical areas (December 2011) Source: (Holliday, 2011)

Figure 6 shows that the major geographies (Homs, Hama, Dara, Idlib, Latakia) where the Syrian protests originated are rural areas. The point is that the Syrian protests were a spontaneous reaction to the outcomes of the policies of the Baath regime. Gerges explains that Syria's popular uprising was neither violent nor motivated by sect. In Syria, protesters risked their lives to challenge the government and dared to demand just political and social reforms, not even regime change. The uprising did not militarize and assumed a sectarian guise until six months later. That development shouldn't, however, make us lose sight of the protesters' struggle for change and their shared aspirations (Gerges, 2021b). Hence, the first six months of the uprisings were pacific calls for socioeconomic and political reforms.

What happened in the next few months that transformed these armless uprisings into a war of all against all? How come certain groups succeeded in deploying arms?

3.2 The Metamorphosis of the Revolution from Below and the Intervention

Peaceful protests took a different direction when military defectors declared the creation of the Syrian Free Army (FSA), a rebel organization seeking to topple the government in July 2011. Again, while most of the 2011 protests were non-sectarian, the armed conflict exposed more pronounced sectarian divisions. The majority of Syrians are Sunni Muslims, but Assad belongs to the Alawi sect, which has long dominated the country's security establishment ("Syria's War Explained from the Beginning," 2018). However, it is crucial to emphasize that the rise of the Free Syrian Army was not the trigger of Sunni-Alawite sectarian conflict, but a consequence of the way foreign intervention, specifically in the form of indirect military support and assistance, was bipolarly distributed between those who supported Sunni armed groups (the Coalition and its Arab Sunni allies) and those who supported the Alawite regime (Russia and its Shia allies).

It is important to demonstrate that Syria has always been a plural society, yet it has never experienced sectarian armed conflicts, nor did different religious groups form any form of militia. Figures 7 and 8 demonstrate that Syria has had similar ethnic and religious distribution since at least 2000 and until 2011. Sunni Arabs dominate the ethnic landscape when Alawites and other groups constitute a minority in terms of number, but not politically. It is clear that ethnic distribution had not changed since long before the Arab uprisings, yet this ethnic and religious variation did not seem to be a problem even during the first six months of the Arab Spring in Syria.

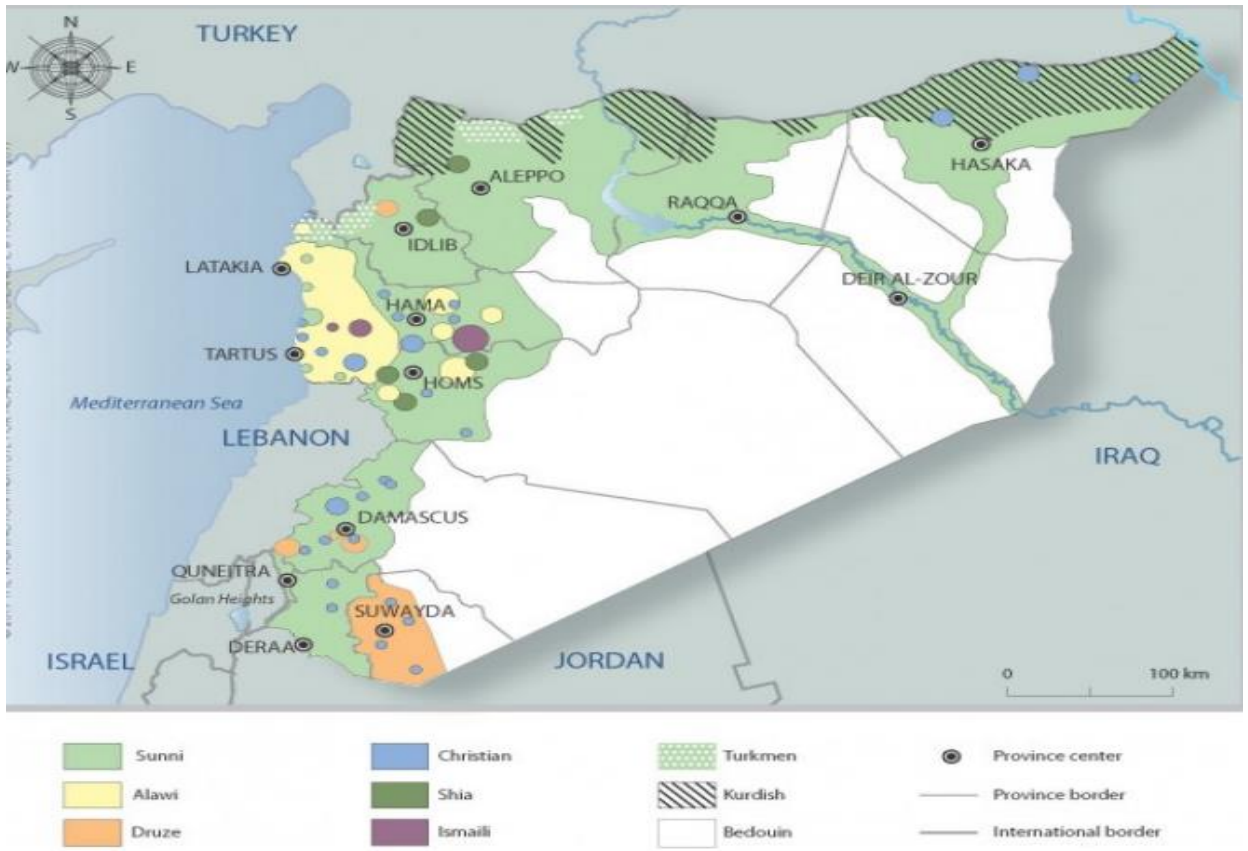
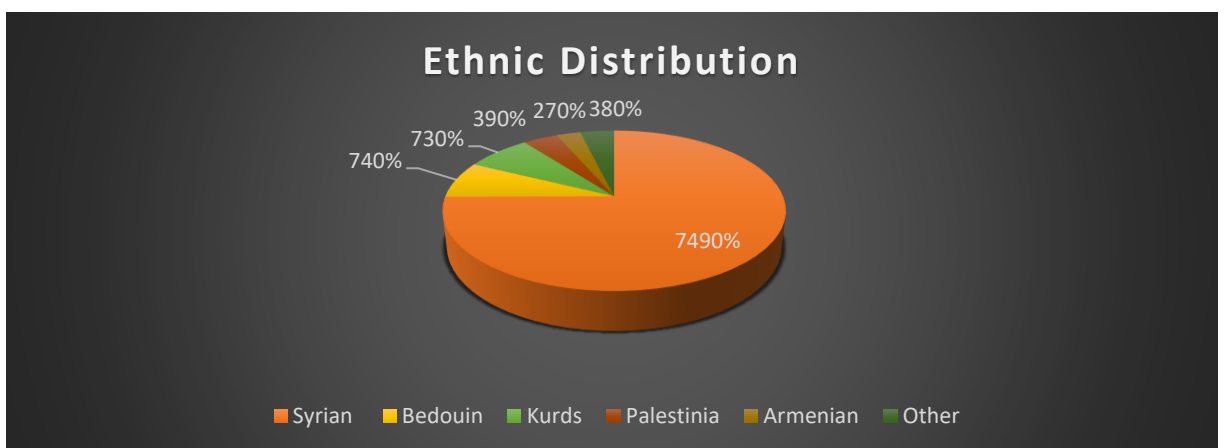


Figure 7: A map of Syria's religious and ethnic distribution in 2011. Source: (How Sectarianism Can Help Explain the Syrian War — Syria Deeply, 2018)

Figure 7 is an ethnic map of Syria. Each color represents a different ethnicity or religion/sect. On first glance, one can notice that the map is of various colors, which shows the diversity of country for a long time. Despite this diversity, the country did not face sectarian war before 2011.



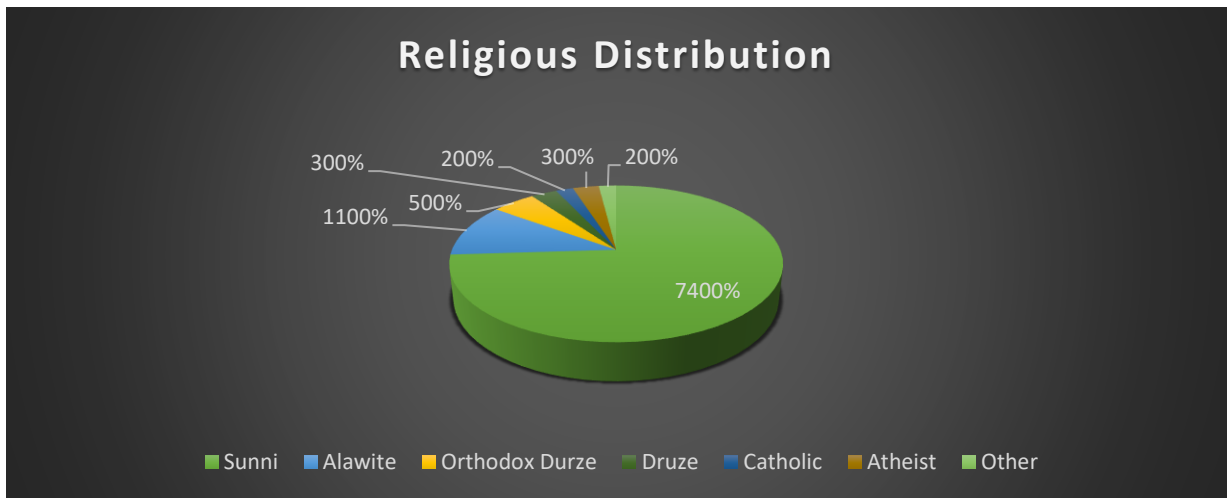


Figure 8: Ethnic and religious distribution in Syria in 2000, Source: Created from (“Syria - The Winds,” 2000)

Figure 8 above also demonstrates that the Syrian society has always been diverse, but dominated by Sunni Arabs at about 74 percent of the population. Alawites constitute the second-largest group. There was no change in the social structure in Syria before and after 2011, which shows that the sectarian crisis has another cause.

The Baath regime itself had not been a sectarian regime, not until the civil war erupted. Baathism originally was about Arab nationalism, which is secular in nature. Even the original founders of the philosophy were not all Muslims. One should also note that if Baathism was about sectarianism, we would not have two Baath parties, one dominated by Sunni Arabs in Iraq and one by Alawites in Syria. We would instead have homogeneity of either Sunni or Shia. Yet it is a question to answer: why are these two parties dominated by either Sunni Baathists or Alawites if they are not sectarian? Ibrahim Marashi demonstrates that sectarianism is only a patronage tactic in states where there are sects. According to him, anyone from either community could become the leader as long as they remained loyal to the ruling party or the Baath Party, whether in Syria or Iraq. Sectarianism was not to be exploited to compel one group to defend the regime while the other did it just under the menace of the Baathists until later, with the war on Iraq and the outburst of the Syrian Civil War. Alawites in Syria and Sunni Arabs in Iraq are two examples of elite in-groups from the same sect that were created by the patronage system for the purpose of loyalty. The victimized sect was used by other groups to fill security gaps (Marashi, 2014). Since the Baathist party was primarily Sunni by coincidence, Baathism itself is not about

sectarianism. Rather, it was about loyalty to the regime. Despite this, the party had no interest in religion or sect at all because it was fundamentally secular and nationalist.

Figure 9 below shows a clear significant increase in religious freedom in Syria since the 1970s or the beginning of the Baathist rule under Hafez al-Assad, and a long period of stability during both Hafez and Bashar al-Assad’s rule. This demonstrates the secular, non-sectarian nature of the Baath ideology and practice. However, a dramatic decrease in the freedom of religion can be noticed since 2011, as well as a slump from 2013 to 2016 (probably during the period of ISIS domination). In around 2017, the index increases again, coinciding the end of the war on ISIS in Syria, accompanied by the end of US and Russian intervention (“Putin Announces Russian Troop Withdrawal from Syria during Visit,” 2017). This kind of data shows that sectarianism in Syria is new to the region. It is not related to the Baath party nor the pacific uprisings of 2011, nor the formation of the Free Syrian Army months later.

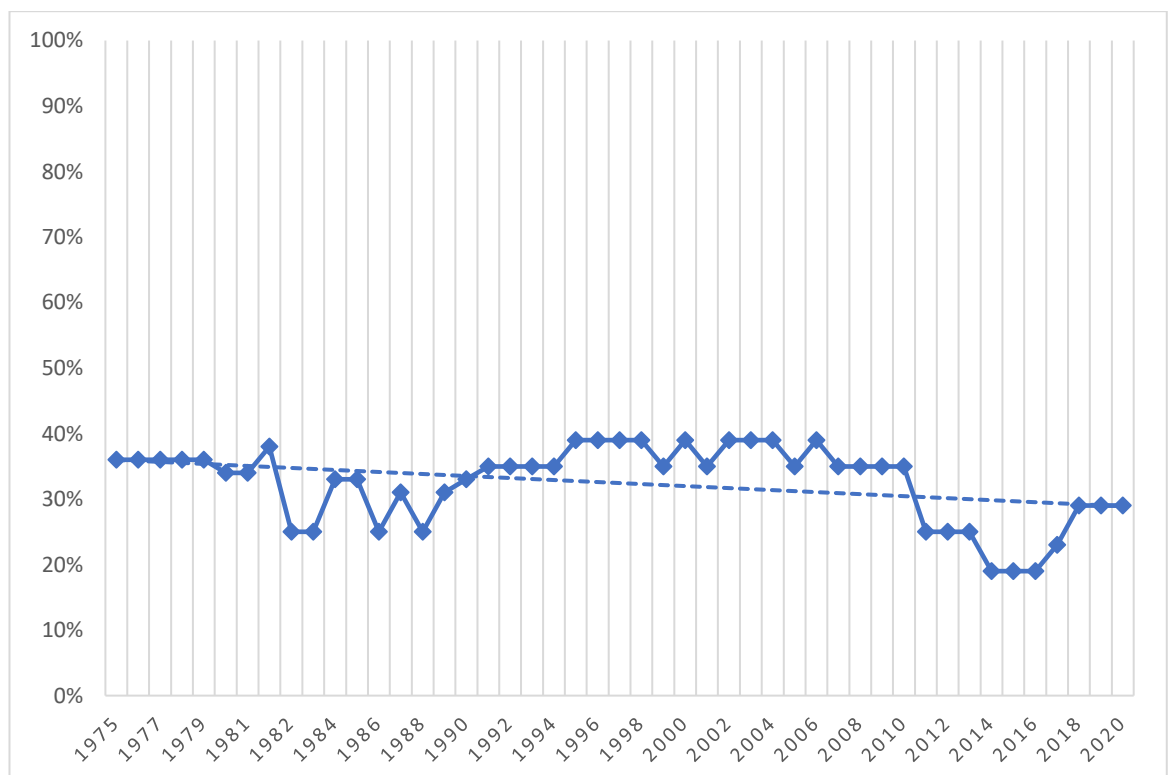


Figure 9: Freedom of Religion Index in Syria and the World, Source: (GovData360, n.d.)

The following section will clarify how the bipolarity of foreign support of the Assad regime and the opposition led to the sectarian division of the opposition and the transformation of

the Assad regime into a sectarian state, and the revolution into a sectarian war of all against all.

3.3 Who Militarized the Uprisings?

Late in 2011, upon the formation of the SNC²⁰, the Syrian opposition took a new direction, especially that the SNC achieved international support and was recognized as a dialogue partner (*The Main Components of the Syrian Opposition*, 2012). In order to support those opposing Syrian president Bashar al-Assad as he tightened his already solid military hold over the country, the US had granted "foreign mission" status to opposition groups. According to US officials, the action was one of several plans to support moderate opposition groups in Syria, including the negotiation with the US Congress for \$27 million in new, non-lethal aid. The total amount of US support for Syrian opposition groups would then be \$278 million (Lewis, 2014).

In May 2013, the European Union (EU) approved the provisional transfer of arms to the SNC despite legal obstacles. The decision made by the EU did not stand alone. Arms, funding, and/or "non-lethal assistance" have all been provided to the Syrian government and/or rebel forces opposing the Assad regime by a number of other nations, including Russia, the United States, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia (Ruys, 2014). Saudi Arabia and Qatar project Sunni dominance in the region, supported by the United States and the Coalition. Iran and Hezbollah project the Shia power, and they are supported and directed by Russia. The United States and Russia both have imperial interests in Syria, and the fact that the Assad regime is a Russia ally forces the United States and its allies to support the Opposition. The intersection of interests in Syria created the sectarian dichotomy, Sunni-Shia, and forced the rebels to take a sectarian direction. The Baath party, although originally non-sectarian, had to turn into a sectarian state, similar to Maliki government in Iraq.

Following Russian and American indirect military interventions in Syria, the crisis became an armed conflict that fed on newly constructed Sunni-Alawite sectarianism, and then it would turn into a civil war.

²⁰ the Syrian National Council, Anti-Assad opposition council

3.4 The Imperial Implications of Western Intervention in Syria

Understanding the imperial implications of the foreign presence in Syria depends on the extent to which this presence is legitimate. It is well-known that Western intervention in Syria to support the opposition is justified as assistance of democratic transition against Baathist dictatorship. It is also justified to be a humanitarian mission to stop Assad and his allies' war crimes and their disregard of the LOAC²¹. However, the coalition itself disregarded the violations of the opposition despite their significance. It is also evident that the US pole paid no attention at all to the ideological orientation of the rebel groups and the possibility of radicalization.

According to the UN Human Rights Council, the commission discovered solid evidence that organized anti-government armed groups had engaged in war crimes such as extrajudicial killings, torture and murder. These organizations are restricted to international humanitarian law. The severity, frequency, and scope of the wrongdoing by government forces and the Shabbiha²² far outweighed that of anti-government armed groups. Both groups also exercised different types of child abuse (*Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic / OHCHR, n.d.*).

The fourth report of the Commission of Inquiry on Syria documented that armed opposition to the government groups had carried out war crimes such as murder, torture, taking hostages, and attacking protected objects. By placing military targets inside civilian areas, they continued to put the civilian population in danger. When armed groups bombed areas with a high concentration of civilians, they spread terror and their actions amounted to attacking civilians, which is a war crime. However, compared to what was done by government forces and affiliated militia, the violations and abuses committed by anti-government armed groups were not as severe or extensive (*Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic / OHCHR, n.d.*). However, it has been reported that some EU member states, including the United Kingdom, have provided "non-lethal" aid to the rebel forces, including armored vehicles and body armor to allow the opposition to move around more easily, in addition to food rations and medical supplies. Finally, following the chemical weapons attack near Damascus on August 21, 2013 ("Syria Chemical Attack," 2013). Washington authorized the alleged CIA-initiated supply of

²¹ law of armed conflict

²² The Mercenaries and militias who are loyal to Assad regime in Syria

weapons to opposition forces (Starr, 2013). When several EU member states (primarily the UK and France) sought to lift a European arms embargo in order to start supplying weapons to the FSA²³ in May 2013, there was a contentious debate that echoed throughout the academic blogosphere. Some participants asserted that it would be against international law to transfer weapons of mass destruction (Ruys, 2014, p.16). Despite the proven human rights violations of the FSA and other anti-government armed groups, the EU and Washington continued to fund them and provide them with weapons, despite breaking international laws. So was Western intervention in Syria really a human rights mission to help democracy flourish there, or was it part of Western power expansion in the region? Was funding and supporting the so-called rebels a deliberate step to sabotage the Arab Spring in Syria?

3.5 The Opposition: Between Moderation and Radicalism

It is well known that Western propaganda asserts that the Syrian Free Army consists of moderate groups and that is why they fund them. However, evidence says otherwise. According to a 2013 BBC report, Brigades aligned with the SMC maintained their unique identities, plans, and commands. Some collaborated with jihadists affiliated with al-Qaeda as well as hardline Islamist organizations. Many of them had the aim of abolishing the secular Baath regime to establish a state based on sharia law (“Guide to the Syrian Rebels,” 2013), something that totally contradicts the aims of the protestors of the early period of 2011 uprisings. Some of the organizations are the Northern Storm Brigade, Harakat Ahrar al-Sham al-Islamiyya, Jaysh al-Islam, Suqour al-Sham, Liwa al-Tawhid, Kurdish Islamic Front, and most importantly Al-Nusra Front, alongside many others (“Guide to the Syrian Rebels,” 2013). A report by the BBC also explained that the West was clearly aware of this and yet they continued to finance and support the opposition with weaponry during what they called the War on Terror. This actually raises many questions about the real intentions of the West in Syria.

3.6 State Institutional Destruction

Giving these weapons or this aid to governmental or anti-governmental forces may result in responsibility under international law if they are, or are likely to be, used for the widespread commission of war crimes and human rights violations (Ruys, 2014, p.20).

²³ Free Syrian Army

Both Russia and the US and allies have continued to arm the two parties despite the previous risks, information about the presence of radicals, and the legal responsibility that accompanies such intervention.

It is obvious that the war has a regional impact and that, as in any civil war, the provision of arms to the combatants runs the risk of prolonging the ongoing armed conflict (Ruys, 2014, p.19). Indeed, this happened in the case of the Syrian crisis. Syria was not a failed state before the intervention, and this is demonstrated by data. However, state failure resulted after mid-2011. Prior to the war, Syria led the region in a number of development sectors, with improvements reflected in the outputs and levels of performance (Bakkour & Sahtout, 2023). After the war, Syrian institutions have started to gradually deconstruct. Measuring institutional deconstruction has two criteria: economy and defense. The indicators of economic deconstruction are GDP and the unemployment rate, while the indicator for defense is army unity.

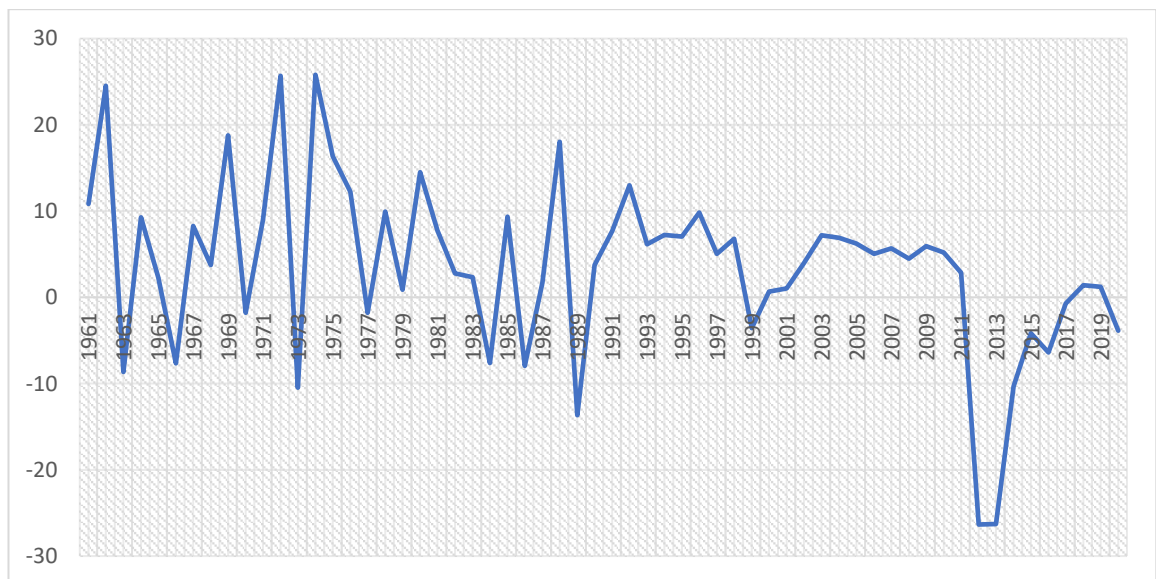


Figure 10: GDP Growth (annual %)- Syrian Arab Republic, source: (World Bank Open Data, n.d.)

Figure 10 shows that, as measured by GDP growth, Syria witnessed a long period of prosperity following the 1960s and during the period of Baath rule up to 2011. Although this period witnessed a kind of fluctuation, none of the slumps can be qualified as “destruction”. In 2011, however, a drastic decrease occurred to reach a severe slump in 2013, coinciding with the peak of ISIS control accompanied by the Western war on ISIS in

Syria. After 2013, GDP starts to increase again but insignificantly, and decreases again in 2019, showing the inability of the regime to challenge state failure.

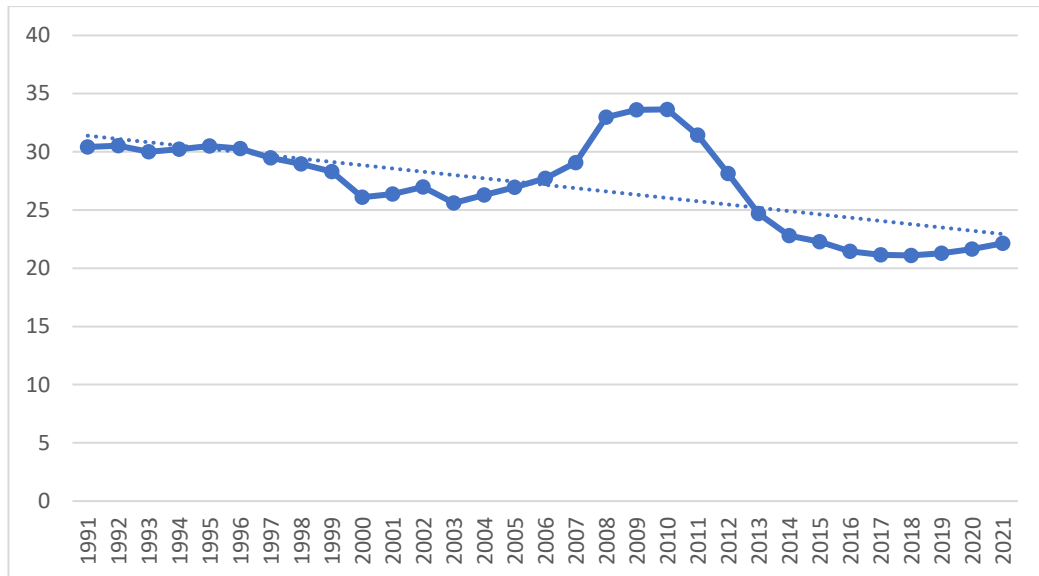


Figure 11: Employment to Population Percentage (total %)- Syrian Arab Republic

Source: (World Bank Open Data, n.d.)

Figure 11 above shows a period of flourishing in terms of employment up to 2011. There was a gradual decrease after that to reach a slump in 2013, coinciding with the peak of the Western presence in Syria with the pretext of the war on ISIS.

Figure 12 below shows that Syria had strong and stable armed forces from at least the 1990s. In 2011, 2012, and 2013, an almost complete destruction of the armed forces occurred. Of course, we know that there was a split between the Syrian Free Army and Syrian Armed Forces, to become different militias and insurgent groups. Although, following 2014, the number of armed personnel started to increase but insignificantly.

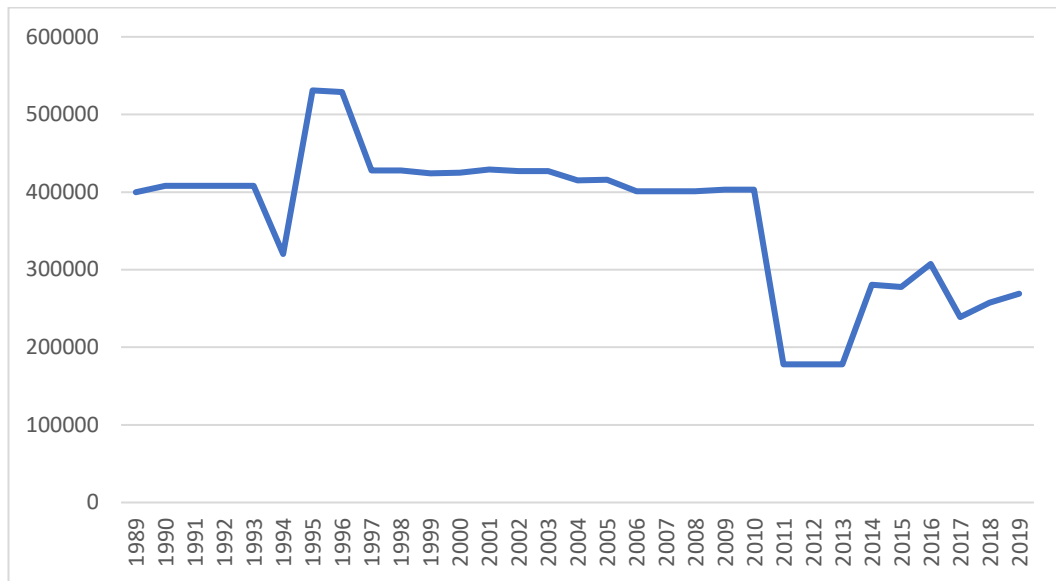


Figure 12: Armed forces personnel, total- Syria, Source: (World Bank Open Data, n.d.)

Data show that Syria was very far from being a failed state before 2011. Economic failure coincides with the deconstruction of the Syrian Armed Forces after the creation of the Syrian Free Army. This latter event is explicitly linked to foreign intervention in Syria as explained in previous sections. Hence, economic destruction and the eventual linked institutional deconstruction are linked to foreign intervention.

3.7 The Construction of ISIS: The Product of Intervention in Syria

The organizational analysis of ISIS has shown that ISIS is built on two pillars: the ideology of the near enemy and the recruitment economy. These pillars were born out of the Iraqi context. However, a similar context was created in Syria, which resulted in the expansion of ISI to Syrian borders in 2013.

Sectarianism was not an issue before 2011 and even during the first half of the 2011 uprisings. It was socially constructed after the foreign intervention in the Syrian crisis. What is special about this intervention is its dichotomic structure, Russia with its Shia allies and the US with its major Sunni power allies made the opposition and the Assad regime take a sectarian direction.

The new sectarian nature of the conflict created fertile soil for ISI to build a new base outside Iraq. Now, ISI could have an ideological basis in Syria too, which was fighting the near enemy: the Alawite regime and its Shia supporters.

The situation in Iraq made expansion even easier. The US forces withdrew from Iraq, the Iraqi army was almost deconstructed, and the Maliki government turned into a Shia-dominated exclusive regime. All of these consequences of the US uncalculated withdrawal from Iraq helped ISI recover again from Anbar Awakening.

Now the Islamic State could export its near enemy ideology outside Iraq, where it would find a feverish social basis: the excluded Sunni population in Syria. Furthermore, the split of the Syrian Armed Forces with foreign support made weaponry easily available to extremist groups such as Al-Qaeda and Al-Nusra, which would fuse with ISI and construct ISIS.

ISIS was now formed and it had a strong social base with easy access to imported weaponry from the West and other allies. Similar to the Iraqi scenario, ex-soldiers and officers who split off from the Syrian Armed Forces would be an essential part of the recruited force of ISIS. In this way, ISIS could control many energy sources, as was explained before.

The deconstructed economic institutions left most people who didn't flee the country unemployed. These people would be divided between different militias and insurgent groups and ISIS.

3.8 Sectarianism: Between 'Social Construction' and 'Othering'

The othering process has created a particular understanding about the Middle East: "the secular and tolerant West with a religiously divided, tribal and savage Orient" (Hassan, 2019). The understanding of sectarianism in the Middle East is dominated by this dichotomy, believing that the sectarian nature of the social structure of the Middle East is the major cause of the failure of the Arab Spring in different countries. However, the Syrian case demonstrated that a plural society does not necessarily imply sectarianism. Syria had been for a long time, a plural society, and under an Alawite dominated regime, yet it was a highly tolerant society with a state that was fundamentally secular and nationalist until mid-2011. This demonstrates that sectarianism in Syria is socially constructed and not innate to Middle Eastern societies. Therefore, sectarianism has been repeatedly created and strengthened by both domestic and foreign bourgeois forces, rather than being an inherent feature of Arab societies (Hassan, 2019).

The othering process has shadowed the role of Western imperialism in directing the events of the Arab Spring. Claiming to facilitate the democratic transition in Syria, foreign powers intervened in the Syrian crisis with the pretext of supporting the opposition against the Assad dictatorship, Western colonial powers with their allies actually indirectly sabotaged the Arab Spring in Syria when Russia and its allies took a more direct way of doing so, all to secure their imperial interests in the region.

4. The Process-Tracing of Ansar Al-Sharia in Libya (ASL)

4.1 The First Libyan Civil War and Foreign Intervention

Similar to Syria, the first Libyan Civil War (February 15, 2011, to October 20, 2011) was the result of the transformation of the revolution from below into an armed conflict, between Gaddafi's government and anti-Gaddafi forces, supported by foreign powers. Although everything started as peaceful protests, asking for universal values and human rights, similar to other uprisings of the Arab Spring, the revolution from below would take a different direction after foreign intervention.

To understand the effect of foreign intervention on the Arab Spring in Libya, the crisis will be divided into two periods: before and after the foreign direct military intervention in March 2011, justified by United Nations Security Council Resolution 1973²⁴.

4.2 The Pre-Intervention Period: The Revolution from Below

The beginning of the Arab Spring was identical in all the concerned Arab countries; it was a series of peaceful uprisings, asking for reforms. In Libya, "protests erupt in Benghazi after the arrest of human rights activists" (*Timeline*, 2021). The demands of protestors were no different from the other Arab Spring countries. The protests were a "wave of pro-democracy protests" (*Libya Protesters Killed*, 2011). Philip Crowley explained that regarding demographics, popular aspirations, and the need for reform, all of the countries in the region faced similar difficulties. He also urged these nations to take specific steps to meet the needs, aspirations, and hopes of their citizens. Libya unquestionably falls into that same category (*Libya Protesters Killed*, 2011). *Al Jazeera* reporters found that some of the

²⁴ On March 17, 2011, the United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 1973 in response to the First Libyan Civil War. This resolution called for an "immediate ceasefire" and allowed the international community to establish a no-fly zone and take necessary actions other than occupation, and became a legal justification for military intervention in the Libyan civil war (Correspondent, 2011).

most prominent people in Libya were also calling for reforms. A number of well-known people and representatives from human rights organizations have called for Gaddafi to step down. The demands were contained in a signed statement by 213 individuals representing various facets of Libyan society, including political activists, attorneys, students, and government officials (*Libya Protesters Killed*, 2011). Therefore, the original Libyan protestors were average citizens of different backgrounds, asking for reforms and universal human rights, which qualifies the pre-intervention era as a revolution from below, similar to the Syrian situation. For the first period of the Arab Spring, any Islamist demands or radical traces were totally absent.

The peaceful protests, however, were sabotaged by Gaddafi's security forces after three days. Fourteen civilians were killed, and the demonstrators started using rocks against the regime's live ammunition (*Protesters Take Control of Several Libyan Cities*, 2011). With the tightening of Gaddafi's offensives, the protestors started using other primitive tools to fight back, including bulldozers, stones and crude bombs ("Libya," 2011). With only such limited capabilities and the help of members of security forces who refused to attack civilians, anti-Gaddafi protestors were expanding. By late February, Gaddafi lost most parts of Libya (*Gaddafi Defiant as State Teeters - Africa - Al Jazeera English*, 2011). With only limited tools, the rebels were able to take over a great portion of Libya despite the regime's continuous counteroffensives.

4.3 The Period of Intervention

Libya had completely spiraled out of control since the NATO intervention led by the United States in March 2011, and it now posed a threat to regional and global security (*Libya's Terrorist Descent: Causes and Solutions*, 2016). NATO intervened in Libya, claiming to protect civilians from Gaddafi's offensives. However, evidence shows that NATO's offensives also caused civilian losses and casualties. For instance, Human Rights Watch looked into eight NATO airstrikes on residential buildings, causing civilian losses, including 44 women and children. Numerous additional civilians suffered injuries (Abrahams, 2012). In other words, NATO originally intervened in Libya with the pretext of the "Responsibility to Protect" all Libyan civilians. However, it failed to fulfil this responsibility. In this section, The study will show that NATO actually intervened in Libya to expand its imperial road map. This actually led to sabotaging the original Arab Spring's objectives and turned the revolution from below into a civil war. The civil war destroyed

the state institutions, leaving the country subject to different insurgent groups, including the rebels. On October 31, 2011, NATO's presence in Libya came to an end. Similar to when Saddam Hussein was overthrown in Iraq, militant jihadist organizations stepped into the void left by the Gaddafi government (*Airstrikes and Civilian Casualties in Libya*, n.d.).

4.4 The Legitimacy of Foreign Intervention in Libya

NATO's military campaign in Libya, which was mainly an American campaign, was legitimized by the United Nations, unlike the cases of Iraq and Afghanistan, or what is known as the War on Terror. Nonetheless, skepticism about the legitimacy of this intervention is present. former Congresswoman and 2008 Green Party candidate Cynthia McKinney testified that NATO had collaborated with a number of human rights organizations to produce the propaganda that led to the overthrow of Gaddafi's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya. When the time was right, these organizations worked together with NATO allies and the media on a plan to isolate, castrate and subjugate the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya. In order to spread untrue information about Libyan military jet attacks on civilians, African mercenaries, and Muammar Qaddafi's massacres of civilians, these so-called human rights organizations collaborated with the media. They created a fabric of lies to present to the UN (McKinney, 2012). For instance, Amnesty questioned NATO's claims that Gaddafi's forces committed any rape. Amnesty's investigation failed to uncover any proof of these human rights violations, and in many instances, it discredited or questioned them. Additionally, there were hints that the rebels in Benghazi may have fabricated evidence or made false claims on several different occasions. Different human rights organizations considered that these false claims were fabricated to justify NATO's war on Libya (Cockburn, 2011).

A British Parliament report showed that NATO's war on Libya was fundamentally lying on fabrications and the falsification of data. To our knowledge, there is no evidence that the UK government provided a correct evaluation of the nature of the uprisings. The UK method also had faulty assumptions and a poor understanding of the available evidence. The Foreign Affairs Committee claims that the British government disregarded the overstated threat to civilians and the fact that the financed rebels had a significant Islamist component (Norton, 2016). Therefore, NATO intentionally fabricated lies about the realities in Libya to wage war for another reason rather than the "Responsibility to Protect".

4.5 NATO's War on Civilians

Other evidence has shown that NATO did not only target military bases of Gaddafi's regime. According to an Amnesty International Report, NATO airstrikes on private homes in urban and rural areas have resulted in the deaths of dozens of civilians, despite the fact that Amnesty International, UN experts, other international NGOs, and journalists did not discover any signs of military objectives there at the time of the strikes. In one incident, NATO claimed that a legitimate target site in Majer was purposefully attacked; however, it did not present any evidence that the region hosted military operations or camps when NATO attacked it, ending 34 civilian lives, including 16 women and children (*Libya: The Forgotten Victims of NATO Strikes*, 2012).

The deaths of 28 men and 44 women and children were the result of eight NATO airstrikes on residential structures. Many more civilians also sustained injuries. The report looks at every place that Human Rights Watch is aware of where NATO strikes have killed civilians. Between August 2011 and April 2012, extensive fieldwork was carried out all over Libya for the investigation. Strikes that resulted in property loss or injuries to civilians but no fatalities among them were disregarded. Over the course of the seven-month campaign, NATO dropped over 7,700 precision-guided bombs and flew about 9,700 strike sorties (Abrahams, 2012).

No one who supported the Gaddafi regime was taken into account. Even if they were civilians by definition, they could not be included in the group of people who needed to be protected. Since they were not protected, both NATO airstrikes and unrestrained rebel forces killed them (Terry, 2015). It seems that NATO was deliberately targeting the civilians that it had claimed to intervene in Libya to protect.

4.6 Anti-Gaddafi Rebels

The NATO case that was presented to the UN was based on war crimes and human rights' violations by Gaddafi's forces. However, no attention was given to the nature of the rebel groups or their respect for human rights.

The UN human rights forum reported that a group of independent experts looked into claims of excessive force, extrajudicial killings, torture, infringements on the right to free speech, sexual assault, attacks on civilians, and the enlistment of children as soldiers, among other things. The commission warned both the regime and the rebels of the conflict

about these violations and urged them to adhere strictly to international human rights and humanitarian law, because evidence showed violations by both parties (Reuters, 2011). Furthermore, according to an Amnesty International report, Libyan rebels "committed abuses" that amounted to war crimes, which renewed concerns about the country's post-conflict justice system. It also brought up new questions about the capacity to bring together various anti-Qaddafi forces and supervise a peaceful transfer of power ("Libyan Rebels Tarnished by Human Rights Report," n.d.). In addition, Human Rights Watch reported that the rebels looted and attacked civilians with force, and burned their houses (B. the C. W. Staff, 2011).

In addition, Libyans of black skin had been driven out of entire villages by the rebel forces, and in the refugee camps outside of Tripoli, rebel forces sexually assaulted black African women (Enders, 2011). These reports show that despite NATO's active military engagement with the Gaddafi regime, the organization failed to adequately intervene in accordance with its Responsibility to Protect the Libyan people. Despite all of these reports and others, NATO sponsored and fought with the rebels against Gaddafi, transforming the crisis into a civil war, ending any possibility of peaceful transition of power, knowing that the first demonstrations against Gaddafi's regime were winning and a peaceful solution was more likely at that time. In other words, NATO's intervention sabotaged the Arab Spring in Libya by ending the peaceful nature of the revolution from below.

4.7 The Implications of NATO's Intervention in Libya: A Post-Colonial View

The first chapter explained how the United States and other imperialist powers used the idea of a "just war" to justify their systematic exploitation of "the other". The previous analysis of NATO's intervention in Libya gives a perfect example of how the "just war" approach was employed by the US and its allies to take over Libya. The "just war", in this case, came in the form of what is claimed to be a humanitarian intervention or the "Responsibility to Protect".

Evidence collected by different human rights organizations and different governments showed that NATO's intervention, despite being legitimized by the UN, was illegitimate. NATO did not only fake evidence about Gaddafi regime's violations, it also disregard the atrocities committed by the rebels against civilians. NATO itself was demonstrated to be involved in different attacks on civilians. This kind of evidence shows that NATO's war

on Libya is not a just war; it has rather different aims: oil and hegemony. Eni, Total, BP, and Repsol YPF, the four largest oil companies in Europe, were perfectly situated to take advantage of the Libyan oil after the dissolution of the state. The potential for gas production was also enormous, and due to Libya's position on the southern Mediterranean coast, it was possible to free Western Europe from the shackles of expensive Russian producers who controlled their gas supply (Goet, 2011).

4.8 State Deconstruction: The Product of Intervention

Two criteria will be used to measure state deconstruction: economy and defense. The indicators of economic deconstruction are GDP, oil rents and the employment rate, while the indicator for defense is army unity. I will also show that Libya was far from being a failed state before 2011.

4.8.1 Economic Destruction:

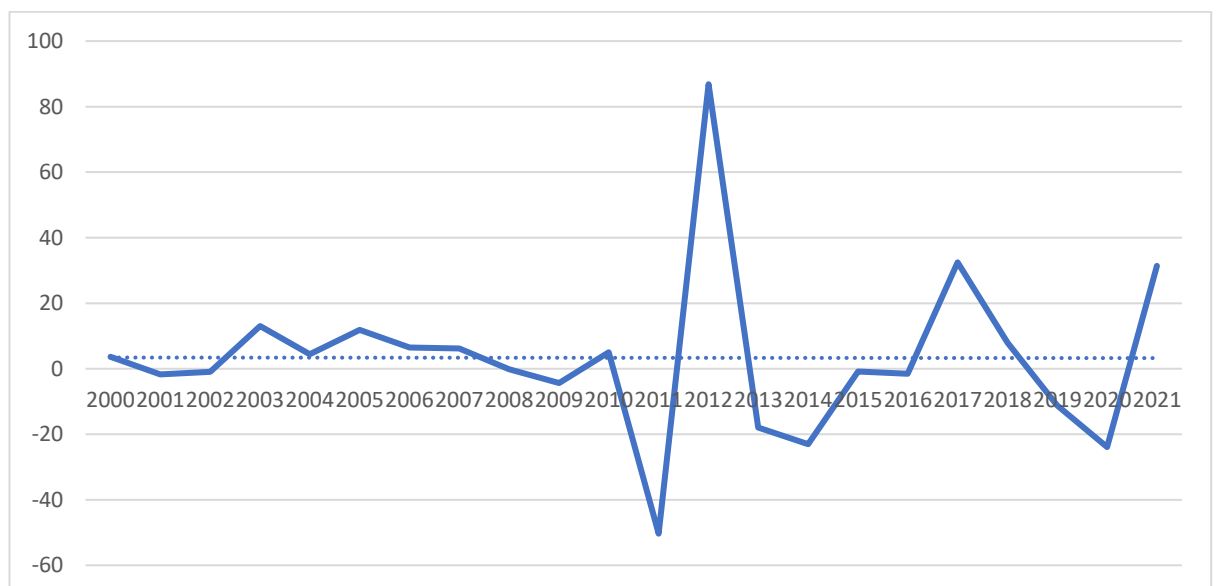


Figure 13: GDP Growth (Annual %), Libya - Source:(World Bank Open Data, n.d.)

Figure 13 shows stable GDP growth at least since the beginning of the 21st century until mid-2011, when a slump is recorded, coinciding with beginning of NATO's war on Libya. In 2012, a dramatic increase in GDP is recorded, coinciding the end of the First Libyan Civil War, i.e., the end of NATO's War or intervention.

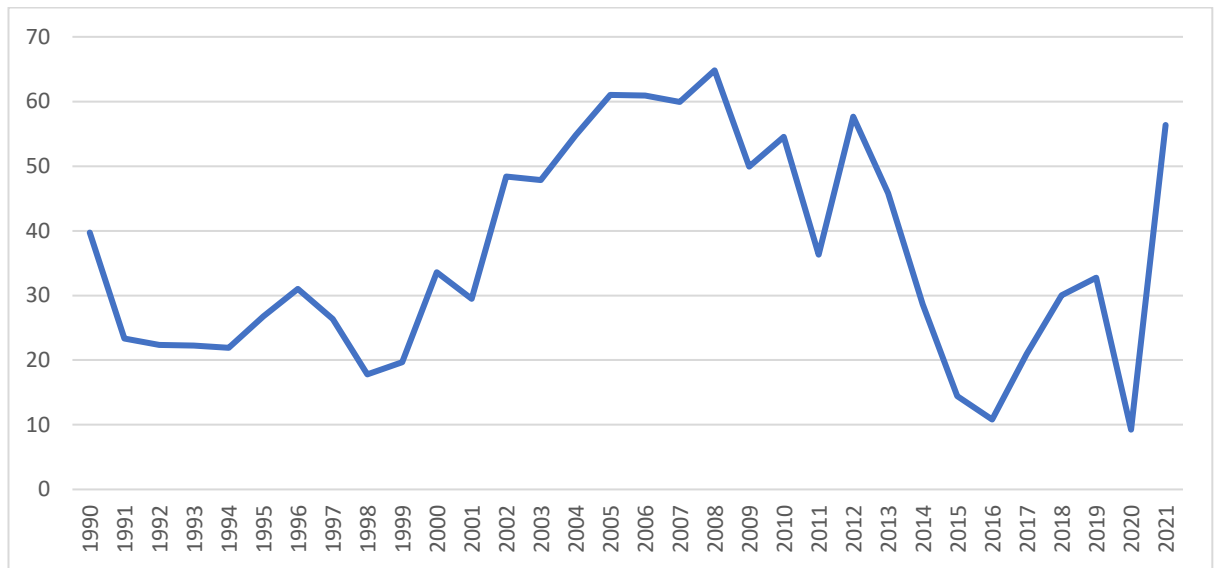


Figure 14: Oil Rents (% of GDP)- Libya- Source:(World Bank Open Data, n.d.)

Figure 14 shows an increase of the percentage of oil rents since the 1990s in Libya. A sudden decrease is recorded in mid-2011 and early 2012, reaching a slump in 2016. Oil is the major component of the Libyan economy. Because of the dramatic slump in oil production from a daily 1.77 million barrels to just 22,000 barrels, the gross domestic product (GDP) in 2011 fell by 60 percent from 2010. In addition, United Nations Security Council Resolution 1971 imposed foreign economic sanctions on Libya in the wake of the revolution in February 2011 (Gargoum, 2022, p. 99). NATO's intervention led to the intensification of fights on the ground and the creation of a complexity of militias. Further, when armed militias took over oil facilities in 2013, in the post-war era, daily oil production decreased to 160,000 barrels by September, costing the Libyan government \$130 million per day in lost revenue. Because of this unrest, foreign businesses that were planning to increase their investment in Libya's energy sector or even to purchase oil from the nation in the future were fired (Gargoum, 2022, p. 99). Because oil is the Libyan economic engine, all other economic growth indicators would be proportional to the oil industry. This explains the drop in GDP growth. This economic failure is directly linked to the rise of militias and the transformation of the revolution into a civil war due to NATO's intervention.

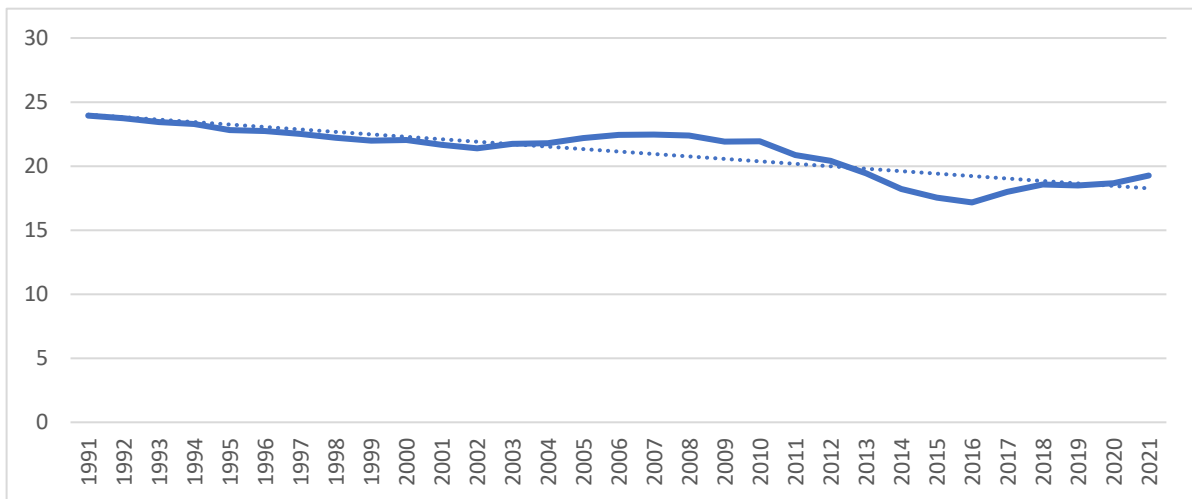


Figure 15: Employment in industry (% of total employment)- Libya- Source: reproduced from (World Bank Open Data, n.d.)

Eventually, economic failure would lead to high rates of unemployment. Figure 16 shows a drop in the employment rate after late 2011, reaching a slump in 2016. Hence, Libya was far from being a failed state before late 2011; it became one after NATO's intervention.

4.8.2 Military Destruction

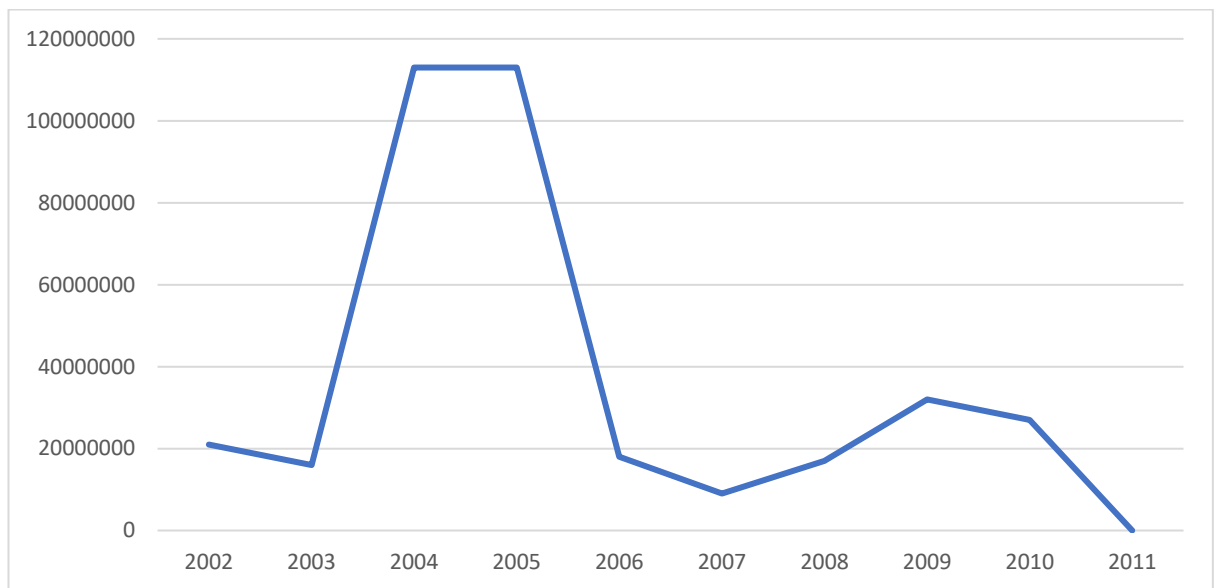


Figure 16: Arms Exports of Libya (SIPRI Indicators) - Source:(World Bank Open Data, n.d.)

NATO's war on Libya led to the total deconstruction of Libyan defenses. Libya before the war had the privilege of exporting arms, however, after the war, the export index dropped to zero (figure 17). The result was the creation of different militia groups, each with its own interests and ideologies. All of this would be significant in the rise of insurgency.

4.9 State Deconstruction and ASL

The above section about state deconstruction showed that the failure of oil production after NATO's intervention led to the destruction of the economy and a worrying rate of unemployment. Also, the Armed Forces of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya were totally deconstructed. The result was an unemployed population and a state of anarchy with the dissolution of the army. Eventually, different militias were created with mainly economic goals. The tumultuous post-revolutionary political climate in Libya has served as the backdrop for the rise of ASL and has been crucial to the group's ability to carry out open operations there. Since Muammar Gaddafi was toppled in 2011, Libya has been plagued by a security vacuum that has allowed local militias to create fiefdoms that are largely independent of Tripoli's provisional government. Thereafter, all governments failed to monitor violence and seize absolute power. However, power has been divided among different militia groups of conflicting objectives and motives: jihadis, nationalists, ethnic groups, rebels and counterrevolutionaries, leading to the failure of the Libyan politics

(Gråtrud & Skretting, 2017). Therefore, ASL is only one case of the many armed groups that were created due to state deconstruction.

4.10 ASL: An Organizational Analysis

Ansar al-Sharia in Benghazi and in Derna collaborated to form ASL (ASD). Muhammad al-Zahawi founded ASB, the more well-known of the two organizations, in Benghazi in February 2012, while bin Qumu²⁵ founded the one in Derna (Zelin, 2012). Ideologically, the group is Salafi-jihadist, like ISIS and Al-Qaeda Central. However, the most important component of the group's ideology is "to remove US and Western influence from Libya" (Ansar Al-Shria, n.d.). Hence, unlike ISIS, the group's ideology is focused on the far enemy, following the steps of Al-Qaeda Central. This manifests in the group's first suicide bombing on the American consulate in Benghazi.

Previous sections explained that the context created terrorist groups' ideology and strategy. NATO's intervention in Libya and its attacks on civilians inspired the anti-Western ideology of the group. It even helped the group gain a social base, presenting itself as the savior from NATO's war. This would lead to the group's strategy of recruitment and expansion: "da'wa (proselytizing) campaigns" (Zelin, 2012). This method took on many different forms, such as giving aid to the needy, maintaining clean streets and public spaces, guarding nearby hospitals, imparting religious knowledge, and promoting the ASL's unique interpretation of Islam (Zelin, 2015). The effectiveness of the group's da'wa practices is hard to assess, but there are some signs that the organization amassed strong social bases in some regions. For example, in and around Benghazi, the *Libya Herald* estimated in 2014 that ASL had 50,000 to 45,000 supporters (Paton, 2014). Hence, ASL, like ISIS and all other terrorist groups, grew out of the context created by the intervention in the region where they first emerged. Even the ideology and the strategies of the groups were determined by contextual factors.

5. The Case of Tunisia: A Witness

It is well-known that Tunisia is the only country that experienced the Arab Spring to transform from an authoritarian state under Ben Ali into a democratic state. Unlike Syria and Libya and other countries, the Tunisian Spring did not turn into a civil war; the

²⁵ Former Guantanamo prisoner

authoritarian regime was overthrown to be replaced by a new government, without experiencing a failed state scenario. What made Tunisia the only country to make the transition to democracy and freedom successfully, while Libya and others deposed their governments but failed to make the same transition? Trevor Eck argues that the level of foreign intervention and its different types (diplomatic, economic and military) following the Arab Spring determined the results of the Arab Spring. In the case of Tunisia, there was almost no foreign intervention. In Egypt, there was a medium level of diplomatic intervention, while in Libya, the intervention was extreme in the form of military intervention. The three cases had different results. The Tunisian Spring resulted in a democratic transition of power. In Egypt, the democratic experience was short, and soon the country returned to military authoritarianism. In Libya, extreme intervention led to the First Libyan Civil War (Eck, 2019).

In addition, the global terrorism index shows a drastic increase in terrorist activity in Libya and Syria in 2013, following the Arab Spring, compared to the low index reading of 2010 (pre-Arab Spring). This can be explained by the rise of ISIS and other terrorist groups. In Tunisia, however, there is a low terrorist index before and after the Arab Spring, almost half of that in Syria, following the Arab Spring (table 1).

Table 1: The development of terrorism index since the Arab Spring (Global Terrorism Index by Country, n.d.)

Country/Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Libya	0.12	0.06	0.35	4.46	6.25	7.29	7.28
Syria	2.68	2.04	5.86	7.11	8.12	8.11	8.59
Tunisia	1.69	1.05	2.36	3.29	3.70	4.96	4.62

Therefore, in Syria and Libya, where there was foreign intervention following the Arab Spring, terrorism activity rose drastically. However, in Tunisia, where there was almost no foreign intervention, terrorist activity remained stable. One can conclude that terrorism and foreign intervention are closely linked. In addition, in Tunisia, there was no escalation into a civil war, unlike in Libya and Syria, and the previous dictatorship was replaced by a new government with no trace of state failure, a fact that supports the study's hypothesis that the war itself and state failure were not the cause of the rise of terrorism but were intervening variables, linking foreign intervention and terrorism.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

This chapter summarizes what was previously discussed and offers some recommendations for future research.

1. Conclusion

By examining the two cases, ISIS and ASL, one can conclude that foreign intervention, whether direct or indirect, in both Syria and Libya, indeed led to the creation of the two terrorist groups. Hence, the study's hypothesis can be accepted.

Using the process tracing methodology and organizational theory has allowed the discovery of the causal mechanism that explains the relationship between foreign intervention in Syria and Libya and the rise of terrorism.

The process tracing of ISIS has shown that the indirect military interventions of the United States and Russia with their allies in Syria was the major cause of the rise of ISIS. Evidence has shown that the 2011 uprisings in Syria, as a part of the Arab Spring, qualified as a revolution from below. The uprisings were shown to be peaceful calls for reforms and universal values, free from any sectarian or Islamist components, for the first half of 2011 or the period that preceded the intervention. In the second half of 2011, the United States with its Arab Sunni allies and Russia with its Shia allies started their operational and political support for the rebels and the Assad regime, respectively. The Syrian armed forces split and the Syrian Free Army was formed. At this point, the revolution from below started to take a different direction.

Evidence has shown that Syria before the intervention, although a plural society, was not sectarian. The Baath Party, although dominated by the Alawites, was not a sectarian government. Baathism is actually based on secularism and nationalism. The Baath Party even somewhat promoted religious freedom. After the intervention, the dichotomy of foreign intervention on behalf of Sunni and Shia sides forced both the Assad regime and the rebels to take a sectarian direction. Sectarianism created a source of support from foreign countries: the US, with its Arab Sunni allies, would only support the opposition, who were Sunni, and Russia, with its Shia allies, would only support the Alawites, who were Shia. This made the social base of the opposition solely Sunni and the social base of

Assad militias solely Alawites. Eventually, sectarianism was socially constructed, and the plural society that characterized the pre-war period metamorphosed into a sectarian society.

The metamorphosis of revolution from below into a civil war was primarily because of the newly constructed sectarianism. The original uprisings that were based on universal values were sabotaged, and the Arab Spring turned into a mere sectarian conflict.

The new nature of the conflict made the peaceful transition of power impossible. The country plunged into a civil war that deconstructed all state institutions, including the economy and army. The economic collapse created a dramatic slump of employment, and the deconstruction of the army led to the creation of a huge number of militias, each with its own ideology. The major motives of the militias are economic because of unemployment.

During this time, the Islamic State in Iraq was reviving itself after the withdrawal of the US from the country. The circumstances in Syria created a hospitable environment for ISI to expand and flourish by 2013. The organizational analysis of the Islamic State in general has demonstrated that the group feeds on sectarianism because of its near-enemy ideology. Sectarianism helped the group gain a social base and, therefore, made recruitment easy, especially with the economic collapse in Syria. The group, therefore, had new economic prospects in Syria. And this how ISI transformed into ISIS.

The process tracing of ASL has shown that the military intervention of NATO, led by the US was the major cause of the rise of ASL. Evidence has shown that NATO's intervention was not humanitarian in nature but expansionist. NATO presented fake evidence about human rights violations in Libya by the Gaddafi regime. Further, during the war, NATO itself, with the Libyan rebels, targeted civilians and caused much civilian loss of life.

The pre-intervention period was a period of peaceful uprisings, similar to all other Arab Spring uprisings. Evidence has shown that the uprisings can be considered a revolution from below. Despite the limited resources of the rebels, Gaddafi's loyalists were losing territory and their social base. NATO's intervention weaponized different groups, regardless of their ideology and aims. Although investigations proved that some groups committed human rights violations and attacked civilians, NATO continued to arm them. Many of these proved to have ties with Al-Qaeda Central. NATO's uncalculated support for these groups and the destruction of Gaddafi's government and Libyan army led to the

creation of different militias. The intervention led to total state destruction. Oil production decreased drastically and the economy failed, leaving most Libyans jobless. Joining the different existing militias was the only way of survival.

Among these militias was ASL. ASL had the far enemy as its main ideology. This was adopted because of the circumstances. NATO destroyed the country, and it attacked civilians; hence, ASL adopted anti- Western ideology to gain a social base. An appealing ideology added to unemployment made recruitment easy. Eventually, ASL developed into an organized group with a strong social base.

The findings of this study have different theoretical implications. The findings suggest that essentialism cannot adequately explain the phenomenon of terrorism. Syria and Libya have always been religious societies, yet terrorism has appeared as an alien phenomenon. Hence, it is not logical to blame the violent nature of religion as Kessler suggests. Similarly, Turner's relative deprivation theory cannot fully explain this phenomenon. For instance, Both Libyan and Tunisian societies have had economic difficulties, yet terrorism did not affect Tunisia. In addition, the failed states theory provides a strong explanation for terrorism; however, the findings support Hehir's (2007) claim that a failed state is not causally linked to terrorism. As the results suggest, it is solely an intervening variable that explains a missing link in the causal mechanism that connects intervention and terrorism. Likewise, post-colonialism has important weight in explaining terrorism; however, it cannot stand alone because if so "the terrorist other" would have a victimized position, which creates bias. Terrorism might be a kind of anti-colonial resistance, yet the findings show that it might be a political and economic strategy of survival too. Moreover, it is difficult to conclude that imperial powers intentionally planned to create terrorism or their uncalculated measures led to unintentional consequences such as terrorism. Finally, social constructivism gives the broad lines to explain how different realities in the Muslim world were constructed, yet it is difficult to use it as the only theory to explain terrorism. Therefore, it seems that a bridge between the three theories – post-colonialism, failed state theory and social constructivism – is necessary to adequately explain the missing links.

2. Suggestions

Regarding the conclusion above, the author would like to propose some suggestions for further study regarding the study of terrorism. First, the study is limited in different ways.

This study uses a simple narrative method for data collection. Secondly, this study focuses on only two case studies. These two facts make generalization difficult. Therefore, the author encourages additional research on this subject from other scholars. The same subject may be investigated in future studies using different data collection tools or case studies. Furthermore, it will be fruitful to continue synthesizing classical and critical theories of terrorism studies to overcome the weaknesses of each theory.

The findings of this study have some implications in terms of practice. For policymakers, this study shows that mixing the problem-solving approach with critical analysis can be a better departure point to enhance counterterrorism policies and strategies. The findings also show that military measures for counterterrorism are not effective because terrorism itself is the product of military operations in the form of intervention. It is also shown that analyzing the context and the potential long-term consequences for the policies adopted is crucial before the final decision and the implementation of these measures. Furthermore, an urgent reconsideration of the War on Terror is needed for its mere reliance on military operations, conquest and violence, which have proven to be not just ineffective but also likely to worsen the situation and lead to more complicated unwanted results.

REFERENCES

- Abedin, M. J. (2019). The Principles of ISIS's Ideology: An Academic Debate. *European Journal of Political Science Studies*.
- Abrahams, F. (2012). Unacknowledged deaths. *Human Rights Watch*.
<https://www.hrw.org/report/2012/05/13/unacknowledged-deaths/civilian-casualties-natos-air-campaign-libya>
- Ahmed, S. (2013). *A philosophical theory of the politics of space: Totalitarian space and the destruction of spatial aura*. University of Ottawa (Canada).
- Airstrikes and Civilian Casualties in Libya*. (n.d.). New America. Retrieved April 5, 2023, from <http://newamerica.org/international-security/reports/airstrikes-and-civilian-casualties-libya/>
- Al-Jabouri, N. A., & Jensen, S. (2010). The Iraqi and AQI roles in the Sunni Awakening. *Prism*, 2(1), 3–18.
- Al-Qarawee, H. H. (2014). Iraq's Sectarian Crisis. *Carnegie Middle East Center*.
- Ansar Al-Shria*. (n.d.). [Counterterrorism Guide]. Retrieved April 7, 2023, from https://www.dni.gov/nctc/groups/ansar_al_sharia.html
- Ashcroft, B. (2012). Colonialism. In *The Wiley-Blackwell Encyclopedia of Globalization*. John Wiley & Sons, Ltd. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9780470670590.wbeog080>
- Bakkour, S., & Sahtout, R. (2023). The Dimensions and Attributes of State Failure in Syria. *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, 1–17.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/19448953.2023.2167337>
- Bayless, L. (2012). Who is Muqtada al-Sadr? *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 35(2), 135–155. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2012.639063>
- Beach, D., & Pedersen, R. B. (2011). What is Process-Tracing Actually Tracing? The Three Variants of Process Tracing Methods and Their Uses and Limitations. *The Three Variants of Process Tracing Methods and Their Uses and Limitations*.
- Belasco, A. (2009). *Troop levels in the Afghan and Iraq wars, FY2001-FY2012: Cost and other potential issues*.
- Brownlee, B. J. (2015). The Revolution “from below” and its misinterpretations “from above”. The case of Syria's neglected civil society. *Syria Studies*, 7(1), 31–59.
- Butina, M. (2015). A Narrative Approach to Qualitative Inquiry. *American Society for Clinical Laboratory Science*, 28(3), 190–196.
<https://doi.org/10.29074/ascls.28.3.190>
- Cafarella, J. (2014). Jabhat al Nusra in Syria. *Institute for the Study of War*.
- Cheeseman, N., Bertrand, E., & Husaini, S. (2019). Shadow state. In *A Dictionary of African Politics*. Oxford University Press. <https://>

- Cockburn, P. (2011, June 23). *Amnesty questions claim that Gaddafi ordered rape as weapon of war.* The Independent. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/africa/amnesty-questions-claim-that-gaddafi-ordered-rape-as-weapon-of-war-2302037.html>
- Cordesman, A. (2008). Conditions-based US withdrawal from Iraq?. *CSIS Commentary, Washington.*
- Cordesman, A. H., & Mausner, A. (2009). *Withdrawal from Iraq: Assessing the readiness of Iraqi security forces.* CSIS.
- Correspondent, F. R. R., CNN Senior U. N. (2011). *U.N. Security Council approves no-fly zone in Libya.* CNN. <http://www.cnn.com/2011/WORLD/africa/03/17/libya.civil.war/index.html>
- Eck, T. (2019). *Arab Spring in North Africa: An Analysis of Foreign Influence and Revolutions in Egypt, Libya, and Tunisia.*
- Enamorado, J. J. (2014). *Ansar Al Sharia y la inquietante evolución del Yihadismo en Libia.* 145.
- Enders, D. (2011). *Empty village raises concerns about fate of black Libyans | Miami Herald.* <https://www.miamiherald.com/latest-news/article1938670.html>
- Fierke, K. M. (2005). The 'War on Terrorism': A Critical Perspective. *Irish Studies in International Affairs*, 16(1), 51–64.
- Gaddafi defiant as state teeters—Africa—Al Jazeera English.* (2011, March 19). Aljazeera English. <https://web.archive.org/web/20110319101656/http://english.aljazeera.net/news/africa/2011/02/20112235434767487.html>
- Gargoum, T. (2022). Post-international Intervention Libya: The Challenges Against State-Building. *Lectio Socialis.* <https://doi.org/10.47478/lectio.1119365>
- Gaub, F. (2015). *Can ISIL Be Copied?*
- Gerges, F. A. (2014). ISIS and the Third Wave of Jihadism. *Current History*, 113(767), 339–343.
- Gerges, F. A. (2021a). 5 Baathists and ISIS Jihadists: Who Converted Whom? In *5 Baathists and ISIS Jihadists: Who Converted Whom?* (pp. 148–173). Princeton University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9780691211923-008>
- Gerges, F. A. (2021b). *ISIS: A history.* Princeton University Press.
- Ghosh, R. (Ed.). (2009). *Edward Said and the literary, social, and political world.* Routledge.
- Global Terrorism Index 2022.* (2022). World ReliefWeb. <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/global-terrorism-index-2022>

- Global terrorism index by country*. (n.d.). Knoema. Retrieved July 14, 2023, from <https://knoema.com//atlas/topics/World-Rankings/World-Rankings/Global-terrorism-index>
- Global War on Terror*. (2003). George W. Bush Library. <https://www.georgewbushlibrary.gov/research/topic-guides/global-war-terror>
- Goet, N. (2011, September 15). *The Fight for Libya's Oil*. OXPol. <https://blog.politics.ox.ac.uk/the-fight-for-libyas-oil/>
- GovData360: Freedom of religion*. (n.d.). GovData360. Retrieved March 20, 2023, from https://govdata360.worldbank.org/indicators/hd6a18526?country=SYR&indicator=41930&viz=line_chart&years=1975,2020
- Gråtrud, H., & Skretting, V. B. (2017). Ansar al-Sharia in Libya: An Enduring Threat. *Perspectives on Terrorism*, 11(1), 40–53.
- Gregg, H. S. (2014). Defining and distinguishing secular and religious terrorism. *Perspectives on Terrorism*, 8(2), 36–51.
- Griffin, M. (2016). *Islamic state: Rewriting history*. Pluto Press London.
- Guide to the Syrian rebels. (2013, October 17). *BBC News*. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-24403003>
- Gulmohamad, Z. K. (2014). The Rise and Fall of the Islamic State of Iraq and Al-Sham (Levant) ISIS. *Global Security Studies*, 5(2).
- Gunning, J. (2007). A case for critical terrorism studies? 1. *Government and Opposition*, 42(3), 363–393.
- Gurr, T. R. (2011). *Why Men Rebel* (1st ed.). Routledge. <https://www.routledge.com/Why-Men-Rebel/Gurr/p/book/9781594519147>
- Hafez, M. M. (2003). *Why Muslims rebel: Repression and resistance in the Islamic world*. Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Hansen-Lewis, J., & Shapiro, J. N. (2015). Understanding the Daesh Economy. *Perspectives on Terrorism*, 9(4), 142–155.
- Hassan, O. (2019). *Marxist Left Review | The social construction of sectarianism in the Middle East*. <https://marxistleftreview.org/articles/the-social-construction-of-sectarianism-in-the-middle-east/>
- Heath-Kelly, C. (2010). Critical terrorism studies, critical theory and the ‘naturalistic fallacy.’ *Security Dialogue*, 41(3), 235–254.
- Hehir, A. (2007). The myth of the failed state and the war on terror: A challenge to the conventional wisdom. *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, 1(3), 307–332.
- Holliday, J. (2011). *MIDDLE EAST SECURITY REPORT 2*.
- Hove, M. (2018). Middle East: The Origins of the “Islamic State” (ISIS). *Conflict Studies Quarterly*, 23, 3–22. <https://doi.org/10.24193/csq.23.1>

- How Sectarianism Can Help Explain the Syrian War—Syria Deeply*. (2018). The New Humanitarian.
<https://deeply.thenewhumanitarian.org/syria/articles/2018/03/06/how-sectarianism-can-help-explain-the-syrian-war>
- Huntington, S. P. (1996). *The clash of civilizations and the remaking of world order*. Simon & Schuster.
- Hussain, M. R. (n.d.). *The benefits of a postcolonial approach to security studies*. Retrieved February 27, 2023, from https://www.academia.edu/7581888/_ESSAY_The_benefits_of_a_postcolonial_a_pproach_to_security_studies
- Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic | OHCHR*. (n.d.). United Nations. Retrieved March 22, 2023, from <https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/iici-syria/documentation>
- Ingram, J. D. (2018). Critical Theory and postcolonialism. In *The Routledge companion to the Frankfurt school* (pp. 500–513). Routledge.
- ISIS is a Problem of Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow*. (n.d.). United States Institute of Peace. Retrieved April 1, 2023, from <https://www.usip.org/publications/2022/07/isis-problem-yesterday-today-and-tomorrow>
- ISIS Leader Killed in U.S. Raid in Syria*. (2022). Wilson Center. <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/microsite/8/node/109340>
- Jackson, R. (2007). The core commitments of critical terrorism studies. *European Political Science*, 6, 244–251.
- Jackson, R. (2011). Culture, identity and hegemony: Continuity and (the lack of) change in US counterterrorism policy from Bush to Obama. *International Politics*, 48, 390–411.
- Jackson, R. (Ed.). (2016a). *Routledge handbook of critical terrorism studies*. Routledge Abingdon.
- Jackson, R. (2016b). Unknown knowns: The subjugated knowledge of terrorism studies. In *Critical Terrorism Studies since 11 September 2001* (pp. 11–29). Routledge.
- Jones, G. R. (2013). *Organizational theory, design, and change* (7th ed). Pearson.
- Kagan, K. (2007). *The anbar awakening: Displacing al qaeda from its stronghold in western iraq*. JSTOR.
- Kessler, O. (2016). The Middle East’s Conflicts are About Religion. *The National Interest*, 1.
- Kuru, A. T. (2009). *Secularism and state policies toward religion: The United States, France, and Turkey*. Cambridge University Press.

- Laub, Z., & Masters, J. (2014). Islamic state in Iraq and greater Syria. *The Council on Foreign Relations*. June, 12.
- Lewis, P. (2014, May 5). US to grant Syrian Opposition Coalition “foreign mission” status. *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/may/05/us-syria-opposition-diplomatic-foreign-mission-status>
- Libya: Governments Should Demand End to Unlawful Killings. (2011, February 20). *Human Rights Watch*. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2011/02/20/libya-governments-should-demand-end-unlawful-killings>
- Libya protesters killed.* (2011). Aljazeera. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2011/2/16/protesters-die-in-libya-unrest>
- Libya: The forgotten victims of NATO strikes.* (2012). Amnesty International Publications.
- Libyan rebels tarnished by human rights report. (n.d.). *Christian Science Monitor*. Retrieved April 5, 2023, from <https://www.csmonitor.com/World/Middle-East/2011/0913/Libyan-rebels-tarnished-by-human-rights-report>
- Libya’s terrorist descent: Causes and solutions.* (2016). U.S. GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING OFFICE. <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CHRG-114hhrg21676/html/CHRG-114hhrg21676.htm>
- Malreddy, P. K. (2015). *Orientalism, terrorism, indigenism: South Asian readings in postcolonialism*. SAGE Publications India.
- Marashi, I. (2014). Reconceptualizing sectarianism in the Middle East and Asia. *Middle East Institute*.
- Matini, A. Y. (2022). *An Organizational Analysis of Al Qaeda in Iraq and the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria* [PhD Thesis]. Virginia Tech.
- McBride, M. K. (2019). Unforced Errors: ISIS, The Baath Party, And The Reconciliation Of The Religious and The Secular. *Politics, Religion & Ideology*, 20(2), 170–191. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21567689.2019.1617136>
- McKinney, C. (2012). *The Illegal War on Libya*. SCB Distributors.
- Merone, F. (2021). *Sunni Ideology, Contention and the Islamic State in Iraq* (1.0) [Dataset]. University of Salento. <https://doi.org/10.1285/I20356609V14I2P727>
- Mishali Ram, M. (2017). Foreign Fighters and Transnational Jihad in Syria. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 41, 00–00. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2017.1283198>
- Mousseau, M. (2002). Market civilization and its clash with terror. *International Security*, 27(3), 5–29.
- Najjar, F. (2019). *ISIL defeated in final Syria victory: SDF / ISIL/ISIS News*. Al Jazeera. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/3/23/isil-defeated-in-final-syria-victory-sdf>

- Narozhna, T., & Knight, W. A. (2009). Understanding Suicide Terrorism: Problem-Solving Approach to Suicide Terrorism. *Central European Journal of International & Security Studies*, 3(2).
- National Counterterrorism Center. (n.d.). Counterterrorism Guide. Retrieved May 12, 2023, from https://www.dni.gov/nctc/groups/ansar_al_sharia.html
- Negus, S. (2015). *Call for Sunni States in Iraq*. Financial Times. <https://www.ft.com/content/e239159e-5c6a-11db-9e7e-0000779e2340>
- Norton, B. (2016, September 16). *U.K. Parliament report details how NATO's 2011 war in Libya was based on lies*. Salon. <https://www.salon.com/2016/09/16/u-k-parliament-report-details-how-natos-2011-war-in-libya-was-based-on-lies/>
- Pašagić, A. (2020). Failed States and Terrorism: Justifiability of Transnational Interventions from a Counterterrorism Perspective. *Perspectives on Terrorism*, 14(3), 19–28.
- Paton, C. (2014). *Outbursts of sporadic violence as Benghazi prepares itself for day of armed demonstrations*. <https://libyaherald.com/2014/10/outbursts-of-sporadic-violence-as-benghazi-prepares-itself-for-day-of-armed-demonstrations/>
- Pearson, F. S. (1974). Foreign Military Interventions and Domestic Disputes. *International Studies Quarterly*, 18(3), 259–290. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2600156>
- Pfiffner, J. P. (2010). US Blunders in Iraq: De-Baathification and Disbanding the Army. *Intelligence and National Security*, 25(1), 76–85. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02684521003588120>
- Protesters Take Control of Several Libyan Cities*. (2011). The News International. <https://www.thenews.com.pk/>
- Putin announces Russian troop withdrawal from Syria during visit. (2017, December 11). *BBC News*. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-42307365>
- Reuters, S. (2011, June 2). U.N. finds war crimes by Gaddafi forces, opposition. *Reuters*. <https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-libya-un-crimes-idUKTRE75139M20110602>
- Ritchie, H., Hasell, J., Mathieu, E., Appel, C., & Roser, M. (2022). *Terrorism*. Our World in Data. <https://ourworldindata.org/terrorism>
- Rival factions reach power-sharing deal in Iraq*. (2010, November 11). France 24. <https://www.france24.com/en/20101111-iraq-political-factions-reach-power-sharing-deal-parliament-politics>
- Rohde, D., Strobel, W., Ryan, M., & Parker, N. (2014). Our Man in Baghdad. *The Atlantic*. <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2014/07/nouri-maliki-united-states-iraq/373799/>
- Rosenau, J. N. (1968). The concept of intervention. *Journal of International Affairs*, 165–176.

- Ruys, T. (2014). Of arms, funding and “non-lethal assistance”—Issues surrounding third-state intervention in the Syrian Civil War. *Chinese Journal of International Law*, 13(1), 13–53.
- Said, E. W. (2012). *Culture and imperialism*. Vintage.
- Schmitt, E., & Cooper, H. (2023, January 26). Senior ISIS Leader in Somalia Killed in U.S. Special Operations Raid. *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/26/us/politics/isis-leader-us-somalia-raid.html>
- Sense, N. (2016, September 1). Critical Terrorism Studies – A Case of Overemphasising the Discursive? *E-International Relations*. <https://www.e-ir.info/2016/09/01/critical-terrorism-studies-a-case-of-overemphasising-the-discursive/>
- Silke, A. (2019). *Routledge Handbook of Terrorism and Counterterrorism*. <https://www.routledge.com/Routledge-Handbook-of-Terrorism-and-Counterterrorism/Silke/p/book/9780367580520>
- Speckhard, A., & Yayla, A. S. (2017). The ISIS Emni: Origins and Inner Workings of ISIS’s Intelligence Apparatus. *Perspectives on Terrorism*, 11(1), 2–16.
- Staff, B. the C. W. (2011). *Rights group: Libyan rebels looted and beat civilians*. <http://www.cnn.com/2011/WORLD/africa/07/13/libya.war/index.html>
- Staff, R. (2015). *Leader of Libyan Islamists Ansar al-Sharia dies of wounds* | Reuters. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-libya-security-idUSKBN0KW1MU20150123>
- Starr, B. (2013). CIA-funded weapons begin to reach Syrian rebels | CNN Politics. *CNN*. <https://edition.cnn.com/2013/09/12/politics/syria-arming-rebels/index.html>
- Staszak, J.-F. (2020). *Other/otherness*.
- Syria chemical attack: What we know. (2013, September 2). *BBC News*. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-23927399>
- Syria’s war explained from the beginning. (2018). *Al-Jazeera*. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/4/14/syrias-war-explained-from-the-beginning>
- Syria—The winds. (2000). In *Britannica*. <https://www.britannica.com/place/Syria/The-winds>
- Tankel, S. (2020). US counterterrorism in the Sahel: From indirect to direct intervention. *International Affairs*, 96, 875–893. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ia/iiaa089>
- Terry, P. C. (2015). The Libya intervention (2011): Neither lawful, nor successful. *The Comparative and International Law Journal of Southern Africa*, 48(2), 162–182.
- The financing of the “Islamic State” in Iraq and Syria (ISIS)*. (2017). European Parliament Director General for External Policies Policy Department. <https://policycommons.net/artifacts/2189539/the-financing-of-the-islamic-state-in-iraq-and-syria-isis/2945515/>

- The Global War on Terrorism: The First 100 Days*. (2009). U.S. Department of State Archive. <https://2001-2009.state.gov/s/ct/rls/wh/6947.htm>
- The Main Components of the Syrian Opposition*. (2012). BBC News عربي. https://www-bbc-com.translate.goog/arabic/middleeast/2012/02/120224_syria_opposition_guide?_x_tr_sl=ar&_x_tr_tl=en&_x_tr_hl=en
- Thürer, D. (1999). The “failed State” and international law. *International Review of the Red Cross*, 81(836), 731–761. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1560775500103694>
- Timeline: How the Arab Spring unfolded*. (2021). Aljazeera. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/1/14/arab-spring-ten-years-on>
- Towle, P. (1996). The disarmament of Iraq: Precedents and prospects. *Defense Analysis*, 12(1), 53–64. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07430179608405681>
- Turner, J. (2014). *Religious ideology and the roots of the global Jihad: Salafi Jihadism and international order*. Springer.
- Wendt, A. (1992). Anarchy is what states make of it: The social construction of power politics. *International Organization*, 46(2), 391–425. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818300027764>
- World Bank Open Data*. (n.d.). World Bank Open Data. Retrieved May 19, 2023, from <https://data.worldbank.org>
- Zelin, A. Y. (2015). The rise and decline of Ansar al-Sharia in Libya. *Current Trends in Islamist Ideology*, 18(104,118,120).
- Zelin, A. Y. (2012). *Know Your Ansar al-Sharia – Foreign Policy*. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2012/09/21/know-your-ansar-al-sharia/>

