FOREIGN FIGHTER INTEGRATION AND ITS CONSEQUENCES FOR INTERNATIONAL SECURITY: AN EXAMINATION OF THE SOVIET-AFGHAN AND AFGHAN CIVIL WARS

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Statement of Original Authorship

The work contained in this thesis has not been previously submitted to meet requirements for an award at this or any other higher education institution. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made.

Signature:

Date: 15/12/2022

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Abstract

The Soviet-Afghan and Afghan Civil Wars (1979-1992) mark a critical juncture in the global jihadist movement. Some of the most recognisable figures within the jihadist movement had their first experience of conflict in Afghanistan. The resulting constellation of armed groups—referred to as the Afghan Network—has been responsible for the most well-known acts of terrorist and civil war violence since the 1990s and continues today with its members still holding senior positions in armed groups. Yet, most foreign fighters that travelled to the conflict stayed for a short period and had limited combat exposure. How, then, did these foreign fighter veterans come to represent such a significant threat to international security? This thesis proposes that the answer lies in the specific conditions of how this generation of foreign fighters participated in the Afghan conflicts. I introduce a framework of foreign fighter integration that locates foreign fighters as embedded, partitioned, and isolated vis-à-vis local armed groups. I argue that because foreign fighters were isolated from local Mujahideen fighters, the Afghan conflicts provided them protection from state security apparatus, protection from conflict itself, and acted as a site of mass convergence. This thesis examines how these conditions altered the processes of network formation, expertise development and socialisation that transformed the Afghan Network into a site for knowledge exchange, innovation, and resource sharing. The Afghan Network was able to continually draw on valuable expertise, increasing their effectiveness as conflict actors, while building network resilience. I propose that these outcomes are unique to the experiences of isolated foreign fighters. Embedded and partitioned foreign fighters, due to their exposure to combat, pose different, not lesser, threats to international security.

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List of Abbreviations

AaI	Ansar al-Islam
AAIA	Aden-Abyan Islamic Army
AaSE	Ansar al-Sharia Egypt
ABiH	Bosnian Army
AFG2	Afghanistan post-2001
AhaS	Ahrar al-Sham
AIS	Islamic Salvation Army
AjaS	Ajnad al Sham
AM	al-Mourabitoun
AMB	al-Mulathamun Battalion
ANF	al-Nusra Front // Jabhat al-Nusra
AoM	Army of Muhammad
AQ	al-Qaeda Central
AQAP	al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula
AQI	al-Qaeda in Iraq
AQIM	al-Qaeda in the Maghreb
AQSP	al-Qaeda in the Sinai Peninsula
ASG	Abu Sayyaf Group
ASMB	Abu Salim Martyrs' Brigade
BGD	Bangladesh
BIF	Benevolence International Foundation
BiH	Bosnian War
CHE	Chechen Civil Wars
DI	Dural Islam
EIJ	Egyptian Islamic Jihad // al-Jihad al-Islamī al-Masrī
ETH	Ethiopia
FIS	Islamic Salvation Front
FLN	National Liberation Front, Algeria

FMLN	Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front
FTF	Foreign Terrorist Fighter
GI	Islamic Group // al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya
GIA	Groupe Islamique Arme
GICM	Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group
GSPC	Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat
HAM	Hamas
HDS	Houmat al-Da'wa al-Salafyyia // Defenders of Salafist Preaching
HEZ	Hezbollah
HUJI	Harakat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami
HUJI-B	Harakat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami Bangladesh
HUM	Harakat-ul-Mujahedeen
ICU	Islamic Courts Union
IIRO	International Islamic Relief Organisation
IJM	Islamic Jihad Movement
IJMB	Islamic Jihad Movement of Bangladesh
ILDU	International Legion of Defence of Ukraine
IMC	Islamic Movement for Change
IND	Independent
ISIS	Islamic State
ISKP	Islamic State Khorasan Province
ISWAP	Islamic State West Africa Province
JaS	Jund al-Sham
JEM	Jaish-e-Mohammed
JFS	Jabhat Fatah al-Sham
JI	Jemaah Islamiyya
JMB	Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh
JNIM	Jama‘at al Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin
KGB	Committee for State Security (Komitet Gosudarstvennoy Bezopasnosti)
KhAD	Afghanistan Department of State Information Services (Khadamat-e Aetla'at-e Dawlati)

KMM	Kumpulan Mujahidin Malaysia
KOS	Kosovo
KWT	Gulf War
LeT	Lashkar-e-Taiba
LIFG	Libyan Islamic Fighting Group
MaD	Majmouat al-Denniyah (Denniyah Group)
MaH	Muhammad al-Hami Battalion
MAK	Maktab al-Khidamat (Services Bureau)
MBY	Muslim Brotherhood Yemen
MEI	Movement for an Islamic State
MFDC	Movement of Democratic Forces of Casamance
MILF	Moro Islamic Liberation Front
MJIM	Moroccan Islamic Youth Movement
MJN	Muhammad Jamal Network
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NPFL	National Patriotic Front of Liberia
OIC	Organisation of Islamic Cooperation
PDPA	People’s Democratic Party of Afghanistan
POUM	Workers Party of Marxist Unification (Partido Obrero de Unificacion Marxist)
PSE	Palestine
RIM	Rohingya Islamic Front
RUF	Revolutionary United Front
SDN	Sudan
SM	Southern Movement
SOM	Somalia
TAK	Independent Takfiri Group
TJK	Tajikistan Civil War
TLB	Taliban
TRIP	Tripoli Brigade
UN	United Nations

USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
VoC	Vanguards of the Conquest
WG	Wohngemeinschaft' or sharehouse in Germany
YEM	Yemen

Introduction

The Soviet-Afghan and Afghan Civil War (1979-1992) mark a critical juncture in the global jihadist movement. Hegghammer cites the Soviet-Afghan and Afghan Civil War—referred as the Afghan conflicts hereafter—as 'the world's first truly global foreign-fighter mobilization... the Big Bang in the globalization of jihadism.'[1] Similarly, Hafez notes: 'All revolutionary movements have a myth of genesis and global jihadists attribute their birth to the victory in Afghanistan.'[2] Some of the most recognisable figures within the jihadist movement had their first of conflict during the Afghan conflicts. Osama bin Laden first travelled to the Afghan conflicts in 1984 before forming al-Qaeda in 1988.[3] Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, leader of al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI), travelled to Afghanistan in 1989 beginning his jihadist career.[4] Hambali, senior figure of Jemaah Islamiyaa and Guantánamo Bay detainee, trained for 18-months in a dedicated Indonesian training centre.[5] The founders of the Groupe Islamique Armé (GIA) were foreign fighters in Afghanistan before they launched their campaign of violence during the Algerian Civil War.[6]

This constellation of armed groups and actors—referred to as the Afghan Network[7]—have been responsible for some of the most spectacular and deadly violence throughout

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[1] Thomas Hegghammer, *The Caravan: Abdallah Azzam and the Rise of Global Jihad* (Cambridge University Press, 2020), 1.
[2] Mohammed M. Hafez, "Jihad after Iraq: Lessons from the Arab Afghans," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 32, no. 2 (January 26, 2009): 78, https://doi.org/10.1080/10576100802639600.
[3] Lawrence Wright, *The Looming Tower: Al-Qaeda and the Road to 9/11* (New York: Penguin Books, 2006), 94; al-Qaeda, "Founding Document" (INTELWIRE, August 11, 1988), http://intelfiles.egoplex.com/1988-08-11-al-qaeda-founding.pdf.
[4] Mary Anne Weaver, "The Short, Violent Life of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi," *The Atlantic*, July 1, 2006, https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2006/07/the-short-violent-life-of-abu-musab-al-zarqawi/304983/.
[5] National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States, "The 9/11 Commission Report: Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States" (Washington, D.C., 2004), 150–51, http://govinfo.library.unt.edu/911/report/911Report.pdf.
[6] Barak Mendelsohn, "The Battle for Algeria: Explaining Fratricide among Armed Nonstate Actors," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 44, no. 9 (March 27, 2019): 791, https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2019.1580419.
[7] This network is referred to as the Arab-Afghan Network by Kohlman. However, this dismisses those members of the foreign fighter community that were not Arab. For this reason, I will use "the Afghan Network" throughout. Evan Kohlmann, *Al-Qaida's Jihad in Europe: The Afghan-Bosnian Network* (New York, N.Y: Berg, 2004).

the end of 20th and 21st Century. The most well-known attacks carried out by al-Qaeda include the East Africa Embassy Bombings in 1998, the bombing of the USS Cole in Yemen in 2000, and the September 11 attacks in 2001. Yousuf Ramzi, veteran foreign fighter, and nephew (and brother-in-law) of Khalid Sheikh Muhammad, planned the 1993 World Trade Centre bombings that killed 6 and injured thousands.[8] Hambali claimed responsibility for planning the 2002 Bali Bombing targeting western tourists that killed 202.[9] The 26/11 Mumbai Bombings in 2008 are attributed to Lashkar-e-Taiba (LET), an armed group that formed in Afghanistan between 1989-1991.[10] The attack killed 175 across four days. Zarqawi launched a campaign of violence against Shia Muslims in Iraq so severe that he was chastised by al-Qaeda leadership.[11] In short, major, and internationally recognised terrorist attacks can often be traced back to actors forged by and through the Afghan conflicts. Then there is the violence committed within domestic insurgencies led by veteran foreign fighters including (but not limited to) Algeria, the Philippines, Libya, Jordan, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Lebanon, Tajikistan, Chechnya, and Egypt.

While the legacies of the violence committed by the Afghan Network are well documented, the networks endurance stands in contrast to narratives of their participation in the conflicts themselves. Ibn al-Khattab, foreign fighter veteran in

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[8] Evan Thomas et al., "Al Qaeda in America the Enemy Within," *Newsweek* 141, no. 25 (June 23, 2003): 40, http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=10021962&site=ehost-live; "ḍābiṭ istikhabārāt amīrkī yakshif 'lāqah wazir dākhilīyat qaṭar al-sābiq bimudbir hajamāt 11 sibtambar [An American intelligence officer reveals the relationship of the former Minister of Interior of Qatar to the mastermind of the September 11 attacks]," *Al Arabiya*, September 4, 2019, https://www.alarabiya.net/arab-and-world/gulf/2019/09/03/ضابط-استخبارات-أميركي-يكشف-علاقة-وزير-الداخلية-القطري-السابق-بمدبر-هجمات-11-سبتمبر.

[9] Scott Atran, "The Emir: An Interview with Abu Bakar Ba'asyir, Alleged Leader of the Southeast Asian Jemaah Islamiyah Organization," *Spotlight on Terror* 3, no. 9 (December 16, 2005), https://jamestown.org/interview/the-emir-an-interview-with-abu-bakar-baasyir-alleged-leader-of-the-southeast-asian-jemaah-islamiyah-organization/; Carol Rosenberg, "Guantánamo Case to Test Whether Torture Can Be Put on the Docket (Published 2019)," *The New York Times*, June 24, 2019, sec. U.S., https://www.nytimes.com/2019/06/24/us/politics/guantanamo-case-to-test-whether-torture-can-be-put-on-the-docket.html; "U.S. Charges Hambali at Guantánamo with Bali, Jakarta Terrorist Bombings," miamiherald, accessed December 7, 2020, https://www.miamiherald.com/news/nation-world/world/americas/guantanamo/article157887649.html; "Hambali (Riduan Isamuddin)," The Guantánamo Docket, accessed December 7, 2020, https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/projects/guantanamo/detainees/10019-hambali-riduan-isamuddin-.

[10] Saroj Kumar Rath, "South Asia's Future Security: The Danger of Terrorism from Pakistan," Social Research Reports (Center for Program Evolution and Social Development, 2013), 69.

[11] Office of the Directorate of National Intelligence, "DNI Releases Letter from Al-Zawahiri to al-Zarqawi," October 11, 2005, https://fas.org/irp/news/2005/10/dni101105.html.

Afghanistan and leader of foreign fighters in Tajikistan and Chechnya, reflected: 'we didn't really do jihad in Afghanistan. The Afghans did almost everything.'[12] Senior figure of Jemaah Islamiyya, Nasir Abas, admitted: 'To be truthful I am not a person who had much capability to help the mujahideen of Afghanistan. My age at the time had just reached eighteen years old, but hopefully with my presence there I would strengthen the ranks of mujahedeen in Afghanistan.'[13] Similarly, Zarqawi noted the insufficiency of the Afghan experience: 'the experience was military and contradicting that we had not mastered fighting skills... There were also some security holes because of our lack of organizational experience at that time…the three years in Afghanistan wasn't enough!'[14] Many foreign fighters—sometimes referred to as 'Gucci Jihadists'[15]—only travelled to the Afghan conflicts for short periods of times, were poorly trained, and rarely participated in combat.[16] The Afghan conflicts leave us with two divergent conclusions. First, the Afghan conflicts serve as the common roots for individuals and or groups responsible for the most spectacular terrorist attacks and violence in recent history. Second, these same actors seem to have had little impact on the Afghan conflicts themselves and were chronically underprepared to fight or meaningfully participate in the conflict. This project seeks to explain how this network of veteran foreign fighters were able to evolve into a significant threat to international security.

This thesis proposes that the answer lies in how this generation of foreign fighters participated in the Afghan conflicts. I introduce a framework of foreign fighter

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[12] Samir Saleh Al-Suwailem, *Memories of Amir Khattab: The Experience of the Arab Ansar in Chechnya, Afghanistan and Tajikistan* (Ansar al-Mujahideen English Forum, n.d.).
[13] Nasir Abas, *Inside Jamaah Islamiyah: A Former Member's True Story* (Grafindo Khazanah Ilmu, 2011), 40.
[14] "Dialogue with Sheikh Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi Part 1-3" (Al-Furican Foundation for Media Production, December 28, 2006), https://scholarship.tricolib.brynmawr.edu/bitstream/handle/10066/5124/ZAR20061228.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y.
[15] Brian Glyn Williams, "On the Trail of the 'Lions of Islam': Foreign Fighters in Afghanistan and Pakistan, 1980-2010," *Orbis* 55, no. 2 (January 2011): 220, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.orbis.2011.01.004.
[16] For first-hand accounts of the conditions for foreign fighters in the Afghan Conflicts, see: Abdullah Anas and Tam Hussein, *To the Mountains: My Life in Jihad from Algeria to Afghanistan* (London: Hurst & Company, 2019); Mustafa Hamid and Leah Farrall, *The Arabs at War in Afghanistan* (Oxford University Press, 2015); Basil Muhammed, *Al-Ansar al-Arab Fi Afghanistan [The Arab Cohorts in Afghanistan]* (House of Learning Printing Press, 1991); Abu Ja'far al-Misri al-Qandahari, *Dhikrayat 'arabi Afghani [Memories of an Arab Afghan]* (Dar Al-Shorouk, 2002); Camille Tawil, *Brothers in Arms: The Story of Al-Qa'ida and the Arab Jihadists* (London: Saqi, 2011).

integration and argue that because foreign fighters were isolated from local Mujahideen fighters, the Afghan conflicts provided them protection from state security apparatus, protection from the conflict itself, and acted as a site of mass convergence. These conflict conditions determined how foreign fighters participated in the conflict and facilitated rapid network formation, expertise development and socialisation. The Afghan Network was not static but was expanded and transformed by the continual coordination of its members across space and time. Using network perspectives, I argue this resultant Afghan Network became a site for knowledge exchange, innovation, and resource sharing that allowed foreign fighters to draw on valuable expertise, increasing their effectiveness as conflict actors, while building network resilience.

As the beginning of the current wave of foreign fighters, the Afghan conflicts present a unique opportunity to study the importance of foreign fighting.[17] It is estimated 2,000-20,000 foreign fighters travelled to participate in the Afghan conflicts[18] with estimates of five to 10 per cent fighting in subsequent armed groups.[19] Members of the Afghan Network would go on to participate in or support armed groups across the world, including Chechnya, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Somalia, Algeria, Indonesia, the Philippines, Yemen, Kashmir, as well as prominent members of global organisations such as Al Qaeda (and affiliates).[20] Further, the Afghan Network became the model for future groups in the transnational jihadist movement with current generations of jihadist foreign fighters rooted in the expertise, networks and ideas that can be traced back to the Afghan conflicts. [21] The Afghan Network represented a new approach to jihadist violence and a culture that, while adapted over time, remains evident today.

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[17] Thomas Hegghammer, "The Rise of Muslim Foreign Fighters: Islam and the Globalization of Jihad," *International Security* 35, no. 3 (December 2010): 53–94, https://doi.org/10.1162/ISEC_a_00023; David Malet, "Why Foreign Fighters? Historical Perspectives and Solutions," *Orbis* 54, no. 1 (2010): 105–6, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.orbis.2009.10.007.

[18] Hafez says estimates of 3000-4000 are generous but Hegghammer puts estimates at 5,000-20,000. Hafez, "*Jihad* after Iraq," 86; Hegghammer, "The Rise of Muslim Foreign Fighters," 61.

[19] Isabelle Duyvesteyn and Bram Peeters, "Fickle Foreign Fighters? A Cross-Case Analysis of Seven Muslim Foreign Fighter Mobilisations (1980-2015)," *International Centre for Counter-Terrorism*, 2015, https://doi.org/10.19165/2015.1.07.

[20] For example, see Barak Mendelsohn, "Foreign Fighters—Recent Trends," *Orbis* 55, no. 2 (January 2011): 191, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.orbis.2011.01.002; Hamid and Farrall, *The Arabs at War in Afghanistan*, 183–84; Hafez, "*Jihad* after Iraq," 83.

[21] Hegghammer, "The Rise of Muslim Foreign Fighters"; Malet, "Why Foreign Fighters? Historical Perspectives and Solutions," 105–6.

Examining the transformation of foreign fighters in the Afghan conflicts tells us a great deal about future movements that were both connected to, and replicating, the Afghan Network.

1.1 FOREIGN FIGHTER INTEGRATION

Although the Afghan conflicts are identified as the first global mobilisation of foreign fighters, foreign fighting is not a new phenomenon. Sometimes referred to as 'foreign war volunteers', historical figures have also participated in overseas conflicts. British poet, Lord Byron died while participating in the Greek Civil War in the 1770s.[22] During the Spanish Civil War, writer George Orwell fought in the International Brigades, inspiring *Homage to Catalonia.*[23] During the same conflict, Josip Broz Tito, future leader of the Partisans during World War Two and President of Yugoslavia, coordinated foreign recruits and underground railways from Paris to Spain.[24] However, since the September 11 attacks on the United States in 2001, the concept of foreign fighting has been intimately tied to the problem of terrorism.[25] Foreign fighter literature is thus skewed towards prevention (recruitment and mobilisation of foreign fighters in the pre-war phases)[26] and repatriation (the security risk, prosecution and de-

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[22] Nir Arielli, *From Byron to Bin Laden: A History of Foreign War Volunteers* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2017), 3.

[23] Hochschild, *Spain in Our Hearts*, 191–95.

[24] Vjeran Pavlaković, "Yugoslav Volunteers in the Spanish Civil War" (Belgrade: Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung, 2016), 36, https://europeanmemories.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Vjeran_pavlakovic_spain_.pdf.

[25] For example, work on foreign fighters often code-switches to referring to the same conflict actors as terrorists. See Rik Coolsaet, "Facing the Fourth Foreign Fighters Wave: What Drives Europeans to Syria, and to Islamic State? Insights from the Belgian Case" (The Royal Institute for International Relations, March 2016), https://www.egmontinstitute.be/content/uploads/2016/02/egmont.papers.81_online-versie.pdf?type=pdf; See also the designation of foreign fighters as "foreign terrorist fighters" (FTF) within the UN system: "Foreign Terrorist Fighters."

[26] Edwin Bakker and Roel de Bont, "Belgian and Dutch Jihadist Foreign Fighters (2012–2015): Characteristics, Motivations, and Roles in the War in Syria and Iraq," *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 27, no. 5 (September 2, 2016): 837–57, https://doi.org/10.1080/09592318.2016.1209806; Lorne L. Dawson and Amarnath Amarasingam, "Talking to Foreign Fighters: Insights into the Motivations for Hijrah to Syria and Iraq," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 40, no. 3 (March 4, 2017): 191–210, https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2016.1274216; Lorne L Dawson, "A Comparative Analysis of the Data on Western Foreign Fighters in Syria and Iraq: Who Went and Why?," *ICCT*, 2021, https://doi.org/10.19156/2021.1.02; Brian Dodwell, Daniel Milton, and Don Rassler, "Then and Now: Comparing the Flow of Foreign Fighters to AQI and the Islamic State" (Combating Terrorism Centre, 2016), https://ctc.usma.edu/then-and-now-comparing-the-flow-of-foreign-fighters-to-aqi-and-the-islamic-state/; Güneş Murat Tezcür and Clayton Besaw, "Jihadist Waves: Syria, the Islamic State, and the Changing Nature of Foreign Fighters," *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 37, no. 2 (March

radicalisation of returnees in the post-war phase).[27] This focus on prevention and repatriation has often left out a key feature of the foreign fighter lifecycle: participation. How foreign fighters participate in conflict appears crucial to their trajectories in transnational violence, and yet standard narratives fail to outline how the experiences within conflicts account for future action.

1.2 THE ISOLATION OF THE AFGHAN NETWORK

This research question—How did the Afghan Network come to pose such a significant threat to international security?—is grounded in a single generation of foreign fighters, but reflects a major gap in foreign fighter literature: what do foreign fighters do during

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2020): 215–31, https://doi.org/10.1177/0738894217738990; Jason Fritz and Joseph K. Young, "Transnational Volunteers: American Foreign Fighters Combating the Islamic State," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 32, no. 3 (April 2, 2020): 449–68, https://doi.org/10.1080/09546553.2017.1377075; Randy Borum and Robert Fein, "The Psychology of Foreign Fighters," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 40, no. 3 (March 4, 2017): 249, https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2016.1188535; Lasse Lindekilde, Preben Bertelsen, and Michael Stohl, "Who Goes, Why, and With What Effects: The Problem of Foreign Fighters from Europe," *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 27, no. 5 (September 2, 2016): 858–77, https://doi.org/10.1080/09592318.2016.1208285; Efraim Benmelech and Esteban F. Klor, "What Explains the Flow of Foreign Fighters to ISIS?," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 32, no. 7 (October 31, 2018): 1458–81, https://doi.org/10.1080/09546553.2018.1482214; Meirav Mishali-Ram, "Foreign Fighters and Transnational Jihad in Syria," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 41, no. 3 (March 4, 2018): 169–90, https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2017.1283198; Malet, "Why Foreign Fighters? Historical Perspectives and Solutions."

[27] Amber Atteridge, "Foreign Fighters Post Conflict: Assessing the Impact of Arab Afghans and Syrian-Iraqi Foreign Fighters on Global Security" (International Institute for Counter-Terrorism, 2016); Arsla Jawaid, "From Foreign Fighters to Returnees: The Challenges of Rehabilitation and Reintegration Policies," *Journal of Peacebuilding & Development* 12, no. 2 (May 4, 2017): 102–7, https://doi.org/10.1080/15423166.2017.1323660; Richard Barrett, "Beyond the Caliphate: Foreign Fighters and the Threat of Returnees" (The Soufan Centre, 2017), https://thesoufancenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Beyond-the-Caliphate-Foreign-Fighters-and-the-Threat-of-Returnees-TSC-Report-October-2017-v3.pdf; Daniel Byman and Jeremy Shapiro, "Be Afraid. Be A Little Afraid: The Threat of Terrorism from Western Foreign Fighters in Syria," *Foreign Policy at Brookings* November 2014, no. 34 (November 2014): 1–30, http://www.brookings.edu/~/media/research/files/papers/2014/11/western%20foreign%20fighters%20in%20syria%20and%20iraq%20byman%20shapiro/be%20afraid%20%20web.pdf; Jeanine de Roy van Zuijdewijn and Edwin Bakker, "Returning Western Foreign Fighters: The Case of Afghanistan, Bosnia and Somalia," *Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism Studies*, 2014, https://doi.org/10.19165/2014.2.02; Daniel Byman, "The Homecomings: What Happens When Arab Foreign Fighters in Iraq and Syria Return?," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 38, no. 8 (August 3, 2015): 581–602, https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2015.1031556; Adam Hoffman and Marta Furlan, "Challenges Posed by Returning Foreign Fighters," Program on Extremism (George Washington University, 2020), https://extremism.gwu.edu/sites/g/files/zaxdzs2191/f/Challenges%20Posed%20by%20Returning%20Foreign%20Fighters.pdf; Elena Pokalova, *Returning Islamist Foreign Fighters: Threats and Challenges to the West* (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2020), https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-31478-1; Thomas Hegghammer and Petter Nesser, "Assessing the Islamic State's Commitment to Attacking the West," *Terrorism Research Initiative* 9, no. 4 (2021): 14–30; Leduc, "The Ontological Threat of Foreign Fighters."

a conflict and why does it matter? This thesis examines the participation of foreign fighters during the Afghan conflicts to identify what transformational processes foreign fighters undergo during conflict and connects this experience to their downstream effects for international security. I utilise a slightly altered definition of foreign fighters taken from Malet.[28] I define foreign fighters as non-citizens of conflict states who join armed conflicts. This definition intentionally encompasses the category currently referred to as 'foreign volunteers': non-citizens of conflict states who join foreign militaries during conflicts. The motivation for this definition is two-fold. First, this thesis traces the Afghan Network across time, and encompasses conflicts such as the Bosnian War (1992-1995) where individuals who were classified as foreign fighters during the Afghan conflicts would be defined as foreign volunteers in later conflict. Second, this thesis introduces a framework of foreign fighter integration. I propose that how foreign fighters are integrated in armed groups provides greater analytical utility in exploring their subsequent effect on security—domestic or international—than the type of armed group—militaries or insurgents—those foreign fighters join.

This thesis argues that the enduring consequences of the Afghan Network for international security comes from the internal characteristics of networks formed during their participation in the Afghan conflicts. I utilise network perspectives to argue that the persistence of the Afghan Network as a threat to international security can be traced to how they were integrated during the Afghan conflicts vis-à-vis the local Mujahideen. I define the concept of integration as the degree of structural embeddedness of foreign fighters within the receiving group's organisational structures, and introduce three ideal types of integration: embedded, partitioned, and isolated. Foreign fighters are considered *embedded* when they become full members of the groups that they join and are integrated into the existing organisational structure alongside local fighters.[29] Embedded foreign fighters train, fight and live alongside

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[28] Malet defines foreign fighters as 'non-citizens of conflict states who join insurgencies during civil conflicts'--to include foreign fighters that join armed groups that are participating in other types of conflicts and armed groups Malet, "Why Foreign Fighters? Historical Perspectives and Solutions," 9; This definition is also utilised by de Roy van Zuijdewijn and Bakker, "Returning Western Foreign Fighters," 1.
[29] Nicola Mathieson, "Foreign Fighter Experience and Impact," *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 33, no. 6 (August 11, 2022): 9, https://doi.org/10.1080/09592318.2022.2109888.

local fighters. As a result of their membership status, embedded foreign fighters may achieve leadership positions. Foreign fighters are *partitioned* when they are separated from local fighters into specific foreign fighter units. However, armed groups will utilise these foreign fighters during combat. Foreign fighters are *isolated* when they are both separated from local fighters, as well as excluded from combat. Isolated and partitioned foreign fighters may achieve leadership positions among other foreign fighters but rarely within the armed group itself.[30]

The Afghan conflicts represents one of the few instances where foreign fighters were excluded from local fighters, as well as from combat roles. This thesis argues that this isolation from the network of Mujahideen fighters is central to understanding how the shape of the Afghan Network developed and consequently enabled its members to threaten international security over the long term. Foreign fighters benefit from three conditions of isolation: protection from the state, protection from the conflict, and—as a result—this isolation enables extensive convergences for like-minded actors. These conditions structured how foreign fighters participated in the conflict. Specifically, I explore how isolation was essential for three processes: network formation, expertise development and socialisation. First, I argue that the unique location, and therefore network of foreign fighters, defy our traditional understanding of network effects in collective action. I demonstrate how the isolation facilitated network formation of new armed groups within a wider global network. This process of network formation stands in contrast to the processes of group formation being built upon or leveraging existing social networks and blunts the difficulties of building networks during conflict. I argue this process of network formation ensured the resilience of the Afghan Network over time that served as the location for cooperation and resource sharing between armed groups.

Second, I demonstrate how the isolation enabled the development of conflict expertise and shared practices that became central for subsequent jihadist groups. While literature suggests that foreign fighter experience leads to the promotion of veterans in

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[30] This theoretical framework expands the typologies of integration presented in Mathieson (2022) to include partitioned fighters--those that are utilised in combat--from isolated--those foreign fighters that are not used in combat roles. Mathieson, 9–10.

subsequent conflicts due to their advanced conflict skills, I propose that the conflict skills gained in the Afghan conflicts were less important than the reification of this expertise through connection to the Afghan Network. This conflict experience in Afghan conflicts was not objective—foreign fighters in the Afghan conflict had limited training and actual conflict exposure—but was legitimised by their connection to the victory of the Mujahideen over the Soviet Union. A mythology formed around the Afghan Network where its members were viewed as conflict experts despite their minimal participation in the conflict.

Third, I demonstrate how foreign fighters were socialised among other foreign fighters rather than among local fighters. Consequently, the socialisation processes advocated a distinct and shared practices and goals that stitched this foreign fighter network together. I ground the role of religious education among the Afghan Network and argue that this process did not produce a single doctrine for the global jihadist movement but a sufficient shared vision of installing Islamic governance through jihad. The bonds of trust developed through socialisation allowed for coordination and resource sharing among the resultant armed groups in the Afghan Network.[31]

The empirical chapters that follow trace the Afghan Network to demonstrate how the networks, expertise, and socialisation processes took place during the Afghan conflicts and the recurrent effects of these processes on international security. This network was not static. Instead, the Afghan Network expanded and transformed through the continued coordination and cooperation among its members. The Afghan Network became a site for knowledge exchange, innovation, and resource sharing that allowed foreign fighters to continually draw on valuable expertise, increasing their effectiveness as conflict actors, while building network resilience.

1.3 METHODOLOGY

This thesis introduces an original dataset of the Afghan Network. My dataset includes 404 veteran foreign fighters from the Afghan conflicts who went on to participate in a subsequent armed group or conflict. I locate veteran foreign fighters across 69 groups

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[31] Theodore McLauchlin, *Desertion: Trust and Mistrust in Civil Wars* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2020).

and conflicts spanning from those immediately after 1992 all the way up until 2022. Importantly, this dataset is only the second dataset to trace foreign fighters across time and space. The first dataset was produced by Daymon et. al. traces 54 Sunni foreign fighters.[32] My dataset differs in that it traces foreign fighters originating from a single conflict, rather than those that adhere to a specific ideology. This dataset also includes foreign fighters that return to their home countries and continue participating in violence. This inclusion allows us to better understand the full scope of the violent pathways available to foreign fighters and link trajectories of foreign fighters to both domestic and international security threats. I build on the empirics of this dataset with forty-one in depth, qualitative profiles of veteran foreign fighters that represent fighters from 54 of the 69 armed groups identified in the dataset. These profiles allow me to understand the micro-level transformations and trajectories of individual fighters and how they connect to the experiences of foreign fighting.

I utilise a combination of descriptive statistics and Social Network Analysis to understand and visualise the dynamics of this network. I utilise Social Network Analysis (SNA) to visualise, for the first time, the scope, and contours of the Afghan Network. As defined by Hansen, SNA allows researchers to 'visualise complex sets of relationships and maps of connected symbols and calculate the precise measures of the size, shape and density of the network as a whole and the positions of the elements within it.'[33] Instead of focusing on the individual attributes or characters, SNA focuses on the affiliation between actors.[34] Contrary to extant models that explain the formation of violent non-state movements, I demonstrate how the Afghan Network emerged as a function of the isolation that allowed these disparate actors to rapidly build networks that would serve as the basis for future armed groups, and points of contact to form a wider transnational network.

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[32] Chelsea Daymon, Jeanine de Roy van Zuijdewijn, and David Malet, "Career Foreign Fighters: Expertise Transmission Across Insurgencies" (RESOLVE Network, April 13, 2020), https://doi.org/10.37805/ogrr2020.1.cff.
[33] Derek L. Hansen et al., "Social Network Analysis: Measuring, Mapping, and Modeling Collections of Connections," in *Analyzing Social Media Networks with NodeXL* (Elsevier, 2020), 32, https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-12-817756-3.00003-0.
[34] Hansen et al., 32.

I also utilise the unique positions data within the dataset to examine how the experience of the Afghan conflicts influenced the seniority of veterans within subsequent armed groups. Using the positions data, I examine how veteran foreign fighters achieved higher positions within subsequent armed groups. As veteran foreign fighters move through different armed groups, they consistently achieve higher positions.

1.4 THESIS STRUCTURE

This thesis proceeds as follows. Chapter 2 presents a literature review on the extant scholarship on the participation of foreign fighters in conflict with a particular focus on how foreign fighters impact armed groups. I highlight the disconnect between our current understandings of the threat of foreign fighters to international security and the actual participation of foreign fighters in conflict.

Chapter 3 uses network perspectives to build a theoretical framework around the integration of foreign fighters and connects integration to foreign fighter trajectories. I identify three types of integration—embedded, partitioned, and isolated—and identify the Afghan conflicts as a case of isolation. I demonstrate how three processes—network formation, expertise development, and socialisation—are shaped by these isolated conditions. Overall, this theoretical framework argues that no single factor determines why this network of foreign fighters has been so resilient and persistent but that, taken together, this generation of foreign fighters developed a network of armed groups embedded in a transnational network that were able to leverage their shared participation to continue coordination among members to achieve its shared goals of installing forms of Islamic governance in their respective home countries.

Chapter 4 outlines the methodology for this thesis. I introduce the original dataset that is the foundation of the empirics of this thesis. I present the data collection process and outline each of the dataset's components. The dataset provides new details about the trajectories and experiences of foreign fighters over time. It does not, however, provide explanations for the transformative effect of foreign fighting. To address this gap, I

constructed forty-one in-depth profiles of veteran foreign fighters representing 54 of the 69 armed groups in the dataset.[35]

Chapter 5 provides a historical overview of the Afghan conflicts to understand how foreign fighters came to be isolated. I begin with a basic history of the Soviet invasion and outline the different factions in the Afghan opposition. This section does not contribute to the theoretical argument of this thesis but provides necessary context for the empirical chapters. I then outline how foreign fighters came to participate in Afghanistan and the trajectory of their participation—from the formation of the Maktab al-Khidamat (Services Bureau) (MAK) to being forced out of Peshawar.

Chapter 6 explores the rapid formation of a network within the Afghan Network. First, I demonstrate how the formation of new armed groups emerged in the Afghan conflicts. The formation of these new armed groups stands in contrast to common understandings that suggest armed groups are built on pre-existing networks. These new networks were able to form in the protection of the foreign fighter isolation, minimising the risk of infiltration or destruction by their domestic security apparatuses. Second, I examine transnational network in which these armed groups were embedded. This chapter, for the first time in academic research, visualises the network of foreign fighter veterans from this period. I use Social Network Analysis (SNA) to visualise the connections between veteran foreign fighters within my original dataset to demonstrate the increased density of the network overtime. I then provide qualitative analysis of the continued coordination and cooperation among the Afghan Network to demonstrate how its members leveraged its expertise.

Chapter 7 confronts the contradictions of conflict expertise within the Afghan Network. Foreign fighters are considered to have limited conflict exposure during the Afghan conflicts. And yet, they came to be leaders, senior figures, and trainers within subsequent armed groups. This chapter seeks to unpack this contention and understand what expertise foreign fighters developed in the Afghan conflicts and how this expertise mattered for the future trajectories of these fighters. This chapter proposes

[35] Noting that of those forty-one foreign fighters, many joined more than one subsequent armed group.

that the Afghan Network did emerge with limited conflict skills, but these skills were reified by the network effect of proximity to the Mujahideen victory. I utilise the novel positions data within my dataset to show the upwards career trajectories of members of the Afghan Network.

Chapter 8 examines the socialisation of foreign fighters during the Afghan conflicts. Instead of being socialised among local Afghan fighters and their networks, this generation of foreign fighters were largely socialised among themselves.[36] I demonstrate how, regardless of the specific interpretation of Islam taught, members of the Afghan Network supported the overthrow of existing regimes and the installation of some form of Islamic governance.[37] I argue that for an opposition group with limited options for accessing resources, this shared goal built sufficient trust among the Afghan Networks for continued coordination.

The final empirical chapter, Chapter 9, examines how the isolation identified in the Afghan conflicts can help us understand the variation in integration and trajectories of other generations of foreign fighters. I outline the cases of al-Shabaab and the Islamic State as examples of embedded foreign fighters and Bosnia and Herzegovina and the International Brigades as partitioned fighters to demonstrate how the conflict processes examined in this thesis—network formation, expertise development, and socialisation—differ from those in the Afghan conflicts and the trajectories of these fighters. This chapter does not propose any of the types of integration will lead to foreign fighters posing a greater or lesser threat to international security only that these threats will likely take different forms. These differences will have important implications for how the threat of these foreign fighters can be managed by the international community.

The final chapter will discuss the findings of this thesis, the contributions to the field and possibilities for future research.

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[36] Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger, *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation* (Cambridge University Press, 1991).
[37] Lave and Wenger.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

While this thesis focuses on foreign fighters from the Afghan conflicts, the research question is embedded within the gap of foreign fighter literature more broadly: what do foreign fighters do in conflict? And what are the consequences? Much of the current literature on foreign fighter participation and impact is premised observed correlation between the presence of foreign fighters in a conflict zone and conflict dynamics. What is often missing in this literature is the connection of foreign fighters to these dynamics. This literature review establishes the current gap in existing scholarship: how the experience of foreign fighting affects the future trajectories of foreign fighters. I demonstrate how limited work suggests that how foreign fighters are integrated to—or detached from—local fighters affect their behaviour in conflict. I build on this idea in subsequent chapters and present a framework of foreign fighter integration.

This chapter proceeds in four parts. Fist, I determine the difference between local and foreign fighters. While foreign fighter literature is premised on local and foreign fighters being distinct conflict actors, how these differences shape participation is rarely addressed. Second, I examine the literature focused on the impact of foreign fighters on domestic and international security. It is assumed that the impact of veteran foreign fighters stems from their participation in overseas conflicts. Therefore, third, I examine the existing work on foreign fighter participation in conflict. This literature focuses on the impact of foreign fighters on conflict dynamics, but this work is marred by a deep contradiction: foreign fighters are determined to both benefit and harm the capacity of the groups. Finally, foreign fighter literature is awash with references to networks. However, foreign fighter literature does not have the same mechanistic approach to networks found in both social network and social movement literature. Scholars and policy makers alike assume that shared participation as foreign fighters grant automatic membership to foreign fighter networks and that these networks must matter.[38]

[38] For example, Kohlman's book, Al-Qaida's Jihad in Europe: the Afghan-Bosnian Network, uses the terms network or networks 85 times but never explains the structure of the networks or how the networks came to be formed beyond mutual participation in conflict. Kohlmann, *Al-Qaida's Jihad in Europe*.

Building on these gaps within the literature, I propose that key to understanding how the Afghan Network came threaten international security lies in how they participated in the Afghan conflicts. I propose that foreign fighter participation varies depending on how foreign fighters are integrated into the network of armed groups in two keys ways. Where foreign fighters are integrated determines who they can build networks with, how they are utilised in conflict, and, therefore, the combat exposure that they gain. Therefore, there is not a single pathway for foreign fighters after conflict, but their trajectories are shaped within conflict.

2.1 DEFINING FOREIGN FIGHTERS

The term 'foreign fighter' first emerged in 2001 in media reports of the participation of non-Afghan fighters in the Battle of Kunduz.[39] As a result, and despite the existence of foreign fighters throughout history,[40] the academic study of foreign fighters—as distinct from foreign volunteers or mercenaries—is relatively new. The participation of Osama bin Laden and his senior commanders in the Afghan conflicts, led to a proliferation in foreign fighter literature.[41] The relationship between foreign fighters and international terrorism has led this literature being situated in concepts of extremism, radicalisation and Islam. The focus of this literature has been on the

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[39] The term became widespread after the battle of Kunduz in Afghanistan November 27, 2001 by the Associated Press Malet, "Why Foreign Fighters? Historical Perspectives and Solutions," 108.

[40] For examples of historical analysis of non-Islamic foreign fighters see N. Arielli and B. Collins, *Transnational Soldiers: Foreign Military Enlistment in the Modern Era* (Springer, 2012); Michael W Jackson, *Fallen Sparrows: The International Brigades in the Spanish Civil War* (American Philosophical Society, 1994); David Malet, "Workers of the World, Unite! Communist Foreign Fighters 1917–91," *European Review of History: Revue Européenne d'histoire* 27, no. 1–2 (March 3, 2020): 33–53, https://doi.org/10.1080/13507486.2019.1706449; Malet, "Why Foreign Fighters? Historical Perspectives and Solutions"; Fransjohan Pretorius, "Welcome but Not That Welcome: The Relations between Foreign Volunteers and the Boers in the Anglo-Boer War of 1899–1902," in *War Volunteering in Modern Times: From the French Revolution to the Second World War*, ed. Christine G. Krüger and Sonja Levsen (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2010), 122–49, https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230290525_8; Nir Arielli, *From Byron to Bin Laden* (Harvard University Press, 2018); David Malet, "Foreign Fighters: Transnational Identity in Civil Conflicts" (George Washington University, 2009), http://choicereviews.org/review/10.5860/CHOICE.51-5831.

[41] For a long view of foreign fighters see Arielli, *From Byron to Bin Laden*, 2018; See also previous research on the International Brigades. Jackson, *Fallen Sparrows*; Dan Richarson, *Comintern Army: The International Brigades and the Spanish Civil War* (University Press of Kentucky, 2015); Peter Carroll, *The Odyssey of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade: Americans in the Spanish Civil* (Stanford University Press, 1994); Cary Nelson and Jefferson Hendrick, *Madrid 1937: Letters of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade from the Spanish Civil War* (Routledge, 1996).

recruitment and mobilisation of foreign fighters in the pre-war phases[42] and the repatriation, security risk, prosecution and de-radicalisation of returnees in the post-war phase as a means of reducing the threat of foreign fighters to international security.[43]

Some of the most prominent foreign fighter scholars downplay the distinction between the two categories of conflict actors. Hegghammer claims that foreign fighters are 'insurgents in every respect but their passports.'[44] Malet assesses foreign fighters as fighters with a 'shared transnational identity' with the local fighters that they join.[45] Borum and Fein, claim that the motivation of foreign fighters to join insurgencies are indistinguishable from local recruits.[46] Despite the shared characteristics of foreign and local fighters, foreigners are treated as separate conflict actors and are assessed as bringing unique conflict skills, tactics, and ideas that reshape conflict dynamics. As a result, the threat perception of foreign fighters to international security is distinct—and much greater—than the local fighters that participate in the same conflicts.

Scholars are fairly consistent in their definitions of foreign fighters, with most grounded in citizenship.[47] Malet defines foreign fighters as 'non-citizens of conflict states who join insurgencies during civil conflicts.'[48] Mendelsohn similarly defines foreign

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[42] Bakker and de Bont, "Belgian and Dutch Jihadist Foreign Fighters (2012–2015)"; Dawson and Amarasingam, "Talking to Foreign Fighters"; Dawson, "A Comparative Analysis of the Data on Western Foreign Fighters"; Dodwell, Milton, and Rassler, "Then and Now: Comparing the Flow of Foreign Fighters to AQI and the Islamic State"; Tezcür and Besaw, "Jihadist Waves"; Fritz and Young, "Transnational Volunteers"; Borum and Fein, "The Psychology of Foreign Fighters," 249; Lindekilde, Bertelsen, and Stohl, "Who Goes, Why, and With What Effects"; Benmelech and Klor, "What Explains the Flow of Foreign Fighters to ISIS?"; Mishali-Ram, "Foreign Fighters and Transnational Jihad in Syria"; Malet, "Why Foreign Fighters? Historical Perspectives and Solutions."

[43] Atteridge, "Foreign Fighters Post Conflict: Assessing the Impact of Arab Afghans and Syrian-Iraqi Foreign Fighters on Global Security"; Jawaid, "From Foreign Fighters to Returnees"; Barrett, "Beyond the Caliphate"; Byman and Shapiro, "Be Afraid. Be A Little Afraid: The Threat of Terrorism from Western Foreign Fighters in Syria"; de Roy van Zuijdewijn and Bakker, "Returning Western Foreign Fighters"; Byman, "The Homecomings"; Hoffman and Furlan, "Challenges Posed by Returning Foreign Fighters"; Pokalova, *Returning Islamist Foreign Fighters*; Hegghammer and Nesser, "Assessing the Islamic State's Commitment to Attacking the West"; Leduc, "The Ontological Threat of Foreign Fighters."

[44] Hegghammer, "The Rise of Muslim Foreign Fighters," 55.

[45] Malet, "Why Foreign Fighters? Historical Perspectives and Solutions," 97.

[46] Borum and Fein, "The Psychology of Foreign Fighters," 249.

[47] David Shinn, "Al Shabaab's Foreign Threat to Somalia," *Orbis* 55, no. 2 (January 2011): 210, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.orbis.2011.01.003.

[48] Malet, "Why Foreign Fighters? Historical Perspectives and Solutions," 9; This definition is also utilised by de Roy van Zuijdewijn and Bakker, "Returning Western Foreign Fighters," 1.

fighters as volunteers that leave their homes and intervene in a foreign conflict.[49] Hegghammer's often cited work defines foreign fighters along four criteria. Firstly, an individual has joined, and operated within the confines of, an insurgency. Secondly, participants do not hold the citizenship or kinship of the state in which the conflict is taking place. Thirdly, the participant is not fighting for government forces but with an unofficial military organisation and finally, the participant is unpaid.[50]

However, there are also definitions that are rooted in characteristics that relate to the differential participation of foreign fighters in conflict: geographic origin and religious background. First, some foreign fighters are 'closer' to locals than others. Some definitions refer to 'foreign fighters' as exclusively western recruits. It is assumed that western foreign fighters will have limited capacity to integrate and assist armed groups because of their lack of prior combat experience and cultural difference.[51] For example, Shinn examines the role of al-Shabaab, in Somalia. Recruits from western states could be divided between Somali diaspora and non-Somali western recruits. Shinn hypothesises that the diaspora is fully accepted within al-Shabaab ranks, but non-Somalis are viewed with disapproval.[52] Mendelsohn similarly distinguishes between foreign recruits coming from the 'near abroad' and the 'far abroad.'[53] The effectiveness of recruits from neighbouring states or from diaspora is likely different from those travelling longer distances. Shared kinship and language are also noted as important for the integration of fighters within local insurgent groups.[54]

The second characteristic often added to definitions of foreign fighters is an adherence to Sunni Islam. Rich and Conduit assign a fifth characteristic to Hegghammer's

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[49] Mendelsohn, "Foreign Fighters—Recent Trends," 189.
[50] Hegghammer, "The Rise of Muslim Foreign Fighters," 57–58.
[51] Frank J Cilluffo, Jeffrey B Cozzens, and Magnus Ranstorp, "Foreign Fighters: Trends, Trajectories & Conflict Zones" (Homeland Security Policy Institute, 2010), 3, http://fhs.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:380558/FULLTEXT01.
[52] Shinn, "Al Shabaab's Foreign Threat to Somalia," 203.
[53] Mendelsohn, "Foreign Fighters—Recent Trends," 192.
[54] For example, even in the Afghan context in the 1980's, Arab recruits often came with no experience. Ot was quickly noted that these fighters should not be mixed with local fighters, many of whom were viewed as liabilities. de Roy van Zuijdewijn and Bakker, "Returning Western Foreign Fighters," 3.

definition: adherance to the Sunni branch of Islam.[55] Similarly, Crain and Stipanovich define foreign fighters as fighting against so-called 'corrupt' Muslim regimes.[56] Cilluffo defines foreign fighters as 'violent extremists who leave with aspirations to train or take up arms against non-Muslim factions in jihadi conflict zones.'[57] This characteristic is not only inaccurate,[58] but also distorts assessments of the participation of foreign fighters in conflict. Assuming foreign fighting is a phenomenon exclusive to Muslim communities reinforces an entanglement with the concept of terrorism. Coolsaet outlines four waves of foreign fighters: the Soviet-Afghan War (1979-1989), conflicts of the 1990's whose foreign fighters were elite expats from Arab states, the American Invasion of Iraq, and the start of the Syrian War.[59] However, the article later lists these four waves under the header 'The Fourth Wave of Jihadi Terrorism.'[60] Many Islamic insurgent groups such as ISIS, al-Nusra, and al-Shabaab are internationally recognised terrorist organisations,[61] however, by taking this approach, authors create narratives that associate all foreign fighters with terrorism.[62] Within the UN and much

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[55] Ben Rich and Dara Conduit, "The Impact of Jihadist Foreign Fighters on Indigenous Secular-Nationalist Causes: Contrasting Chechnya and Syria," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 38, no. 2 (February 2015): 114, https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2014.979605.

[56] R. Kim Cragin and Susan Stipanovich, "Metastases: Exploring the Impact of Foreign Fighters in Conflicts Abroad," *Journal of Strategic Studies*, November 29, 2017, 2, https://doi.org/10.1080/01402390.2017.1402766.

[57] Cilluffo, Cozzens, and Ranstorp, "Foreign Fighters: Trends, Trajectories & Conflict Zones," 3.

[58] These analyses largely neglect other conflicts such as the 1948 Arab Israeli War during which many Jewish foreign fighters fought for the independence of Israel, as well as those that fought opposing Israel. If analysis were to include pre-1945, it would also capture the Spanish Civil War during which approximately 30,000 foreign fighters joined the International Brigades to fight for the largely communist Republican forces Jackson, *Fallen Sparrows*; Malet, "Workers of the World, Unite! Communist Foreign Fighters 1917–91"; Hochschild, *Spain in Our Hearts*; Nir Arielli, "Getting There: Enlistment Considerations and the Recruitment Networks of the International Brigades during the Spanish Civil War," in *Transnational Soldiers* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 219–32; Richard Baxell, "Myths of the International Brigades," *Bulletin of Spanish Studies* 91, no. 1–2 (February 7, 2014): 11–24, https://doi.org/10.1080/14753820.2013.868647; Nir Arielli, "When Are Foreign Volunteers Useful? Israel's Transnational Soldiers in the War of 1948 Re-Examined.," *Journal of Military History* 2, no. 78 (2014): 703–24.

[59] Coolsaet, "Facing the Fourth Foreign Fighters Wave."

[60] Coolsaet, 18.

[61] see ISIL (Da'esh) & Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee, "Sanctions List Materials: ISIL (Da'esh) & Al-Qaida Sanctions List," United Nations Security Council, accessed January 4, 2022, https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/sanctions/1267/aq_sanctions_list and other national sanctions lists.

[62] Edwin Bakker and Jeanine de Roy van Zuijdewijn, "Jihadist Foreign Fighter Phenomenon in Western Europe: A Low-Probability, High-Impact Threat," *The International Centre for Counter-Terrorism – The Hague* 6, no. 9 (2015), https://doi.org/10.19165/2015.1.09; "Foreign Terrorist Fighters"; Daniel Milton, "Lessons from September 11 about the Post-Conflict Threat Posed by Foreign Terrorist Fighters," *Journal of Policing, Intelligence and Counter Terrorism*, February 6, 2020, 1–18, https://doi.org/10.1080/18335330.2020.1725097.

of the literature, foreign fighters, especially Muslim foreign fighters, are now referred to as Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTF).[63] This assignment of foreign fighters as terrorists pose additional problems for our analytical understandings. Although these current groups of foreign fighters may be associated with terrorism, this assignment is also being exploited by being projected onto past conflicts. Take, for example, foreign fighters that participated in the Bosnian War on the side of Bosnian Muslims. Officials in Republika Srpska and Serbia have sought to justify their actions during the war by reframing their actions as combating Islamic extremism as evidenced by the presence of Muslim foreign fighters—positioning themselves as the misunderstood historic victims of Islamic terrorism.[64]

In sum, most definitions separate local and foreign fighters based on citizenship, but this delineation becomes fuzzy when there are other shared forms of identity. Others ascribe characteristics—Islamic, radical, terrorist—without evidence that foreign fighters are inherently any of these things. Regardless, the separation of foreign fighters portrays them as more complex and problematic figures than local insurgents with the greatest threat emanating from their return.

2.2 INTERNATIONAL SECURITY THREAT

There is a common theme driving almost all foreign fighter literature: the threat foreign fighting poses to international security.[65] Media, scholars, and even Presidents, make

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[63] "Foreign Terrorist Fighters"; Letta Tayler, "Foreign Terrorist Fighter Laws: Human Rights Rollbacks Under Un Security Council Resolution 2178," *International Community Law Review* 18, no. 5 (December 8, 2016): 455–82, https://doi.org/10.1163/18719732-12341342; Barton, "The Historical Context and Regional Social Network Dynamics of Radicalisation and Recruitment of Islamic State Foreign Terrorist Fighters in Indonesia and Its Southeast Asian Neighbours"; Haroro J Ingram et al., "The Repatriation & Reintegration Dilemma: How States Manage the Return of Foreign Terrorist Fighters & Their Families," *Journal for Deradicalization*, no. 31 (2022): 45; Milton, "Lessons from September 11 about the Post-Conflict Threat Posed by Foreign Terrorist Fighters."

[64] Karmen Erjavec and Zala Volčič, "'War on Terrorism' as a Discursive Battleground: Serbian Recontextualization of G.W. Bush's Discourse," *Discourse & Society* 18, no. 2 (March 2007): 123–37, https://doi.org/10.1177/0957926507073370; Zeljko Cvijanovic, "Belgrade Exploits War on Terror," *Institute for War and Peace Reporting*, October 3, 2001, https://iwpr.net/global-voices/belgrade-exploits-war-terror.

[65] de Roy van Zuijdewijn and Bakker, "Returning Western Foreign Fighters"; Barrett, "Beyond the Caliphate"; Jawaid, "From Foreign Fighters to Returnees"; Byman, "The Homecomings"; Hoffman and Furlan, "Challenges Posed by Returning Foreign Fighters"; Pokalova, *Returning Islamist Foreign Fighters*; Byman and Shapiro, "Be Afraid. Be A Little Afraid: The Threat of Terrorism from Western Foreign Fighters in Syria."

almost identical claims regarding the risk of foreign fighters to international security. Former U.S. President Obama claimed that foreign fighters return 'trained and battle-hardened', posing a threat to domestic security.[66] Azinović and Jusić state that '[r]eturnees will inevitably be battle-hardened, skilled in weapon and explosives and radicalised.'[67] Benmelech and Klor argue 'As returnees trained in terrorist tactics and furnished with new connections, these fighters can create terror networks to commit attacks at home.'[68] Byman states: '[f]oreign fighters comeback as hardened veterans, steady in the face of danger and skilled in the use of weapons and explosives. While in the conflict zone, they will form networks with other radicals, embrace techniques like suicide bombings and beheadings and establish ties to jihadists around the world'[69]

This focus on the threat of returnees is not unfounded. Bin Laden and much of al-Qaeda's Shura Council were veteran foreign fighters from the Afghan conflicts. Two of the September 11 hijackers—Khalid al Mihdhar and Nawaf al-Hamzi—had fought in the Bosnian War.[70] At least four of the perpetrators of the November 13 attack on Paris in 2015 were returnees from Syria. The attacks killed 130 people and injured over 350.[71] Further attacks were committed in Brussels by returnees in 2016.[72] A young British-Libyan, Salman Abedi, who received training in Libya carried out a bombing attack on a concert in Manchester in 2017 killing 22 people.[73] While in reality these

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[66] "Obama on Syria: Assad Must Go," *Wilson Center*, March 24, 2013, https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/obama-syria-assad-must-go.

[67] Azinović and Jusić, "The Lure of the Syrian War: The Foreign Fighters' Bosnian Contingent," 6.

[68] Benmelech and Klor, "What Explains the Flow of Foreign Fighters to ISIS?," 1.

[69] Byman, "The Homecomings," 581.

[70] National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States, "The 9/11 Commission Report: Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States," 147, 155; Brendan O'Neill, "The Bosnian Connection," *New Statesman*, August 2, 2004, https://www.newstatesman.com/node/160271; Stephanie Zosak, "Revoking Citizenship in the Name of Counterterrorism: The Citizenship Review Commission Violates Human Rights in Bosnia and Herzegovina," *Nw. UJ Int'l Hum. Rts.* 8 (2009): 219.

[71] Atteridge, "Foreign Fighters Post Conflict: Assessing the Impact of Arab Afghans and Syrian-Iraqi Foreign Fighters on Global Security," 24; Pokalova, *Returning Islamist Foreign Fighters*, 90; Julian Richards, "Down but Not Out? Revisiting the Terror Threat from Foreign Fighters," *The International Journal of Intelligence, Security, and Public Affairs* 22, no. 2 (May 3, 2020): 73, https://doi.org/10.1080/23800992.2020.1764240.

[72] Richards, "Down but Not Out?," 73.

[73] Eran Benedek and Neil Simon, "The 2017 Manchester Bombing and the British-Libyan Jihadi Nexus," *CTC Sentinel* 13, no. 5 (May 2020): 28–38, https://ctc.usma.edu/the-2017-manchester-bombing-and-the-british-libyan-jihadi-nexus/.

attacks only represent a tiny fraction of veteran and returnee foreign fighters,[74] they have driven vast changes to domestic and international security to manage the risk including the reneging of citizenship and a reem of new laws and legislation.[75]

2.3 CONFLICT IMPACT

Despite the assumption that it is the experience of foreign fighting that drives the risk posed by returnees, less academic attention has been given to how foreign fighters participate in conflict. Current literature looks at how foreign fighters impact conflict dynamics. These impacts are rarely presented as causal but based on an assumed correlation based on foreign fighter presence. Here I identify one of the tensions motivating this research: foreign fighters are assumed to emerge from conflict as battle-hardened and radicalised but, also, most literature admits that foreign fighters contribute little or nothing to the strength of armed groups. Foreign fighters sometimes provide new skills and resources but, more often, armed groups separate foreign fighters into their own units to limit their impact. Literature needs a new theoretical approach that accounts for these contradictions by integrating participation as a transformative experience that is connected to international security. In this section, I examine the three core impacts of foreign fighters in literature—conflict outcomes, skills, and group cohesion—and the shortcomings of some of these assessments.

Foreign fighters are widely cited as improving conflict outcomes. However, this claim relies on two core quantitative works in the field. First, Malet finds that groups with foreign fighters were disproportionately more successful than those without. This assessment is formed on a simple count of the outcomes of insurgent groups (Incumbent Victory, Insurgent Victory, Stalemate and Ongoing).[76] Similarly, Chu and Braithwaite find the presence of foreign fighters is associated with a decrease in government victory

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[74] Hegghammer and Nesser assess the role of foreign fighters in domestic terrorist attacks between 2011 and 2015. Hegghammer and Nesser find that during this period only 16 out of 69 ISIS plots involved at least one foreign fighter returnee from Syria. Overall, they found only 11 'plotting returnees' out of an estimated 4,000 returnees or one in 360, roughly in line with the 'blowback' rates of other foreign fighter contingents. Hegghammer and Nesser, "Assessing the Islamic State's Commitment to Attacking the West," 20.

[75] Tayler, "Foreign Terrorist Fighter Laws."

[76] Malet, "Foreign Fighters," 68.

by 430 per cent, indicating foreign fighters are a potential advantage for the receiving group.[77] While these findings on conflict outcomes are enticing (and well cited), they lack evidence of a causal relationship and tell us little about what foreign fighters are contributing to these outcomes. As noted by Malet, their findings may be reflective of a group's organisational capacity—those groups that were able to recruit foreign fighters were more likely to win anyway—than the presence of foreign fighters.[78]

This finding also contrasts with the number of foreign fighters that participate in conflict. Quantitative models measure group strength in terms of troop rations—comparing the number of fighters between two groups to establish which one is 'stronger.'[79] Greater manpower is generally agreed to be positively associated with group strength. However, foreign fighters tend not to represent a dominant proportion of manpower of any armed group. The Islamic State recruited an unprecedented number of foreign fighters—estimates suggest foreign fighters represented one-third of forces at approximately 40,000 fighters[80] —but this figure is an anomaly within armed groups. In most armed groups where there are foreign fighters, foreign fighters only consist of five to ten percent of manpower. [81] Therefore, the impact of foreign fighters on conflict outcomes is unlikely to be attributable to their number and instead the types of manpower they provide.

A second perceived impact of foreign fighters is the transfer of new skills to the armed group.[82] These skills may benefit a group by expanding their repertoire of violence.[83] For example, in Syria, Mironova found that many foreign fighters 'bought the necessary

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[77] Tiffany S. Chu and Alex Braithwaite, "The Impact of Foreign Fighters on Civil Conflict Outcomes," *Research & Politics* 4, no. 3 (July 2017): 5, https://doi.org/10.1177/2053168017722059.
[78] Malet, "Foreign Fighters," 68.
[79] Ivan Arreguin-Toft, *How the Weak Win Wars* (Cambridge University Press, 2005); Reed M Wood, "Rebel Capability and Strategic Violence against Civilians," *Journal of Peace Research* 47, no. 5 (September 2010): 601–14, https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343310376473.
[80] Mapping Militant Organizations, "The Islamic State," Mapping Militant Organizations, September 2019, https://cisac.fsi.stanford.edu/mappingmilitants/profiles/islamic-state.
[81] Prior to the rise of ISIS, the highest percentage of foreign fighters on record was the roster of Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) where foreign fighters represented 10% of the membership. Arielli, *From Byron to Bin Laden*, 2018, 153–54.
[82] Kristin M. Bakke, "Help Wanted? The Mixed Record of Foreign Fighters in Domestic Insurgencies," *International Security* 38, no. 4 (April 1, 2014): 167, https://doi.org/10.1162/ISEC_a_00156.
[83] Darryl Press, "Lessons from Ground Combat in the Gulf: The Impact of Training and Technology," *International Security* 22, no. 2 (1997): 137–46, http://www.jstor.com/stable/2539369.

military experience including North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) training and worked as combat instructors for Syrian fighters, or as elite fighters.'[84] Daymon et al present the first work that systematically traced the movement of veteran foreign fighters between armed groups and argue that foreign fighters that survive their first 'tour' and continue to fight in other armed groups accumulate skills and become a greater concern for international security.[85] The more conflicts that a foreign fighter has participated in, the higher their fighting capacity should be, and thus, the greater threat they pose to international security.[86] Malet also claims that transnational recruits are responsible for higher levels of violence.[87] This violence, however, is often seen at odds with the local population and is not adopted by local fighters. Bakke argues that for these tactics to be transferred to and adopted by local groups, they must first go through a process of framing with local communities.[88] Therefore foreign fighters might arrive with a different set of tactics and skills sets but this does not equate to a widespread adoption among armed groups.

In contrast to claims that foreign fighters bring skills are assessments that criticise foreign fighters as a resource burden to armed groups. Mendelsohn characterises Western foreign fighters as 'not only insignificant for the fighting effort; they may even become a liability. Instead of a force multiplier on the front, many need the equivalent of babysitting.'[89] In the Spanish Civil War, Dutch foreign fighters were lambasted for their lack of fighting experience.[90] Levitt finds that foreign fighters in al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) were ill trained, overzealous, and poorly informed about the political climate in Iraq.[91] In reference to the Soviet-Afghan War, veteran foreign fighter Noman Benotman stated: '(y)ou see, many of the Arab fighters were not professionals and had no idea

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[84] Vera Mironova, *From Freedom Fighters to Jihadists: Human Resources of Non-State Armed Groups* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 136.
[85] Daymon, de Roy van Zuijdewijn, and Malet, "Career Foreign Fighters."
[86] Daymon, de Roy van Zuijdewijn, and Malet.
[87] Malet, "Why Foreign Fighters? Historical Perspectives and Solutions," 97.
[88] Bakke, "Help Wanted?"
[89] Mendelsohn, "Foreign Fighters—Recent Trends," 195.
[90] Samuël Kruizinga, "Fear and Loathing in Spain. Dutch Foreign Fighters in the Spanish Civil War," *European Review of History: Revue Européenne d'histoire* 27, no. 1–2 (March 3, 2020): 134–51, https://doi.org/10.1080/13507486.2019.1699505.
[91] Matthew Levitt, "Foreign Fighters and Their Economic Impact: A Case Study of Syria and al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI)," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 3, no. 3 (September 2009): 19, https://www.jstor.org/stable/26298413.

that you had to build up a siege before going for the kill. They just wanted to move in quickly and seize cities and other targets.'[92] These assessments suggest that foreign fighters are not necessarily bringing skills that strengthen an armed groups but are a drain on group resources.

Finally, foreign fighters are found to negatively impact the cohesion of the armed groups that they join. There is almost no assessment of foreign fighters that does not note the suspicion and distrust by local fighters and civilians towards foreign fighters. This tension between local and foreign fighters is often associated with rupturing group cohesion. Group cohesion usually refers to two characteristics of armed groups: the capacity to fight effectively as a single unit and internal cohesiveness.[93] Increased group cohesion will result in sustained collective action, determination under adverse conditions, flexibility, the ability to perform within without tight command and control and a greater chance of victory.[94] The better the group cohesion, the more control groups have over its fighters in terms of both loyalty and behaviour. Conversely, a lack of group cohesion can lead to fragmentation of an armed group leading to poor performance.[95]

The role of foreign fighters in group fragmentation is often noted in the case of Chechnya. Al-Shishani finds that foreign fighter leader, Ibn al-Khattab established a training camp for local and foreign fighters that taught Salafi-jihadi ideology, distinct

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[92] Mahan Abedin, "From Mujahid to Activist: An Interview with a Libyan Veteran of the Afghan Jihad," *Spotlight on Terror* 3, no. 2 (March 22, 2005), https://jamestown.org/program/from-mujahid-to-activist-an-interview-with-a-libyan-veteran-of-the-afghan-jihad/.

[93] Jasen J. Castillo, *Endurance and War: The National Sources of Military Cohesion* (Redwood City: Stanford University Press, 2014), 2, http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/anu/detail.action?docID=1719955.

[94] Castillo, 4; Terrence Lyons, "The Importance of Winning: Victorious Insurgent Groups and Authoritarian Politics," *Comparative Politics* 48, no. 2 (January 1, 2016): 167–84, https://doi.org/10.5129/001041516817037745; Guy L. Siebold, "The Essence of Military Group Cohesion," *Armed Forces & Society* 33, no. 2 (January 2007): 286–95, https://doi.org/10.1177/0095327X06294173; Paul Staniland, "Organizing Insurgency: Networks, Resources, and Rebellion in South Asia," *International Security* 37, no. 1 (2012): 142–77, https://www.jstor.org/stable/23280407.

[95] Bakke, Cunningham, and Seymour, "A Plague of Initials"; Asal, Brown, and Dalton, "Why Split?"; Kenny, "Structural Integrity and Cohesion in Insurgent Organizations"; W. Mahoney, "Splinters and Schisms."

from local Sufi traditions.[96] Rich and Conduit claim that after the First Chechen War, the leadership within Chechnya became divided between those supporting a fight for jihad and an Islamist cause over the secular and nationalist causes that drove the first conflict. This divide not only affected group cohesion but also allowed Russia to label Chechen separatist forces as 'terrorists' or 'religious extremists' while simultaneously preventing previous supporters of the Chechen cause to voice continued support.[97] Other authors similarly note that foreign fighters brought new ideas about how the insurgency should be fought, negatively affecting group cohesion.[98] However, foreign fighters were not solely responsible for this schism. As argued by Bakke, the division between Nationalist and Islamist forces already existed in Chechnya. Foreign fighters were used instrumentally to drive this fragmentation, not the cause.[99]

Foreign fighters may be disliked but there is no causal evidence that they drive fragmentation. Armed groups are also not passive recipients of foreign fighters: they implement strategies for integrating and managing foreign fighters. One means of managing the tension and inherent differences between local and foreign fighters has been to place them into separate fighting units. During the Boer War, the relationship between Boer and foreign volunteers is simply characterised as 'not good.' Foreign fighters arrived to the front with 'no knowledge of the Boer's language or morality' and most were restricted to separate national units.[100] In the Spanish Civil War, volunteers were organised as much as possible into units according to language.[101] The International Brigade units were kept separate from local republican fighters as the

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[96] MB Al-Shishani, "The Rise and Fall of Arab Fighters in Chechnya" (Washington DC: The Jamestown Foundation, 2006), 8, https://jamestown.org/program/the-rise-and-fall-of-foreign-fighters-in-chechnya/.

[97] Rich and Conduit, "The Impact of Jihadist Foreign Fighters on Indigenous Secular-Nationalist Causes."

[98] Bakke, "Help Wanted?," 183; Kristin M. Bakke, "Copying and Learning from Outsiders? Assessing Diffusion from Transnational Insurgents in the Chechen Wars," in *Transnational Dynamics of Civil War* (Cambridge University Press, 2013), 31; Lorenzo Vidino, "The Arab Foreign Fighters and the Sacralization of the Chechen Conflict," *The Fletcher School Online Journal for Issues Related to Southwest Asia and Islamic Civilization*, Spring 2006, 3, https://ciaotest.cc.columbia.edu/olj/aln/aln_spring06/aln_spring06e.pdf; Rich and Conduit, "The Impact of Jihadist Foreign Fighters on Indigenous Secular-Nationalist Causes," 115.

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[100] Pretorius, "Welcome but Not That Welcome," 127.

[101] Jackson, *Fallen Sparrows*, 2, 4; Kruizinga, "Fear and Loathing in Spain. Dutch Foreign Fighters in the Spanish Civil War."

Spaniards viewed these volunteers with suspicion.[102] In Somalia, Bacon and Muibu note that foreign fighters often needed to be kept separate from the local population, especially women, due to the distrust of foreigners.[103] In this way, armed groups manage foreign fighters within their ranks and determine where they are located and how they are utilised within conflict.

2.4 INTEGRATING FOREIGN FIGHTERS

The theoretical ramifications of the separation of foreign fighters into their own units—or their embeddedness among local fighters—has received limited attention in literature. Both works outlined here have a focus on how integration of foreign fighters affects violence against civilians. The first, and most significant of these works is the doctoral project, and subsequent paper, by Pauline Moore.[104] Moore argues that a fighter's degree of embeddedness in an armed group determines their behaviour towards civilians. Introducing the concepts of social and cultural embeddedness, Moore utilises foreign fighters as a proxy for 'disembedded' actors. This lack of connection to locals makes them more likely to commit violence against civilians as they are unable to construct ties as locals would.[105] Second, Doctor and Willingham argue that foreign fighters fall outside the normal remit of control of armed groups.[106] As leadership does not constrain foreign fighters and foreign fighters lack the need for local civilian support, they are able deploy violence against civilians with little consequence.[107] The lack of ties to local networks implies that some foreign fighters are operating in their own space within conflicts.[108] These two works rely on the assumption that foreign

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[102] Jackson, *Fallen Sparrows*, 4.
[103] Tricia Bacon and Daisy Muibu, "The Domestication of Al-Shabaab," *The Journal of the Middle East and Africa* 10, no. 3 (July 3, 2019): 296, https://doi.org/10.1080/21520844.2019.1658986; This view is supported by Shinn, "Al Shabaab's Foreign Threat to Somalia"214.
[104] Pauline Luz Moore, "When Do Ties Bind? Foreign Fighters, Social Embeddedness, and Combatant Repertoires of Behavior During Civil War" (PhD, University of Denver, 2019), https://digitalcommons.du.edu/etd/1542; Pauline Moore, "When Do Ties Bind? Foreign Fighters, Social Embeddedness, and Violence against Civilians," *Journal of Peace Research* 56, no. 2 (March 2019): 279–94, https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343318804594.
[105] Moore, "When Do Ties Bind?," 2019; see also Austin C. Doctor and John D. Willingham, "Foreign Fighters, Rebel Command Structure, and Civilian Targeting in Civil War," *Terrorism and Political Violence*, July 16, 2020, 1–19, https://doi.org/10.1080/09546553.2020.1763320.
[106] Doctor and Willingham, "Foreign Fighters, Rebel Command Structure, and Civilian Targeting in Civil War."
[107] Doctor and Willingham, 6.
[108] It is important to note here that, like the work of Malet and Chu and Braithwaite outlined above, this piece also treats foreign fighters as a dichotomous value as present or absent from a conflict. Therefore,

fighters are separated from local fighters. However, other armed groups welcome and integrate foreign fighters within their organisational structure. In cases like AQI and the Islamic State, foreign fighters obtained high profile leadership positions within the organisation and or had significant influence over the conflict.

Literature is currently lacking an analysis of how integration into local networks affects the participation of foreign fighters in conflict. This lack of analysis of network structures is notable when much of the foreign fighter literature notes the importance of networks. The most prominent work on foreign fighter networks is Kohlman's examination of foreign fighters in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Kohlman's work suggests that foreign fighting creates networks that result in long-term, transnational coordination between armed groups that have shared experiences of foreign fighting. Kohlman highlights the onward movement of some veteran foreign fighters to other armed groups. In terms of foreign fighters that fought in Afghanistan, they are cited as being in places such as Chechnya, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Somalia, Algeria, Indonesia, the Philippines, Yemen, Kashmir, as well as prominent members of global organisations such as Al Qaeda (and affiliates).[109] The development of networks suggests that within conflicts, foreign fighters are undergoing a process that build enduring ties between individuals. This is an assumption made throughout the literature: foreign fighters emerge as a part of terrorist networks formed during conflict.[110] Yet, these works do not take a network approach to understand how these networks form or function.

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the relationship is not causal and there is no way to tell if it is the foreign fighters themselves that are committing the violence against civilians or if groups that allow foreign fighters to join their organisation are predisposed to commit more violence against civilians.

[109] For example, see Mendelsohn, "Foreign Fighters—Recent Trends," 191; Hamid and Farrall, *The Arabs at War in Afghanistan*, 183–84; Hafez, "*Jihad* after Iraq," 83.

[110] For example, see: Kohlmann, *Al-Qaida's Jihad in Europe*; Abuza, "Funding Terrorism in Southeast Asia"; Abuza, "Tentacles of Terror," December 2002; Agbiboa, "Terrorism without Borders"; Carter, Maher, and Neumann, "#Greenbirds: Measuring Importance and Influence in Syrian Foreign Fighter Networks"; Celso, "The Jihadist Forever War"; Barton, "The Historical Context and Regional Social Network Dynamics of Radicalisation and Recruitment of Islamic State Foreign Terrorist Fighters in Indonesia and Its Southeast Asian Neighbours."

2.5 CONCLUSION

Taken together, literature understands that foreign fighters are unique conflict actors operating to different effect to local fighters. Less is known about how foreign fighters participate in conflict and how this participation affects future trajectories of veterans. I propose that the answer is located in the intersection between integration into armed group and their participation in conflict.

In this thesis, I will argue that in order understand the transformative role of foreign fighting, we need to first understand the different functions and consequences of the networks where foreign fighters operate during conflicts. Existing literature notes that foreign fighters are often separated from local fighters, as well as the internal network building among foreign fighters. This thesis introduces a theoretical framework of foreign fighter integration that locates foreign fighters within the organisational structure of armed groups that determine with whom, where, and how foreign fighters participate in conflict and connects this participation to future impacts on international security.

Chapter 3: Foreign Fighter Integration and Network Perspectives

This chapter presents the theoretical framework for understanding how the Afghan conflicts transformed the Afghan Network into a persistent and resistant threat to international security. I utilise network perspectives to introduce the concept of foreign fighter integration. We are all connected to a multitude of networks, whether they be familial, friendship, commercial or within our local communities.[111] As outlined by Borgatti et al, 'one of the most potent ideas in social sciences is the notion that individuals are embedded in thick webs of social relations.'[112] Network perspectives ask how these interdependencies, and our location within them, affect behaviour, decision-making, and social phenomena.[113] I argue that the integration or exclusion of foreign fighters from local armed group networks determines how, where, and with whom foreign fighters participate in conflict. This variation in participation shapes the trajectories of foreign fighters. I do not propose that this variation in trajectories results in any greater or lesser threat to international security but that these threats are distinct.

This theoretical framework introduces three ideal types of foreign fighter integration—embedded, partitioned, and isolated—and connect this integration into local networks to their subsequent impact of foreign fighters on international security.[114] I propose that foreign fighters in the Afghan conflicts are unique in that they are one of the few examples of isolated foreign fighters. There are three processes common to all foreign fighters: network formation, expertise development, and socialisation. I argue that these processes are shaped by the integration type. Isolated foreign fighters benefit from three conditions: they are protected from the state, protected from the conflict, and these

[111] Christina Prell, *Social Network Analysis: History, Theory and Methodology* (SAGE, 2012), 1.
[112] S. P. Borgatti et al., "Network Analysis in the Social Sciences," *Science* 323, no. 5916 (February 13, 2009): 892, https://doi.org/10.1126/science.1165821.
[113] Lilla Vicsek, Gábor Király, and Hanna Kónya, "Networks in the Social Sciences," *Corvinus Journal of Sociology and Social Policy* 7, no. 2 (June 1, 2016): 86, https://doi.org/10.14267/CJSSP.2016.02.04.
[114] A similar typology was introduced here to describe how integration of foreign fighters determine how they are able to impact (rather than participate in) the armed groups that they join. Mathieson, "Foreign Fighter Experience and Impact."

conditions act as a site of convergence of like-minded individuals. This chapter outlines how the Afghan Network was formed and argues that the enduring consequences of foreign fighters on international security stems from the internal characteristics of networks formed during conflict.

First, I outline the field of network perspectives in social science and what I term 'collective action literature' more specifically. I establish how networks act as mechanisms for mobilisation, information and socialisation that can transform participant identity and social position within networks during collective action ranging from social movements to insurgencies. Second, I outline how foreign fighters can be connected to the networks of armed groups and how variations in affects how, where, and with whom foreign fighters engage during a conflict. I then outline how this isolation alters the processes of network formation, expertise development, and socialisation in contrast to our established understands of network perspectives but also our conventional understandings of foreign fighters more broadly.

In contrast to most social movements and armed groups, foreign fighters in the Afghan conflicts were not mobilised or embedded into existing social networks. Instead, the protection and opportunity of their isolation brought together previously unconnected fighters from around the world and allowed them to both rapidly develop new armed groups, while also becoming embedded in the transnational Afghan Network. Counter to narratives of foreign fighters emerging from conflict hardened and radicalised, I argue that foreign fighter isolation in the Afghan conflicts limited their capacity to build conflict skills. However, these limited conflict skills were legitimised through the network effects by trading on the mythic victory of the Mujahideen against the Soviet Union. Therefore, this generation of conflict-adjacent foreign fighters were able to achieve positions of higher authority within subsequent armed groups despite their limited experience of actual conflict. I argue that in contrast to our current understandings of socialisation in conflict, this generation of foreign fighters were not socialised into the behaviours and norms of the Afghan Mujahideen but among the foreign fighters within the Afghan conflicts. These socialisation processes—in particular, the formal political education in training camps—created a sufficient alignment of goals among veteran fighters that would facilitate continued coordination.

Finally, I outline the consequences of these processes when taken together. For veteran foreign fighters, the Afghan Network became a site for knowledge exchange, innovation, and resource-sharing that allowed foreign fighters to continually draw on valuable expertise, increasing their effectiveness as conflict actors, while building network resilience. The regenerative and resilient characteristics of the Afghan Network will form the core of the empirical chapters where I demonstrate how the network—its shape, characteristics, and identity—has been leveraged across time and space to ensure the network's survival and impact on conflicts worldwide, and international security more generally.

3.1 NETWORK PERSPECTIVES IN COLLECTIVE ACTION

I draw on network perspectives to understand how foreign fighters are integrated into armed groups. Armed groups do not uniformly integrate foreign fighters into their organisational structure. Foreign fighters are found operating on the outskirts of armed groups, as well as in influential leadership positions. I argue that the variation in integration gives rise to the specific characteristics of foreign fighters that help determine how they emerge from conflicts. This section provides an overview of network perspectives within social sciences and collective action literature more specifically. I use this literature as a base for understanding the effects of being integrated in, or connected to, a network in conflict.

The use of network perspectives in social science emerged among anthropologists and sociologists. Scholars recognised that attempts to describe or explain social phenomena through demographics—kinship, economics, religion, politics—were insufficient amid complex societies.[115] Instead, collective action is shaped by the relationships between people, influencing group behaviour and decision-making.[116] Network perspectives

[115] Stanley Wasserman and Katherine Faust, *Social Network Analysis: Methods and Applications* (Cambridge University Press, 1994), 12; Vicsek, Király, and Kónya, "Networks in the Social Sciences," 85.
[116] Alexandra Marin and Barry Wellman, "Social Network Analysis: An Introduction," *The SAGE Handbook of Social Network Analysis* 11 (2011): 25.

have been utilised by scholars since the 1920s to understand social phenomena, but they have only been recently adopted within the study of international relations.[117]

To start, it is important to introduce the terminology of network scholars. Network perspectives use a specific terminology to describe a network and its constituent parts. A network is formed by nodes that are connected by ties.[118] Nodes (also referred to as agents or actors) are social entities and may be individuals, corporate or collective social entities, spanning people, corporations, and states.[119] The ties between nodes—also known as edges—are the shared properties or relationships that connect them to other nodes in the network. These relationships may be familial, social, ethnic, interactions, shared possessions, transactional, shared movement such as migration, or some form of membership to a shared group.[120] A relational tie can even be the transmission of disease between nodes.[121] The strength of the tie between nodes may be conceptualised as the frequency or number of shared attributes—for example, the number of shared Facebook pages individuals follow—or binary ties—whether two nodes belong to the same group. How these ties and nodes fit together forms the structure of a network.

As outlined by Hafner-Burton et al, a 'network approach…defines structures as emergent properties of persistent patterns of relations among agents that can define, enable, and constrain those agents.'[122] Therefore, '[n]etwork theory refers to the mechanisms and processes that interact with network structures to yield certain outcomes for individuals and groups.'[123] Wasserman and Faust outline four relational concepts underpinning social network perspectives. First, network perspectives, at base, posit that actors are not autonomous but mutually dependent or interdependent on those within their networks. Second, networks can act as a source of transmission and

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[117] Vicsek, Király, and Kónya, "Networks in the Social Sciences," 84.
[118] S. P. Borgatti and Daniel S. Halgin, "On Network Theory," *Organization Science* 22, no. 5 (2011): 1169, https:// doi.org/10.1287/orsc.1100.0641; Marin and Wellman, "Social Network Analysis."
[119] Wasserman and Faust, *Social Network Analysis*, 17.
[120] Wasserman and Faust, 18; Marin and Wellman, "Social Network Analysis," 3.
[121] Vicsek, Király, and Kónya, "Networks in the Social Sciences," 87.
[122] Emilie M. Hafner-Burton, Miles Kahler, and Alexander H. Montgomery, "Network Analysis for International Relations," *International Organization* 63, no. 03 (July 2009): 561, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818309090195.
[123] Borgatti and Halgin, "On Network Theory," 1168.

exchange (of materials, goods, and ideas) referred to as 'flow.' Third, the network structural environment—the power dynamics and social norms between nodes—constrains and enables behaviour of actors within a network. Fourth, network models 'conceptualize structure…as lasting patterns of relations among actors.'[124]

Building on this work, relational sociology was established in the 1990s. Relational sociology was driven by the work of Harrison White.[125] White's approach focused on the types and strength of ties between nodes—friendship, cooperation, co-worker, family, etc—as the 'basic measurement unit in sociological network research.'[126] Further, in 1997, Emirbayer published the *Manifesto for Relational Sociology.* In it, Emirbayer argues:

> [I]ndividual persons, whether strategic or norm following, are inseparable from the transactional contexts in which they are embedded. … [a relational perspective] depicts social reality in dynamic, continuous and processual terms, and sees relations between social terms and units as pre-eminently dynamic in nature, as unfolding, ongoing processes rather than as static ties among inert substance.[127]

Network perspectives grounded in relational sociology have been utilised within social movement to help understand collective action. According to Diani and McAdam, the ties between social groups, both direct and indirect, create networks that affect an individual's ability to participate in, and the type of participation in collective action. These networks can facilitate 'the development of cognitive skills and competences and/or provide the context for the socialization of individuals to specific sets of values.'[128] Whereas theories of networks focus on tie formation and network theory

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[124] Hafner-Burton, Kahler, and Montgomery, "Network Analysis for International Relations," 562; Wasserman and Faust, *Social Network Analysis*, 4.
[125] Jan A. Fuhse, "Theorizing Social Networks: The Relational Sociology of and around Harrison White," *International Review of Sociology* 25, no. 1 (January 2, 2015): 15, https://doi.org/10.1080/03906701.2014.997968.
[126] Fuhse, 18.
[127] Mustafa Emirbayer, "Manifesto for a Relational Sociology," *American Journal of Sociology* 103, no. 2 (September 1997): 287–88, https://doi.org/10.1086/231209.
[128] Mario Diani and Doug McAdam, eds., *Social Movements and Networks: Relational Approaches to Collective Action*, Comparative Politics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 8.

deals with network effects.[129] As will be highlighted through the empirics of this thesis, examining social relations in conjunction with network structure provides the context in which individuals belong.[130]

Network perspectives have been widely used within social movement literature using both traditional mapping and measurements of social networks, as well as relational sociology. Groups undertaking collective action—including social movements, revolutionary groups, and insurgencies—can all be conceptualised as networks.[131] These groups are made up of complex webs of interpersonal ties. This section will outline how networks have been conceptualised as processes and mechanisms within these literatures—that I will refer to as collective action literature.

First, it is generally agreed that social networks play a crucial role in the emergence and development of social movements and armed groups. This work has a particular focus on the role of networks in the mobilisation of participants.[132] As outlined by Snow et al, an 'examination of the movement literature strongly suggests that network channels

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[129] Fuhse, "Theorizing Social Networks," 29.

[130] Lee Ann Fujii, *Killing Neighbors: Webs of Violence in Rwanda* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011), 18.

[131] Mario Diani, *Green Networks: A Structural Analysis of the Italian Environmental Movement* (Edinburgh University Press, 1995).

[132] Donatella Della Porta, *Social Movements, Political Violence, and the State: A Comparative Analysis of Italy and Germany*, 1st ed. (Cambridge University Press, 1995), https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511527555; Charles Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution* (New York: Random House, 1978); Roberto M. Fernandez and Doug McAdam, "Social Networks and Social Movements: Multiorganizational Fields and Recruitment to Mississippi Freedom Summer," *Sociological Forum* 3, no. 3 (1988): 357–82, https://doi.org/10.1007/BF01116431; David A. Snow, Louis A. Zurcher, and Sheldon Ekland-Olson, "Social Networks and Social Movements: A Microstructural Approach to Differential Recruitment," *American Sociological Review* 45, no. 5 (October 1980): 787, https://doi.org/10.2307/2094895; Florence Passy, "Socialization, Connection, and The Structure/Agency Gap: A Specification of The Impact of Networks on Participation in Social Movements," *Mobilization: An International Quarterly* 6, no. 2 (September 1, 2001): 173–92, https://doi.org/10.17813/maiq.6.2.v6u4wg67x87w943h; Bert Klandermans and Dirk Oegema, "Potentials, Networks, Motivations, and Barriers: Steps Towards Participation in Social Movements," *American Sociological Review* 52, no. 4 (August 1987): 519, https://doi.org/10.2307/2095297; Paul Staniland, *Networks of Rebellion: Explaining Insurgent Cohesion and Collapse*, Cornell Studies in Security Affairs (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2014); Doug McAdam and Ronnelle Paulsen, "Specifying the Relationship Between Social Ties and Activism," *American Journal of Sociology* 99, no. 3 (November 1993): 640–67, https://doi.org/10.1086/230319; Diani, *Green Networks*; Fujii, *Killing Neighbors*; Edward Aspinall, *Islam and Nation Separatist Rebellion in Aceh, Indonesia* (Stanford University Press, 2009); Roger Dale Petersen, *Resistance and Rebellion: Lessons from Eastern Europe* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 15.

is the richest source of movement recruits.'[133] This work doesn't claim that network membership is the only determinant of participation but that networks are important in two core ways: a network's structural connections provide the opportunity to join collective action and the network's socialisation function produces a collective identity for participation.[134] The more connections an individual has with members of a network, the more opportunities they will have to join.[135] Those individuals with fewer ties to participants within the network will be less likely to participate in the group.[136] As highlighted by Della Porta, in both Italy and Germany, opposition groups were built out of pre-existing networks, often consisting of small networks of friends. These networks became cliques and connected with other cliques and moved from low to high-risk activism. The pre-existing ties accelerated participation.[137]

Similarly, Shesterinina highlights the central role of quotidian or 'everyday' networks in decision-making to join the resistance or leave during the Georgia-Abkhaz war. Participants almost universally reported contacting family and friends to get more information about their mobilisation options after the Georgian invasion.[138] Butler et al note: 'It is through these [prior] networks that information regarding grievances and opportunities for social mobilization is transmitted. Social relations within one's network are both a source of benefit (or loss) and a source of information regarding the larger network.'[139] Snow et al note an exception to this trend in their examination of recruits to religious group, Hare Krishna. Snow et al find that most recruits to Hare Krishna were recruited in public spaces. However, these recruits self-reported as being new to the area or passing through. Thus, it was their complete disconnect to, or lack

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[133] Snow, Zurcher, and Ekland-Olson, "Social Networks and Social Movements," 790.

[134] Passy, "Socialization, Connection, and The Structure/Agency Gap"; Florence Passy and Marco Giugni, "Social Networks and Individual Perceptions: Explaining Differential Participation in Social Movements," *Sociological Forum* 16, no. 1 (2001): 128.

[135] Klandermans and Oegema, "Potentials, Networks, Motivations, and Barriers," 520; Snow, Zurcher, and Ekland-Olson, "Social Networks and Social Movements"; Della Porta, *Social Movements, Political Violence, and the State*.

[136] Snow, Zurcher, and Ekland-Olson, "Social Networks and Social Movements."

[137] Della Porta, *Social Movements, Political Violence, and the State*, 203.

[138] Anastasia Shesterinina, "Collective Threat Framing and Mobilization in Civil War," *American Political Science Review* 110, no. 03 (August 2016): 411–27, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055416000277.

[139] Christopher Butler, Michele Leiby, and Joshua Morales, "Social Networks and Civil War" (Conference on Disaggregating the Study of Civil War and Transnational Violence, University of California, San Diego, 2005), 4.

of embeddedness in, social networks that made them vulnerable to recruitment.[140] Connections to a network—or a complete disconnect from any networks—shape the likelihood that an individual will participate in collective action: one drives participation through connection and the other through striving for connection.

Second, networks also have a social and socialisation function that determines the characteristics of the individuals within them. People are more likely to participate in collective action because they have shared norms and values.[141] As outlined by Passy, '[s]ince identities are created and shaped through social relations, networks play a crucial role in the process of individual participation.'[142] McAdam and Fernandez examine applicants for the Mississippi Freedom Summer Project in 1964 from two university campuses. The Mississippi Freedom Project recruited predominantly white students from northern universities to 'staff freedom schools, register black voters, and dramatize the continued denial of civil rights…throughout the South.'[143] McAdam and Fernandez find that students who applied to the project were already embedded in civil rights activist networks and that their participation was shaped by the contextual history of activism for the civil rights movement at their respective universities.[144] Building on Staniland's work on insurgent networks, we also know that an insurgencies connection not just to potential recruits but their host or original communities shape how insurgencies form. Staniland's social-institutional theory argues that leaders and organisers build 'socially appropriate' organisations according to the networks in which they are embedded. Pre-existing networks that contain shared political worldviews become the backbone of an insurgency and determine the shape of an insurgent group. What is particularly important to understand here is the flexibility of pre-existing networks to be transformed into committing violence but the difficulty of building networks exclusively for the purpose of violence.[145]

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[140] Snow, Zurcher, and Ekland-Olson, "Social Networks and Social Movements," 793.
[141] Fernandez and McAdam, "Social Networks and Social Movements"; McAdam and Paulsen, "Specifying the Relationship Between Social Ties and Activism"; Alberto Melucci, "Youth, Time and Social Movements," *YOUNG* 4, no. 2 (May 1996): 3–14, https://doi.org/10.1177/110330889600400202.
[142] Passy, "Socialization, Connection, and The Structure/Agency Gap," 174.
[143] Fernandez and McAdam, "Social Networks and Social Movements," 359.
[144] Fernandez and McAdam, "Social Networks and Social Movements."
[145] Staniland, *Networks of Rebellion*.

Third, participation in a conflict network is a transformative experience. The participation in collective action, especially in civil wars, provide participants with a new set of skills. As outlined by Finkel, groups develop the skills necessary for resistance.[146] There are also the organisational skills of coordinating opposition to the state. Groups must know how to connect themselves to resources and expertise, establish secure communication channels, remain clandestine, and manage information to avoid detection from the state.[147] While such skills can be acquired during times of inaction, they are only tested and refined through practical application. Over time, participants are assumed to gain more experience, and often, as a result, higher positions within groups. These individuals are thought to retain these skills gained through conflict experience and can be re-activated for future action.[148]

Transformation is not limited to skills acquisition. Participation in collective action can also transform how participants view themselves and their capacities. In Wood's research into the experiences of *los campensinos* (which translates to the peasants or farmers) who supported and fought for the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) in El Salvador's civil war described this change through physical transformations: participants demonstrated their previous roles as submissive, hands out asking for assistance and contrasted this with their feelings now, shoulders back, heads held high with pride at what they had achieved.[149] Campesinos identity shifted from one of subordination to 'militant activists.'[150] Della Porta highlights that the 'the more total the activists' involvement in a political network, the more insulated they were from information that could threaten their political beliefs.'[151] Isolation within

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[146] Evgeny Finkel, "The Phoenix Effect of State Repression: Jewish Resistance during the Holocaust," *American Political Science Review* 109, no. 2 (May 2015): 339–53, https://doi.org/10.1017/S000305541500009X.
[147] Adapted from the five items of Finkel's resister's toolkit. Finkel, 341.
[148] Sarah Zukerman Daly, "Organizational Legacies of Violence: Conditions Favoring Insurgency Onset in Colombia, 1964–1984," *Journal of Peace Research* 49, no. 3 (May 2012): 473–91, https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343311435801.
[149] Elisabeth Jean Wood, *Insurgent Collective Action and Civil War in El Salvador* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511808685.
[150] Wood, 213.
[151] Della Porta, *Social Movements, Political Violence, and the State*, 180.

collective action networks can facilitate the development and acceptance of more radical ideas and an alternate view of reality.

Although the examples here have drawn on cases of network transformation in civil wars, the same processes of socialisation and transition can be observed in other forms of collective action. During the revolutions of the Arab Spring, whole societies had their entire political systems overturned and transformed by networks of activists coming together. For some states such as Syria, the networks of society were not redrawn through the success of the movements but their repression that saw individuals move from peaceful to violent opposition to the state. Once individuals and networks are transformed through collective action, these ties and transformations are expected to persist.[152]

In line with, but expanding on this network literature, I propose that the position of foreign fighters in an armed group—how they are embedded within local networks—determines how foreign fighters participate in conflict, and thus how this participation shapes their trajectories in future conflict. The following section introduces the concept of integration—how foreign fighters are located vis-à-vis an armed group—and how integration shapes participation in conflict. Integration encompasses more than just how foreign fighters are embedded—or isolated—from an armed group but also how foreign fighters are separated from their everyday networks. The network effects among foreign fighters share some characteristics identified in extant opposition movement, but also, in many areas foreign fighters deviates from expected outcomes. I outline how foreign fighters were integrated into the Mujahideen opposition during the Afghan conflict and the consequences of this integration for future action.

3.2 FOREIGN FIGHTER INTEGRATION

Integration, in this thesis, refers to how and where foreign fighters are located within the structural organisation of the armed groups they join and how they are utilised within conflict. As outlined by More and Tumelty, how foreign fighters are integrated

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[152] Dora L. Costa et al., "Persistent Social Networks: Civil War Veterans Who Fought Together Co-Locate in Later Life," *Regional Science and Urban Economics* 70 (May 2018): 289–99, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.regsciurbeco.2017.09.005.

into an armed group and their relationship with local fighters determines their role and status within a conflict.[153] I introduce foreign fighter integration to explore how foreign fighters are embedded in—or isolated from—the organisational structure of the armed groups that they join and how they are utilised. While Moore utilised foreign fighters as a proxy for 'disembedded' conflict actors—meaning that they fell outside of the command of the Bosnian Army—there is no uniform way that foreign fighters are integrated into armed groups.[154] Instead, I propose that foreign fighters are integrated into an armed group along a spectrum that affects how they are utilised by an armed group and thus, how they experience and participate in a conflict.

Extant literature fixates on the supposed 'difference' between foreign and local fighters.[155] However, what is rarely noted in literature is that few armed groups actively seek to attract foreign fighters.[156] While some, such as those fighting for the Islamic State or al-Shabaab, receive explicit invitations from an armed group,[157] others such as the Bosnian Army, reported foreign fighters arriving unexpectedly and uninvited.[158] This desire to have foreign fighters within one ranks, as well as the operational needs of an armed group, determines how foreign fighters are used by an armed group.

I outline three types of integration of foreign fighters: embedded, partitioned, isolated. Foreign fighters are considered embedded when they become full members of the groups that they join and are integrated into the existing organisational structure

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[153] Cerwyn Moore and Paul Tumelty, "Foreign Fighters and the Case of Chechnya: A Critical Assessment," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 31, no. 5 (April 11, 2008): 413, https://doi.org/10.1080/10576100801993347.
[154] Moore, "When Do Ties Bind?," 2019.
[155] Bakke, "Help Wanted?," 183; Bakke, "Copying and Learning from Outsiders?"; Vidino, "The Arab Foreign Fighters and the Sacralization of the Chechen Conflict," 3; Rich and Conduit, "The Impact of Jihadist Foreign Fighters on Indigenous Secular-Nationalist Causes," 115; Al-Shishani, "The Rise and Fall of Arab Fighters in Chechnya."
[156] Barak Mendelsohn, "In Limited Demand: The Other Foreign Volunteers in the Syrian Civil War," *Terrorism and Political Violence*, February 25, 2020, 1–24, https://doi.org/10.1080/09546553.2020.1730330.
[157] Voice of America News, "Al-Shabab Asks Foreign Fighters to Come to Somalia," *Voice of America News*, September 16, 2009.
[158] International Crisis Group, "Bin Laden and the Balkans: The Politics of Anti-Terrorism," November 9, 2001, 11, http://www.intl-crisis-group.org/projects/balkans/balkansregion/reports/A400481_09112001.pdf; Jennifer Mustapha, "The Mujahideen in Bosnia: The Foreign Fighter as Cosmopolitan Citizen and/or Terrorist," *Citizenship Studies* 17, no. 6–7 (October 2013): 742–55, https://doi.org/10.1080/13621025.2012.751718.

alongside local fighters.[159] Embedded foreign fighters train, fight and live alongside local fighters. As a result of their membership status, embedded foreign fighters may achieve leadership positions. Foreign fighters are partitioned when they are separated from local fighters into specific foreign fighter units. However, armed groups will utilise these foreign fighters during combat. Foreign fighters are isolated when they are both separated from local fighters and are not used in combat roles by armed groups. Isolated and partitioned foreign fighters may achieve leadership positions among other foreign fighters but rarely within the wider armed group itself.[160]

Table 1 Ideal Types of Foreign Fighter Integration

Integration Type	Group Membership	Combat Participation
Embedded	Yes	Yes
Partitioned	No	Yes
Isolated	No	No

Figure 1 provides two illustrative examples of what these different types of integration might look like in relation to of organisational structures of an armed group using a hierarchical and a flat organisational structure. Importantly, partitioned, and isolated foreign fighters should appear in similar locations within the organisational structure—separate from local fighters and leadership—but vary in how they are utilised in combat.

[159] Mathieson, "Foreign Fighter Experience and Impact," 9.
[160] This theoretical framework expands the typologies of integration presented in Mathieson (2022) to include partitioned fighters--those that are utilised in combat--from isolated--those foreign fighters that are not used in combat roles. Mathieson, 9–10.

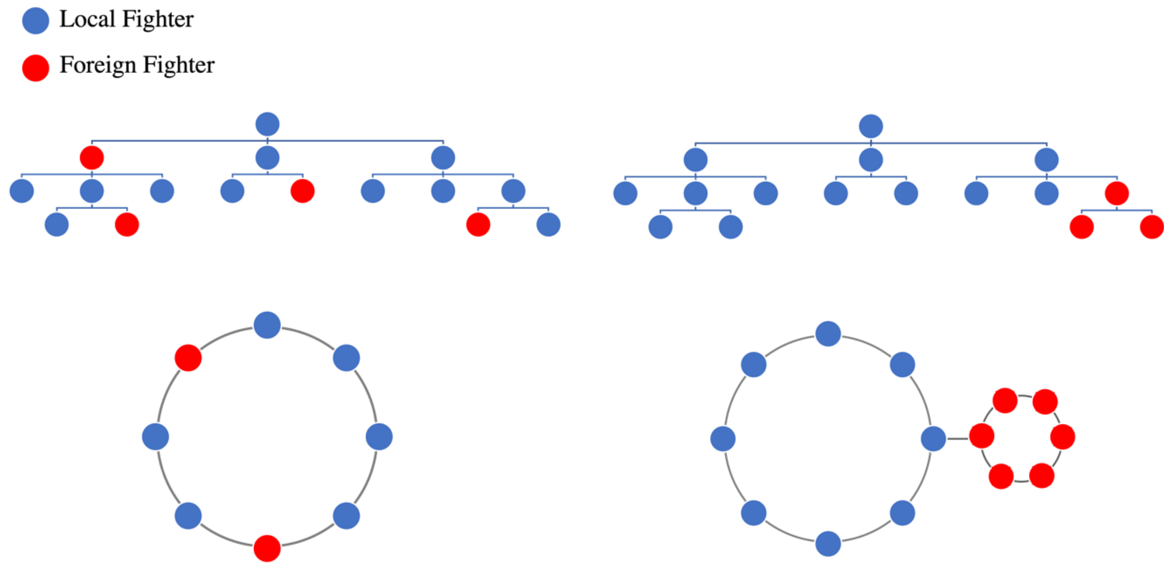

Figure 1 Examples of Embedded Foreign Fighters (left) and Partitioned and Isolated Foreign Fighters (right)

These three types of integration may present in any armed group with foreign fighters. Much has been made of the difference between foreigners that join the ranks of an army—the Bosnian War, the Israel Defence Force during the Arab Israeli War, the International Brigades during the Spanish Civil War, and more recently, foreigners joining the International Legion of Defence of Ukraine (ILDU)—and those that join non-state armed groups. The argument is that foreigners that join government forces—usually described as foreign volunteers—will be under the direct control of the state and less likely to commit war crimes or pose a threat to international security.[161] In short, the position of foreign fighters as embedded in a military hierarchy shapes their behaviour. However, this perspective seems to hold less weight when you consider partitioned foreign fighters such as the International Brigades in Spain and those

[161] Teun van Dongen et al., "Foreign Volunteers in Ukraine: Security Considerations for Europe," *International Centre for Counter-Terrorism* (blog), May 4, 2022, https://icct.nl/publication/foreign-volunteers-in-ukraine-security-considerations-for-europe/; Fritz and Young, "Transnational Volunteers"; David Malet, "The Risky Status of Ukraine's Foreign Fighters," *Foreign Policy* (blog), accessed June 24, 2022, https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/03/15/ukraine-war-foreign-fighters-legion-volunteers-legal-status/; Daphne Richemond-Barak and Victoria Barber, "Foreign Volunteers or Foreign Fighters? The Emerging Legal Framework Governing Foreign Fighters," *Opinio Juris* (blog), May 6, 2016, http://opiniojuris.org/2016/05/06/foreign-volunteers-or-foreign-fighters-the-emerging-legal-framework-governing-foreign-fighters/.

fighting for the Bosnian Army during the Bosnian War.[162] Both groups of fighters operated relatively autonomously from their respective army hierarchies. Further, in the case of Bosnia, many of the foreigners who travelled to the conflict were veterans of the Afghan conflicts, setting up training camps in the style of Afghanistan. Therefore, rather than the type of armed group that they join, I propose that it is how foreign fighters are integrated and the degree of control the armed group leadership has over their conduct that determines how foreign fighters participate in conflict.

Drawing on network perspectives outlined above, I argue that where foreign fighters are located within the organisational structure of an armed group is important for future trajectories of foreign fighters for two core reasons. The first is the inherent vulnerability of foreign fighters as they enter conflict zones. As highlighted in the overview of network perspectives, it is understood that networks can constrain individual behaviour and act as a source of information when it comes to decision-making. When foreign fighters arrive to a conflict zone, they are disconnected from their 'everyday' networks—one's family, friends, colleagues, and acquaintances within their domestic setting—removing them from the information and constraint these networks hold.[163] This has important consequences for their decision-making processes. While many foreign fighter scholars speak to a 'lack of life embeddedness' as a motivating factor for foreign fighters,[164] it is also true that for those that are actively recruited, recruiters seek to generate a disconnect between potential recruits and their everyday networks in order to mobilise them.[165] This approach is no different to the experiences of other organisations that have divergent ideologies to the mainstream

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[162] For an overview of foreign fighters in both contexts, see Mustapha, "The *Mujahideen* in Bosnia"; Yehia Ghanem, "Dancing with Arab Mujahedeen in the Hills of Bosnia," *Al Jazeera*, July 6, 2016, https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2016/07/dancing-arab-mujahedeen-hills-bosnia-160706092951260.html; Baxell, "Myths of the International Brigades"; Jackson, *Fallen Sparrows*; Richarson, *Comintern Army: The International Brigades and the Spanish Civil War*.

[163] Hafner-Burton, Kahler, and Montgomery, "Network Analysis for International Relations," 562; Wasserman and Faust, *Social Network Analysis*, 4.

[164] Coolsaet, "Facing the Fourth Foreign Fighters Wave," 12; Lindekilde, Bertelsen, and Stohl, "Who Goes, Why, and With What Effects."

[165] For the most up to date data on radicalisation processes, see Nafees Hamid and Christina Ariza, "Offline Versus Online Radicalisation: Which Is the Bigger Threat?: Tracing Outcomes of 439 Jihadist Terrorists Between 2014-2021 in 8 Western Countries" (London: Global Network on Extremism and Technology, 2022), https://gnet-research.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/GNET-Report-Offline-Versus-Online-Radicalisation.pdf.

such as cults or religious sects.[166] The separation from, or lack of, strong ties to everyday networks establishes a vulnerability for alternative norms and behaviours to take hold. In his report on foreign fighters in Sudan, Menkhaus notes: 'a young diaspora recruit is, upon arrival in Somalia, entirely cut off socially and therefore in theory easier to isolate, indoctrinate, and control for the purpose of executing suicide bombings. Were this not the case, it would much less risky and less expensive for [al-S]habaab to simply recruit locals.'[167] I propose that foreign fighters are more vulnerable to network effects because they lack access, or are separated from, their normal information channels and the effects of their everyday networks on decision-making and constraint.

Second, how foreign fighters are integrated into an armed group determines who fills this information or social provision role and whether or how foreign fighters can participate in the conflict. For those foreign fighters that are embedded into an armed group, the role of information and social provision should be filled by members of the armed group itself, and the information and control provided will be in line with their agenda. However, for those that are partitioned or isolated, the armed group will have less control over who fills this role. Armed groups may find that they have little to no control over the foreign fighters that have joined their ranks.[168]

While embedded or partitioned foreign fighters are utilised in conflict, those foreign fighters that are isolated are outside of the direct control of the armed group and protected from the conflict itself. Isolated foreign fighters, I argue, are the least common type of foreign fighters and the core example of this lack of integration are foreign fighters in the Afghan conflicts. While this thesis only examines the Afghan Network in depth, Chapter 9 provides a brief overview of the different conflict processes and trajectories of foreign fighters that are embedded and partitioned. Chapter 9 demonstrates how different types of integration affects the experiences and trajectories

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[166] see for example Rodney Stark and William Sims Bainbridge, "Networks of Faith: Interpersonal Bonds and Recruitment to Cults and Sects," *American Journal of Sociology* 85, no. 6 (1980): 1376–95.
[167] "Violent Islamic Extremism: Al-Shabaab Recruitment in America," 2009, 11–12, http://www.hsgac.senate.gov/download/031109menkhaus.
[168] Moore, "When Do Ties Bind?," 2019; Doctor and Willingham, "Foreign Fighters, Rebel Command Structure, and Civilian Targeting in Civil War."

of foreign fighters, generally, highlighting the unique characteristics of the Afghan Network identified throughout this thesis.

3.3 FOREIGN FIGHTER ISOLATION IN THE AFGHAN CONFLICTS

I propose that in the Afghan conflicts, foreign fighters were isolated from local Mujahideen fighters. With a few exceptions, most foreign fighters were trained in foreign fighter camps, led by other foreign fighters, and stayed in foreign fighter guesthouses. This meant that foreign fighters had minimal interaction with local fighters. Foreign fighters in the Afghan conflicts were also rarely used in combat. I argue that this isolation provided three key conditions that facilitated the trajectories and shaped their downstream consequences: protection from the state, protection from the conflict, and served as a mass convergence experience. This section examines each in turn before examining how these conditions affected the experiences of foreign fighters.

Protection from the State

For many foreign fighters, the Afghan conflicts presented an opportunity to escape from persecution and prosecution in their home countries. For example, at the time of the Afghan conflicts, the two major opposition groups in Egypt were Gema‘a Islamiyya (GI) and Egyptian Islamic Jihad (EIJ). Both groups had emerged from the discontent with the Muslim Brotherhoods decision to renounce violence in 1970. Lebanese journalist Camille Tawill notes that GI was dominant in the south, whereas EIJ was dominant in Cairo and the north.[169] EIJ and GI coordinated the assassination of President Sadat in 1981.[170] After the assassination, the Egyptian government imprisoned thousands of Islamists. Those that avoided arrest fled to Afghanistan and as others were released, they moved to Afghanistan to avoid detection. Similarly, for Darul Islam (DI) in Indonesia had a resurgence in the 1970s before it experienced another government crackdown before the general election in 1977.[171] Abdullah

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[169] Tawil, *Brothers in Arms*, 99.
[170] Tawil, 11–12.
[171] David Gordon and Samuel Lindo, “Jemaah Islamiyah,” AQAM Futures Project: Case Studies Series (Center for Strategic and International Studies, November 2011), 2, https://csis-website-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-

Sungkar and Abu Bakar Ba'syir (also commonly spelt Bashir), two senior members of DI who had been arrested in 1979,[172] on release in 1985, fled to Malaysia to re-establish the group beyond the reach of the Indonesian state.[173] Sungkar and Ba'syir began dispatching Indonesian and Malaysian recruits to the Soviet-Afghan war for training in order to rebuild and strengthen the group.[174] In Libya, prior to the Afghan conflicts, there was an underground opposition movement that sought to overthrow President Moammar Gaddafi. However, any previous attempts of opposition or violence had led to the violent and public crackdowns by the state. Captured opposition members would often be executed, and in some cases, their bodies hung from gallows around the university.[175] Afghanistan not only presented an opportunity to escape the regime but also to establish a coordinated opposition capable of confronting Gaddafi.[176]

Although there are other motivations among this generation for travelling to the Afghan conflicts, all foreign fighters were afforded protection from their home states. States are generally unwilling to participate in external civil conflicts as a means of targeting their citizens. This protection has changed overtime with some armed groups participating in insurgencies being classified as terrorist actors. We see in both the case of Somalia with al-Shabaab and the Islamic State in both Syria and Iraq being targeted in counter-terrorism airstrikes by third-party states, including the deliberate targeting of foreign fighters. However, during the Afghan conflicts, this was not the case. Foreign fighting provided the opportunity to build networks, train and develop opposition groups without the risk of detection. As these actors were not operating clandestinely, I argue that these processes occurred more rapidly and were reinforced within the culture of the foreign fighter network.

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public/legacy_files/files/publication/111101_Gordon_JemaahIslamiyah_WEB.pdf; Quinton Temby, "Imagining an Islamic State in Indonesia: From Darul Islam to Jemaah Islamiyah," *Indonesia* 89, no. 1 (April 2010): 13.

[172] Muhammad Tito Karnavian, *Explaining Islamist Insurgencies: The Case Of Al-Jamaah Al-Islamiyyah And The Radicalisation Of The Poso Conflict, 2000-2007* (World Scientific, 2014), 43.

[173] Gordon and Lindo, "Jemaah Islamiyah," 2.

[174] Gordon and Lindo, 1.

[175] Tam Hussein, "Abdul Hakim Belhaj: Why I Rejected Bin Laden's Invitation to Join al-Qaeda," *Middle East Eye*, 2019, http://www.middleeasteye.net/big-story/abdul-hakim-belhaj-libya-alqaeda-binladen.

[176] Christophe Ayad, "'We Are Simply Muslim': Libyan Rebel Chief Denies Al-Qaeda Ties," *Time Magazine*, September 4, 2011, http://content.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,2091744,00.html.

Protection from the Conflict

Foreign fighters in the Afghan conflicts were rarely utilised by the Mujahideen factions during conflict. While some foreign fighters, such as Indonesian fighters from the AMMA participated on the frontlines, Sayyaf made it clear that it was his preference that these foreign fighters take their skills back to Indonesia rather than participate in the Afghan conflicts. [177] However, by and large, foreign fighters in Afghanistan were not only isolated from Mujahideen fighters in camps, but also from combat roles. Some exceptions are outlined in Chapter 4. Unlike other foreign fighter populations and local Afghan fighters, there was a relatively low casualty rate among this generation of foreign fighters. Reports record casualties usually related to training accidents in foreign fighter camps.[178] Hegghammer estimates deaths among foreign fighters in Afghanistan were between two and six percent.[179] In contrast, an estimated 90 percent of foreign fighters that travelled to Chechnya were killed.[180] Reports of foreign fighter death rates in Syria and Iraq remain unreliable but also indicate a high casualty rate as a result of the defeat of the Islamic State.[181] In Afghanistan, foreign fighters were 'conflict-adjacent.' This generation of foreign fighters benefited from proximity to conflict—the conditions of war, forming networks, training, and socialisation—without the threat of harm or death. In contrast to foreign fighters in other conflicts, members of the Afghan Network were likely to survive the conflict. This higher survival rate resulted in a large pool of veteran foreign fighters who participated in training or combat during the conflict who were able to use this participation and experience in future conflicts and armed groups.

Mass Convergence

Participation in conflict can facilitate strong socialisation processes.[182] However, being isolated, foreign fighters in the Afghan conflicts were not meeting and socialising with

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[177] Abas, *Inside Jamaah Islamiyah*, 45.
[178] see accounts by Hamid and Farrall, *The Arabs at War in Afghanistan*, 242; "The Secret Diary of Abu Zubaydah," *Al Jazeera America*, accessed August 14, 2020, http://projects.aljazeera.com/2013/abu-zubaydah/index.html.
[179] Hegghammer, "The Rise of Muslim Foreign Fighters," 63.
[180] Byman, "The Homecomings," 587.
[181] Arie Perliger and Daniel Milton, "From Cradle to Grave: The Lifecycle of Foreign Fighters in Iraq and Syria," *Combating Terrorism Centre*, 2016, 60.
[182] Jeffrey T Checkel, "Socialization and Violence: Introduction and Framework," *Journal of Peace Research* 54, no. 5 (September 2017): 592–605, https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343317721813; Amelia

local fighters but in constant contact and interaction with each other. The Afghan conflicts served as a melting pot for foreign fighters from all over the world who would have otherwise never met, providing them the opportunity to share ideas and practices. Fazul Abdullah Muhammad, a foreign fighter from the Comoros, wrote a letter to his brother explaining how he was able to meet and train with people from all over the world:

> There was, of course, a big Comoran group, and they kept us all together. Some Filipino brothers, a group of Libyan Arabs and some Yemenis joined us. Thus, the camp itself taught you practically how to deal with Muslim brethren from other nationalities without discrimination and without racism.[183]

This socialisation not only occurred between fighters from different countries but also among individuals from the same country. Even though there were clusters of specific nationalities, foreign fighters did not necessarily know one another or move in the same circles prior to their travel to Afghanistan. For example, the Libyan foreign fighter and future senior figure in the LIFG, Noman Benotman, was never a member of the underground movements in Libya.[184] Although Benotman, like many Islamists, was influenced by the ideas of Sayyid Qutb, Benotman was kicked out of university by the Gaddafi regime and not connected to the opposition movements based at Libyan universities.[185] Without the space of the Afghan conflicts, Benotman may never have encountered his fellow LIFG fighters.

Mass convergence is a factor that should remain stable regardless of integration type. However, shared participation in conflict is not a sufficient explanation for the

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Hoover Green, "Armed Group Institutions and Combatant Socialization: Evidence from El Salvador," *Journal of Peace Research* 54, no. 5 (September 2017): 687–700, https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343317715300; Devorah Manekin, "The Limits of Socialization and the Underproduction of Military Violence: Evidence from the IDF," *Journal of Peace Research* 54, no. 5 (September 2017): 606–19, https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343317713558.

[183] "Fazul Joins Camp to Begin Jihad," *Daily Nation*, August 5, 2008, https://web.archive.org/web/20120112012801/http://www.nation.co.ke/News/-/1056/452640/-/tjlr3a/-/index.html.

[184] Abedin, "From Mujahid to Activist."

[185] Noman Benotman, "Exile Has Taught Me How Vital Freedom Is," *The Times*, October 21, 2011, https://www.quilliaminternational.com/exile-has-taught-me-how-vital-freedom-is-by-noman-benotman/.

formation of the Afghan Network. Instead, shared participation was necessary for the development of the social links among foreign fighters. The Afghan conflicts is estimated to have brought together between 2,000-20,000 foreign fighters.[186] Were it not for this experience, many of these individuals would not have met.

3.4 OUTCOMES OF FOREIGN FIGHTER ISOLATION

The isolation of foreign fighters in the Afghan conflicts created a confluence of conditions that altered the expected or established outcomes of participating in conflict. The processes of network formation, expertise development, and socialisation is common to all foreign fighters. However, I argue, the conditions facilitated by isolation, shapes each of these processes. I challenge the common assertions that foreign fighters emerge from conflict battle-hardened, radicalised[187] and supported by an international network of terrorist actors.[188] This section outlines how these three processes, driven by the network effect of integration, challenge the common assumptions of foreign fighters. I argue that the Afghan Network was able to develop thicker social ties among participants and were built on limited shared expertise directly related to their isolation.

3.4.1 Network Formation

I propose that the isolation of the foreign fighters allowed for rapid network formation that resulted in a network: new armed groups attached to a transnational network. As highlighted in the literature review, foreign fighter literature makes frequent reference to networks but fails to use network perspective to understand how these networks form and how new networks are leveraged. This section builds a framework for understanding how a network emerged and how this network formation process differs from social movement and civil war literature. First, I outline how networks were formed among foreign fighters in the Afghan conflicts. I propose that instead of

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[186] Hafez says estimates of 3000-4000 are generous but Hegghammer puts estimates at 5,000-20,000. Hafez, "*Jihad* after Iraq," 86; Hegghammer, "The Rise of Muslim Foreign Fighters," 61.
[187] President Barack, "Statement by the President on ISIL"; Azinović and Jusić, "The Lure of the Syrian War: The Foreign Fighters' Bosnian Contingent," 6; Benmelech and Klor, "What Explains the Flow of Foreign Fighters to ISIS?," 1; Byman, "The Homecomings," 581.
[188] For example, see: Kohlmann, *Al-Qaida's Jihad in Europe*; Abuza, "Funding Terrorism in Southeast Asia"; Abuza, "Tentacles of Terror," December 2002; Agbiboa, "Terrorism without Borders"; Carter, Maher, and Neumann, "#Greenbirds: Measuring Importance and Influence in Syrian Foreign Fighter Networks"; Celso, "The Jihadist Forever War"; Barton, "The Historical Context and Regional Social Network Dynamics of Radicalisation and Recruitment of Islamic State Foreign Terrorist Fighters in Indonesia and Its Southeast Asian Neighbours."

leveraging pre-existing social ties, as is normally the case for social movements and armed groups, the isolation of the foreign fighters allowed for the formation of new networks. Second, I outline how isolation allowed for the rapid formation of new armed groups. I argue that these networks that formed due to the protection of isolation defy usual expectations of armed group formation.

It is generally agreed that social networks play a crucial role in the emergence and development of social movements and armed groups.[189] Foreign fighters in the Afghan conflicts differ in that, with exception of members of extant armed groups that sent its members to fight, these fighters rarely came from pre-existing opposition networks. Foreign fighter memoirs and first-hand accounts highlight travelling alone or with a few friends or family members rather than systematic connection to pre-existing networks.[190] Further, on arrival, these same foreign fighters were not integrated with local fighters but placed among other foreign fighters with whom they did not share a prior connection. When describing the integration of foreign fighters, I highlighted how those disconnected from their everyday networks are more vulnerable to the influence of outsiders. Foreign fighters arrived in Pakistan and Afghanistan unable speak the local languages and unable to leverage prior network guidance. The vulnerability of foreign fighters in this new environment incentivised building connections with among other foreign fighters. Instead of being mobilised and impacted by extant networks, foreign fighters in the Afghan Network were attached to new networks and more dependent on them. I identify two distinct networks formed in the Afghan conflicts: new networks used to form new armed groups, and the transnational network between foreign fighters.

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[189] Della Porta, *Social Movements, Political Violence, and the State*; Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution*; Fernandez and McAdam, "Social Networks and Social Movements"; Snow, Zurcher, and Ekland-Olson, "Social Networks and Social Movements"; Passy, "Socialization, Connection, and The Structure/Agency Gap"; Klandermans and Oegema, "Potentials, Networks, Motivations, and Barriers"; Staniland, *Networks of Rebellion*; McAdam and Paulsen, "Specifying the Relationship Between Social Ties and Activism"; Diani, *Green Networks*; Fujii, *Killing Neighbors*; Aspinall, *Islam and Nation Separatist Rebellion in Aceh, Indonesia*; Petersen, *Resistance and Rebellion: Lessons from Eastern Europe*, 15.
[190] See accounts by Hamid and Farrall, *The Arabs at War in Afghanistan*; Anas and Hussein, *To The Mountains*; Muhammed, *Al-Ansar*; Abas, *Inside Jamaah Islamiyah*.

Formation of New Armed groups

As outlined in Lewis' pioneering work, historically, scholars have known little about the formation stage of armed groups.[191] Major datasets capture conflict onset, and therefore the emergence of an armed group, if they hit a threshold of violence—ranging from 25 to 100 battle deaths in a year.[192] However, many nascent armed groups never meet this threshold and are either destroyed by government or choose not to proceed prior to this point. Larson and Lewis note that nascent armed groups often rely on the secrecy of the local communities around them because if the identity of the leaders and their whereabouts would likely 'spell the end of rebellion.'[193] In the early stages of group formation, leadership is established and goals of the group developed.[194] Blaxland uses the term incubation to refer to the period of a group's life cycle where insurgents 'actively avoid detection while they undergo pre-war preparation.'[195] Blaxland posits that those groups that are able to shore themselves up with training and organisations prior to becoming visible to the state are likely to survive longer.[196] Della Porta's work on political violence in Italy notes that few of the opposition groups survived for longer than a single year.[197]

Lewis lists several criteria that a rebel group must meet to be considered formed: 'an organization formed with discernible command and control structure, and that had committed or planned to commit, at least one act of violence against the state.[198] As an armed group reaches this threshold of violence, it reveals itself to the state or opposition. Once fighting with the state begins, armed groups are forced to shift energy from war preparation to war fighting. As an armed group expands beyond the formation

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[191] Janet I. Lewis, *How Insurgency Begins: Rebel Group Formation in Uganda and Beyond*, 1st ed. (Cambridge University Press, 2020), https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108855969.

[192] Janet I. Lewis, "How Does Ethnic Rebellion Start?," *Comparative Political Studies* 50, no. 10 (September 2017): 1423, https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414016672235.

[193] Jennifer M. Larson and Janet I. Lewis, "Rumors, Kinship Networks, and Rebel Group Formation," *International Organization* 72, no. 4 (2018): 876, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818318000243.

[194] Lewis' work in Uganda examines the formation of armed groups from their clandestine origins of just a few individuals and their success or failure to expand beyond this stage. Lewis, "How Does Ethnic Rebellion Start?," 1430.

[195] Joel J. Blaxland, *Insurgency Prewar Preparation and Intrastate Conflict: Latin America and Beyond* (Springer Nature, 2020), 49.

[196] Blaxland, *Insurgency Prewar Preparation and Intrastate Conflict*.

[197] Donatella Della Porta, *Clandestine Political Violence* (Cambridge University Press, 2013), 263–64.

[198] Lewis, "How Does Ethnic Rebellion Start?," 1428.

stage and become observable to their opposition, the group needs to rapidly expand their forces and capacity to survive.[199] As noted by Staniland, expansion is a 'particularly severe challenge' to armed groups as they face military pressure, incorporating new members into the organisation and work to seize territory.[200] During this period of new visibility while still undergoing recruitment and training, nascent armed groups are at a heightened risk of being destroying by the state and most groups do not survive this stage of development.

As highlighted above, a key condition of the isolation is the protection of foreign fighters from their home state. Therefore, foreign fighters in the Afghan conflicts were protected from the main determinant of armed group failure. All the while, foreign fighters were able to build their networks and gain the experience necessary for the formation of armed groups including expertise development through training and building shared aims reinforced through socialisation. I argue that it was this protection that facilitated the proliferation of armed groups among veteran foreign fighters of the Afghan conflicts.

Formation of Transnational Network

These new networks that formed the basis of new armed groups do not exist in isolation: they form part of the transnational network that resulted from the mass convergence of foreign fighters to the Afghan conflicts. Individuals who would have otherwise never met were brought together by a basic desire to participate in the same conflict. Although many foreign fighters organised themselves by nationality, most engaged in training and combat alongside other foreign fighter contingents. This network, built on a shared identity developed through participation in the Afghan conflicts, would become an important resource for the armed groups. Non-state armed groups, at risk of detection

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[199] Douglas A. Van Belle, "Leadership and Collective Action: The Case of Revolution," *International Studies Quarterly* 40, no. 1 (March 1996): 117, https://doi.org/10.2307/2600933; Jeremy M. Weinstein, "Resources and the Information Problem in Rebel Recruitment," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 49, no. 4 (August 2005): 600, https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002705277802; Kristine Eck, "Coercion in Rebel Recruitment," *Security Studies* 23, no. 2 (April 3, 2014): 387, https://doi.org/10.1080/09636412.2014.905368.

[200] Staniland, *Networks of Rebellion*, 41; Although referencing expansion that results in territorial control, Kalyvas also notes the "staggering" increase in military requirements as a group expands. Stathis N. Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*, Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 138–41.

and destruction from the state, must source weapons, resources and training that does not compromise their safety. The Afghan Network played an important role in facilitating the continued coordination between trusted members in support of the mutual goal of Islamic governance. I propose that this network, built from scratch, created ties between armed groups, bound together in a transnational network that would become the site of continued interactions and learning.

3.4.2 Expertise Development

Participating in conflict should provide fighters the opportunity to develop specific combat skills necessary for confronting the state. There is a consensus in military and civil wars literature that prior conflict experience is beneficial to the capacity of armed groups. As noted by Hoover Green, '[a]nyone who undergoes military training are incrementally more predisposed to commit violence, a change that is considerably intensified by combat experiences.'[201] State and non-state armed groups draw on previous experience to learn and adapt strategies.[202] While such skills may be acquired during times of inaction, they can only be tested and refined through practical application. As outlined by Storr, 'a fighter-pilot will not become proficient if he never meets an enemy aircraft, nor a submariner a merchantman.'[203] Basic training may teach a participant how to load and fire a gun, but it is only in conflict itself that the reality of firing at the opposition can be tested. Conflict participation should also increase perceptions of capacity. Leaders of armed groups with prior military experience are more likely to be trusted and will experience less group fragmentation.[204] In militaries, commanders with prior conflict experience make better decisions in the field.[205] Over time, participants are assumed to gain more experience, and often, as a result, higher

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[201] Amelia Hoover Green, "The Commander's Dilemma: Creating and Controlling Armed Group Violence," *Journal of Peace Research* 53, no. 5 (September 2016): 622, https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343316653645.

[202] Zachary Abuza, "Learning by Doing: Al Qaeda's Allies in Southeast Asia," *Current History; Philadelphia* 103, no. 672 (April 2004): 171–76, https://search.proquest.com/docview/200753195/abstract/3523D7ABCFA244AAPQ/1; Nancy K. Hayden, "Innovation and Learning in Terrorist Organizations: Towards Adaptive Capacity and Resiliency," *System Dynamics Society*, 2013, https://proceedings.systemdynamics.org/2013/proceed/papers/P1407.pdf; Press, "Lessons from Ground Combat in the Gulf: The Impact of Training and Technology."

[203] Jim Storr, *The Human Face of War* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2009), 161.

[204] Austin C Doctor, "A Motion of No Confidence: Leadership and Rebel Fragmentation," *Journal of Global Security Studies* 5, no. 4 (2020): 598–616, https://doi.org/10.1093/jogss/ogz060.

[205] Storr, *The Human Face of War*.

positions within groups. Individuals are assumed to retain these skills gained through experience and they can be re-activated for future action.[206] As outlined by Finkel, opposition groups also develop a range of skills beyond combat skills necessary for resistance,[207] including clandestine information sharing, coordinating protests, evading security forces, and establishing and running training camps. Groups must know how to connect themselves to resources and expertise, establish secure communication channels, remain clandestine, and manage information leaks to the opposition to survive.[208] Therefore, opposition groups need more than military or conflict experience, they also require the logistics and planning expertise to ensure group survival.

As foreign fighters in the Afghan conflicts were isolated from conflict, few members of this generation participated in direct combat. Few also stayed long enough to receive more than basic training. This reality stands in contrast with the assessments that foreign fighters emerge from conflict as battle-hardened and radicalised. Azinović and Jusić state that returnee foreign fighter veterans 'will inevitably be battle-hardened, skilled in weapon and explosives and radicalised.'[209] Byman states: 'Foreign fighters come back as hardened veterans, steady in the face of danger and skilled in the use of weapons and explosives.'[210] This thesis does not propose that foreign fighters emerged from the Afghan conflicts with no expertise. Instead, I propose that the protection allowed groups to side-step the trial-and-error process of developing the practical expertise necessary for a successful armed group, including establishing training camps, developing training regimes and specific repertoire of violence: namely bomb-making. The aim here is to demonstrate that these foreign fighters did develop expertise but, for most, this expertise was limited by their isolation. This experience did not create an army of battle-hardened and expert fighters. However, I demonstrate how it did create a model for training that would be instrumental in the development of future armed groups and their modes of violence.

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[206] Daly, "Organizational Legacies of Violence."
[207] Finkel, "The Phoenix Effect of State Repression."
[208] Adapted from the five items of Finkel's resister's toolkit. Finkel, 341.
[209] Azinović and Jusić, "The Lure of the Syrian War: The Foreign Fighters' Bosnian Contingent," 6.
[210] Byman, "The Homecomings," 581.

If foreign fighters only had limited participation on the frontlines and most only had a few weeks of training, how did foreign fighters become renowned as experienced and hardened fighters? I argue that during the Afghan conflicts, foreign fighters benefited from being connected to the mythology developed within the Afghan conflicts. The mythology of foreign fighters in the Afghan—often marked through the identifier of Arab Afghan or 'nationality' Afghan (as was the case of Algerian Afghans)—carried revered meaning. This mythology then became entangled with the victory of the Mujahideen in Afghanistan which inspired other Islamist opposition groups, providing evidence that victory was possible. Despite the limitation of the expertise developed in the Afghan conflicts, the mythology that developed around the Afghan Network reified any participation and transformed participants into respected conflict actors.

3.4.3 Combatant Socialisation

The third process that I examine in this thesis is combatant socialisation. Building on the socialisation work of Checkel,[211] Hoover-Green defines *combatant socialisation* as: 'the process of inducting new combatants into the norms and rules of a given armed group.'[212] Socialisation can occur through many processes. As highlighted by Passy, networks have a strong socialisation function and the embeddedness within networks, whether formal or informal, 'helps individuals create a salient identity which is an important cultural resource…which facilitates the emergence of a political consciousness.'[213] This internal transformation can also be accompanied by a physical shift of the position of individuals within a network. Participants may gain more ties to others within their networks, or these ties may be strengthened by their shared experiences. In the case of the Campesinos in El Salvador, participants transitioned from peasants to landholders which altered their position within the network, transforming the overall shape of social relations.[214] Therefore, the network effects of socialisation range from internalisation of new norms and behaviours to the social transformation of participants into new roles.

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[211] Checkel, "Socialization and Violence."
[212] Hoover Green, "Armed Group Institutions and Combatant Socialization."
[213] Mario Diani and Doug McAdam, *Social Movements and Networks: Relational Approaches to Collective Action* (Oxford University Press, 2003), 30.
[214] Wood, *Insurgent Collective Action and Civil War in El Salvador*.

I argue that the socialisation of foreign fighters in the Afghan conflicts was directly affected by their isolation. First, foreign fighters, being disconnected from their everyday networks, were particularly vulnerable to new ideas and practices.[215] Leaders within the foreign fighter network were able to stitch unconnected foreign fighters in their orbit and socialise them into a particular culture of jihad. Second, instead of being socialised among local Afghan fighters and their ideas about conflict, this generation of foreign fighters were largely socialised among themselves. The formal religious education provided to foreign fighters in camps socialised fighters into ideas of transnational global jihad, a social and political framework that applied beyond the Afghan conflicts. I propose that, regardless of the specific interpretation of Islam taught, the religious education can be typified as supporting the overthrow of extant regimes through violent jihad, and the implementation of some form of Islamic governance. The form of governance varied from a state governed by Sharia Law to the establishment of a caliphate across multiple states. I argue that despite disagreements in specifics among the Afghan Network, this basic alignment in support of Islamic governance was sufficient to build trust and facilitate cooperation within the network. I demonstrate how socialisation facilitated by isolation created a shared language, standard operating procedures, and common goals and ideologies that stitched this foreign fighter network together.

3.5 THE LONG-TERM EFFECTS OF THE AFGHAN NETWORK

The Afghan Network should be seen as a collection of foreign fighters with a shared identifying characteristic based on their participation in the Afghan conflicts. However, as indicated throughout this chapter, this generation is bound together by more than shared participation. Reconceptualising the Afghan Network through their integration and subsequent participation in conflict provides the theoretical framework for understanding how foreign fighters were able to develop a network with a unique shape, characteristics and identity that allowed members if that network the outsized capacity to influence international security.

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[215] Snow, Zurcher, and Ekland-Olson, "Social Networks and Social Movements," 793.

How does this incorporation of network perspectives help us understand the persistent and resistant consequences of the Afghan Network? First, the Afghan Network did not emerge as a static set of ties between individuals but as a living network that expanded and transformed through the success and cooperation of its members. By utilising network perspectives, we can identify the continual coordination and cooperation among members across time and space. Through the bonds formed during conflict, the Afghan Network became a safe site of knowledge exchange, innovation, and resource sharing that allowed foreign fighters to continually draw on valuable expertise, increasing their effectiveness as conflict actors, while building network resilience. The Afghan Network provided the location and motivation for learning and innovation that occurred more readily than the mechanisms put in place to counter them.[216]

Second, the Afghan Network built models of practice that acted as the foundation for armed group learning and has been transferred to subsequent armed groups. According to Jackson et al, organisational learning is a process 'through which a group acquires new knowledge or technology that it then uses to make better strategic decisions, improve its ability to develop and apply specific tactics, and increase its chance of success.'[217] Literature on armed group learning traces three categories of learning: mimicry, adapting and sharing. *Mimicry* is the replication of aspects of other armed groups but does not require interaction with said groups.[218] *Adapting* is group learning in response external information such as counter-insurgent success and competition from other groups.[219] *Sharing* is defined as the process of coordination and cooperation

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[216] Benjamin Schulte, Florian Andresen, and Hans Koller, "Exploring the Embeddedness of an Informal Community of Practice Within a Formal Organizational Context: A Case Study in the German Military," *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies* 27, no. 2 (May 2020): 153, https://doi.org/10.1177/1548051819833382.
[217] Brian A. Jackson, *Aptitude for Destruction. Volume 1, Organizational Learning in Terrorist Groups and Its Implications for Combating Terrorism [Electronic Resource]* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corp, 2005), 9, http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7249/mg331nij.
[218] For example, there has been a recent spike in vehicle attacks on pedestrians, and groups have copied this form of violence. In the past, there has been a trend among insurgent groups of kidnapping foreign nationals for ransom across conflicts. In the 1970-1980s, terrorist groups often engaged in plane hijackings. As noted by Pape, successful attacks by groups communicate the cost and likely success of different forms of violence. Victor Ojakorotu, *Contending Issues in the Niger Delta Crisis of Nigeria* (Delray Beach, Fl.: JAPSS Press, 2009), 95–119; Robert Anthony Pape, *Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism* (Random House Incorporated, 2006).
[219] See adaptation among the Lord Resistance Army and the Taliban. Christopher R. Day, "'Survival Mode': Rebel Resilience and the Lord's Resistance Army," *Terrorism and Political Violence*, March 28, 2017, 2, https://doi.org/10.1080/09546553.2017.1300580; Francesco Trebbi et al., "Insurgent

between different armed groups to transfer knowledge.[220] The Afghan networks practice—their repertoires of violence and modes of operation—could be copied, adapted and shared with other armed groups through both direct transfer by veterans but also through the direct mimicking of these practices by other actor. As noted by Græger, 'the power and persistence of practices lie in the shared implicit understanding of how things should be done.'[221] The victory of the Mujahideen provided a legitimacy and conveyed the effectiveness of these practices and models of conflict. This replication of practice often stands in contrast to the objective expertise of the Afghan Network and were often at odds with the differing conflict dynamics—geographic, political, and demographically—outside of Afghanistan. By understanding the continued ties among the Afghan Network, we can better observe the persistence of these practices of both violence and domain through their reproduction throughout and spill over into other jihadist movements.[222]

Third, viewing the Afghan Network as a source of legitimised authority, we can better understand how these objectively inexperienced conflict actors retained authority and expanded their influence among the jihadist movement. Contrary to current assumptions, senior figures in the Afghan Network did not necessarily gain positions of authority because of the expertise that they developed during the conflict. Instead, I propose that the rise of veteran foreign fighters to leadership positions in subsequent groups was also caused by the network effect—the connection to this mythology—whereby mere presence in the Afghan conflicts imbued individuals with legitimacy among the broader jihadist community. Members of the Afghan Network were to be able to 'generate enough excitement, relevance, and value to attract and engage

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Learning" (Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research, June 2017), 2, https://doi.org/10.3386/w23475.

[220] Adrian Guelke, "Irish Republican Terrorism: Learning from and Teaching Other Countries," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 40, no. 7 (July 3, 2017): 566–67, https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2016.1237222; Andrew Mumford, "How Terrorist Groups 'Learn': Innovation and Adaptation in Political Violence," *British Academy Review* 26 (Summer 2015): 22, https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/documents/728/BAR26-08-Mumford.pdf.

[221] Nina Graeger, "European Security as Practice: EU–NATO Communities of Practice in the Making?," *European Security* 25, no. 4 (October 2016): 480, https://doi.org/10.1080/09662839.2016.1236021.

[222] Walter W. Powell and Paul J. DiMaggio, *The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis* (University of Chicago Press, 2012), 9.

members'[223] vicariously through the victory and their participation in the Afghan conflicts. As highlighted by journalist Tam Hussein, 'To some Arabs, the Afghan mujahedeen were examples of who they could be as men and what they could achieve for Islam after a succession of catastrophic military defeats.'[224] For veteran foreign fighters, victory was a 'balm to the wounded masculinity of a new generation of fighters.'[225] After many Islamists were forced to travel to Afghanistan as exiles, veteran foreign fighters now had the authority and confidence to begin their opposition movements at home, or continue on in their mission to protect and liberate Muslims around the world.

3.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter has provided a theoretical framework for understanding how the participation of foreign fighters in the Afghan conflicts transformed these fighters from inexperienced and undisciplined fighters to networked threats to international security, despite the minimal participation in actual conflict. I use a network perspective to argue that the explanation for the transformation of foreign fighters lies in their structural connection to local Afghan fighters. I introduced the concept of integration to capture where foreign fighters are located within a conflict vis-à-vis local fighters and how this embeddedness—or isolation—determines the degree to which foreign fighters can participate in a conflict. I argue that foreign fighters in the Afghan conflict were isolated from the Mujahideen, and that this isolation created specific conflict conditions: protection from the state, protection from the conflict, and mass convergence. I demonstrate how the isolation of foreign fighters altered well understood conflict processes by examining network formation, expertise development and socialisation.

When analysed through network perspectives, we can better understand how the Afghan Network became a site for knowledge exchange, innovation, and resource sharing that allowed foreign fighters to continually draw on valuable expertise,

[223] Etienne Wenger, Richard A. McDermott, and William Snyder, *Cultivating Communities of Practice: A Guide to Managing Knowledge* (Boston, Mass: Harvard Business School Press, 2002), 50.
[224] Tam Hussein, "The Façade of the Afghan Jihad," *New Lines Magazine* (blog), November 15, 2021, https://newlinesmag.com/argument/the-facade-of-the-afghan-jihad/.
[225] Hussein.

increasing their effectiveness as conflict actors, while building network resilience. The following empirical chapters explicate the processes of network formation, expertise development, and socialisation. I demonstrate how these three processes held consequences that expanded beyond the Afghan conflicts, as the Afghan Network was able to leverage the outcomes of these processes for continued coordination and cooperation across time and space. Chapter 6 examines the membership of the Afghan Network and demonstrate how this network of armed groups embedded in a transnational network formed. I argue that this network became the site for knowledge and resource exchange. I demonstrate how this network was leveraged across space and time. Chapter 7 examines in-depth the expertise development of the Afghan Network and demonstrates how the minimal conflict skills obtained during the Afghan conflicts were legitimised through membership in the network. Finally, Chapter 8 examines the socialisation processes that took place among foreign fighters—especially political education through religious education—and examine how the internalisation of a shared domain that permeated both through the Afghan Network and future jihadist groups.

Although this theoretical framework is grounded in the study of foreign fighters in the Afghan conflicts, it provides the core concepts that can be applied to the examination of other generations of foreign fighters. Chapter 9 provides an initial examination of integration across other conflicts. I propose that the types of integration—embedded and partitioned—provide different sets of conditions that are unlikely to create the groundwork for another network as emerged in the Afghan conflicts. This difference in security threat does not negate these different generations pose a threat, but that this threat is different from that posed by the Afghan Network.

Chapter 4: Methodology

This thesis seeks to understand the onward security threat of foreign fighters after leaving conflict by examining how they participate in conflict. This chapter outlines the methodology for data collection. The empirics of this thesis are based on an original dataset of foreign fighters from the Afghan conflicts. This dataset is the first of its kind and traces the trajectories of 404 foreign fighters from a single conflict across their jihadist careers. I utilise the dataset to examine the trajectories of foreign fighters from the beginning of the Soviet-Afghan War (1979) through to current armed groups including well-known groups as the Islamic State and al-Qaeda. The dataset I compiled greatly expands the extant information on several generations of foreign fighters, tracing foreign fighters and information about their position within 69 distinct armed groups.

The global pandemic greatly shaped this thesis. I obtained ethics clearance to conduct in-person interviews with retired foreign fighters in the United Kingdom from June 2020 on. However, the COVID-19 pandemic and the closing of Australia's borders meant that no university travel was permitted for over 18 months. To adapt to these circumstances, I gained altered ethics clearance to conduct interviews online, as well as to conduct a bilingual survey online. However, I found potential participants were unwilling and sceptical of conducting interviews online. Conducting interviews online also presented challenges to maintaining the safety of participants. At the same time, the pandemic in the United Kingdom disproportionally affected the elderly in multicultural communities, of which my potential participants were members. This confluence of risks and logistical obstacles led me to alter the course of this project, shifting from in-person interviews to the development of an original dataset.

In this chapter, I provide an overview of the quantitative and qualitative research methods employed to examine the participation of foreign fighters in the Afghan conflicts to trace how this experience matters across time and space. This chapter begins by presenting a thorough overview of the data collection process. As part of this, I provide details of the information included in the dataset and summaries of the coding

rules used to identify both foreign fighter positions and the armed groups. I also provide an overview the methodology used to build 41 in-depth profiles of individuals from within the dataset. Lastly, I introduce Social Network Analysis (SNA), a method utilised in Chapter 6 to examine network formation within the Afghan conflicts.

4.1 THE DATASET

This dataset is the first of its kind. It is unique in its objective to capture and trace foreign fighters from the Afghan conflicts. Table 2 presents the structure of the dataset. I have selected the first five rows of the dataset (in alphabetical order and including headings) to demonstrate what information is captured in the dataset. This section outlines the data collection process, as well as inclusion in the dataset. I also outline each of the variables or columns of the dataset.

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Table 2 Sample of Foreign Fighter Dataset

Actor	Other Name	Country of Origin	Pre-Group 1	Pos PG1	Pre-Group 2	Pos PG2	Afghanistan	Position	Group_2	Position 2
Abdul Hadi al-Iraqi		Egypt					Afghanistan	Fighter	AQ	Fighter
Abdul Majid al-Zindani		Algeria					Afghanistan	Fighter	AQ	Fighter
Abdullah Assadeq		Libya					Afghanistan	Fighter	LIFG	Senior Figure
Abou Leith al-Musili	Abou Laith al-Musili	Algeria					Afghanistan	Fighter	GIA	Senior Figure
Abu Abdallah al-Somali		Somalia					Afghanistan	Fighter	AQ	Fighter

Group_3	Position 3	Group_4	Position 4	Group_5	Position_5	Group_6	Position_6	DOD	Location	Reference	Other Notes
AFG2	Commander									Mustafa Hamid and Leah Farrall, *The Arabs at War in Afghanistan* (Oxford University Press, 2015), xi	Fought in first Afghan jihad. Joined AQ in 1996 when he returned to Afghanistan. Commander of Ansar volunteers which was the overall group coordinating FF in Afghanistan (listed as Afg2)
MBY	Leader									Mustafa Hamid and Leah Farrall, The Arabs at War in Afghanistan (Oxford University Press, 2015), xi, 185	Leader of the Muslim Brotherhood in Yemen. Visited Afghanistan during SAW and during Taliban era to see OBL
										Mustafa Hamid and Leah Farrall, The Arabs at War in Afghanistan (Oxford University Press, 2015), xii	
										Camille Tawil, Brothers in Arms: The Story of Al-Qa'ida and the Arab Jihadists (London: Saqi, 2011), 78	One of the foremost Afghan veteran founders of the GIA. Was faction's emir in Afghanistan
										Anne Stenersen, "Al Qaeda's Foot Soldiers: A Study of the Biographies of Foreign Fighters Killed in Afghanistan and Pakistan Between 2002 and 2006," Studies in Conflict & Terrorism 34, no. 3 (February 22, 2011): 191, https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2011.545934	Killed Afghanistan or Pakistan 2002-2006

4.1.1 Convenience Sampling

This dataset is built using what is commonly referred to as 'convenience sampling.' Convenience sampling is a 'kind of nonprobability sample that involves a group of elements that is easily accessible to a researcher.'[226] The dataset hence captures those individuals that are visible, whether due to their inclusion on a sanctions list, a martyr notice or their appearance in other fighters' memoirs. This increased visibility of foreign fighters means that this sample is unlikely to be representative.

Currently, the conventional understanding is that 5-10% of the 2,000-20,000 foreign fighters in the Afghan conflicts joined subsequent conflicts, putting the total figure of veteran foreign fighters in subsequent armed conflicts from 100-2,000.[227] To date, I have identified 404 individuals, a number that falls well within the expected range. The dataset notes their presence in at least 69 different armed groups and conflicts, significantly expanding our understanding of the potential influence of the Afghan Network. While this data provides insights on individual foreign fighter trajectories, we cannot know how representative this sample is of the larger population. For example, the diligent production of death notices by some armed groups results in an overrepresentation of deceased members of the network. However, unlike the concerns convenience sampling raises in other types of research, for example, survey research, the analyses based on a convenience sample here are not trying to claim causal relationships between respondents and preferences.[228] While this dataset provides confirmatory evidence of networks that exist within this population of foreign fighters, is it likely that this network is both larger and more diverse than is captured here. Therefore, this dataset captures a conservative, rather than inaccurate, picture of the network as a whole

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[226] Roger Clark, "Convenience Sample," in *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Sociology* (John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, 2017), 1, https://doi.org/10.1002/9781405165518.wbeosc131.pub2.
[227] Duyvesteyn and Peeters, "Fickle Foreign Fighters?"
[228] Clark, "Convenience Sample," 1.

4.1.2 Data Sources

This data was collected using publicly available data. Sources include but are not limited to the Counter Extremism Project Terrorist and Extremist Database,[229] sanctions lists by national and intergovernmental bodies,[230] foreign fighter biographies and memoirs,[231] the Guantanamo Docket released by the New York Times,[232] case-specific books,[233] martyr notices,[234] Stanford University's Mapping Militants Project,[235] West Point's Combating Terrorism Centre's LeT dataset[236] as well as a plethora of news and journal articles. I owe special thanks to Dr Thomas Hegghammer who permitted access to his personal research records and data.[237]

I considered English, German, French, and Arabic sources. I read Arabic to an upper intermediate level (B2) and was able to access media and reports only available in Arabic. Often, these sources would mirror English media reports with additional details. However, my Arabic level did not allow me to utilise all memoirs or books in

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[229] Counter Extremism Project, "Terrorists and Extremists Database (TED)," Counter Extremism Project, accessed January 8, 2020, https://www.counterextremism.com/extremists.

[230] UNSC, "Security Council Committee Pursuant to Resolutions 1267 (1999) 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) Concerning ISIL (Da'esh) Al-Qaida and Associated Individuals Groups Undertakings and Entities," ISIL (Da'esh) & Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee, accessed January 8, 2020, https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/sanctions/1267; US Department of the Treasury, "Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons List (SDN) Human Readable Lists," SDN List, accessed January 8, 2020, https://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/sanctions/sdn-list/pages/default.aspx.

[231] Hamid and Farrall, *The Arabs at War in Afghanistan*; Anas and Hussein, *To The Mountains*; Al-Suwailem, *Memories of Amir Khattab*.

[232] "The Guantánamo Docket," *The New York Times*, May 18, 2021, sec. U.S., https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/us/guantanamo-bay-detainees.html.

[233] See in particular Kohlmann, *Al-Qaida's Jihad in Europe*; Edna Reid et al., "Terrorism Knowledge Discovery Project: A Knowledge Discovery Approach to Addressing the Threats of Terrorism," in *Intelligence and Security Informatics*, ed. Hsinchun Chen et al., vol. 3073 (Berlin, Heidelberg: Springer Berlin Heidelberg, 2004), 125–45, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-540-25952-7_10; Wright, *The Looming Tower*; Turki Al-Faisal Al-Saud, *The Afghanistan File* (Arabian Publishing, Limited, 2021).

[234] See online Unknown, "Among the Stories of the Arab Martyrs in Bosnia and Herzegovina" (Said.net, n.d.), Jihadi Document Repository, accessed February 1, 2020; Azzam Publications, "Caravans of Martyrs - Biographies Of The Martyrs," accessed January 8, 2020, http://caravansofmartyrs.atspace.com/; University of Oslo, "Jihadi Document Repository - Department of Culture Studies and Oriental Languages," Archive, accessed October 2, 2019, https://www.hf.uio.no/ikos/english/research/jihadi-document-repository/index.html.

[235] Mapping Militant Organizations, "Mapping Militants Organizations," Stanford University, accessed January 8, 2020, https://cisac.fsi.stanford.edu/mappingmilitants.

[236] Don Rassler et al., "The Fighters of Lashkar-e-Taiba: Recruitment, Training, Deployment and Death," *Combating Terrorism Center at West Point*, April 4, 2013, https://ctc.usma.edu/the-fighters-of-lashkar-e-taiba-recruitment-training-deployment-and-death/.

[237] Thomas Hegghammer, "Violent Islamism in Saudi Arabia, 1979-2006: The Power and Perils of Pan-Islamic Nationalism" (Doctoral Thesis, Paris, Institut d'Etudes Politiques de Paris, 2007).

Arabic produced by foreign fighters during this period. I selected the most prominent memoirs, including those by Basil Muhammad[238] and Abu Ja'far al-Misri al-Qandahari[239] and, where possible, relied on translated versions of documents or English summaries. For example, Fadil Harun has produced a two-part, 1000-page memoir, *al-Ḥarb ʿalā al-Islām,* of his time as a member of al-Qaeda.[240] Nelly Lahoud has provided detailed summaries of these works for the Combatting Terrorism Center at West Point.[241] I read German to a working proficiency (C1) level. German sources were usually in reference to veteran foreign fighters that had been residing in Germany pre or post the Afghan conflicts. There are unique German sources, including interviews with Mohamed Heider Zammar. Zammar was a friend of several of the September 11 hijackers while they were living in Hamburg. French sources were accessed using the translation software Google Translate.

Transliterations of Arabic sources have been based on the American Library Association and Library of Congress (ALA-LC) Arabic Romanization Table.[242] In footnotes, English translations are provided in brackets after the Arabic transliteration. Where armed groups have a common English name, this has been used instead of a transliteration of the Arabic name. The dataset does not utilise transliteration characters for actor names. For example, for a name such as 'al-Islāmi', the name would be entered as 'al-Islami' to increase searchability.

4.1.3 Inclusion

Inclusion in the dataset was limited to those foreign fighters that travelled to the Afghan conflicts between 1979-1992 and went on to participate in at least one subsequent armed group. Subsequent armed groups include military, insurgent and

[238] Muhammed, *Al-Ansar*; Muhammed.

[239] al-Qandahari, *Dhikrayat ʻarabi Afghani [Memories of an Arab Afghan]*.

[240] Fadil Harun, *Al-Ḥarb ʿalā al-Islām [The War Against Islam (Part 1)]*, 2004, https://www-int.hf.uio.no/ikos/english/research/jihadi-document-repository/biographies-and-memoirs/memoirs/fadil-haroun/index.html.

[241] Nelly Lahoud, "Beware of Imitators: Al-Qa`ida through the Lens of Its Confidential Secretary:" (Fort Belvoir, VA: Defense Technical Information Center, June 4, 2012), https://doi.org/10.21236/ADA562328.

[242] American Library Association and Library of Congress, "ALA-LC Arabic Romanization Table" (Library of Congress, 2012), https://www.loc.gov/catdir/cpso/romanization/arabic.pdf.

terrorist groups. Foreign fighters are included in the dataset regardless of if they entered Afghanistan itself or trained on the border in Pakistan.

I decided to include groups where the foreign fighter returns to their country of origin and joins a domestic armed group. These groups are often omitted in assessments of foreign fighter trajectories. The reasoning for many is that when a foreign fighter returns home, they are no longer foreign. I have included these individuals in this dataset for two reasons. First, as this project is concerned with the transformative nature of foreign fighting rather than the impact of foreign fighters themselves, it is important to trace all trajectories, not only those that fall under the category of foreign fighting. Second, the international community and academia alike tend to fixate on the potential security risk posed by foreign fighters upon return to their country of origin.[243] It would be negligent to not include these domestic armed groups in an analysis aimed at understanding foreign fighters and their impact on the international system. Finally, this type of fighter is the most common among the individuals identified in the dataset. When foreign fighters leave conflict zones—i.e. they are not killed in combat and they do not settle in the conflict country—there are three available pathways: return home, continue foreign fighting, and join transnational groups.

Table 3 depicts the breakdown of the different types of armed foreign fighters joined across their fighting career. For domestic contexts (D), I identify five potential violent pathways: join new armed groups (NAG), re-join existing group (RJ), fragment from existing group (FRG), engage in domestic terrorism (DT), join the state army (ARMY).[244]

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[243] For example, see Barrett, "Beyond the Caliphate"; R. Kim Cragin, "The Challenge of Foreign Fighter Returnees," *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice* 33, no. 3 (August 2017): 292–312, https://doi.org/10.1177/1043986217697872; R. Kim Cragin, "The November 2015 Paris Attacks: The Impact of Foreign Fighter Returnees," *Orbis* 61, no. 2 (2017): 212–26, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.orbis.2017.02.005; Jawaid, "From Foreign Fighters to Returnees"; David Malet and Rachel Hayes, "Foreign Fighter Returnees: An Indefinite Threat?," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 32, no. 8 (November 16, 2020): 1617–35, https://doi.org/10.1080/09546553.2018.1497987; Christopher J. Wright, "Sometimes They Come Back: Responding to American Foreign Fighter Returnees and Other Elusive Threats," *Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression* 12, no. 1 (January 2, 2020): 1–16, https://doi.org/10.1080/19434472.2018.1464493.

[244]

I also record those foreign fighters that remain in armed groups overseas, with these fighters marked as 'foreign' (F). Within this category, I distinguish between those veteran foreign fighters that continue as foreign fighters (FF), those engaging in global terrorism (GT) committing terror attacks independently or as part of a cell against targets outside of their country of origin, and those joining transnational groups (TRNS). In this research, only al-Qaeda (AQ) and al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) that operate transnationally and accept membership outside of their geographic focus are considered as potential transnational groups.

If we only consider the movement of veteran foreign fighters from the Afghan conflicts to Group 2 (G2), we can see that over half, 208 of the 404, of veteran foreign fighters are observed returning to their home countries (D). Across the entire dataset, this figure shifts to 44 per cent of foreign fighters having joined a domestic armed group at some point. Therefore, to neglect this trajectory for foreign fighters would almost halve the available data and dismiss how domestic security and foreign fighter blowback impacts international security.

Table 3 Distribution of Foreign Fighters Across Different Pathways

Domestic.or.Foreign	Type	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	Total
D	NAG	104	17	3	0	0	125
D	RJ	55	2	0	0	0	56
D	FRG	43	7	0	1	1	51
D	DT	4	1	0	0	0	5
D	ARMY	1	0	0	0	0	1
F	GT	1	1	0	0	0	2
F	FF	108	46	10	5	2	172
F	TRNS	88	33	3	3	0	127
	Total (N)	404	107	16	9	3	NA

4.1.4 Names

The first and second columns ('actor' and 'other names') of the dataset capture the name of foreign fighters. Herein lies the first challenge of building a foreign fighter dataset: multiple names and kunyas exist. Foreign fighters from this period tended to adopt a kunya as a security measure. A kunya is a *nom de guerre* assumed within Islamic traditions, usually to indicate familial relations. For example, after the birth of a first son, a father will take the kunya Abu (father) + son's name. If the son's name is Muhammad, the father's kunya would be Abu Muhammad. Similarly, mothers take Umm (mother) Muhammad. In the case of Osama bin Laden, his eldest son was Abdullah, and thus, his kunya was Abu Abdullah. Kunyas have also been used in conflicts by Islamic fighters in the place of real names for security purposes and draw on an individual's characteristics or countries of origin. For example, many Egyptians have a kunya that end in al-Masri for Egyptians or al-Libi for Libyans.

If the birth name of the foreign fighter is known, it was entered in the actor column. If an actor's name was not known, their kunya was used as the primary identifier. There are exceptions in cases where the kunya became more well-known than the familial name. For example, Abdullah Anas, the son-in-law of Abdullah Azzam and senior figure within the Services Bureau, is rarely referred to by his birth name: Boudjema Bounoua. Conversely, Osama bin Laden is rarely referred to by his kunya: Abu Abdullah. The second issue with names is transliteration. There are a variety of ways that Arabic names are transliterated into English. All other names, including alternative spellings, are included in the subsequent 'Other names' column.

4.1.5 Country of Origin

The country of origin is included for all fighters. If a foreign fighter holds a nationality, both are recorded. Foreign fighters with historical origins that differ from their country of origin present an additional issue. This issue is prominent among foreign fighters originally from Palestine who held citizenship elsewhere after displacement. Foreign fighters that fall into this category have their nationality listed as the country of origin rather than Palestine. Information about Palestinian heritage is documented in 'Other Notes' in the last column of the dataset (see Table 1). I record 37 nationalities in the dataset.

4.1.6 Prior Experience or Membership

If the individual was a member of an armed group or military prior to travelling to Afghanistan, this has been recorded. The pre-group category allows me to record any pre-existing membership in political entities, armed groups, or military service. This category is important as many foreign fighters with pre-existing conflict experience took on training and leadership roles or were better equipped when they entered the Afghan conflicts.

4.1.1 Participation in the Afghan conflicts

Column 5 captures the shared participation of all foreign fighters in Afghanistan. As foreign fighters did not organise or lead their own operations, and most were inexperienced, the bulk of foreign fighters are listed under the position of 'fighter.' I provide further details on the positions below.

4.1.2 Armed Group Membership

I record each armed group that a foreign fighter joined in temporal order. Group 2 to Group 6 records the group and position of fighters after their experience in the Afghan conflicts. All SNA maps used within this thesis depart from Group 2. Every individual in the dataset will have information for their participation in Afghanistan and Group 2. I identify veteran foreign fighters in 69 armed groups and conflicts. The full list of acronyms, name, and a description of the armed group is included in Appendix 1.

In some instances, it was not possible to disaggregate the data to the specific armed group and only the country is listed. This is the case with Somalia, where foreign fighters were present as advisers to al-Ittihad al-Islamiya (AIAI) as early as 1993, the pre-curser to al-Shabaab.[245] Similarly, in the case of mujahideen fighters in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), despite the majority joining the Katibat El-Mudžahid (KEM), the presence of multiple foreign fighter contingents during the war makes it impossible to

[245] Shinn, "Al Shabaab's Foreign Threat to Somalia," 205.

know with certainty which group individuals were participating in.[246] All cases in BiH have been recorded as 'BiH'. Other examples with limited granularity include Bangladesh, Palestine, and Kosovo.

Further, it should be noted that all foreign fighters who were in Afghanistan post-2001 and whose membership of a faction or armed groups was not identifiable are recorded as al-Qaeda. This assignment is problematic but reflects how the international community and the US records of detainees of Guantánamo Bay from where much of the Afghanistan data post-2001 is gathered recorded these fighters.[247] If it is known that the foreign fighters were not participating on behalf of al-Qaeda, they are recorded as 'Afgh2.'

4.1.3 Positions Data

I also record the available data on the position of fighters within armed groups. The dataset currently includes twenty-three (23) positions. I have tried to be parsimonious but also provide clear distinctions between categories. The table below outlines each of these categories. I utilise the positions data in Chapter 6 to outline the increased capacity of veteran foreign fighters. This data demonstrates how foreign fighters moved into more senior positions within armed groups after their experience in Afghanistan and in subsequent armed groups.

Table 4 Positions Descriptions of the Foreign Fighter Dataset

Position	Description
Accountant	Accountant for the armed group
Affiliate	Associated with the armed group but does not hold membership. Generally, supporters of the armed group with previous connections to senior figures within the armed group.
Bodyguard	Acted as a personal bodyguard within an armed group
Bomb Maker	Bomb maker of an armed group

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[246] Jasper Schwampe, "Muslim Foreign Fighters in Armed Conflicts" (Doctoral Thesis, Denmark, Aarhus University, 2018), 33.
[247] "The Guantánamo Docket."

Commander	Senior leader of fighters in combat operations
Deputy Commander	Second in command to Commander
Doctor	Medical doctor that provides medical care to members of an armed group
Fighter	Individual that fights or trains on behalf of the armed group but does not hold a senior position or any identified expertise i.e., bomb maker. Equivalent to foot soldier. Also includes individuals that are identified in conflict zones whose roles are not listed.
Financer	Provides financial support for armed groups
Hijacker	Operative that specifically participates in plane hijackings
Leader	The overall leader—military and often spiritual—of the armed group. Leader is only assigned to the most senior figure of the armed group and not to multiple.
Major	Major in a national army. Usually applies to foreign fighters that were members of armed forces before travelling to the Afghan conflicts.
Media	Responsible for propaganda and media
Member	Identifies individuals that were members of armed groups but are not found to be participating in violent activities. For example, many individuals supported or held membership of the Muslim Brotherhood prior to travelling to Afghanistan but had no role in their violent activities.
NGO	Listed as participating in an NGO rather than a fighting capacity. Many of these NGOs, such as the BIF, were directly associated with supporting the activities of armed groups
Operative	Fighters that participated in terrorist operations
Plotter	Individuals responsible for the planning of terrorist attacks
Recruiter	Individuals that were responsible for the recruitment of new fighters
Senior Figure	Includes founders, ideological leaders and members of the senior leadership of an armed group but are not the overall leaders

Soldier	Soldier in national armed forces. Usually applies to foreign fighters that were members of armed forces before travelling to the Afghan conflicts.
Suicide Bomber	Operative that specifically participated in suicide attack
Trainer	Provides operational and combat training to fighters of an armed group

4.1.4 Date and Location of Death

If available, I record the date of death and location under 'DOD' and 'Location.' Of course, not all foreign fighters from this generation are deceased or the information surrounding their death is not always available. This information is not utilised within this project. This information usually came from martyr notices published by armed groups. Due to the nature of available sources, deceased foreign fighters are likely overrepresented in this sample.

4.1.5 References

I provide references for where information on each actor can be located. Where possible, I verify the information using at least two sources. This information is presented using the format of full notes in Chicago style for accuracy. The exception here is when I have drawn on the private dataset provided by Thomas Hegghammer. Where the reference is listed as 'Hegghammer, AinA' this individual was in Thomas Hegghammer's personal records and has not been published. Hegghammer has collected this data through interviews and fieldwork over many years and an alternative source was not always available. For the forty-one actors that I have built in-depth cases for, more extensive references are available.

4.1.6 Other Notes

The final column in the dataset provides a basic summary of the foreign fighter. This information can include defections, more detailed information about their position within a group, and any doubts about the accuracy of the information provided.

4.1.7 Data Limitations

Although secondary data collection alleviates many of the ethical and safety issues that this project has faced, collecting data on this generation of fighters poses its own set of challenges. As noted by Thomas Hegghammer in his attempts to build a dataset from observations from this period:

> Bringing the list up to something like 500 names would require a prohibitively large time investment, and finding 1,000 would be practically impossible. And even then, the sample would be nonrepresentative and have a lot of missing values, so I discontinued the effort.[248]

Despite these challenges, there is an urgent need to know and systematically catalogue who these foreign fighters were. Not only does the resulting dataset add granularity, it also greatly expands our understanding of the armed groups that foreign fighters went on to join. This section outlines the data collection process and presents a sample of the data structure.

4.2 FOREIGN FIGHTER PROFILES

The dataset provides new details about the trajectories and experiences of foreign fighters over time. It does not, however, provide explanations for the transformative effect of foreign fighting. To fill this gap, I constructed 41 in-depth profiles of veteran foreign fighters. As the dataset is not representative and limited information exists for many foreign fighters, there is no ideal way to select actors for case studies. Instead, I sought to build profiles that portray foreign fighters from as many of the armed groups in the dataset as feasible to maximise diversity. For some armed groups, such as AQ and JI, I included profiles on more than one fighter due to the global or regional focus of the group. In one case, the Islamic Movement for Change (IMC), the profile is centred on three veteran foreign fighters that carried out a single attack in Saudi Arabia as details about individuals were limited.

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[248] Hegghammer, *The Caravan*, 268.

The profiles capture veteran foreign fighters from 54 of the 69 armed groups in the dataset. Table 5 provides an overview of the 41 foreign fighter profiles and their respective group membership.

Table 5 List of Foreign Fighter Profiles

Actor	Armed Groups
Jamal Ahmed Mohammed al-Fadl	Al Qaeda Central (AQ)
Khalid Sheikh Mohammed	Al Qaeda Central (AQ)
Husam Abd al-Ra'uf	Al Qaeda Central (AQ)
Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi (Ahmad Fadil al-Khalayilah)	Bayat al-Imam (BaI)
	Jund al-Sham (JaS)
	Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI)
Mokhtar Belmokhtar	Groupe Islamique Arme (GIA)
	Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM)
	al-Mulathamin Brigade (AMB)
	al-Mouribitun (AM)
	Jama'at al Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM)
Tariq al-Fadhli	Islamic Jihad Movement (IJM)
	Southern Movement (SM)
Ibrahim Ahmed Mahmoud al-Qosi	Al Qaeda Central (AQ)
	Al Qaeda on the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP)
Ahmad Salama Mabrouk	Egyptian Islamic Jihad (EIJ)
	Chechnya (CHE)
	Ansar al-Sharia Egypt (AaSE)
	Yemen (YEM)
	Jabhat al-Nusra (&HTS) (ANF)
Issam al-Barqawi (Abu Muhammad Al-Maqdisi)	Bayat al-Imam (BaI)

Mustafa Hamid	Independent (IND)
	Taliban (TLB)
Izz al-Din Sheikh Khalil	Hamas (HAM)
Kamar Kharban	Islamic Salvation Front (FIS)
Abdur Rahman	Harakat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami (HUJI)
	Harakat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami Bangladesh (HUJI-B)
	Jamaat ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB)
Abdelhakim Belhaj	Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG)
	Tripoli Brigade // February 17 Brigade (TRIP)
Noman Benotman	Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG)
Mohammad Jamal Al-Kashef	Egyptian Islamic Jihad (EIJ)
	Muhammad Jamal Network (MJN)
Riyad al-Hajiri/Mosleh al-Shamarani/Khaled Ahmed al-Sa'id	Islamic Movement for Change (IMC)
Mohammad Shouki al-Islambouli	Al-Gama'a al-Islamia (GI)
Abdelillah Zyad	Moroccan Islamic Youth Movement (MJIM)
	Independent (IND)
Bassam Kanj Abu Aisha	Majmouat al-Denniyah/Takfir wal-Hijra (MaD)
Mohammad Haydar Zammar	Islamic State (ISIS)
Zain al-Abedin Aby Bakr al-Mihdar	Aden Abyan Islamic Army (AAIA)
Mohd Lotfi Ariffin	Kumpulan Mujahidin Malaysia (KMM)
	Ajnad as Syam (AjaS)
Abdurajak Abubakar Janjalani	Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG)
Salamat Hashim	Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF)
Hambali (Encep Nurjaman/Riduan Isomuddin)	Jemaah Islamiyah (JI)
Imam Samudra	Jemaah Islamiyah (JI)
Nasir Abas	Jemaah Islamiyah (JI)
Zainon Ismail	Kumpulan Mujahidin Malaysia (KMM)

Zakiur Rehman Lakhvi	Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT)
	Harakat-ul-Mujahedeen (HUM)
	Jaish-e-Mohammad (JEM)
Muhammad Ilyas Kashmiri	Harakat-ul-Jihad al-Islami (HUJI)
	Al Qaeda Central (AQ)
Mufti Abdul Hannan	Harakat-ul-Jihad al-Islami Bangladesh (HUJI-B)
Fazul Abdullah Muhammad	Al Qaeda Central (AQ)
	Somalia (Al Shabaab and AIAI)
Mohammad Odeh	Al Qaeda Central (AQ)
	Somalia (Al Shabaab and AIAI)
Samir Ibn Saleh Ibn Abd Allah Al-Suwailem (Khattab)	Chechnya (CHE) Tajikistan (TJK)
Sheikh Salih bin Muhammad Ad-Daheishi	Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH)
	Chechnya (CHE)
	Kosovo (KOS)
Mahmud Bahadhiq (Barbaros)	Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH)
	Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT)
Enaam Arnaout	Benevolence International Foundation (BIF)
	Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH)
Khaled Al-Asmar	Al Haramain Foundation (AHIF)
Ibrahim Bah	Hezbollah (HEZ)
	National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL)
	Revolutionary United Front (RUF)

The groups not represented in the profiles are groups where only limited information about the foreign fighter and/or the armed group was available and only a single member was represented in the dataset. A list of the excluded groups and the justification for exclusion can be found in Table 6.

Table 6 Armed Groups in Dataset not included in Foreign Fighter Profiles

Group	Reason not included
Ahrar al Sham (AhaS)	Umbrella groups in Syrian Civil War
Ansar al-Islam (AaI)	
Rohingya Islamic Front (RIM)	Groups only mentioned in captured AQ documents. Unclear if these were the official names of each group
Islamic Jihad Movement of Bangladesh (IJMB)	
Houmat al-Da'wa al-Salafyyia (HDS)	Battalions in the Libyan Civil War
Muhammad al-Hami Battalion (MaH)	
Abu Salim Martyrs' Brigade (ASMB)	
Palestine	Generic assignment when specific group not known but present in a particular state
Ethiopia	
Army of Muhammad (AoM)	Insufficient information available
Takfiri group	
Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group (GICM)	
Muslim Brotherhood Yemen (MBY)	National or regional chapters of international group
al-Qaeda in the Sinai Peninsula (AQSP)	
Vanguards of the Conquest (VoC)	Re-absorbed into EIJ after splintering in Sudan

For example, Vanguards of the Conquest was a branch of EIJ that splintered but then re-joined under Zawahiri's leadership. The only corresponding entry in the dataset is Ahmed Hussein Ugayzah. The most information about Ugayzah comes from a 2001 al-Ahram Newspaper article:

> Ahmed Hussein Ugayzah faces life imprisonment in Egypt. He escaped to Yemen in 1984, then went to Afghanistan where he became assistant to Ayman El-Zawahri. Ugayzah supervised training camps and helped in planning several operations. He fell out with El-Zawahri over the arrest of 800 members of the

Vanguards of Conquest in Egypt. Afterwards, he left Al-Jihad to become second in command of the Vanguards of Conquest.[249]

Each of the profiles sought to provide the information across four areas: general background, skills and training, resources, and cohesion. Here, I provide examples of the data collected drawing on the profile of Jamal Ahmed Mohammed al-Fadl, business manager for al-Qaeda in Sudan. General background included information on the individual's family, education, employment and how they travelled to the Afghan conflicts. Al-Fadl's profile also details his defection. In 1996, al-Fadl arrived at the US Embassy in Eritrea claiming to have important information for the US. He had stolen $110,000 in commissions from AQ and feared for his life.[250] Al-Fadl accepted a plea deal of 15 years imprisonment for his role in a terrorist organisation in exchange for his testimony. Al-Fadl went into witness protection and his wife and children were brought to the United States. Dan Coleman, an FBI agent responsible for debriefing al-Fadl, recalled in an interview: 'He's a loveable rogue. He's fixated on money. And he loves women.'[251] FBI agents referred to al-Fadl as 'Junior' and note the difficulty in managing both al-Fadl and his wife in the United States.[252]

Skills and Training outlines where a foreign fighter was trained, the skills that they were trained in and any combat experience they have. Al-Fadl claimed that he had trained in several camps. The first camp was Khalid Ibn Walid Camp where al-Fadl was training in using small weapons, Kalashnikovs, and RPGs.[253] At the time of al-Fadl's training, the camp was run by Abu Shaleed al-Falastini and the training course lasted 45 days.[254] Al-Fadl then spent two weeks training at al-Faruq camp in Khost where fighters received Islamic and jihad training.[255] At Abu Bakr al-Sadeek camp al-

[249] Ahmed Moussa, "Egypt's Most Wanted," *Al-Ahram Weekly*, October 18, 2001, https://web.archive.org/web/20130611085923/http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2001/556/11war3.htm.
[250] Southern District of New York. United States of America v. Usama Bin Laden et al, "S(7) 98 Cr. 1023, S.D.N.Y: Day 2" (Trial transcript, February 7, 2001, Jamal al-Fadl, n.d.), 383.
[251] Jane Mayer, "Junior," *The New Yorker*, 2006, https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2006/0September 11/junior.
[252] Mayer.
[253] Southern District of New York, *United States of America v. Usama Bin Laden et Al*, S(7) 98 Cr. 1023, S.D.N.Y (New York: United States District Court, 2001), 171–72.
[254] Southern District of New York, 172, 174.
[255] Southern District of New York, 182.

Fadl was further trained in camp management. The training lasted two weeks.[256] Finally, al-Fadl trained at Jihad Wal in Khost, a camp that specialised in training with small guns and explosives.[257] Al-Fadl claims to have fought in Jaji, bin Laden's base in the mountains, for two months.[258]

Resources seeks to identify any financial or material contributions individuals provided. This section reflects assumptions within the literature that the Afghan Network was a site of exchange of financial and material goods, including weapons, between groups. This information was rarely available but as a business manager, Jamal al-Fadl participated in the movement of money and weapons on behalf of al-Qaeda. Al-Fadl claims that AQ used camels to transport weapons across the Sudan-Egyptian border: 'We buy camels to send them to Egypt because we use the camels to smuggle Kalashnikov to Egypt…We buy from market for camels over there in Umduhrman City.' Each trip consisted of about 50 camels.[259]

Foreign fighters are often cited as a source of issues to group cohesion. Group Cohesion captured any information surrounding tensions between foreign fighters and locals or within armed groups themselves. Al-Fadl noted the tensions within AQ between the Egyptians and other nationalities. Complaints about Egyptians were first raised in Peshawar to bin Laden, Abu Hafs al-Masri and Ubaydah al-Banshiri. The complaints related to the number of leadership positions Egyptians held:

> We told Banshiri and Abu Hafs el Masri and Usama Bin Laden in that meeting that the camp run by Egyptian people and the guesthouse, emir from the guesthouse is Egyptian and everything Egyptian people and from jihad group [EIJ], and we have people from Nigeria, from Tunisia, from Siberia, why is Egyptian people got more chance than other people run everything.[260]

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[256] Southern District of New York, 183.
[257] Southern District of New York, 184.
[258] Southern District of New York, 175, 180.
[259] Southern District of New York, 320.
[260] Southern District of New York, 322–23.

Al-Fadl also provides evidence of the working relationship that AQ had with the National Islamic Front in Sudan. Bin Laden's investment in Sudan is well recorded. Bin Laden purchased multiple properties, farms and a tannery and invested in roads through the Hijra construction company.[261] The relationship eventually soured under international pressure with AQ forced to relocate back to Afghanistan in 1996.

The template used for the profiles and an explanation of each section is included in Appendix 2. Data from the profiles are utilised throughout the empirical chapters. The depth of information varied for each fighter and in some cases, no information was available for individual sections. The information gathered in the profiles is used throughout the empirical chapters to demonstrate how individuals experienced the acquisition of skills, the formation of new networks, and the new ideas that became part and parcel of the Afghan experience.

4.3 SOCIAL NETWORK ANALYSIS

In chapter 6, I utilise social network analysis (SNA) to visualise the Afghan Network and how the network changed over time. The role of SNA in network perspectives has been briefly discussed in the theoretical framework (Chapter 3). SNA explicitly focuses on the 'relationships among social entities, and on the patterns and implications of these relationships'[262] rather than broader network perspectives that can include non-human, non-social actors.[263] As defined by Hansen, SNA allows researchers to 'visualise complex sets of relationships and maps of connected symbols and calculate the precise measures of the size, shape and density of the network as a whole and the positions of the elements within it.'[264] Instead of focusing on the individual attributes or characters, SNA focuses on the affiliation between actors.[265] As veteran foreign fighters form a network, the dataset can be presented and analysed

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[261] Southern District of New York. United States of America v. Usama Bin Laden et al, "Testimony Jamal Al-Fadl February 7 2001," 351.
[262] Wasserman and Faust, *Social Network Analysis*, 3.
[263] Network perspectives are not only concerned with human actors. Approaches such as Actor-Network Theory incorporates non-human actors. Vicsek, Király, and Kónya, "Networks in the Social Sciences."
[264] Hansen et al., "Social Network Analysis," 32.
[265] Hansen et al., 32.

using SNA. I utilise SNA to visualise the foreign fighter network that emerged from the Afghan conflicts. These visualisations are presented in Chapter 7 to explore the formation of new armed groups and their location in a global network.

Terrorism and political violence researchers have increasingly drawn on SNA to understand the internal dynamics and external connections of armed groups. Perliger and Pedahzur note that SNA was first adopted by political violence scholars to understand collective action.[266] This research contributed to a shift in our understanding of collective action from individual motivation or organisational approaches, ostensibly highlighting organisational strategies and decision-making practices, to explain how individuals are connected to armed groups by quotidian and community ties.[267] As highlighted by Koschade's work on Jemaah Islamiyya (JI) and the organisation of the Bali Bombings, SNA can also elicit information about organisational structure and reveal key actors.[268] Similarly, Krebs' work—one of the most well-known pieces on SNA within International Relations—maps the actors involved in the September 11 attacks.[269] Using publicly available data, Krebs mapped the relationships between the September 11 hijackers.[270] Similarly, Azad and Gupta used SNA to demonstrate the internal structure of the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) terrorist cell responsible for the 26/11 attacks in Mumbai in 2008 based on phone records.[271] These three examples are restricted to a relatively small number of actors—17, 19, and 13 respectively. In an unpublished working paper from 2020, Rosenblatt uses SNA to compare recruitment networks of 1,059 ISIS foreign fighters from captured documents.[272] These works attempt to extricate the organisational or network structure

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[266] Arie Perliger and Ami Pedahzur, "Social Network Analysis in the Study of Terrorism and Political Violence," *PS: Political Science & Politics* 44, no. 01 (January 2011): 45, https://doi.org/10.1017/S1049096510001848.
[267] Perliger and Pedahzur, 45.
[268] Stuart Koschade, "A Social Network Analysis of Jemaah Islamiyah: The Applications to Counterterrorism and Intelligence," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 29, no. 6 (September 2006): 560, https://doi.org/10.1080/10576100600798418.
[269] Valdis E. Krebs, "Mapping Networks of Terrorist Cells," *Connections* 24, no. 3 (2002): 43–52, https://www.aclu.org/sites/default/files/field_document/ACLURM002810.pdf.
[270] Krebs, 46.
[271] Sarita Azad and Arvind Gupta, "A Quantitative Assessment on 26/11 Mumbai Attack Using Social Network Analysis," *Journal of Terrorism Research* 2, no. 2 (October 30, 2011): 11, https://doi.org/10.15664/jtr.187.
[272] Nate Rosenblatt, "Localism as Secrecy: Efficiency-Secrecy Tradeoffs in the Recruitment of ISIS Foreign Fighters," *ArXiv Preprint*, 2020, 38, https://arxiv.org/pdf/2011.12290.pdf.

between actors in cells or armed groups through SNA. Rather than a practical application for terrorism prevention, this work takes a step back and seeks to understand the inner workings that lead to violence.

In SNA, nodes represent individuals or entities that are connected. Edges symbolise the connections between nodes.[273] The networks that are examined as part of this research are both unimodal and bipartite. Unimodal affiliation matrixes contain a single type of node such as represented by the connections between armed groups. Bipartite models contain two different types of nodes.[274] In this context, there are several possible bipartite matrices including organisation-to-actor and organisation-to-nationality. The networks visualised in Chapter 7 are bipartite networks that show the relationship between individual foreign fighters and armed groups. Within these network maps, the larger the node—in this case a foreign fighter or armed group—the greater the number of fighters affiliated with this group. The thickness/width? of the edges indicates the strength of the relationship between nodes, in this case, the number of individuals that belong to both groups.

I also use SNA to capture the temporality of the Afghan network. The dates on which foreign fighters move between armed groups are often unclear. Instead, I separate the networks according to the order that a foreign fighter joined it. For example, the Group 2 network (Figure 3) captures the network of groups that foreign fighters joined after the Afghan conflicts. Figure 4 captures foreign fighters across group 2 and 3. For this purpose, I present five network maps (Figure 3-7) that progressively include the movement of foreign fighters by group. This approach is an imperfect means of capturing temporality but allows for a visualisation of how this network changed over time. The start dates of conflicts provide further information on when foreign fighters are likely to have moved between groups.

A core feature of SNA is its ability not only to illustrate the structure of networks but also the central nodes within those networks. Centrality is generally measured in three

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[273] Hansen et al., "Social Network Analysis," 34; Perliger and Pedahzur, "Social Network Analysis in the Study of Terrorism and Political Violence," 46.
[274] Hansen et al., "Social Network Analysis," 36.

ways. First, *closeness* calculates the shortest paths between a node and all other nodes within the network. The nodes with the shortest paths have a higher centrality. Second, *betweenness* identifies bridge figures that connect different clusters within a network. These nodes are generally viewed as controllers of power or information. Third, *degree* calculates the number of nodes a single node is connected to divided by the total number of nodes within a network.[275] These three measurements illustrate that different nodes are important in different ways. For example, Azad and Gupta provide the different measures of centrality of individuals responsible for the 26/11 Mumbai attack in 2008.[276] Their network only consists of thirteen actors but includes all the perpetrators of the attack. Phone records determine their connectivity. From there the authors extrapolate the likely organisational structure of the cell.[277] All these calculations may be applied to the single mode networks that can be built with this dataset, i.e., organisation-to-organisation or individual-to-individual. However, in a convenience sample, centrality calculations are unlikely to reflect these individuals' position in the complete universe of cases. Further, this calculation does not take an individuals' role within the destination-armed group into consideration. Instead, I use a measure of *density*. Network density refers to how connected vertices—in this case actors and armed groups—are by calculating the number of ties in the network and comparing it to the number of possible ties.[278]

4.4 CONCLUSION

As part of this research, I present an original dataset of foreign fighter veterans from the Afghan conflicts (1979-1992) containing 404 individuals. I identify veteran foreign fighters in 69 different armed groups and conflicts. This dataset expands on the conventional accounts of foreign fighters returning or moving on to Algeria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Chechnya, Indonesia, Kashmir, the Philippines, Somalia, and

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[275] Aparna Basu, "Social Network Analysis: A Methodology for Studying Terrorism," in *Social Networking*, ed. Mrutyunjaya Panda, Satchidananda Dehuri, and Gi-Nam Wang, vol. 65 (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2014), 5–7, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-05164-2_9.

[276] Azad and Gupta, "A Quantitative Assessment on 26/11 Mumbai Attack Using Social Network Analysis," October 30, 2011, 12.

[277] Azad and Gupta, 10.

[278] Hansen et al., "Social Network Analysis," 39.

Yemen, as well as those focused on prominent members of global organisations such as AQ (and affiliates).[279] In quantitative research, the aim is for representative or otherwise complete data. In the field of foreign fighter research, completeness is nearly impossible to attain. This dataset provides the first attempt of a systematic recording of a generation of foreign fighters. The biographical data that results from it can be used to not only trace the movement of fighters but also their progression into different positions within armed groups.

Chapter 6 will utilise the dataset to visualise the Afghan Network with the help of SNA. The positions data will be utilised in Chapter 7 to demonstrate the career progression among foreign fighters in subsequent conflicts. Chapter 8 will draw primarily on the in-depth profiles to identify socialisation processes in the Afghan conflicts.

[279] For example, see Mendelsohn, "Foreign Fighters—Recent Trends," 191; Hamid and Farrall, *The Arabs at War in Afghanistan*, 183–84; Hafez, "*Jihad* after Iraq," 83.

Chapter 5: Foreign Fighter Isolation in the Afghan Conflicts

The story of the Afghan Network has been stretched and transformed by mythology. Members of the Afghan Network often exaggerated their contributions to the victory of the Mujahideen during the Afghan conflicts. Abu Ja'far al-Misri al-Qandahari claimed that foreign fighters were responsible for the withdrawal of the Soviets from Afghanistan: 'When the red army failed this shameful failure in Jaji, Gorbachev produced the withdrawal of the army from Afghanistan.'[280] Further, the concept of 'blowback'—the unintended consequences for states of providing external support or participating in conflicts—has been retrospectively applied to the success of major al-Qaeda attacks and the rise of jihadist movements led by veteran foreign fighters.[281] The Afghan conflicts is viewed as a major, and consequential, training ground for foreign fighters who became a threat to international security. These narratives are at odds with the limited participation of foreign fighters in almost all aspects of the conflict. This chapter provides an overview of the Afghan conflicts and the isolation of foreign fighters from local Mujahideen fighters. This isolation provides the premise for analysing the altered conflict processes identified in the theoretical framework.

I argue that the isolation of foreign fighters during the Afghan conflicts was a deliberate decision by Afghan leaders. I then outline how this isolation created the unique conditions of protection from the state, protection from the conflict, and acted as a site of mass convergence. This chapter proceeds in two parts. First, I provide a basic timeline of the Soviet invasion and outline the different factions in the Afghan opposition and their relationship to foreign fighters. Second, I outline how foreign

[280] al-Qandahari, *Dhikrayat 'arabi Afghani [Memories of an Arab Afghan]*, 38.

[281] Note that at the time of the Afghan Conflicts, the concept of foreign fighter blowback did not yet exist but two magazine articles published in 1994 and 1996 were already using the term in relation to US funding sent to Afghanistan. Hegghammer, *The Caravan*, 179; Mary Anne Weaver, "Blowback," *The Atlantic*, May 1, 1996, https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1996/05/blowback/376583/; Tim Weiner, "Blowback From the Afghan Battlefield," *The New York Times*, March 13, 1994, sec. Magazine, https://www.nytimes.com/1994/03/13/magazine/blowback-from-the-afghan-battlefield.html.

fighters came to join the Afghan conflicts and how their isolated shaped their limited participation in the conflict.

5.1 THE SOVIET-AFGHAN AND AFGHAN CIVIL WAR

On 25 December 1979, approximately five thousand Soviet troops entered Afghanistan.[282] The Soviet invasion followed almost a decade of political instability in Afghanistan beginning with the coup ousting King Mohammed Zahir Shah. Shah ruled Afghanistan from 1933 to 1973 before his cousin and former-Prime Minister (1953-1963),[283] Mohammed Daoud Khan, assumed power in a coup while Shah was in Italy for surgery.[284] Daoud's main political threat were the Islamist activists at Kabul University. Daoud suppressed University-based Islamist movements forcing its leaders into exile in Peshawar including Rabbani, Sayyaf, Massoud and Hekmatyar.[285]

While the Soviet Union already held some influence with King Shah, under Daoud the USSR came to play a greater role in Afghan politics.[286] The USSR was increasingly concerned with Daoud's relationship with the United States. Within Afghanistan, there was also growing discontent among communists with Daoud's inability to implement socialist political and economic reforms.[287] In 1978, to quell his opposition, Daoud arrested several senior figures of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA). The PDPA was the Moscow-supported communist party founded in 1965

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[282] Mark Galeotti, *Afghanistan, the Soviet Union's Last War* (London: Frank Cass, 1995), 13.

[283] M. Hasan Kakar, *Afghanistan: The Soviet Invasion and the Afghan Response, 1979-1982* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 9; Anas and Hussein, *To The Mountains*, 27.

[284] Lester W. Grau, "The Soviet–Afghan War: A Superpower Mired in the Mountains," *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 17, no. 1 (March 2004): 4, https://doi.org/10.1080/13518040490440692; Martin Ewans, *Conflict in Afghanistan: Studies in Asymmetric Warfare* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 82.

[285] Ewans, *Conflict in Afghanistan*, 82; Vahid Brown and Don Rassler, *Fountainhead of Jihad: The Haqqani Nexus, 1973-2012* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 37; Chris Sands and Fazelminallah Qazizai, *Night Letters: Gulbuddin Hekmatyar and the Afghan Islamists Who Changed the World* (London: Hurst & Company, 2019), 91.

[286] Amin Saikal and William Maley, eds., *The Soviet Withdrawal from Afghanistan* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 4; Alam Payind, "Soviet – Afghan Relations from Cooperation to Occupation," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 21, no. 1 (February 1989): 115–16, https://doi.org/10.1017/S002074380003213X.

[287] Galeotti, *Afghanistan, the Soviet Union's Last War*, 4; Steve Coll, *Ghost Wars: The Secret History of the CIA, Afghanistan, and Bin Laden, from the Soviet Invasion to September 10, 2001* (Penguin, 2005), 46–47.

with two factions: Parcham and Khalq.[288] Two of the party's senior Khalqi leaders, Nur Mohamed Taraki and Hafizullah Amin, were among the arrests.[289] Taraki and Amin represented two opposing groups within the Khalq faction.[290] In retaliation, the PDPA launched a successful coup against Daoud in April, installing Taraki as the Chair of the Revolutionary Council and Amin as President.[291] The new PDPA government launched a 'reign of terror' on both traditionalist and Islamic community members and the Parcham members within the PDPA, including exiling Barbak Karmal, the future President of Afghanistan.[292]

The communist PDPA government faced political and armed opposition throughout Afghanistan. The Afghan government first requested the assistance of Soviet forces in response to an uprising in western Afghanistan.[293] In March 1979, Afghan Army Captain, Ismail Khan, led a major revolt in the city of Herat[294] in response to attempts by the PDPA to implement compulsory women's education.[295] The subsequent suppression by the government resulted in 5,000 casualties.[296] Further insurrection followed in most provinces, with significant uprisings in Jalalabad in April and Kabul in August.[297] By the end of 1979, the Afghan Army, as a result of desertions and defections, reduced from 90,000 to 40,000 personnel.[298]

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[288] Artemy Kalinovsky, *Long Goodbye: The Soviet Withdrawal from Afghanistan* (Harvard University Press, 2011), 17; Payind, "Soviet – Afghan Relations from Cooperation to Occupation," 117.
[289] Kalinovsky, *A Long Goodbye*, 17.
[290] Galeotti, *Afghanistan, the Soviet Union's Last War*, 4; Ewans, *Conflict in Afghanistan*, 91; Kalinovsky, *A Long Goodbye*, 18.
[291] Payind, "Soviet – Afghan Relations from Cooperation to Occupation," 118.
[292] Kalinovsky, *A Long Goodbye*, 18.
[293] Artemy Kalinovsky, "Decision-Making and the Soviet War in Afghanistan: From Intervention to Withdrawal," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 11, no. 4 (October 2009): 49, https://doi.org/10.1162/jcws.2009.11.4.46.
[294] Coll, *Ghost Wars*, 39–42; Robert Johnson, *The Afghan Way of War: How and Why They Fight* (Oxford University Press, 2011), 207.
[295] Galeotti, *Afghanistan, the Soviet Union's Last War*, 7; Coll, *Ghost Wars*, 40; Kalinovsky, *A Long Goodbye*, 19.
[296] Geraint Hughes, "The Soviet–Afghan War, 1978–1989: An Overview," *Defence Studies* 8, no. 3 (September 2008): 229–330, https://doi.org/10.1080/14702430802252511.
[297] Hughes, 330.
[298] Galeotti, *Afghanistan, the Soviet Union's Last War*, 7; Ewans, *Conflict in Afghanistan*, 106; Coll, *Ghost Wars*, 44–45.

Takari was Moscow's preferred leader. Amin appeared to lack control and was resistant to USSR influence. Soviet actors even started a rumour that Amin was a CIA agent, recruited during his time at Columbia University in the 1960s.[299] On 9 October, Taraki was assassinated by Amin's forces.[300] Amin took full control of the Afghan government and continued his campaign of repression.[301] By 1979, the government—with KGB support—had arrested approximately 12,000 political prisoners.[302] The Afghan government had requested military intervention from the Soviets thirteen times. All requests had been denied.[303] However, Taraki's assassination, the growing revolts, and the fear of the collapse of the communist government increased pressure on the Soviet Politburo to intervene.[304]

On 12 December 1979, members of Soviet Politburo made the decision to invade Afghanistan.[305] The aims of the intervention were limited: change the leadership, stabilise the new government and secure cities to allow Afghan forces to quell the insurgency.[306] The USSR invaded Afghanistan on 25 December 1979.[307] On 27 December, USSR forces assassinated Amin and installed Babrak Karmal, the exiled Parchamist leader of the PDPA.[308] Karmal, with Soviet support, remained in power for seven years, However, as nation-building projects stalled and Karmal failed to unify the communist government or support outside of urban centres, the Soviets reassessed its ability to stabilise the Karmal regime.[309]

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[299] Hughes, "The Soviet–Afghan War, 1978–1989," 332; Coll, *Ghost Wars*, 50–51.
[300] Ewans, *Conflict in Afghanistan*, 96.
[301] Ewans, 96.
[302] Coll, *Ghost Wars*, 39.
[303] Fred Halliday, "Soviet Foreign Policymaking and the Afghanistan War: From 'Second Mongolia' to 'Bleeding Wound,'" *Review of International Studies* 25, no. 4 (October 1999): 678, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210599006750.
[304] Coll, *Ghost Wars*, 50–51; Hamid and Farrall, *The Arabs at War in Afghanistan*, 21; Galeotti, *Afghanistan, the Soviet Union's Last War*, 9; Kohlmann, *Al-Qaida's Jihad in Europe*, 4; Kalinovsky, *A Long Goodbye*, 22–23.
[305] Halliday, "Soviet Foreign Policymaking and the Afghanistan War," 675; Ewans, *Conflict in Afghanistan*, 98.
[306] Kalinovsky, *A Long Goodbye*, 24–25.
[307] Coll, *Ghost Wars*, 50–51.
[308] Ewans, *Conflict in Afghanistan*, 97; Hughes, "The Soviet–Afghan War, 1978–1989," 332; Aisha Ahmad, *Jihad & Co.: Black Markets and Islamist Power* (Oxford University Press, 2017), 31; Payind, "Soviet – Afghan Relations from Cooperation to Occupation," 121.
[309] Kalinovsky, *A Long Goodbye*, 63.

In October 1985, Karmal was called to Moscow for secret talks with Gorbachev. Gorbachev decided to replace Karmal with Mohammed Najibullah. [310] Najibullah, also referred to as Najib, was a Parchamist and the head of the Department of State Information Services (KhAD).[311] KhAd was established by, and received significant oversight from, the KGB.[312] KhAd controlled the notorious Pul-i-Charkhi prison that had a reputation as a death camp known for rape, torture and executions of political prisoners.[313] From the beginning of the invasion to May 1983, an estimated 16,500-17,000 prisoners from Pul-i-Charki were executed. Najibullah first took over as PDPA Secretary in May 1986 before being installed as President in 1997.[314][315] Najibullah would eventually resign 1992 as the Mujahideen took control of Kabul.[316]

5.1.1 Mujahideen Leadership

Afghan opposition to the increasingly communist government emerged prior to the Soviet invasion. Khan's crackdown on university-based Islamists forced the movement's leaders into exile in Pakistan. Here, leaders plotted their revenge beyond the reach of Afghanistan's security forces.[317] The first operation was led by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, a Pashtun, in 1975 in Nangarhar. Hekmatyar's men crossed into Afghanistan and attacked government posts but were quickly forced to retreat. Later in 1975, Ahmad Shah Massoud, launched an attack in his native Panjshir Valley. After controlling government buildings for several days in the city of Rukha, Massoud fled back to Peshawar after a large force was sent from Kabul.[318]

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[310] Kalinovsky, 83, 95.

[311] Galeotti, *Afghanistan, the Soviet Union's Last War*, 18; Ahmad, *Jihad & Co.*, 34; Kalinovsky, *A Long Goodbye*, 26.

[312] Fred Halliday and Zahir Tanin, "The Communist Regime in Afghanistan 1978−1992: Institutions and Conflicts," *Europe-Asia Studies* 50, no. 8 (December 1998): 1366, https://doi.org/10.1080/09668139808412601.

[313] Ahmad, *Jihad & Co.*, 34.

[314] Halliday and Tanin, "The Communist Regime in Afghanistan 1978−1992," 1367; Kalinovsky, *A Long Goodbye*, 97−99.

[315] Ahmad, *Jihad & Co.*, 34.

[316] Ahmad, 59; Hughes, "The Soviet–Afghan War, 1978–1989," 344.

[317] Anas and Hussein, *To The Mountains*, 29.

[318] Anas and Hussein, 30.

After the Soviet invasion, opposition swelled. The Mujahideen were not a united force but fractured into several armed factions largely based on geography, qawm,[319] tribe, ethnicity, and religion.[320] The most powerful Mujahideen parties were known as the 'Peshawar Seven'[321]: Abdul Rasul Sayyaf, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, Burhanuddin Rabbani, Yunis Khalis, Sigbutullah Mujaddidi, Sayyid Ahmad Gilani, Muhammad Nabi Muhammadi.[322] The Mujahideen had access to a reem of external support. The United States, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan coordinated funding and armed the Mujahideen.[323] As demonstrated in figure 2 taken from Hamid and Farrall's book *The Arabs at War in Afghanistan,*[324] the alliances and fragmentation of the Mujahideen created a complex, disunified opposition. The Union twice appointed Sayyaf as leader

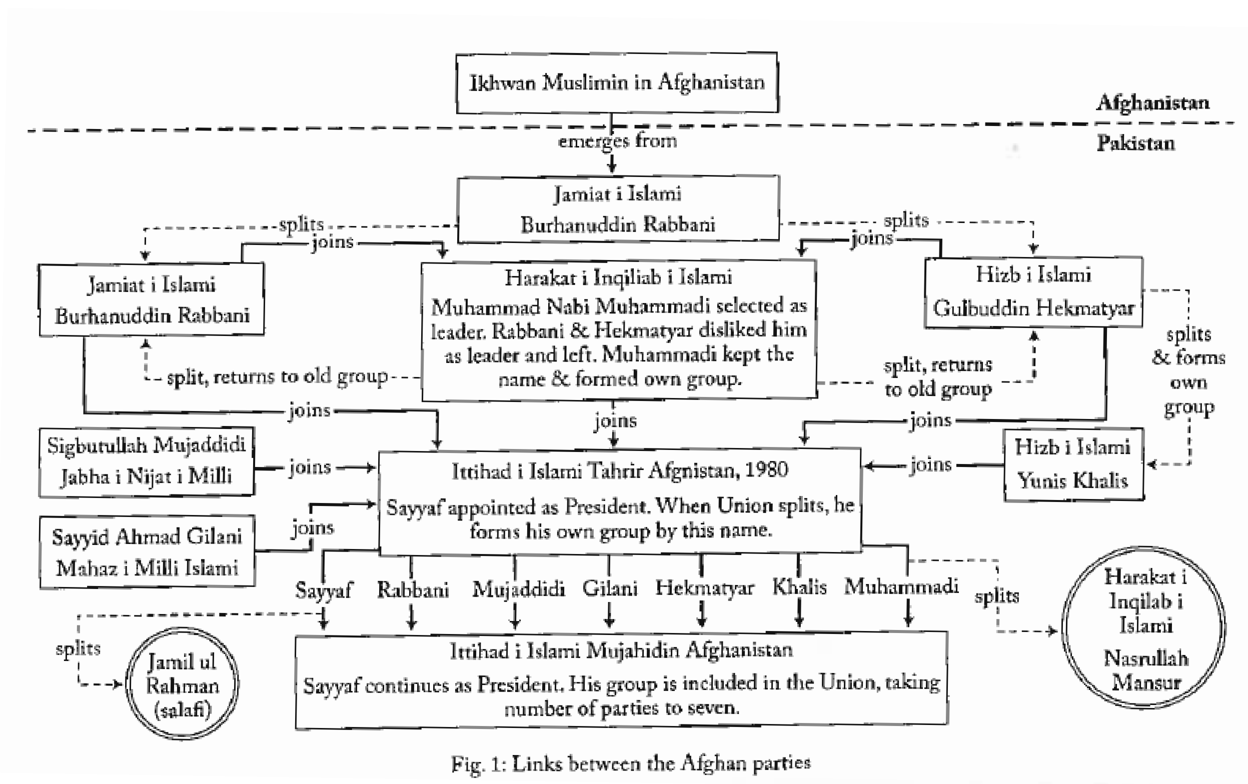

Figure 2 Diagram of the major Mujahideen factions and their alliances produced by Hamid and Farrall 2015

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[319] Roy describes qawms as "the term used to designate any segment of society bound by solidarity. It could be familiy, a clan, an occupational group a village etc." Olivier Roy, *Afghanistan: From Holy War to Civil War* (New Jersey, USA: Darwin Press, Incorporated, 1995), 21–25.
[320] Roy, 21–23; Saikal and Maley, *The Soviet Withdrawal from Afghanistan*, 3.
[321] Hegghammer, *The Caravan*, 174.
[322] Saikal and Maley, *The Soviet Withdrawal from Afghanistan*, 6.
[323] Hegghammer, *The Caravan*, 179.
[324] Hamid and Farrall, *The Arabs at War in Afghanistan*.

despite not representing the strongest military force. Rabbani (with Massoud as his top commander) and Hekmatyar were the two most powerful factions among the mujahideen.[325]

It is important to recognise that foreign fighters only engaged with a few factions within the Peshawar Seven and that this relationship varied between them. Table 7 provides an overview of Mujahideen leaders that engaged with foreign fighters. These vignettes are not designed to serve an analytical purpose but as background for the thesis. Each of these Afghan leaders will be referenced throughout this thesis and it is important to understand their preferences and relationships to foreign fighters.

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[325] Ahmad, *Jihad & Co.*, 35.

Table 7 Descriptions of Mujahideen leaders and commanders that engaged with foreign fighters

Name	Ethnic Group	Mujahideen Faction	Position	Description
Abdul Rasul Sayyaf	Pashtun	Ittihad i Islami Tahrir	President	Sayyaf was President of the Ittihad i Islami Tahrir, the first union of Afghan commanders in 1980.[326] When this union split, Sayyaf continued to lead a group by the same name. Sayyaf was also President of the second union: Ittihad I Islami Mujahideen Afghanistan.[327] Sayyaf spoke fluent Arabic from his time studying in Cairo, which was unique among Afghan commanders[328] and facilitated support by Saudi Arabia.[329] Sayyaf is one of the three founders of the MAK and helped establish the earliest foreign fighter training camps.[330]
Gulbuddin Hekmatyar[331]	Pashtun	Hezbi i Islami (HiH)	Leader	Hekmatyar was a member of the student-led Islamist groups at Kabul University.[332] Daoud's crackdown on university Islamists forced Hekmatyar into exile to Pakistan. Hekmatyar is from the northern state of Kunduz but also had Pushtun roots.[333] Hekmatyar was the founder and military commander of Hizb i Islami (HiH). HiH was largely Pashtun[334] and operated in

[326] Hamid and Farrall, *The Arabs at War in Afghanistan*, 28.
[327] Hamid and Farrall, 23.
[328] Coll, *Ghost Wars*, 82.
[329] Roy, *Afghanistan*, 45–46; Coll, *Ghost Wars*, 82; Ahmad, *Jihad & Co.*, 48.
[330] Tawil, *Brothers in Arms*, 17.
[331] For a fuller account on Hekmatyar see Sands and Qazizai, *Night Letters*.
[332] Coll, *Ghost Wars*, 114; Tawil, *Brothers in Arms*, 15; Sands and Qazizai, *Night Letters*.
[333] Hamid and Farrall, *The Arabs at War in Afghanistan*, 40.
[334] Ahmad, *Jihad & Co.*, 2.

				the Southern and Eastern provinces.[335] Osama bin Laden, although initially supporting Sayyaf, shifted his alliance to Hekmatyar after the battle of Jaji.[336] Hekmatyar received the majority of his financial support from Pakistan's Intelligence Service (ISI) rather than Saudi Arabia.[337]After the fall of Kabul, Hekmatyar refused to join the Mujahideen coalition government as a part of the Peshawar Accords[338] but eventually became a member of the Northern Alliance in conjunction with Massoud to oppose the Taliban.[339]
Burhanuddin Rabbani	Tajik	Jamiat i Islami (JAI)	Leader	Rabbani was a member of the student-led Islamists groups at Kabul University and was exiled to Pakistan during Daoud's rule.[340] Rabbani was considered a moderate and opposed takfir.[341] Rabbani formed the Jamiat i Islami (JAI) during his political activism in Kabul University and shared the same ideology as the Muslim Brotherhood.[342] Unlike other factions, Rabbani called his organisation a 'society' (Jamiat) rather than 'party' (Hizb).[343]

[335] Ahmad, 48.
[336] Hamid and Farrall, *The Arabs at War in Afghanistan*, 100; Coll, *Ghost Wars*, 119.
[337] Hamid and Farrall, *The Arabs at War in Afghanistan*, 127; Coll, *Ghost Wars*, 114; John C M Calvert, "Abdullah Azzam and the Revival of Jihad," in *The Context of Religion and Violence*, Supplement Series 2 (Journal of Religion and Society, 2007), 90.
[338] Roy, *Afghanistan*, 90; Anas and Hussein, *To The Mountains*, 126.
[339] Tawil, *Brothers in Arms*, 147.
[340] Tawil, 15; Anas and Hussein, *To The Mountains*, 28.
[341] Roy, *Afghanistan*, 44.
[342] Anas and Hussein, *To The Mountains*, 27; Roy, *Afghanistan*, 87.
[343] Roy, *Afghanistan*, 44.

				JAI was largely Tajik.[344] Rabbani's JAI, under the command of Massoud, was one of the two dominant military groups competing with Hekmatyar's Hizbi i Islami. In the Peshawar accords, Rabbani would take over as President for four months before elections.[345] Rabbani remained President until Taliban took over Kabul in 1996.[346] The Taliban assassinated Rabbani in 2011 when he was head of the High Peace Council.[347]
Ahmad Shah Massoud	Tajik	Jamiat i Islami (JAI)	Commander	Massoud was the military commander of JAI and considered the most effective of the Afghan commanders alongside Hekmatyar.[348] Massoud was based in Northern Afghanistan. Soviet forces unsuccessfully attempted to remove Massoud's forces from the Panjshir Valley five times.[349] Massoud was the preferred leader of Sheikh Abdullah Azzam who referred to him as 'Lion of Panjshir.'[350] However, Azzam's support was not shared among all foreign fighters.[351] Massoud was named Defence Minister in the Peshawar Accords in 1992 but the

344 Ahmad, *Jihad & Co.*, 2.
345 Anas and Hussein, *To The Mountains*, 126.
346 Kathy Gannon, "Afghanistan Unbound," *Foreign Affairs* 83, no. 3 (2004): 36, https://doi.org/10.2307/20033974.
347 Anas and Hussein, *To The Mountains*, 259.
348 Coll, *Ghost Wars*, 120–23, 165, 182, 190, 203, 206; Johnson, *The Afghan Way of War*, 233.
349 Kalinovsky, *A Long Goodbye*, 40.
350 Tawil, *Brothers in Arms*, 23.
351 In 1988, Arab fighters held a trial of Massoud in Peshawar. They accused him of opening a hostel for Westerners for both men and women, giving control of his front lines to Shia fighters and having a generally 'anti-Arab outlook.' Due to a lack of eyewitnesses, the trial concluded that Arab fighters should not praise or condemn Massoud. Tawil, 21–22; Anas and Hussein, *To The Mountains*, 200.

				agreement soon fell apart.[352] Massoud formed, and was leader of, the Northern Alliance in opposition to the Taliban.[353] In 2001, Massoud was assassinated by assumed al-Qaeda operatives posing as journalists. The operatives detonated a bomb hidden in their camera during the interview.[354]
Jalaladin Haqqani	Pashtun	Hezbi i Islami-Khalis	Leader	Haqqani was a commander for Yunis Khalis from the mountainous Loya Paktia in south-eastern Afghanistan.[355] Khalis splintered from Hekmatyar's Hezbi i Islami but retained the same name. Haqqani was one of the first Afghans to declare Jihad against the Soviets[356] and was a trained Deobandi religious scholar who studied in Pakistan rather than an university Islamist.[357] Haqqani was distinct from other commanders for his willingness to accept foreign fighters and allow them to fight on the battlefield.[358] Haqqani first called for foreign fighters to join the jihad in 1979 and 1980 and pressured Sayyaf to put out the call for more

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352 Anas and Hussein, *To The Mountains*, 126.
353 Coll, *Ghost Wars*, xvi.
354 Coll, 582–83; Anas and Hussein, *To The Mountains*, 121, 127.
355 Brown and Rassler, *Fountainhead of Jihad*, 22.
356 Brown and Rassler have Haqqani declaring Jihad against the Soviets as early as 1973 Brown and Rassler, 31, 45.
357 Anas and Hussein, *To The Mountains*, 160; Brown and Rassler, *Fountainhead of Jihad*, 38.
358 Brown and Rassler, *Fountainhead of Jihad*, 61.

				volunteers.[359] Prior to the establishment of the MAK, most foreign fighters joined Haqqani's forces in Loya Paktia.[360]

[359] Hegghammer, *The Caravan*, 167.
[360] Hamid and Farrall, *The Arabs at War in Afghanistan*.

5.1.2 The Soviet Withdrawal

From the mid-1980s, it was clear that the Soviets would not achieve a decisive victory.[361] When Gorbachev came to power in January 1985, he sought to end the political embarrassment that was the 'bleeding wound' of the Afghan war.[362] On 8 February 1988, Gorbachev announced the Soviet withdrawal and signed the Geneva Accords on 14 April 1988.[363] The withdrawal was to begin on 15 May 1988 and conclude on 15 February 1989.[364]

Around the same period, the United States armed the Mujahideen with anti-aircraft Stinger missiles.[365] According to al-Saud, Director of Saudi Arabia's General Intelligence Directorate during the Afghan conflicts, in the first ten-months after receiving the Stinger missiles, the Mujahideen destroyed more than 100 Soviet aircrafts and helicopters.[366] The introduction of Stinger missiles is widely cited as shifting the balance of the war towards the Mujahideen.[367] Official Soviet reports list 13,933 Soviet fatalities during the Soviet-Afghan War with an additional 469,685 casualties.[368] Moscow continued to provide military support to the communist government for two years after the withdrawal and ceased following the failed Moscow coup in August 1991.[369]

5.1.3 The Fall of Kabul

Najibullah's regime held onto power until 16 April 1992.[370] After the fall of Kabul, Najibullah spent four years in refuge at the UN mission before being killed by the

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[361] Olivier Roy, *Islam and Resistance in Afghanistan* (Cambridge University Press, 1990), 207–8.

[362] Halliday, "Soviet Foreign Policymaking and the Afghanistan War," 683; Kalinovsky, "Decision-Making and the Soviet War in Afghanistan," 60.

[363] Richard P Cronin, "Afghanistan in 1988: Year of Decision," *Asian Survey* 29, no. 2 (1988): 207, https://www.jstor.org/stable/2644581; Saikal and Maley, *The Soviet Withdrawal from Afghanistan*.

[364] Halliday, "Soviet Foreign Policymaking and the Afghanistan War," 686.

[365] Al-Saud, *The Afghanistan File*, 82–83; Roy, *Islam and Resistance in Afghanistan*, 208.

[366] Al-Saud, *The Afghanistan File*, 84.

[367] Halliday, "Soviet Foreign Policymaking and the Afghanistan War," 685; Ahmad, *Jihad & Co.*, 36; Kalinovsky, *A Long Goodbye*, 43; Al-Saud, *The Afghanistan File*, 84.

[368] Hughes, "The Soviet–Afghan War, 1978–1989," 344; Kalinkovsky's numbers vary slightly with 13,826 dead and 49,985 wounded Kalinovsky, *A Long Goodbye*, 1, 42.

[369] Ahmad, *Jihad & Co.*, 59.

[370] Hughes, "The Soviet–Afghan War, 1978–1989," 344.

Taliban in 1996.[371] It was Massoud that eventually captured Kabul with Hekmatyar's forces also on the outskirts of the capital.[372] The Mujahideen signed the Peshawar Accords on 24 or 26 April in 1992.[373] In the accords, Siggatulla Mojaddedi, leader of Jahbe i Nejat i Milli, was to be the interim President for two months.[374] Mojadeddi, a religious scholar from Kabul University, was considered low risk by the Mujahideen factions as he did not control significant armed forces and had minimal political support.[375] Rabbani would take over as President until elections were held.[376] Massoud was named Defence Minister.[377] Hekmatyar refused to join the Mujahideen coalition government, despite his initial appointment as Prime Minister.[378] A 50-member Council—consisting of insurgents, religious leaders and intellectuals—formed to assist the heads of state.[379] Due to intense fractionalisation and opposition by Hekmatyar, the accords promptly fell apart.[380] Hekmatyar continued his assault on Kabul from the south.[381]

On 7 March 1993, the Mujahideen factions signed the Islamabad Accords under pressure from Saudi Arabia and Pakistan.[382] Rabbani would continue as President and Hekmatyar became Prime Minister.[383] Massoud, after disagreements between Rabbani and Hekmatyar, resigned as Defence Minister but maintained his forces in Kabul.[384]

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[371] Hughes, 344.
[372] Abdullah Anas, *The Birth of the Arab Afghans* (Dar al-Saqi, 2002), 124; Shah M Tarzi, "Afghanistan in 1992: A Hobbesian State of Nature," *Asian Survey*, A Survey of Asia in 1992: Part II, 33, no. 2 (February 1993): 165–74, https://www.jstor.org/stable/2645326; Barnett R. Rubin, *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan: State Formation and Collapse in the International System*, 2nd ed. (New Haven, Conn. : London: Yale University Press, 2002), 186.
[373] Rubin, *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan*, 186; Anas and Hussein, *To The Mountains*, 126.
[374] Tarzi, "Afghanistan in 1992: A Hobbesian State of Nature," 166.
[375] Tarzi, 166.
[376] Anas and Hussein, *To The Mountains*, 126.
[377] Anas and Hussein, 126.
[378] Roy, *Afghanistan*, 90; Anas and Hussein, *To The Mountains*, 126.
[379] Tarzi, "Afghanistan in 1992: A Hobbesian State of Nature," 167.
[380] Anas, *The Birth of the Arab Afghans*, 126; Tarzi, "Afghanistan in 1992: A Hobbesian State of Nature," 167; Ahmad, *Jihad & Co.*, 61.
[381] Tarzi, "Afghanistan in 1992: A Hobbesian State of Nature," 169; Ahmad, *Jihad & Co.*, 62.
[382] Rubin, *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan*, 187.
[383] Rubin, 187.
[384] Rubin, 187.

Conflict between the Mujahideen factions would continue until the Taliban took control of Kabul in September 1996.[385]

5.2 FOREIGN FIGHTERS IN THE AFGHAN CONFLICTS

The Afghan conflicts were fractious and complex. How, then, did foreign fighters become involved and where did they fit into the conflict landscape? In this section, I trace the arrival of foreign fighters and examine how they became isolated from local Mujahideen fighters. Early in the development of foreign fighter literature, some scholars suggested that armed groups actively sought out foreign fighters.[386] However, as was the case in the Afghan conflicts, the recruitment and mobilisation of foreign fighters is usually externally coordinated. Mujahideen leaders strategically isolated foreign fighters to manage their inexperience and disruption. The isolation of foreign fighters was also an unintended consequence of the attempts by the first leader among foreign fighters, Sheikh Abdullah Azzam, to prevent foreign fighters becoming entangled in the politics of the Mujahideen factions.

This section outlines the arrival of foreign fighters, the influence of Abdullah Azzam, and the transition to the leadership of Osama bin Laden. I then outline the Mujahideen's decision to isolate foreign fighters and the consequences of this isolation for the participation of foreign fighters in the conflict. The subsequent empirical chapters examine the consequences of this isolation on the future threat of the Afghan Network for international security.

5.2.1 Arrival of Foreign Fighters

Sheikh Abdullah Azzam was the central figure of foreign fighter mobilisation.[387] Azzam, born in the West Bank in Palestine, joined the Muslim Brotherhood in 1953.[388]

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[385] Ralph H. Magnus, "Afghanistan in 1996: Year of the Taliban," *Asian Survey* 37, no. 2 (February 1, 1997): 111, https://doi.org/10.2307/2645476; N. Nojumi, *The Rise of the Taliban in Afghanistan: Mass Mobilization, Civil War, and the Future of the Region* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), xi, 23; Nasreen Ghufran, "The Taliban and the Civil War Entanglement in Afghanistan," *Asian Survey* 41, no. 3 (June 18, 2001): 467, https://doi.org/10.1525/as.2001.41.3.462; For an excellent overview of the Taliban's rise to power, see Ahmad, *Jihad & Co.*

[386] Malet, "Why Foreign Fighters? Historical Perspectives and Solutions."

[387] For an in depth biolgraphy of Azzam's life, see Hegghammer, *The Caravan*.

[388] Anas and Hussein, *To The Mountains*, 22; Hegghammer, *The Caravan*, ix; Kohlmann, *Al-Qaida's Jihad in Europe*, 4.

After Israel forces took control of the West Bank in 1967, Azzam became interested in armed resistance.[389] Between 1969-70, Azzam joined an Islamist wing of the Fedayeen movement in Jordan, gaining training and conflict experience against Israeli forces.[390] Azzam then went on to earn his doctorate of Islamic Law from al-Alzhar University in Cairo in the 1970s.[391] Azzam then taught in Jordan and Saudi Arabia before then accepting a post in Islamabad in 1981.[392] While teaching in Islamabad, Azzam worked to garner support for the Afghan cause, including world-wide fundraising tours.[393] Azzam eventually moved to Peshawar in 1984.[394]

Few foreign fighters mobilised in immediate response to the Soviet invasion in 1979.[395] Those that did arrive between 1981 and 1984 were often envoys and humanitarian workers rather than fighters.[396] Basil Muhammad notes that prior to 1983, there were less than a dozen Arabs in Afghanistan that contributed little to the fighting.[397] During the first five to six years of the war, training camps for Arab fighters—and foreign fighters more generally—were predominantly hosted by one of two factions: Sayyaf or Haqqani. Mustafa Hamid [Abu Walid al-Masri] is considered one of the very first foreign fighters. Hamid travelled to Afghanistan in June 1979, prior to the Soviet Invasion, aged 40, with his first trip only lasting one and a half months.[398] Hamid travelled with two friends from Abu Dhabi to Peshawar and then through to Haqqani's organisation in Paktia.[399] Unlike many foreign fighters, Hamid participated in 1978 Lebanon-Israeli war to fight on behalf of the Palestinian resistance, fighting with the Fatah.[400] In Afghanistan, Hamid fought with Haqqani's,

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[389] Hegghammer, *The Caravan*, 22.
[390] Hegghammer, 47.
[391] Hegghammer, 71.
[392] Hegghammer, *The Caravan*, 143.
[393] Hegghammer, "Violent Islamism in Saudi Arabia, 1976-2006," 187, 189; Calvert, "Abdullah Azzam and the Revival of Jihad," 89.
[394] Coll, *Ghost Wars*, 155; Calvert, "Abdullah Azzam and the Revival of Jihad," 89.
[395] Kohlmann, *Al-Qaida's Jihad in Europe*, 6; Hegghammer, "Violent Islamism in Saudi Arabia, 1976-2006," 191; Quotes Sayyaf's conversation with Anas, announcing that with his arrival, there was now 15 Arabs in Afghanistan Tawil, *Brothers in Arms*, 17.
[396] Hegghammer, "Violent Islamism in Saudi Arabia, 1976-2006," 189.
[397] Muhammed, *Al-Ansar*, 79.
[398] Hamid and Farrall, *The Arabs at War in Afghanistan*, 2, 34.
[399] Hamid and Farrall, 34.
[400] Hamid and Farrall, 25.

while also serving as a journalist for the newspaper al-Ittihad.[401] As noted by Hegghammer, Hamid was a unique case among the foreign fighters as he 'fought like Afghan Mujahidin.'[402] Hamid had known Haqqani for a long time and the Egyptian fighters that he took with him to the Haqqani's fronts all had prior military training.[403] Hamid became a senior figure among Arab fighters throughout the Afghan conflicts.[404] As more foreign fighters arrived with the intention to fight, a more systemic approach to training needed to be developed. Consequently, foreign fighters would be separated from local fighters and trained within their own camps using their own trainers.

Azzam witnessed the slow increase in the numbers of foreign fighters arriving in Peshawar in 1983-84 and was frustrated that their enthusiasm was being tainted by a lack of access to fronts and the disunity among the Afghan commanders. To counteract this issue, Azzam established the Maktab al-Khidamat (MAK) (Services Bureau).[405] Azzam, Osama bin Laden and Sayyaf formed the MAK during the Hajj in Saudi Arabia. By 1984, bin Laden had visited Pakistan several times as a donor. Bin Laden agreed to act as the financial backer for MAK and fund 50-60 Arab families in Peshawar[406] and rented a house for MAK to use as its headquarters.[407] As the leader of the fragile union between Mujahideen forces, Sayyaf's permission was also essential to Azzam's plans.[408] In 1984, Azzam published a fatwa expressing the obligation of Muslim men to participate in jihad in Afghanistan.[409]

Azzam's top priority was uniting the Mujahideen, loyally supporting Sayyaf as chosen leader of Ittehad i Islami. MAK allowed Azzam to maintain independence from Mujahideen leaders[410] and prevented foreign fighters from being 'sucked' into the

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[401] Hamid and Farrall, 2.
[402] Hegghammer, *The Caravan*, 330.
[403] Hegghammer, 330.
[404] Hamid and Farrall, *The Arabs at War in Afghanistan*, 35.
[405] Hamid and Farrall, 33; Hegghammer, "Violent Islamism in Saudi Arabia, 1976-2006," 193; Hegghammer, *The Caravan*, 205; Tawil, *Brothers in Arms*, 17.
[406] Hegghammer, *The Caravan*, 211.
[407] Hegghammer, 213.
[408] Tawil, *Brothers in Arms*, 17.
[409] Hegghammer, *The Caravan*, 300.
[410] Hegghammer, "Violent Islamism in Saudi Arabia, 1976-2006," 193.

politics of Mujahideen factions.[411] Azzam was committed to maintaining neutrality between leaders and worked to bring factions together.[412] MAK's neutrality also ensured independence from the Muslim Brotherhood who had denounced violence in the 1970s.[413] MAK was able to streamline recruitment and fundraising and pushed foreign fighters into a more military involvement[414] MAK's first two guesthouses were named after early foreign martyrs—Abu Hamza, a student from Sofia, Bulgaria and Abu Uthman from Kuwait.[415]

Azzam also revolutionised the promotion and propaganda of foreign fighting. Azzam first wrote *Signs of the Merciful Jihad in Afghanistan* in 1987 that recorded the miracles of the Afghan jihad. Other works included *Join the Caravan,*[416] *The Lofty Mountain,*[417] and *The Defence of the Muslim Lands.*[418] Azzam also set up a magazine to recruit and fundraise called *al-Jihad* in 1984. *Al-Jihad* published the contact details for the MAK so that recruits would be able to locate the office on arrival to Peshawar.[419] Many senior figures of the foreign fighters explicitly cite Azzam's books and lectures as motivating their decision to travel to Afghanistan. Zarqawi used to watch tapes of Abdullah Azzam at his local mosque.[420] In Zarqawi's own words: 'Sheikh Abdullah Azzam, may Allah have mercy on him, who had a very great influence in directing me towards jihad… we would get magazines on jihad and few videos that affected me a lot and made me…travel to the land of jihad in Afghanistan.'[421] Mokhtar Belmokhtar was motivated by the death of Abdullah Azzam: 'I was very affected by his death and I swore with some friends to join the jihad. Most

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411 Anas, *The Birth of the Arab Afghans*, 146.
412 Roy, *Afghanistan*, 86.
413 Hegghammer, "Violent Islamism in Saudi Arabia, 1976-2006," 193.
414 Hegghammer, 194.
415 Anas, *The Birth of the Arab Afghans*, 149–50; Tawil, *Brothers in Arms*, 18.
416 Sheikh Abdullah ibn Yusuf Azzam, "Join the Caravan," 1987, Archive.org, https://archive.org/stream/JoinTheCaravan/JoinTheCaravan_djvu.txt.
417 Sheikh Abdullah ibn Yusuf Azzam, *The Lofty Mountain* (London: Azzam Publications, 2003), https://ebooks.worldofislam.info/ebooks/Jihad/The%20Lofty%20Mountain.pdf.
418 Abdullah Azzam, "Defence of the Muslim Lands," Religioscope, February 1, 2002, https://english.religion.info/2002/02/01/document-defence-of-the-muslim-lands/.
419 Hegghammer, *The Caravan*, 220.
420 Fa'ud Hussayn notes that, as a teenager, Zarqawi attended Abdallah Bin-Abbas Mosque but it is not evident if this is the same mosque he attended after his first stint in prison.
421 "Dialogue with Sheikh Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi Part 1-3," 2.

of these friends died in combat. Since that day, I only dream of one thing: to die a martyr… I was nineteen years old.'[422] Mohamed Odeh told his FBI interrogator, Agent Anticev, that he was motivated, like many others, to travel to Afghanistan after listening to tapes of Abdullah Azzam.[423] Mahmud Bahadhiq, better known as Barbaros, the leader of foreign fighters in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), recalled seeing Azzam give a lecture in his hometown: 'One of those who came to our land was sheikh Dr. Abdallah Azzam — may his soul rest in peace – I heard him rallying the youth to come forth and (join him) to go to Afghanistan. This was in 1984 – I think. I decided to go and check the matter for myself.'[424] Azzam's model of propaganda is still used by jihadist groups today.

Azzam was killed on 24 November 1989 in a car bomb on his way to the local mosque in Peshawar with his two sons. Accounts claim that although Azzam's sons were dismembered, Azzam himself remained intact with no evidence of injury except for a bloody nose.[425] Azzam's killers have never been identified. Mustafa Hamid attributes Azzam's murder to the Israelis. Azzam had been training Palestinians and Jordanians in Sadda for operations in Israel.[426] Abdullah Anas, Azzam's son-in-law and commander within the MAK, believed Azzam's death was a result of disinformation spread by Azzam's opposition.[427]

5.2.2 The Rise of bin Laden

Osama bin Laden first travelled to Afghanistan in 1984. Although bin Laden provided the financial support to form the MAK, over time, he moved away from Azzam, instead surrounding himself with the Egyptian foreign fighters flowing into Peshawar. Members of the Egyptian Islamic Jihad (EIJ), including Ayman al-Zawahiri and Dr

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[422] Cabel Weiss, "Translation of a May 2006 Interview of Mokhtar Belmokhtar," The Line of Steel, *Sahelian Jihad* (blog), July 21, 2020, http://thelineofsteel.weebly.com/5/post/2020/07/translation-of-a-may-2006-interview-of-mokhtar-belmokhtar.html.
[423] Alan Feuer, "Seeking to Tie Conspiracy to Embassy Attacks," *The New York Times*, February 28, 2001, https://www.nytimes.com/2001/02/28/nyregion/seeking-to-tie-conspiracy-to-embassy-attacks.html.
[424] ICTY, "Transcript of Conversation Between Andrew Hogg (Journalist) and Abdel Adiz," Exhibit 00052a, IT-04-83: Delic (The Hague: ICTY, July 10, 2007), https://icr.icty.org.
[425] Anas, *The Birth of the Arab Afghans*, 206.
[426] Hamid and Farrall, *The Arabs at War in Afghanistan*, 124.
[427] Anas, *The Birth of the Arab Afghans*, 187.

Fadl, were *takfiris,* those who declare those that do not follow their creed as apostate or *kafir*.[428] Azzam wanted to focus on Afghanistan and the establishment of an Islamic state, whereas bin Laden turned his focus to the global and the overthrow of other governments.[429] Bin Laden ultimately supported Hekmatyar[430] while Azzam would continue to emphatically support Sayyaf with a preference for Massoud. The split between bin Laden and Azzam went beyond the pair's relationship. There was also a divide among the foreign fighters in Peshawar. Azzam's son, Hudhayfa, described how the two factions would pray at different mosques. Azzam and his followers would pray at Sab' al-Layl while his opposition, mainly Egyptians, would pray at the Kuwait Red Crescent Mosque.[431] Bin Laden would eventually emerge as the most prominent foreign fighter leader in Afghanistan and founded al-Qaeda in 1988.[432]

5.2.3 Isolating Foreign Fighters

The premise of my theoretical framework it was the isolation in the Afghan conflicts that allowed foreign fighters to have such a significant impact on international security. This section outlines how and why foreign fighters were isolated from the Mujahideen. Azzam imagined that foreign fighters would be absorbed into local units, but this rarely occurred. Sayyaf, as leader of the Mujahideen union, made the call for foreign fighters to come to the Afghan conflicts in 1980.[433] Sayyaf let foreign fighters train in his camps, including establishing exclusive spaces for foreign fighters, however, as Sayyaf had minimal military presence inside Afghanistan, there were limited options to integrate foreign fighters into his forces.[434] The only senior commander that expressed an explicit desire to have foreign fighters in their ranks was Haqqani. Haqqani was reported as being far more welcoming to foreign fighters.[435] Other leaders including Hekmatyar, Rabbani, Gailani, Mujaddidi, and Muhammadi did not

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428 Anas and Hussein, *To The Mountains*, 150; Jamileh Kadivar, "Exploring Takfir, Its Origins and Contemporary Use: The Case of Takfiri Approach in Daesh's Media," *Contemporary Review of the Middle East* 7, no. 3 (September 2020): 259–85, https://doi.org/10.1177/2347798920921706.
429 Coll, *Ghost Wars*, 203.
430 Coll, 203; Hamid and Farrall, *The Arabs at War in Afghanistan*, 100.
431 Tawil, *Brothers in Arms*, 39.
432 al-Qaeda, "Founding Document."
433 Hamid and Farrall, *The Arabs at War in Afghanistan*, 30.
434 Hegghammer, *The Caravan*, 167.
435 Muhammed, *Al-Ansar*, 102.

want foreign fighters in their ranks. These leaders argued that what they needed was money not more fighters.[436] Although foreign fighters were not considered good fighters by Afghans, Arab sponsors arrived in Afghanistan with suitcases of cash to fund the Mujahideen.[437] Therefore, there was an incentive for Mujahideen leaders to facilitate, or at least tolerate, foreign fighters, especially from the Gulf, to ensure continued financial support.

As a result of their isolation, there was limited interactions between foreign and local fighters. Foreign fighters would sometimes fight alongside Afghan fighters but would otherwise be kept separate.[438] There was a hesitation to putting foreign fighters into combat. Hegghammer provides an account of Azzam attempting to provide support to Haqqani during the battle of Zhawar in April 1986. Azzam intended to help Haqqani recapture Zhawar with sixty men. Haqqani would not let the foreign fighters participate in the battle: they were untrained and Afghan fighters could do the job better.[439] Mujahideen leaders lacked trust in foreign fighters and did not require their manpower. Estimates place Mujahideen manpower at 200,000-250,000 compared to estimated 2,000-20,000 foreign fighters across the entire conflict.[440] Afghans also had a long history of weapons use and local knowledge of geography that made them superior to the inexperienced foreigners.[441] In contrast, most foreign fighters that came to the Afghan conflicts were inexperienced. For those commanders far from the Afghan-Pakistan border, the distance of travel required, the quality of roads, and the dangers travelling though Afghanistan acted as additional barriers to the wider participation of foreign fighters throughout the faction.[442]

There was also cultural difference between the local and foreign fighters that resulted in tensions. Foreign fighters were sometimes zealous towards the local Afghans

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[436] Hamid and Farrall, *The Arabs at War in Afghanistan*, 30.
[437] Saira Shah, *The Storytellers Daughter: One Woman's Return to Her Lost Homeland* (New York: Alfred A Kopf, 2004), 133; Hamid and Farrall, *The Arabs at War in Afghanistan*, 30.
[438] Muhammed, *Al-Ansar*, 298.
[439] Hegghammer, *The Caravan*, 333–34; Hamid and Farrall, *The Arabs at War in Afghanistan*, 83.
[440] Hegghammer, *The Caravan*, 365.
[441] Muhammed, *Al-Ansar*, 137.
[442] Hegghammer, *The Caravan*, 365.

because of their differing religious and cultural practices. Afghan fighters tended to not take foreign fighters seriously as fighters and questioned their motivations. Some foreign fighters sought martyrdom: instead of being concerned with victory some foreigners were obsessed with death.[443] Others travelled from rich Gulf states and visited Afghanistan for only a few weeks.[444] There was also the issue of theology. Foreign fighters came from different Islamic legal traditions to those within Afghanistan. Salafist foreign fighters often thought they were responsible for 'correcting' the Afghans' beliefs.[445] The most common example used to describe these differences are the desecration of Afghan graves. Afghan fighters sometimes decorated their graves with amulets and flags.[446] In a story told by Faraj [Abu Salih al-Yamani], a foreign fighter from the period, at the grave of a martyr:

> When we arrived at the graveyard, there were many Afghans who had come to bid the martyr farewell and pray on his body. However, the Arabs would not allow it and a blind strife almost erupted between the two groups... the Arabs started blaming the Afghans for the things they put on the graves, seeing how the latter placed on the tomb of the martyr a flag that distinguished it from the other tombs. Luckily, an Afghan sheikh contained the situation and talked to the Arabs in perfect Arabic, telling them that the Hanafi sect imposed the prayer on the martyr, "so if you do not want to pray on him, let the Afghans do it to put an end to strife.[447]

Afghan commanders expressed their concerns that foreign fighters, especially Arab fighters, were more concerned with making videos than helping in a meaningful way.[448]

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[443] Hamid and Farrall, *The Arabs at War in Afghanistan*, 37; Johnson, *The Afghan Way of War*, 218.
[444] Kohlmann, *Al-Qaida's Jihad in Europe*, 8; Williams, "On the Trail of the 'Lions of Islam,'" 220; Fabrizio Coticchia, "The Military Impact of Foreign Fighters on the Battlefield: The Case of the ISIL," in *Foreign Fighters under International Law and Beyond*, ed. Andrea de Guttry, Francesca Capone, and Christophe Paulussen (The Hague: T.M.C. Asser Press, 2016), 125, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-6265-099-2_8.
[445] Hegghammer, *The Caravan*, 387–89.
[446] Coll, *Ghost Wars*, 152–53.
[447] Translation taken from Hegghammer's "The Caravan" p390, al-Qandahari, *Dhikrayat 'arabi Afghani [Memories of an Arab Afghan]*.
[448] Hamid and Farrall, *The Arabs at War in Afghanistan*, 36; Shah, *The Storytellers Daughter: One Woman's Return to Her Lost Homeland*, 135.

5.3 CONSEQUENCES OF ISOLATION

In the theoretical framework, I identify how isolation of foreign fighters generates three conditions: protection from the state, protection from conflict and acted as a site of mass convergence of like-minded individuals. Protection from the state—considered here as domestic security apparatus including intelligence services, military, and police—allowed foreign fighters to train and develop armed groups without the need to be clandestine. By not having to exert energy in avoiding the state, I argue that foreign fighters are better able to develop their conflict expertise. After the Soviet withdrawal, and the separation of bin Laden from MAK, the types of foreign fighters entering Afghanistan changed. Prior to 1989, few of the foreign fighters were members of Islamic groups at home. However, after 1989, armed groups saw Afghanistan as an opportunity to train.[449] These fighters included Libyans dedicated to the overthrow of Gaddafi, Algerians that would go onto form the GIA, but also fighters from South-East Asia including (but not limited to) Indonesians from Dural Islam, Malaysians, Filipinos from both Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) and Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).[450] My dataset finds 37 nationalities among foreign fighters. Although not included in the dataset as I could not find any names, Brown and Rassler's book features a photo claiming to be of two Uighur fighters cleaning guns in Khost in 1990 with Haqqani forces.[451]

Foreign fighters in the Afghan conflicts were protected from many of the risks of conflict. There are exceptions, namely, the battle of Jaji. In 1986, bin Laden established his own training camp in Jaji known as al-Masadah (also commonly transliterated to al-Masa'da) or Lion's den.[452] Bin Laden's choice of location was widely criticised as too exposed and difficult to defend.[453] In May 1987 around 200 Soviet forces launched an offensive against bin Laden's al-Masadah camp in Jaji.[454] Despite the relative

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[449] Tawil, *Brothers in Arms*, 30; Roy, *Afghanistan*, 89.
[450] Tawil, *Brothers in Arms*, 42–43; Hamid and Farrall, *The Arabs at War in Afghanistan*, 172.
[451] Photo source Robert Nickelsberg Brown and Rassler, *Fountainhead of Jihad*, PS6.
[452] Hegghammer, *The Caravan*, 360.
[453] Anas and Hussein, *To The Mountains*, 178.
[454] Hamid and Farrall, *The Arabs at War in Afghanistan*, 97; Tawil, *Brothers in Arms*, 20; Coll, *Ghost Wars*, 162.

vulnerability of bin Laden's camp, Arab fighters managed to repel the Soviets.[455] The battle of Jaji had a huge impact on the confidence and actions of bin Laden.[456] As stated by Anas, 'It helped create one of the foundational myths about the fighting prowess of the Afghan Arabs and made us overlook many things. It created heroes.'[457] The battle of Jaji secured bin Laden as the leader of the Arabs and added to the tensions between himself and Azzam. [458]

The other major battle where foreign fighters participated was at Jalalabad in 1989.[459] After the withdrawal of the Soviets, it was assumed that mujahideen factions would quickly gain control over the country.[460] This included taking Jalalabad from communist forces.[461] Instead, Jalalabad was a disaster for the Mujahideen and foreign fighters. Hamid claims that the Afghans deployed foreign fighters as cannon fodder. The foreign fighters went too far into the desert into a position that they could not hold.[462] Many foreign fighters were killed and bin Laden was almost captured in the retreat.[463] The foreign fighters blamed their failings on disorganisation and lack of support by Afghans[464] Bin Laden lost significant support and the foreign fighters divided into a number of smaller groups [465] Bin Laden returned to Saudi Arabia while Azzam remained in Peshawar.[466] After this time, AQ members or supporters reportedly dropped to as low as ten fighters.[467]

Even in the battle of Jaji—the only foreign led battle of the war—Sayyaf suggested that bin Laden retreat so that Afghan fighters could take over. Ibn al-Khattab noted the

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455 Tawil, *Brothers in Arms*, 18–20.
456 Tawil, 20.
457 Anas and Hussein, *To The Mountains*, 179.
458 Hamid and Farrall, *The Arabs at War in Afghanistan*, 98; Coll, *Ghost Wars*, 163; Williams, "On the Trail of the 'Lions of Islam,'" 221.
459 Brian Glyn Williams, "Afghanistan after the Soviets: From Jihad to Tribalism," *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 25, no. 5–6 (2014): 928, https://doi.org/10.1080/09592318.2014.945634.
460 Williams, "Afghanistan after the Soviets."
461 Anas and Hussein, *To The Mountains*, 104–6.
462 Hamid and Farrall, *The Arabs at War in Afghanistan*, 150.
463 Hamid and Farrall, 150.
464 Hamid and Farrall, 152.
465 Hamid and Farrall, 158, 161.
466 Hamid and Farrall, 161.
467 Hamid and Farrall, 159.

limited role that the Mujahideen allowed foreigners to take: 'After [training] he goes to the front and the Afghan brothers will keep him in certain position and tell him to shoot at this or that direction, and nothing else.'[468] Therefore, foreign fighters did not have widespread experience in combat. Some groups such as the Libyans participated in more battles while inexperienced or short-term recruits participated in no combat. Chapter 7 will highlight how this lack of combat experience affected the expertise of veteran foreign fighters, but the benefit of this isolation is rarely acknowledged. By limiting the conflict exposure of foreign fighters, the Mujahideen helped ensure that the casualty rate among foreign fighters was incredibly low. Consequently, almost all foreign fighters survived their time in Afghanistan and were able to take this experience with them. Hegghammer estimates that before 1989 foreign fighters made up less than one per cent of casualties in Afghanistan—approximately fifty deaths.[469] Even if foreign fighters did not emerge battle-hardened, they did survive to be able to participate in subsequent armed groups.

Finally, the Afghan conflicts acted as a site of mass convergence. While there were fractures among the foreign fighters, Peshawar and training camps provided ample opportunities for foreigners to meet and form relationships. As stated by Algerian foreign fighter, Mokhtar Belmokhtar: 'I had contact with many of the mujahideen brothers from every corner of the Earth, from Morocco, to Indonesia, and to the Philippines, all of which were rightly gathered in Afghanistan for the great jihad. And because it contained the energies and the scholars, it became the convergence point for all the jihadist groups in the world!'[470] Comoros fighter, Fazul Abdullah Muhammad, described the diversity at al-Faruq camp: 'There was, of course, a big Comoran group, and they kept us all together. Some Filipino brothers, a group of Libyan Arabs and some Yemenis joined us. Thus, the camp itself taught you practically how to deal with Muslim brethren from other nationalities without discrimination and without racism.'[471] The Afghan conflicts brought together individuals who would overwise

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[468] Al-Suwailem, *Memories of Amir Khattab*.
[469] Hegghammer, *The Caravan*, 365.
[470] Weiss, "Translation of a May 2006 Interview of Mokhtar Belmokhtar."
[471] "Fazul Joins Camp to Begin Jihad."

never have met and protected them from their state security apparatus and the conflict itself.

5.4 CONCLUSION

After the fall of Kabul in 1992, foreign fighters became both unnecessary and unwanted.[472] In 1993, the Pakistani government announced that they would shut down the Arab guesthouses in Peshawar leading to a mass exodus of foreign fighters from the region.[473] Saudi Arabia even sent a retired General to track down its volunteers in an attempt to bring them back home.[474] Many foreign fighters returned to their countries of origin, some settled in Afghanistan, but many, unable to return home due to fear of arrest, continued on to join or form new armed groups around the world.[475]

This chapter outlined how the isolation of foreign fighters from the local Mujahideen fighters affected their participation in the conflict. There are always exceptions—Mustafa Hamid fighting 'like a Mujahid', Abdullah Anas' relationship with Massoud and others—however, most foreign fighters had little to no exposure to Afghans and rarely experienced combat.[476] Instead foreign fighters broadly trained and socialised among themselves, away from combat, in the safety of foreign fighter training camps or in Peshawar. The following chapters demonstrate how these conditions altered the processes foreign fighters participated in and connects these differences to the future trajectories of the Afghan Network.

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[472] Hegghammer, "Violent Islamism in Saudi Arabia, 1976-2006," 198.
[473] Hafez, "*Jihad* after Iraq," 82.
[474] Al-Saud, *The Afghanistan File*, 130.
[475] Hamid and Farrall, *The Arabs at War in Afghanistan*, 183.
[476] Hegghammer, *The Caravan*, 365.

Chapter 6: Network Formation

A key feature of the longevity of the Afghan Network is the continued coordination among its membership. As noted by Noman Benotman, veteran foreign fighter, and senior member of the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG): 'Once you start your own group as a jihadi group, whether you like it or not, you have to communicate, to look for help, training, knowledge, logistical support, you name it. That's why the LIFG had to communicate with all these groups and leaders including bin Laden, al Zawahiri—everyone, you name it. The Taliban.[477]' This chapter examines this network from formation to present, highlighting how the Afghan Network has become the site for resource and knowledge sharing.

This chapter examines network formation at two levels. First, I demonstrate how the formation of new armed groups emerged from the Afghan conflicts. I refer to new armed groups emerging from two pathways: the transformation of existing opposition movements into armed groups, and the formation of wholly new armed groups. I demonstrate how the isolation of foreign fighters in the Afghan conflicts facilitated the transformation of nascent opposition groups into established armed groups that failed to traverse the armed group formation lifecycle at home into armed groups that were able to confront the state through violence. I demonstrate the uniqueness of these conditions by contrasting the domestic conditions facing opposition groups and the experiences of the same opposition groups in the Afghan conflicts. I outline the experiences of two groups—the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG), Jemaah Islamiyya (JI) and Kumpulan Mujahidin Malaysia (KMM)—that existed in some nascent form prior to the Afghan conflicts but failed to reach beyond the expansion phase of armed group development. Both groups were able to transform during the Afghan conflicts into armed groups that were both better able to withstand, and commit violence against, the state.

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[477] Erick Stackeback, Noman Benotman, September 8, 2010, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NxIVI7ctfT4.

Second, I present the formation of the transnational network of veteran foreign fighters from the Afghan conflicts that form the Afghan Network. Within international security, there is a common assumption that the networks between foreign fighters endure. However, the lack of data on foreign fighter participation prevents scholars from demonstrating the true scope of these networks or the consequences of these connections. This chapter, for the first time in academic research, visualises the Afghan Network using Social Network Analysis (SNA). Utilising an original dataset of foreign fighters from the Afghan conflicts, I visualise the connections between veteran foreign fighters from 1979 to 2022. The network maps in this chapter include temporality, demonstrating the movement of fighters across up to five subsequent armed groups after the Afghan conflicts. Drawing on this data, I observe how the Afghan Network is vaster than is typically conceptualised within literature and demonstrate its longevity and resilience. I then provide qualitative evidence of the continued coordination and cooperation within the network.

The Afghan Network persisted and held major consequences for international security for the next three decades. By examining the network formation of the Afghan Network, I highlight that many of the groups that have threatened international security have their roots in the Afghan conflicts. What is notable about this foreign fighter network is the speed at which it was able to establish itself as a meaningful site of coordination and learning. Rather than developing these relationships from existing networks, the isolation of foreign fighters provided a previously unconnected group of individuals to interact and develop relationships that would become the backbone of the enduring network. The most well-known examples are al-Qaeda (AQ) and al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI), but the threat of the Afghan Network go beyond terrorism. This generation of foreign fighters extends into illegal diamond mines in West Africa, insurgents and terrorist organisations throughout Southeast Asia, and the major armed groups operating in Kashmir. In one instance, the Libyan Civil War, the international community even invoked Responsibility to Protect to support opposition groups to oust the Ghaddafi regime when some of the opposition factions were led by LIFG veterans that had previously been treated as terrorists.

6.1 NEW NETWORKS

Armed groups are constituted by the network of its members.[478] This section outlines the distinct network formation among foreign fighters in the Afghan conflicts that brought together previously unconnected individuals into new network configurations that defy expectations of group formation. An unusual number of new armed groups emerged from the Afghan conflicts; a phenomenon not yet seen in other generations of foreign fighters. To understand how group formation differs among foreign fighters in contrast to in domestic settings, I briefly revisit the armed group lifecycle, highlighting that the greatest risk to armed group formation is detection by the state. I then outline how the isolation of foreign fighters altered these dynamics through the protection from the state, protection from conflict, and mass convergence. The Afghan Networks not only resulted in new armed groups during the conflict: of the 69 subsequent armed groups identified in the dataset, over 80 per cent—57 out of 69—were formed during or after the Afghan conflicts. This trend indicates that veteran foreign fighters were not returning to join long-standing armed groups and insurgencies but a new generation of armed groups. I identify 69 armed groups in the dataset and pay particular attention to those formed and led by veteran foreign fighters.

6.1.1 Armed Group Formation and the Risk of Early Detection

As noted in the theoretical framework, very few armed groups survive the initial stages of formation. Historically, scholars have known little about the formation of armed groups.[479] Major datasets capture conflict onset, and therefore the emergence of an armed group, if they hit a threshold of violence—ranging from 25 to 100 battle deaths in a year.[480] However, many nascent armed groups never meet this threshold and are either destroyed by government forces or choose not to proceed prior to this point.[481] Armed group formation is typified by the need to remain clandestine. As a result, these nascent groups are usually located in 'poorly managed areas' to avoid detection.[482]

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[478] Diani, *Green Networks*.
[479] Lewis, *How Insurgency Begins*.
[480] Lewis, "How Does Ethnic Rebellion Start?," 1423.
[481] Della Porta, *Clandestine Political Violence*, 263–64; Lewis, *How Insurgency Begins*.
[482] Lewis, "How Does Ethnic Rebellion Start?," 1420, 1430; Similarly, Worsnop describes this period as "surival" Alec Worsnop, "Organization and Community: The Determinants of Insurgent Military

The groups that are able to avoid early detection and undergo training in secret stand a better chance of survival.[483] As an armed group expands beyond the formation stage and become observable to their opposition, the group needs to rapidly expand their forces and capacity to survive.[484] As noted by Staniland, expansion is a 'particularly severe challenge' to armed groups as they face military pressure, incorporating new members into the organisation and seize territory. If the group reaches the expansion phase, recruitment is likely to be generated through the pre-existing networks of foundational members before expanding to a broader demographic of recruits.[485] Pre-existing social networks can provide the structural opportunity to join movements, as well as acting as a socialisation function that produces a collective identity for participation.[486] Although these social networks are flexible enough to be leveraged for mobilisation, it is thought to be immensely difficult to build networks exclusively for violence.[487]

Drawing on this literature, I take these two core findings—the greatest threat to armed group formation is detection from the state and social networks act as the base for mobilisation—and apply them to group formation among the Afghan Network. Foreign fighters in the Afghan conflicts, with exception of members of extant armed groups that sent its members to fight, did not necessarily come from pre-existing social networks. Further, on arrival, these same foreign fighters were not integrated with local fighters but among other foreign fighters. As a result of their isolation, this generation were broadly protected from detection from the state and from the dangers of the

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Effectiveness" (Dissertation, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, September 2016), 403, https://dspace.mit.edu/handle/1721.1/107534.

483 Blaxland, *Insurgency Prewar Preparation and Intrastate Conflict*.

484 Belle, "Leadership and Collective Action," 117; Weinstein, "Resources and the Information Problem in Rebel Recruitment," 600; Eck, "Coercion in Rebel Recruitment," 387.

485 Della Porta, *Social Movements, Political Violence, and the State*; Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution*; Fernandez and McAdam, "Social Networks and Social Movements"; Snow, Zurcher, and Ekland-Olson, "Social Networks and Social Movements"; Passy, "Socialization, Connection, and The Structure/Agency Gap"; Klandermans and Oegema, "Potentials, Networks, Motivations, and Barriers"; Staniland, *Networks of Rebellion*; McAdam and Paulsen, "Specifying the Relationship Between Social Ties and Activism"; Diani, *Green Networks*; Fujii, *Killing Neighbors*; Aspinall, *Islam and Nation Separatist Rebellion in Aceh, Indonesia*; Petersen, *Resistance and Rebellion: Lessons from Eastern Europe*, 15.

486 Passy, "Socialization, Connection, and The Structure/Agency Gap"; Passy and Giugni, "Social Networks and Individual Perceptions: Explaining Differential Participation in Social Movements," 128.

487 Staniland, *Networks of Rebellion*.

conflict itself. The following section reviews the armed group lifecycle by examining the process of group formation among foreign fighters during the Afghan conflicts. I argue that the isolation allowed the rapid development of networks essential for group formation and embedded these armed groups in a transnational network.

6.1.2 Armed Group Formation in the Afghan conflicts

Although literature has pointed to the emergence of armed groups from the Afghan conflicts,[488] how these groups were formed—and how this process connects to the consequences of the Afghan Network for international security—has received little attention. This section outlines how new armed groups emerged among the foreign fighters to form the Afghan Network that persists today. I argue that foreign fighters were protected from the state, protected from the conflict, and were exposed to a mass convergence of foreign fighters that provided a unique opportunity to rapidly build new social networks and develop armed groups. For many armed groups during this period, Afghanistan was their literal genesis while other groups utilised the networks formed in Afghanistan to build new armed groups in subsequent years.

Within the original dataset of veteran foreign fighters, I identify veteran foreign fighters across 69 armed groups or conflicts. Of these 69 armed groups or conflicts, twenty-five (25) can be identified definitively as new armed groups formed by Afghan veterans. Eight (8) groups were formed in Afghanistan. Seventeen (17) groups were formed by Afghan veterans outside of the Afghan conflict. Five (5) of these groups were splinter groups from parent organisations. Other groups were the results of mergers between groups with their origins in the Afghan conflicts. For example, Mokhtar Belmokhtar was leader or a senior figure in several armed groups formed through splintering and mergers. Belmokhtar formed al-Mourabitoun (AM) in 2013 in a merger between al-Mulathamun Battalion (AMB)—Belmokhtar's splinter group from AQIM in which he was a commander—and Movement of Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO). AM merged with Al Qaeda in the Maghreb (AQIM) in

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[488] Hafez, "*Jihad* after Iraq"; James Bruce, "The Azzam Brigades: Arab Veterans of the Afghan War," *Jane's Intelligence Review* 7, no. 4 (April 1, 1995): 175, https://www.hf.uio.no/ikos/english/research/jihadi-document-repository/sources-in-english/azzam-publications/articles/1995/the-azzam-brigades-arab-veterans-of-the-afghan-war.pdf.

2015.[489] On March 2, 2017, AM merged with Ansar Dine and AQIM to form Jama'at al Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM) under the leadership of Iyad Ag Ghaly. Belmokhtar remained a senior figure in JNIM but was not the group's leader.[490]

Table 8 includes the list of armed groups formed by veteran foreign fighters. Those groups highlighted in yellow represent splinter groups. Even though some of the groups that veteran foreign fighters joined were not formed or led by veterans themselves, groups were highly influenced by veterans of Afghanistan. AQAP formed in 2009 after a merger of AQ's factions in Saudi Arabia and Yemen. Depending on one's interpretation of AQ Central's control of its affiliates, AQAP could conceivably be included in the list of new armed groups. I have also not included the formation of units that fell under the auspice of a national army such as the Khatibat el Mudžahid (KEM) in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). Even with this conservative approach to recording an armed group as new, I identify several groups that have since posed major threats to international security.

Table 8 New Armed Groups in the Foreign Fighter Network

FORMATION TYPE	GROUP NAME	LOCATION	VETERAN FF LEADER
DURING AFGHAN CONFLICTS (1979-1992)	Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG)	Philippines	Abdurajak Abubakar Janjalani
	Al-Qaeda	Global	Osama bin Laden
	Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG)	Libya	Abdelhakim Belhaj
	Groupe Islamique Arme (GIA)*	Algeria	Abdelhak Layada

[489] Counter Extremism Project, "Al-Mourabitoun," Counter Extremism Project, accessed February 7, 2020, https://www.counterextremism.com/threat/al-mourabitoun.
[490] Thomas Joscelyn, "Analysis: Al Qaeda Groups Reorganize in West Africa," *FDD's Long War Journal* (blog), March 13, 2017, https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2017/03/analysis-al-qaeda-groups-reorganize-in-west-africa.php.
* Could also be considered a splinter group of the FIS

	Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT)	Pakistan	Hafiz Muhammad Saeed
	Jemaah Islamiyya (JI)	Indonesia and SEA	Abdullah Sungkar; Abu Bakar Ba'asyir
	Harakat-ul-Mujahideen (HUM)	Pakistan	Fazlur Rehman Khalil
	Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami (HUJI)	Pakistan	Qari Saifullah Akhtar
AFTER AFGHAN CONFLICTS	Aden-Abyan Islamic Army (AAIA)	Yemen	Zayn al-Abedin Abu Bakr al-Mihdar
	Army of Muhammad (AoM)	Jordan	Khalil al-Deek
	al-Mourabitoon (AM)	North Africa	Mokhtar Belmokhtar
	al-Mulathamun Battalion (AMB)	North Africa	Mokhtar Belmokhtar
	Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI)	Iraq	Abu Musab Zarqawi
	Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group (GICM)	Morocco	Nafia Noureddine
	Harkat-ul-Jihad-ul-Islami Bangladesh (HuJI-B)	Bangladesh	Mufti Mohammad Hannan
	Islamic Jihad Movement (IJM)	Yemen	Tariq al-Fadhli

	Jund al-Sham	Jordan	Abu Musab Zarqawi
	Kumpulan Mujahidin Malaysia (KMM)	Malaysia	Zainon Ismail
	Majmouat al-Denniyah (MaD)	Lebanon	Abu Aisha (Bassam Kanj)
	Movement for an Islamic State (MEI)	Libya	Said Mekhloufi
	Muhammad Jamal Network (MJN)	Egypt	Muhammad Jamal
	Tajikistan	Tajikistan	Ibn al-Khattab
	Chechnya	Chechnya	Ibn al-Khattab
	Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM)	Pakistan	Mohammed Masood Azhar Alvi
	Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB)	Bangladesh	Shaikh Abdur Rahman; Siddiqul Islam (Bangla Bai)

Armed groups can form in domestic settings but the conditions of the Afghan Network both allowed the strengthening of existing armed groups while also allowing the proliferation of armed groups. This proliferation of new armed groups is distinct from other generations of foreign fighters. The conditions of isolation in the Afghan Network provided all the necessary tools for armed groups to form in the conflict or in future. This section outlines the experience of group formation of two of these new armed groups that formed because of the Afghan conflicts: The Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG) and Kumpulan Mujahidin Malaysia (KMM).

Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG)

Prior to the Afghan conflicts there were limited opposition movements against the Gaddafi regime in Libya. Abdelhakim Belhaj, future leader within the LIFG, belonged to a small, underground cell of Libyan university students that distributed pamphlets and graffitied anti-regime slogans around Tripoli.[491] However, these students were also forced to walk past opposition activists who had been killed by the state, with their bodies hung from gallows around the university.[492] In 1986, a show trial for opponents of the Gaddafi regime highlighted the immense risk and challenge of mounting violent resistance. Gaddafi was intent on crushing any opposition to his regime and the Islamists did not have the capacity to withstand government forces.[493] As stated by Belhaj:

> I was forced into exile, I didn't have a choice! In Libya, we were living under a dictatorial regime that did not permit any sort of freedom of thought or expression. That's why I founded, with a group of young people, in the 1980s, the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group. We had no other choice but armed combat.[494]

Afghanistan not only presented an opportunity to escape the regime but also to establish a coordinated opposition capable of confronting the regime. As many Libyans had completed their military service, they sought out more advanced training.[495] Libyan foreign fighters established their own training camps near Nangahar. [496] Noman Benotman, a senior LIFG figure, described the training regime for Libyans:

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[491] Abdelhakim Belhaj, "Sixth Panel: From Arms to Peace: Transitions from Armed Political Action to Peaceful Political Action" (From Bullets to Ballots Transformations from Armed to Unarmed Political Activism, Doha Insitute for Graduate Studies, November 21, 2018), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0XAGY-W8JxQ.
[492] Hussein, "Abdul Hakim Belhaj."
[493] Ayad, "'We Are Simply Muslims'"; Abedin, "From Mujahid to Activist."
[494] Ayad, "'We Are Simply Muslims.'"
[495] Hussein, "Abdul Hakim Belhaj."
[496] Abedin, "From Mujahid to Activist."

> We trained in all types of guerrilla warfare. We trained on weapons, tactics, enemy engagement techniques and survival in hostile environments. All weapons training was with live ammunition, which was available everywhere. Indeed, there were a number of casualties during these training sessions. There were ex-military people amongst the Mujahideen, but no formal state forces participated. We were also trained by the elite units of the Afghan Mujahideen who had themselves been trained by Pakistani Special Forces, the CIA and the British SAS.[497]

Foreign fighters were trained with live ammunition with a real opposition.[498] Some Libyans also received advanced training at al-Qaeda's al-Masadah camp in Jaji, as well as advanced explosives training.[499] The explosives training that was utilised in several assassination attempts against Gaddafi.[500]

Libyan fighters did participate in some fighting, but leaders were focused on forming their organisation. Belhaj recalled: 'There was a feeling of total freedom in Afghanistan, no one could control you. It was a place where Libyans from all over the country gathered. You could use it effectively to organise your forces and that is what we did.'[501] Similarly, Bentoman notes the benefit of establishing the LIFG in Afghanistan as a point of convergence of previously unconnected fighters and the capacity to screen these new recruits. Benotman himself was never a member of the underground movements in Libya. Although Benotman was influenced by the works of Sayyid Qutb like many Islamists, he was kicked out of university by the Gaddafi regime and would have unlikely met other LIFG members outside of the Afghan conflicts. In 1992, there were approximately 1000 Libyans in Afghanistan. The LIFG were able to recruit from this pool and screen for conflict experience and dedication.

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[497] Abedin.
[498] Abedin.
[499] Hussein, "Abdul Hakim Belhaj."
[500] Hussein.
[501] Hussein.

Benotman claims 80 per cent of those fighters that trained directly with the LIFG in Afghanistan became members.[502]

This training experience in the Afghan conflicts contrasted sharply with the experience of recruits in Libya. Unable to provide training in Libya, the LIFG focused on building leadership and maintain morale of its cells. Benotman observes:

> In terms of training we used to send our people to rough areas in the big cities—places infested with gangsters and violent criminals—and tasked them to get into fights and confrontations. We especially encouraged them to get into knife fights and other situations involving extreme and life-threatening violence. The idea was for our people to develop their courage and diminish their sense of fear. We especially used the Abousaleem quarter of Tripoli, which must be one of the roughest urban quarters in the country. Another method involved giving people a sense that they are conducting real operations. For instance at one time we tasked some people to get as close to Qadhafi as possible. They thought they were preparing for an assassination attempt, whereas in reality there was no intention of assassinating Qadhafi at that time. The idea was for them to gain valuable experience in breaching security and learning to operate as secretively and covertly as possible. The closest the Group got to real operations was attacking isolated police outposts to secure arms.[503]

The LIFG was more or less fully established in Afghanistan but did not make itself publicly known in Libya until 1995.[504] Although the Libyan state arrested any returnees from Afghanistan, a number of foreign fighters were able to return to Libya using fake passports or travelled across porous borders.[505] According to Benotman, the Libyan government was not aware that senior figures of the LIFG had returned to

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[502] Omar Ashour, "Post-Jihadism: Libya and the Global Transformations of Armed Islamist Movements," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 23, no. 3 (July 2011): 382, https://doi.org/10.1080/09546553.2011.560218.
[503] Abedin, "From Mujahid to Activist."
[504] Abedin; Alison Pargeter, "LIFG: An Organization in Eclipse," *Terrorism Monitor*, no. 3 (November 3, 2005): 21, https://jamestown.org/program/lifg-an-organization-in-eclipse/.
[505] Tawil, *Brothers in Arms*, 65.

Libya or the group's size and strength.[506] Other LIFG members relocated to Sudan alongside other veteran foreign fighters from the Egyptian Islamic Jihad and al-Qaeda. While LIFG has never joined AQ, Benotman's attendance at bin Laden's 2000 meeting in Afghanistan demonstrates the continued coordination within the wider Afghan Network. The LIFG also unsuccessfully attempted to assist and coordinate with the GIA in Algeria, seeking to leverage the border between Algeria and Libya as a means of smuggling in trained fighters.[507]

The LIFG were revealed to the state in 1995 after a failed attempt to rescue one of its members from a hospital in Benghazi.[508] Although the government response did lead to the eventual withdrawal of senior LIFG members from Libya in 1996, the group was able to remain intact.[509] The LIFG maintained an insurgency in Eastern Libya until 1998 using hit-and-run tactics.[510] As noted by Alison Pargeter, the LIFG were 'the strongest challenge the Libyan regime had ever faced.'[511]

Senior members of the LIFG signed an agreement with the government in 2009. As a part of the negotiations with the Gaddafi regime, facilitated by Saif al-Islam Gaddafi, the government agreed to release the imprisoned leadership of the LIFG.[512] Benotman was the first overseas member of LIFG allowed to visit the leadership in prison on 2007.[513] The LIFG leadership would produce a 478-page book, *Book of Correctional Studies (al-kitab al-dirasat al-tashihiyya),* outlining their renunciation of violence in 2009.[514] However, in 2007, Anas al-Libi, a member of the LIFG, appeared in an al-

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506 Tawil, 66.
507 Tawil, 121–24; Ashour, "Post-Jihadism," 382.
508 Tawil, *Brothers in Arms*, 65; Ashour, "Post-Jihadism," 382–83.
509 Abedin, "From Mujahid to Activist"; Tawil, *Brothers in Arms*, 139.
510 Ashour, "Post-Jihadism," 383.
511 Pargeter, "LIFG."
512 Peter Bergen and Paul Cruickshank, "The Unravelling," *The New Republic*, June 11, 2008, https://newrepublic.com/article/64819/the-unraveling; Eli Lake, "'Freelance Jihadists' Join Libyan Rebels," *The Washington Times*, March 29, 2011, https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2011/mar/29/1000-freelance-jihadists-join-libyan-rebels/; Ashour, "Post-Jihadism," 384.
513 Tawil, *Brothers in Arms*, 197.
514 Frank J Cilluffo and F Jordan Evert, "Reflections on Jihad: A Former Leader's Perspective: An In-Depth Conversation with Noman Benotman" (The George Washington University Homeland Security Policy Institute, October 16, 2009), 3, https://s3.us-east-2.amazonaws.com/us-east-2.files.campus.edublogs.org/wordpress.auburn.edu/dist/8/7/files/2021/01/reflections-on-jihad-a-former-leaders-perspective.pdf.

Qaeda video announcing that LIFG had joined al-Qaeda. Belhaj, as well as other members of LIFG, have consistently denied being connected to AQ: ‘We were never ideological nor organisationally affiliated with or tied to any other groups including al-Qaeda. Our aim was clear – ridding Libya of the Gaddafi regime. Before we managed to do that however, the Libyan people revolted in 2011 and brought him down.’[515]

During the Libyan Uprising in 2011, Abdelhakim Belhaj would lead one of the most effective militias, the ‘February 17 Brigade’ also known as the ‘Tripoli Brigade.’[516] In August, it was Belhaj’s 800 men brigade that tool control of Gaddafi’s compound, Bab al-Aziziya.[517] Reports described Belhaj as ‘spearheading’ the defeat of the regime.[518] Belhaj was appointed military commander of Libya’s National Transitional Council.[519]

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[515] Arwa Inrahim, “EXCLUSIVE: Interview with Libyan Politician Abdel Hakim Belhaj,” *Middle East Eye*, February 16, 2017, http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/exclusive-interview-libyan-politician-abdel-hakim-belhaj.

[516] “‘abd al-Ḥakīm Belhāj: Jihādī Sābiq Wamustaqabl Walin Turkī ‘alá Lībīā! [Abdelhakim Belhaj: A Former Jihadist and the Future of a Turkish Governor of Libya],” *Africa Gate News*, April 26, 2020, https://www.afrigatenews.net/article/عبد-الحكيم-بالحاج-جهاديٌ-سابق-ومستقبلُ-والٍ-تركي-على-ليبيا/; Sudarsan Rajavan, “Riḥalat ‘abd al-Ḥakīm Belhāj Min al-Taṭruf Ilá Barīq al-Māl Wal-Sīāsah [Abdelhakim Belhaj’s Journey from Extremism to the Glamour of Money and Politics],” *Asharq Al-Awsat*, September 29, 2017, https://aawsat.com/home/article/-رحلة-عبد-الحكيم-بلحاج-من-التطرف-إلى-بريق-المال-والسياسة; “Abdul Hakim Belhaj: Libyan Rebel Commander Who Got UK Apology,” *BBC News*, May 10, 2018, sec. Africa, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-14786753.

[517] “‘abd al-Ḥakīm Belhāj”; Rajavan, “Riḥalat ‘abd al-Ḥakīm Belhāj Min al-Taṭruf Ilá Barīq al-Māl Wal-Sīāsah [Abdelhakim Belhaj’s Journey from Extremism to the Glamour of Money and Politics]”; “Abdul Hakim Belhaj.”

[518] Thomas Erdbrink and Joby Warrick, “Documents, Declarations Highlight Libyan Concerns about Islamists,” *Washington Post*, August 30, 2011, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/documents-declarations-highlight-libyan-concerns-about-islamists/2011/08/30/gIQAN3loqJ_story.html.

[519] Alastair Macdonald and Labib Nasir, “Libyan Islamist Commander Swaps Combat Rig for Suit,” *Reuters*, November 11, 2011, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-libya-islamist-belhaj-idUSTRE7AA52320111111; Rod Nordland, “In Libya, Former Enemy Is Recast in Role of Ally,” *The New York Times*, September 2, 2011, https://www.nytimes.com/2011/09/02/world/africa/02islamist.html; Hossam Salama, “‘abd al-Ḥakīm Belhāj Qā’id al-Hujūm ‘alá Bāb al-‘azīzīyah..Muqātil Sābiq Fī Afghānistān [Abdelhakim Belhaj, Commander of the Attack on Bab al-Aziziya, a Former Fighter in Afghanistan],” *Asharq Al-Awsat*, August 25, 2011, https://web.archive.org/web/20140222155306if_/http://www.aawsat.com/details.asp?section=4&issueno=11958&article=637334#.UwjH8FOeQ3E; Rajavan, “Riḥalat ‘abd al-Ḥakīm Belhāj Min al-Taṭruf Ilá Barīq al-Māl Wal-Sīāsah [Abdelhakim Belhaj’s Journey from Extremism to the Glamour of Money and Politics].”

Kumpulan Mujahidin Malaysia (KMM)

Veteran foreign fighter, Zainon Ismail [Cikgu Non], established Kumpulan Mujahidin Malaysia (also referred to as the Malaysian Mujahidin Movement) in 1995.[520] The KMM sought to overthrow the Malaysian government and establish an Islamic state—Daulah Islamiyah Nusantara—throughout Southeast Asia.[521] The KMM grew out of previous opposition movements in Malaysia. In 1986, members of the youth wing of the Islamic opposition party, Malaysian Islamic Party (Pertubuhan Angkatan Sabilullah) (PAS) established the opposition movement called Kumpulan Mujahidin Kedah (KMK) in 1986. Prior to the KMK, there had been a reem of other militant opposition groups in Malaysia, but all had failed after their initial acts of violence.[522] The KMK emphasised jihad and had committed arson against a nationalist stage in 1988. Malaysian authorities arrested 23 leaders of the KMK, and the group disbanded.[523]

Two members of the KMK, Ismail Zainon and Zulkifi bin Mohammad fled to Afghanistan to avoid arrest and were among the few members of the KMK who escaped. Zainon and Zulkifi believed that they were the first Malays to join the Afghan conflicts and claimed to be Filipino to avoid detection.[524] Zainon confirms training with the Pakistani group Harakat ul Jihad al Islami (HuJI).[525] Zainon returned to Malaysia after a year due to health issues but Zulkifli and another Malaysian, Solehan, remained until 1993.[526] Most of the Malaysian recruits were children of PAS members who were undertaking their education in Pakistan.[527]

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[520] "Kumpulan Mujahidin Malaysia (KMM)," Federation of American Scientists, accessed January 28, 2021, https://fas.org/irp/world/para/kmm.htm; Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict, "Killing Marwan in Mindanao," March 5, 2015, 2, http://www.jstor.com/stable/resrep07801.1; Mohd Mizan Mohammad Aslam, "A Critical Study of Kumpulan Militant Malaysia, Its Wider Connections in the Region and the Implications of Radical Islam for the Stability of Southeast Asia" (New Zealand, Victoria University of Wellington, 2009), 102.

[521] Aslam, "A Critical Study of Kumpulan Militant Malaysia," 102.

[522] Aslam, 79–99.

[523] Aslam, 88–89.

[524] Aslam, 104.

[525] Cun Wai Wong, "Of Facebook, Selfies, Jihad and PAS," *The Star*, July 1, 2014, https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2014/07/01/of-facebook-selfies-jihad-and-pas; Aslam, "A Critical Study of Kumpulan Militant Malaysia," 89.

[526] Aslam, "A Critical Study of Kumpulan Militant Malaysia," 103.

[527] Aslam, 107.

Zainon Ismail established Kumpulan Mujahidin Malaysia in 1995.[528] The KMM sought to overthrow the Malaysian government and establish an Islamic state—Daulah Islamiyah Nusantara—throughout South East Asia.[529] In 1996, Zainon renamed the Halaqoh-Pakindo MASSA Pakindo, and it transformed into a right-wing faction of the PAS designed to protect PAS leaders from the police and utilised Afghan veterans to train recruits.[530] In addition to training in Afghanistan, the KMM also gained experience in Ambon, Indonesia.[531]

The KMM began coordinating attacks in Malaysia in 1998 until 2001. During this time, the KMM burned churches and Hindu Temples, robbed banks, and attempted to steal arms from police stations, as well as killing members of the US Navy in a bombing.[532] The KMM may have ultimately been destroyed by the state but managed to survive between 1995-2001 whereas the KMK only lasted two years and single act of violence.

The KMM is known to be connected to two other armed groups with deep links in the Afghan conflicts: Jemaah Islamiyya (JI) and Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).[533] A failed robbery in 2001 led to the arrest of 89 KMM and JI members in Malaysia.[534] Among those arrested was Afghanistan veteran Mohd Lofti Ariffin.[535] In 2012, Lofti also travelled to Syria and joined the independent group Ajnad as Syam, an associate

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[528] "Kumpulan Mujahidin Malaysia (KMM)"; Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict, "Killing Marwan in Mindanao," 2; Aslam, "A Critical Study of Kumpulan Militant Malaysia," 102.
[529] Aslam, "A Critical Study of Kumpulan Militant Malaysia," 102.
[530] Aslam, 107.
[531] Wong, "Of Facebook, Selfies, Jihad and PAS."
[532] Aslam, "A Critical Study of Kumpulan Militant Malaysia," 132.
[533] Aslam, 101.
[534] Aslam, 149.
[535] Farik Zolkepli, "Third M'sian Killed in Syria," *The Star*, September 15, 2014, https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2014/09/15/third-msian-killed-in-syria-exisa-detainee-succumbs-to-injuries-after-attack-on-hama-base/; "Malaysia: Security Act Detainees Launch Hunger Strike," *Human Rights Watch*, March 2, 2004, https://www.hrw.org/news/2004/03/02/malaysia-security-act-detainees-launch-hunger-strike.

of al-Nusra Front. [536] Lotfi was said to be the main leader of the group before being killed by an airstrike in September 2014 at age 49.[537]

Both the LIFG and KMM emerged from extant opposition movements in their home countries that had failed due to detection, and destruction, by the state. When Libyan and Malaysian fighters travelled to Afghanistan, rather than joining local Mujahideen networks, formed networks among fellow foreign fighters. These networks transformed into new armed groups that survived their nascent stages of survival due to their isolation within the conflict. In both cases, these armed groups continued to cooperate and coordinate with other groups within Afghan Network. The following section demonstrates the connections between armed groups and the wider Afghan Network and how these connections were leveraged to strengthen the network.

6.2 THE GLOBAL AFGHAN NETWORK

This section visualises the Afghan Network to demonstrate how armed groups and individuals continued to be connected long after the Afghan conflicts and how these connections were leveraged as sites of coordination. In 1995, a journalist, James Bruce, published an article in Jane's Intelligence Review titled 'The Azzam Brigades: Arab Veterans of the Afghan War.'[538] Bruce provides an overview of the activities of veteran foreign fighters in Algeria, Egypt, Pakistan, Yemen, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and other Middle Eastern States. Bruce states: 'It is likely that there would have been Islamic eruptions whether there had been Arab veterans of the Afghan war or not. But what is undeniable is that these combat experienced zealots have given the fundamentalists a powerful arm that they would not otherwise have had.'[539] What Bruce could not have known at the time was the continued coordination and cooperation throughout this network for over thirty years. Without the Afghan

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[536] *The Jihadist in Our Family* (The New York Times, 2015), https://www.nytimes.com/video/world/100000003439666/my-father-the-jihadi.html; "The Social Media Life of a Malaysian Jihadist," *BBC News*, August 14, 2014, sec. Asia, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-28755907.

[537] Kirsten E. Schulze and Joseph Chinyong Liow, "Making Jihadis, Waging Jihad: Transnational and Local Dimensions of the ISIS Phenomenon in Indonesia and Malaysia," *Asian Security* 15, no. 2 (May 4, 2019): 130, https://doi.org/10.1080/14799855.2018.1424710.

[538] Bruce, "The Azzam Brigades."

[539] Bruce.

conflicts, many of these armed groups would not have been formed, but they also would not have been connected through this transnational network.

More than a network made up of connections between individuals, participation in the Afghan conflicts bound foreign fighters together in a transnational network that would become the site of continued interactions and learning. To date, evidence of the scope of the Afghan Network failed to capture its full scale. First, I present veteran foreign fighter dataset using SNA. This section confirms many of the relationships cited in foreign fighter literature but reveals new connections with armed groups not previously connected to the network. Second, I draw on qualitative examples to demonstrate how these ties between these armed groups continued to be leveraged as sites of knowledge exchange, resource provision and innovation that would strengthen the Afghan Network.

6.2.1 Visualising the Afghan Network

Here, I visualise the Afghan Network using my original dataset of veteran foreign fighters outlined in the methodology chapter. This dataset contains the movements of 404 veteran foreign fighters from the Afghan conflicts who went on to participate in subsequent armed groups. The purpose of this visualisation is two-fold. First, this data greatly expands our current understanding of the trajectories of veteran foreign fighters from this generation. Second, by examining the Afghan Network through SNA, I identify the ties between these armed groups. The purpose of identifying these ties is to understand how and where the Afghan Network was able to leverage the connections within the network as sites of future coordination and cooperation.

The following network maps present a temporal analysis of the individual movement of veteran foreign fighters using a bipartite network. The temporality of the network is not represented through time—the details of when individuals join and move between groups is not sufficiently granular—but by the sequential order that foreign fighters join armed groups. Afghanistan is considered 'Group 1' for all actors in the dataset. As all actors in the dataset participated in the Afghan conflicts, it is not

visualised in the following networks.[540] Therefore, the network maps begin at 'Group 2,' the first group veteran foreign fighters joined after the Afghan conflicts. The dataset contains veteran foreign fighters that joined between two (Afghanistan and one subsequent armed group) and six (Afghanistan and five subsequent armed groups). For example, Ibn al-Khattab [Samir Ibn Saleh Ibn Abd Allah Al-Suwailem], travelled to Afghanistan aged 18, where he became a respected fighter and leader among foreign fighters.[541] Khattab then led a group of veteran foreign fighters across the Afghan border into Tajikistan to participate in the civil war (Group 2).[542] After becoming disillusioned with the conflict in Tajikistan, Khattab travelled to Chechnya in 1995 to investigate the situation there (Group 3).[543] Khattab was impressed with the commitment and resilience of the Chechen people[544] and became leader of foreign fighters in Chechnya until his assassination in 2002.[545]

The maps below represent a bipartite network, meaning that they represent the relationship between two different types of nodes: actor and armed group. The armed group is depicted in red while the actor—or veteran foreign fighters—is white. The nodes that are the armed groups are labelled, with the size of the node indicative of the number of actors that were members of that group i.e., the larger the node, the more actors that are members of this group.

As you move through the maps from Group 2 to Group 2-6, we observe that more armed groups are added into the network and the connections between armed groups, through the individual actor nodes, also increase. When an actor node is connected to two groups, that indicates that the veteran foreign fighter was a member of both groups. Those nodes that appear disconnected from the network—see for example the Southern Movement (SM) and Islamic Jihad Movement (IJM)—only share

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[540] Although membership of groups prior to Afghanistan is recorded for some actors, it is also not visualised here.
[541] *The Biography of Amir Khattab (Lion of Chechnya)*, 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LOa--Q1CpeM.
[542] Al-Suwailem, *Memories of Amir Khattab*.
[543] *The Life and Times of Umar Khattab: Chechen Mujahideen*, accessed October 7, 2020, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k17AquTlooM.
[544] *The Life and Times of Umar Khattab*.
[545] "State Television Shows Footage of Khattab's Body," *Terrorism Monitor* 8, no. 83 (2002), https://jamestown.org/program/state-television-shows-footage-of-khattabs-body/.

connections with the Afghan conflict and each other. One anomaly that should be noted here is the apparent disconnect between Darul Islam (DI) and Jemaah Islamiyya (JI) in the network maps. Although many Indonesian and Malaysian recruits travelled to the Afghan conflicts as a part of DI, the splinter date between DI and JI is debated. The split is said to have occurred anywhere from the late 1980s but was definitively occurred by 1993, after the Afghan conflicts. I have listed the 'Group 2' of these individuals as JI but recognise that there is likely cross-over between membership of DI and JI after April 1992. It is for these reasons that the quantitative network analysis alone is not sufficient to understand the Afghan Network and qualitative analysis of these movements is essential.

The layout of the network maps does not hold any significance. This layout—the Fruchterman-Reingold layout—was chosen as it locates the most connected nodes within the centre of the network. I have held the layout constant throughout the five network maps here so the changes between the groups can be more easily observed. Holding these maps static across groups does, however, mean that each of the network maps are not as clean as it is possible in contrast to if I visualised each map independently.

As expected, based on the data, the greatest changes in the network map occur between Group 2 and Group 4. Only 107 actors participated in greater than three subsequent armed groups.

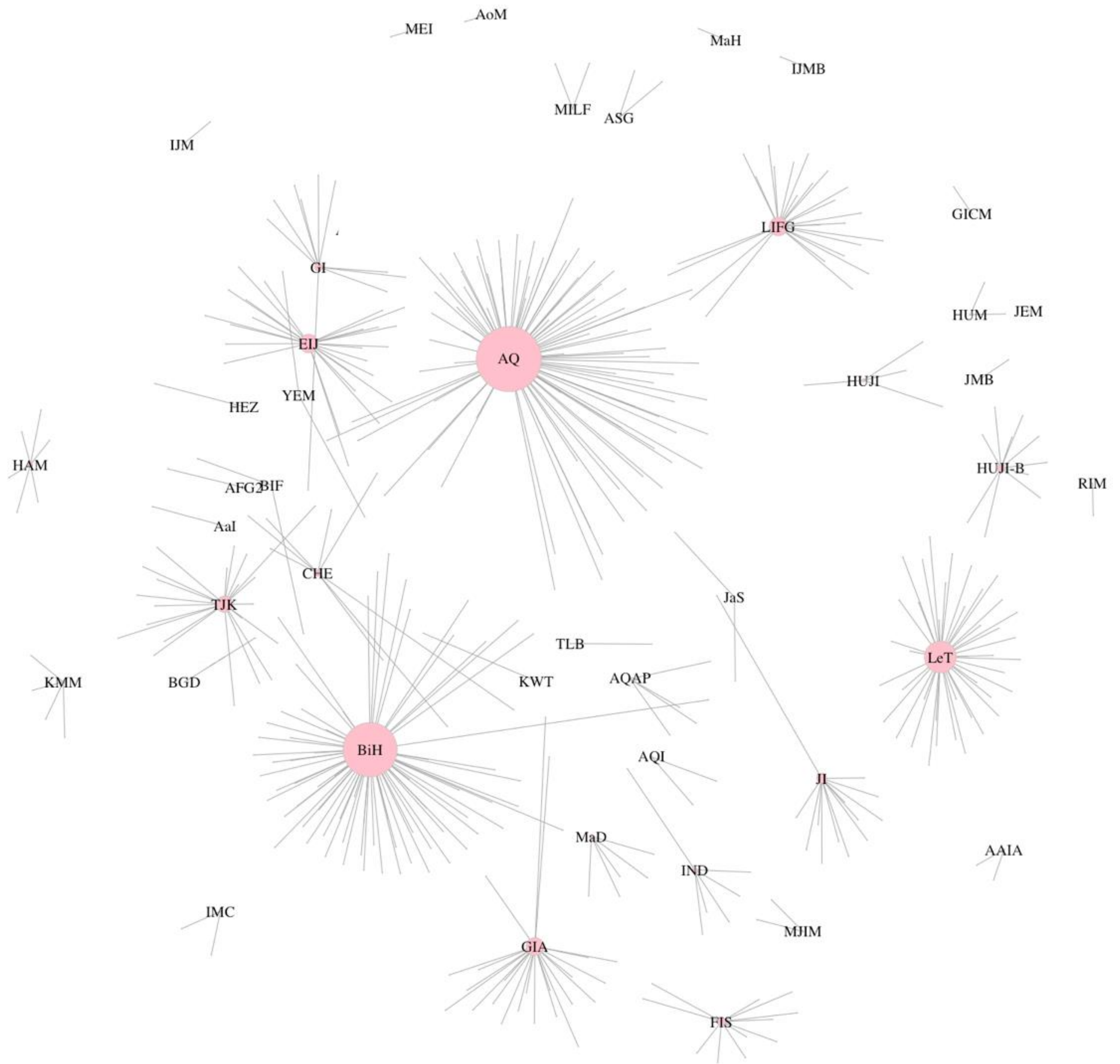

Figure 3: The Afghan Network Group 2

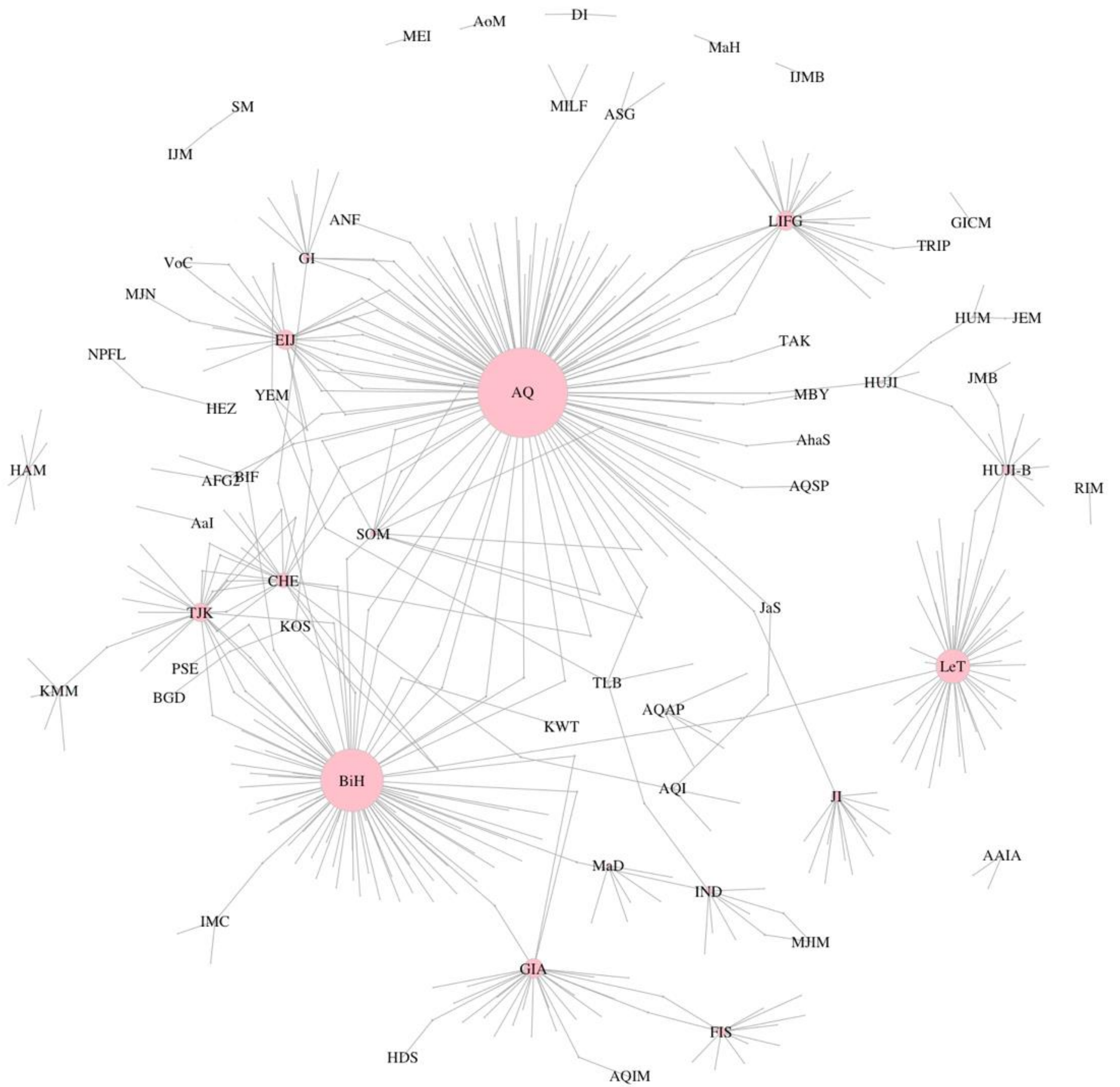

Figure 5 The Afghan Network Group 2-3

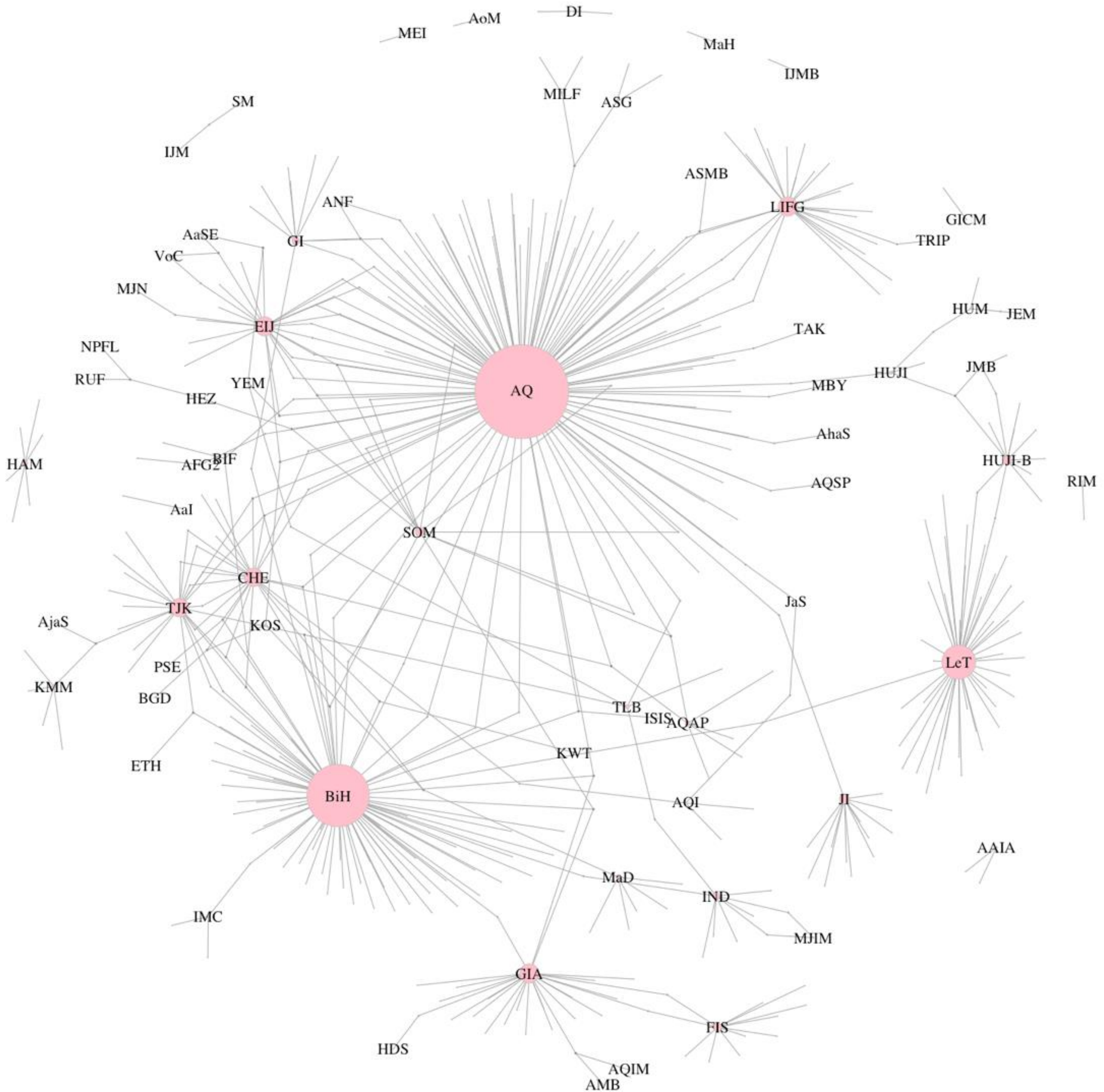

Figure 6: The Afghan Network Group 2-4

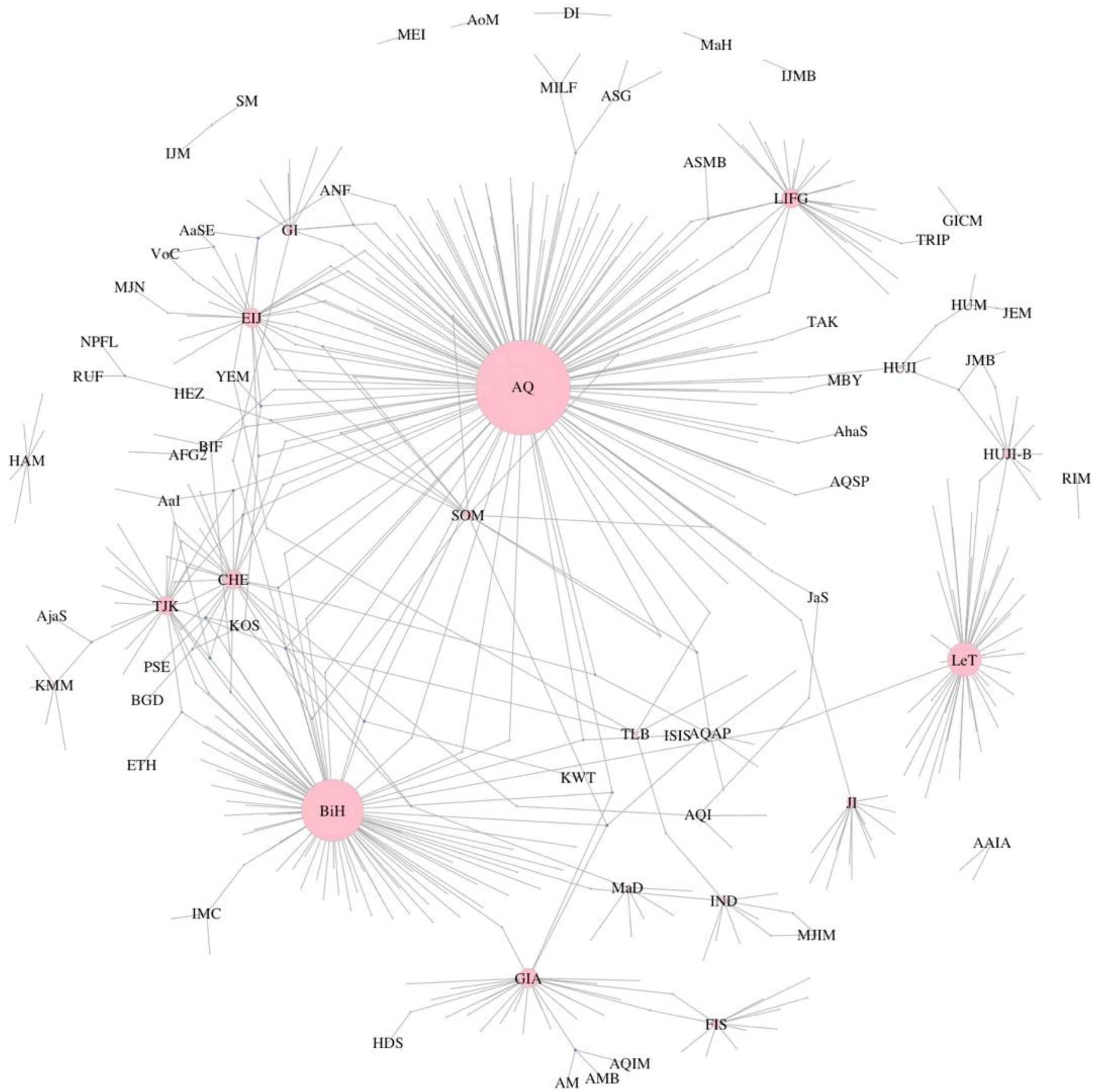

Figure 8: The Afghan Network Group 2-5

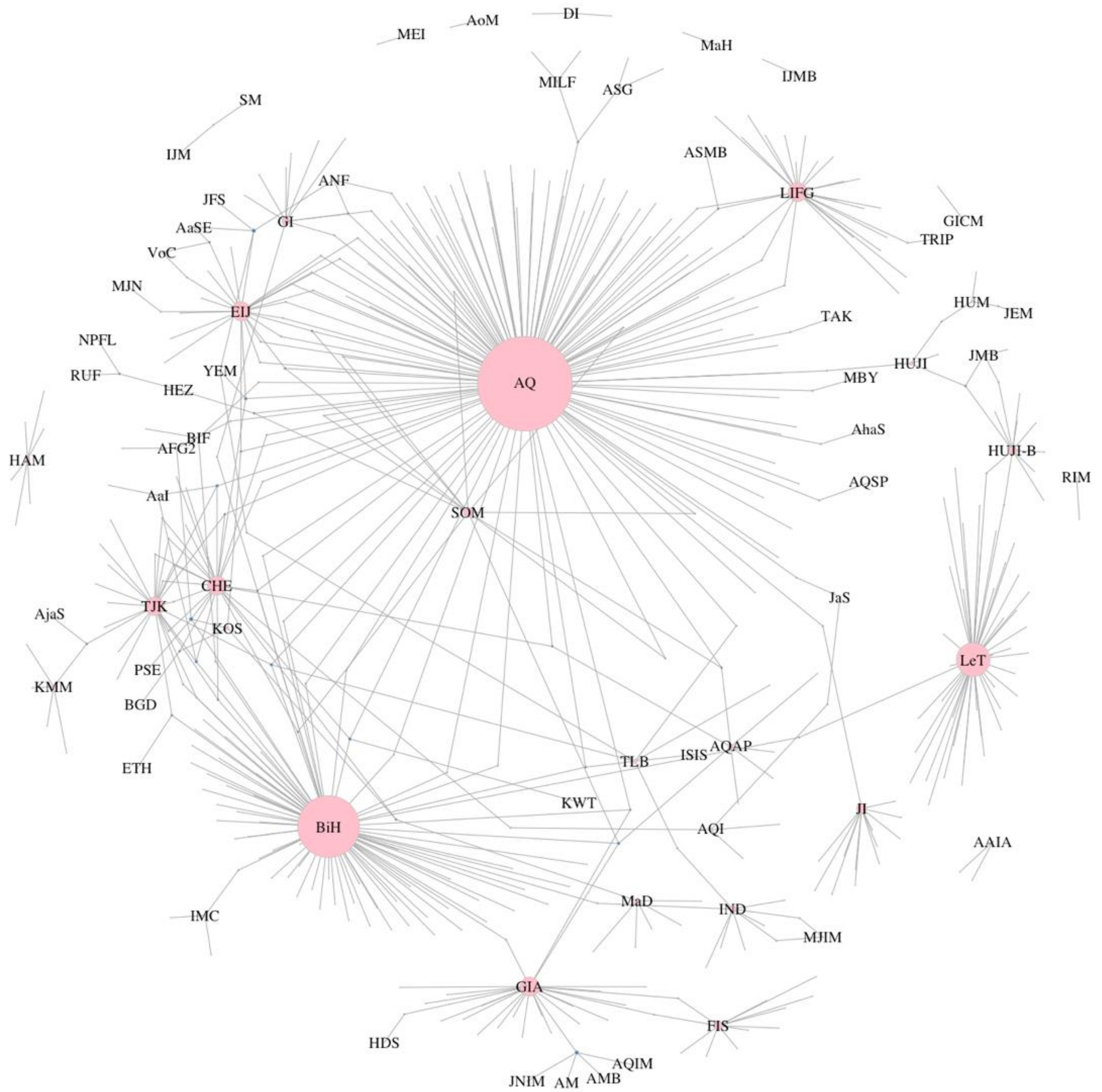

Figure 9: The Afghan Network Group 2-6

6.2.2 Descriptive Analysis

What does this data tell us when visualised through social network analysis? First, the network maps confirm the dominance of the most well-known armed groups connected to the Afghan Network. AQ has the greatest number of members in the network. As demonstrated across the network maps, AQ's dominance in the network begins at Group 2 but its membership continues to grow across time. This reflects both a common knowledge of the prominence of AQ among jihadi groups but also a bias in data towards in-depth investigation and publishing information about AQ's membership and organisational hierarchy.[546] The other largest groupings of veteran foreign fighters in the dataset are in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), Tajikistan, Chechnya, EIJ, LIFG, LeT, and GIA. These findings reflect two conditions: first, existing studies already confirm the presence of foreign fighters in these conflicts and, second, these groups were better recorded in the media than other groups. For example, the LeT wrote entire books dedicated to their martyrs, that included biographical information on where and when LeT members fought. This information has been collated into a dataset and one is able to filter according to year of death and battlefronts.[547] Many of AQ's senior leadership have received both media attention and been added to national and global sanctions lists such as the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) ISIL (Da'esh) & Al-Qaida Sanctions List.[548] Although this discrepancy in data availability introduces bias into the dataset, this is an anticipated consequence of using a convenience sample. As this data is not used to make causal claims or as part of statistical modelling, the missing data of a convenience sample does not skew outcomes. Instead, it represents a minimum sample of confirmed actors within the network. The current dataset reflects the dominance of foreign fighters within armed groups that were already recorded qualitatively and rather than

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[546] see for example, Peter L. Bergen, *The Osama Bin Laden I Know: An Oral History of Al-Qaeda's Leader* (Simon and Schuster, 2006); "The Guantánamo Docket"; Zachary Abuza, "Tentacles of Terror: Al Qaeda´s Southeast Asian Network," *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 24, no. 3 (December 2002): 427–65, https://doi.org/10.1355/CS24-3A; Daveed Gartenstein-Ross and Nathaniel Barr, "How Al-Qaeda Works: The Jihadist Group's Evolving Organizational Design," *Hudson Institute* (blog), June 1, 2018, http://www.hudson.org/research/14365-how-al-qaeda-works-the-jihadist-group-s-evolving-organizational-design.

[547] Rassler et al., "The Fighters of Lashkar-e-Taiba."

[548] ISIL (Da'esh) & Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee, "Sanctions List Materials: ISIL (Da'esh) & Al-Qaida Sanctions List."

drastically reshaping our current understanding of these networks, builds upon what was already established.

Second, the Afghan Network, increases in density over time. Network density refers to how connected vertices—in this case actors and armed groups—are by calculating the number of ties in the network in contrast to the number of possible ties.[549] As actors move between armed groups, what the maps indicate is increasing in density rather than becoming more sparse overtime. The increasing density is confirmed using by measuring the network density of the Afghan Network across the five time periods represented in the network maps. While the increasing density is expected, it confirms that those actors have continued to engage and move between groups that have pre-existing network ties overtime, more than joining new armed groups disconnected from this network.

Table 9 Network Density Across Armed Groups in Dataset

Group/s	Network Density
Group 2	0.004052929
Group 2-3	0.006912718
Group 2-4	0.009638094
Group 2-5	0.0124504
Group 2-6	0.01532149

6.2.3 Leveraging the Network

What these network maps cannot show is how the ties between armed groups were leveraged to support activities. This section presents several vignettes that demonstrate how members within the network drew on the shared expertise to improve their standing. These vignettes include bin Laden using Mustafa Hamid to negotiate with the Taliban, Ibrahim Bah liquidating AQ's assets into diamonds, the financial support of Muhammad Jamal al-Khalifa throughout Southeast Asia, and briefly, the sharing of expertise through the direct participation of veteran foreign fighters. These vignettes are not exhaustive but illustrative of the different kinds of knowledge and resource sharing that occurred within the network.

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[549] Hansen et al., "Social Network Analysis," 39.

Mustafa Hamid and the Taliban

Mustafa Hamid [Abu Walid al-Masri] is considered one of the very first Arab Afghans having travelled to Afghanistan in June 1979, prior to the Soviet Invasion, aged 40.[550] Hamid never became a member of AQ, however, Hamid married his daughter, Asma,[551] to Saif al-Adl, now al-Qaeda's second-in-command.[552] It was al-Adl that encourage bin Laden to allow his father-in-law to keep managing AQ's al-Faruq camps in Khost when AQ relocated to Sudan. Hamid's continued work at the camps in the intervening years meant that these camps were maintained and could be immediately reopened when AQ returned to Afghanistan. Hamid used al-Faruq to train fighters from Tajikistan in a project that he called the 'al-Furqan.' After becoming close with the Taliban regime in Khost, Hamid ended his al-Furqan project—Hamid ran out of money and the Tajik Civil War ended—and decided to travel to Yemen to see his family.[553] While stopping in Sudan on his way to Yemen, Hamid claims to have run into bin Laden who convinced him to return to Afghanistan with him due to his close relationships with the Afghan factions, including the Taliban. AQ was forced to leave Sudan in 1996 and returned to Afghanistan with fewer than fifty men.[554] On arrival in Jalalabad, AQ came under the protection of Yunis Khalis, factional leader of the Hizb i Islami, before relocating to the mountains in Tora Bora.[555] When the Taliban eventually took control of Jalalabad in 1996, bin Laden assigned Hamid as negotiator to allow AQ to remain in Afghanistan.[556]

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[550] Hamid and Farrall, *The Arabs at War in Afghanistan*, 2.

[551] Hamid was also at one time married to Rabia Hutchinson, an Australian Muslim convert sometimes referred to as 'The Grand Dame of Terrorism.' She first encountered Islam at age 18 in Indonesia and married an Indonesian man. Hutchinson studied at Baysir and Sungkar's—the leaders of Jemaah Islamiyya—madrassa in Indonesia. Her husband at the time became the leader of JI in Australia based in Darwin. In the late 1980s, she left her husband and moved to Peshawar for four years. She worked with Abdullah Azzam's wife, Samira Mohyeddin, as a nurse. During this time, Hutchinson also worked with Zawahiri, later leader of al Qaeda, in his role as a medical doctor. Hutchinson moved to Afghanistan in 1998 with her children to live under the Taliban. It was at this time that Hutchinson married Hamid. "Jihad Sheilas" (ABC, February 8, 2008), https://www.abc.net.au/news/2008-02-08/jihad-sheilas/1038430.

[552] Hamid and Farrall, *The Arabs at War in Afghanistan*, 3.

[553] Hamid and Farrall, 203.

[554] Hamid and Farrall, 207.

[555] Hamid and Farrall, 210.

[556] Hamid and Farrall, 218–19.

Ibrahim Bah and liquidating AQ assets

The Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) in West Africa are connected to AQ. This connection is visualised in the network maps through a shared connection of Hezbollah—AQ operatives are known to have trained with Hezbollah in the early 1990s—but there is a much more direct connection between the groups that was leveraged to strengthen AQ's financial position in response to global sanctions. The actor connecting AQ to West Africa is Ibrahim Bah. Bah was never a member of AQ, but he was intimately involved in AQ business dealings. Bah was born in Senegal on March 31, 1957.[557] Bah has a long history of participating in armed groups. Bah fought with the Movement of Democratic Forces of Casamance (MFDC), Casamance separatists, in Senegal in the 1970s before receiving training in Libya in the 1970s.[558] In the early 1980s, Bah spent three years fighting in Afghanistan.[559] In 1987 and 1988, Bah fought with Hezbollah in Beeka Valley, Southern Lebanon.[560] Bah returned to Libya at the end of the 1980s and trained rebels from throughout West Africa. Bah then went to join Taylor's National NPFL between 1991-97 where he became a Commander and participated in 'Operation Octopus' to take Monrovia.[561] In the late 1990s-early 2000s, Bah became the key conduit between RUF commanders and AQ and Hezbollah operatives buying diamonds from the region. [562]

Diamonds are an easy option for money laundering as they are transportable and undetectable. Global Witness suggests that AQ used diamonds in four ways: fundraising, money laundering, hiding assets, and converting cash into a transportable commodity.[563] AQ's diamond trade was allegedly the brain child of Ubaydah al-

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[557] Farah, *Blood From Stones*, 24.
[558] Douglas Farah, "Al Qaeda Cash Tied to Diamond Trade," *Washington Post*, November 2, 2001, https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/2001/11/02/al-qaeda-cash-tied-to-diamond-trade/93abd66a-5048-469a-9a87-5d2efb565a62/.
[559] Farah.
[560] Global Witness, "For a Few Dollars More," 42.
[561] Global Witness, 42.
[562] Farah, "Al Qaeda Cash Tied to Diamond Trade"; Joe DeCapua, "Rights Group: Prosecute Alleged Arms Dealer," *Voice of America*, June 19, 2013, https://www.voanews.com/africa/rights-group-prosecute-alleged-arms-dealer; Tommy Trenchard, "Sierra Leone Deports Former Taylor Associate Ahead of Court Hearing," *Reuters*, August 5, 2013, https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-sierraleone-war-idUKBRE9740TU20130805.
[563] Global Witness, "For a Few Dollars More," 28.

Banshiri and Wadih el-Hage: co-founder of AQ and bin Laden's secretary respectively.[564] Details of the gemstone trade were revealed during the US trial of the 1998 East Africa bombing case, including former members of AQ having knowledge that al-Banshiri and el-Hage were transporting diamonds in Tanzania and Kenya. Diamonds were sourced primarily from Sierra Leone by the RUF and transported across the border to Monrovia.[565]

Bah was known to have dealt diamonds with Abdullah Ahmed Abdullah [Abu Muhammad al-Masri], an AQ explosives expert involved in the 1998 Embassy Bombing. Two other AQ operatives were also sent to deal with Bah in 2000: Ahmed Khalfan Ghailani and Fazul Abdullah Muhammad.[566] Ghailani is alleged to have purchased the truck used in the Dar Es Salaam bombing and Fazul was arrested the day following the attacks in Pakistan after fleeing Tanzania.[567]

Mohammad Jamal Khalifa and al-Qaeda funding in Southeast Asia

AQ is known to have provided early funding to several groups in the Afghan Network throughout Southeast Asia including the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), and Jemaah Islamiyya (JI). This funding was facilitated by bin Laden's brother-in-law, Mohammad Jamal Khalifa who disguised his activities by working for several NGOs appearing to be providing aid to the region, namely under the guise as the head of the International Islamic Relief Organization (IIRO). Khalifa began working for bin Laden in Southeast Asia as early as 1988 travelling through the Moro region of the Philippines to recruit fighters. Khalifa returned to the Philippines in 1991 to establish a permanent AQ presence.[568] Khalifa would facilitate material support to both MILF and ASG, at one point attempting to create a working relationship between the two groups.[569] In the Philippines, Khalifa provided funding for a number of projects beyond ASG's operations through the IIRO, including

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[564] Global Witness, 28.
[565] Farah, "Al Qaeda Cash Tied to Diamond Trade."
[566] Farah; Douglas Farah, *Blood From Stones: The Secret Financial Network of Terror* (Crown, 2004), 49.
[567] Global Witness, "For a Few Dollars More," 47.
[568] Abuza, "Tentacles of Terror," December 2002, 437.
[569] Zachary Abuza, "The Moro Islamic Liberation Front at 20: State of the Revolution," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 28, no. 6 (November 2005): 470, https://doi.org/10.1080/10576100500236881.

mosques, schools, buildings and other relief operations.[570] Khalifa also maintained a relationship with Yousef Ramzi, an independent terrorist who was responsible for the 1993 World Trade Centre bombing in 1993 and the Bojinka Plot and also the nephew and brother-in-law of Khalid Sheikh Mohammad.[571] Khalid Sheikh Mohammad would go on to work with AQ as the key planner of the September 11 attacks on America in 2001.[572] Khalifa was arrested in 1994 in America, significantly reducing the external funding to armed groups in the Philippines.[573]

Abu Hamza al-Masri and Aden Abyan Islamic Army (AIAA) Kidnapping Operation

Zain al-Abedin Abu Bakr al-Mihdar [Abu Hassan] was born in Yemen's Shabwah district.[574] Like many Yemenis, Abu Hassan travelled to Afghanistan to fight the Soviets and returned home in 1989 after the departure of the Russians.[575] After the Yemen Civil War (1994), Abu Hassan formed the Aden Abyan Islamic Army (AIAA) in 1997.[576] The AIAA gained prominence for the kidnapping of 16 Western tourists in December 1998. The kidnapping was linked to the arrest of AIAA members from Britain a few days earlier. On 24 December 1998, eight men were arrested in a routine traffic stop. Those arrested were a group of British members, including the son of Mostafa Kamel Mostafa (better known by his kunya Abu Hamza al-Masri), Muhammad Mostafa Kamel.[577] Abu Hamza was a radical Imam at the Finsbury

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570 Zachary Abuza, "Balik Terrorism: The Return of the Abu Sayyaf:" (Fort Belvoir, VA: Defense Technical Information Center, September 1, 2005), 5, https://doi.org/10.21236/ADA439349.
571 Thomas et al., "Al Qaeda in America the Enemy Within"; "ḍābiṭ istikhabārāt amīrkī yakshif 'lāqah wazir dākhilīyat qaṭar al-sābiq bimudbir hajamāt 11 sibtambar."
572 *Sirī Lil-Ghāīyah - al-Ṭārīq Ilá 11 Siptambar - al-Jaz' al-Thānī [Top Secret: The Road to September 11]*, 2008, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mC3P-Ai-HtU.
573 Peter Chalk, "The Davao Consensus: A Panacea for the Muslim Insurgency in Mindanao?," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 9, no. 2 (June 1997): 79–98, https://doi.org/10.1080/09546559708427404.
574 Mark Fineman, "War to Crush Terrorist Group May Have Set Stage for Cole Attack," *Los Angeles Times*, October 29, 2000, http://archive.is/enCyc.
575 "Al-Miḥḍār y'tarif Bimas'uwīatihi 'n Āghtīāl Qīādāt (al-Ishtirākī) al-Yamanī Qabl Ḥarb '94 [Al-Mihdhar Admits His Responsibility for the Assassination of the Leaders of the Yemeni Socialist Movement before the '94 War]," *Al-Bayan*, July 27, 1999, https://www.albayan.ae/last-page/1999-07-27-1.1062641.
576 "jaīsh abyan al-islāmī [Abyan Islamic Army]," *Al Jazeera*, October 3, 2004, https://www.aljazeera.net/knowledgegate/specialcoverage/2004/10/3/جيش-أبين-الإسلامي; Fathi Bin Lazraq, "Al-Qīṣah al-Kāmilah Liẓuhūr Tanẓīm al-Qā'īdah Fī Abīyan [The Full Story of the Emergence of al-Qaeda in Abyan]," *Aden Al-Gad*, August 2, 2011, https://adengad.net/public/posts/3152.
577 Peter Bergen, "Abu Hamza and Yemeni Kidnapping (Excerpt from Holy War Inc)," *Peter Bergen* (blog), June 6, 2004, https://peterbergen.com/abu-hamza-and-yemeni-kidnapping/.

Mosque in North London and he and his son had participated in the Afghan conflicts.[578] It is alleged that Abu Hamza directly coordinated the kidnapping with Abu Hassan.[579] One of the kidnappers informed the hostages that they were being kidnapped because 'the Yemeni government had arrested some of their English comrades.'[580]

Kidnapping was not unusual practice in Yemen. Between 1992-1998, more than 100 foreigners had been abducted,[581] including four German tourists who had been kidnapped only a few weeks prior. In return for the German tourists, the kidnappers had demanded $640,000, luxury cars and houses, military posts, and state jobs.[582] In this instance, four hostages—three Britons and one Australian—were killed during the rescue mission launched by the Yemeni army.[583]

Abu Hamza was extradited from Britain and sentenced to life in prison for his role in the kidnappings in America in 2014.[584] Crucial to the prosecutor's case was the recording of an interview Abu Hamza granted with one of the surviving hostages, Mary Quin. Quin travelled to London in 2000 while writing her book about the kidnapping. Quin approached Abu Hamza at Finsbury Mosque and he agreed for their meeting to be recorded. In the interview, Abu Hamza stated that the kidnappings 'Islamically, [kidnapping is a] good thing to do' and 'We never thought it would be

[578] Cook reports that Abu Hassan met Abu Hamza while in Afghanistan but doesn't provide any evidence for the claim. It would be equally possible that Abu Hassan met one of Hamza's two sons who also fought in Afghanistan. David Cook, "CTC's Jihadi After Action Report: Paradigmatic Jihadi Movements" (Combating Terrorism Centre, 2006), 26; Dominique Thomas, "Abu Hamza Al-Masri and Supporters of Shari'a'," in *Islamic Movements of Europe* (I. B. Tauris, 2014), 174.
[579] "Abu Hamza and the Islamic Army: The Trial so Far," *Al Bab* (blog), March 6, 1999, https://al-bab.com/albab-orig/albab/yemen/hamza/zinjibar.htm.
[580] Bergen, "Abu Hamza and Yemeni Kidnapping (Excerpt from Holy War Inc)."
[581] Reuters, "16 Tourists Abducted in Yemen," *The New York Times*, December 29, 1998, sec. World, https://www.nytimes.com/1998/12/29/world/16-tourists-abducted-in-yemen.html; Reuters, "Shootout Ends Yemen Kidnapping; 4 Tourists Die," *The New York Times*, December 30, 1998, sec. World, https://www.nytimes.com/1998/12/30/world/shootout-ends-yemen-kidnapping-4-tourists-die.html.
[582] Reuters, "Shootout Ends Yemen Kidnapping; 4 Tourists Die."
[583] Reuters; Bergen, "Abu Hamza and Yemeni Kidnapping (Excerpt from Holy War Inc)"; Reuters, "16 Tourists Abducted in Yemen."
[584] Nick Bryant, "Abu Hamza: The Trial of a Violent Jihadist," *BBC News*, May 19, 2014, sec. UK, https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-27468522.

that bad.'[585] Abu Hassan was sentenced to death in Yemen. Abu Hassan was executed in October 1999.[586]

These vignettes provide the qualitative data on continued coordination among members of the Afghan Network that are missed in quantitative analysis. Foreign fighters from this period were able to continue to work together or share resources to further their shared goals. For some armed groups, this included funding that was essential to their early stages of development. For others, it was the solidification of trust through marriage between family members. While these networks were built in conflict, they were maintained and reinforced in the years and decades after their formation.

Expertise Transfer

Members of the Afghan Network also provided technical assistance to other armed groups within the Afghan Network. This building and transfer of expertise is addressed in-depth in the subsequent chapter, but it is an important aspect of the network effect. During the Bosnian War (1992-1995), the first camp established by veteran foreign fighters was in Mehurići, in central BiH.[587] These camps were organised in the style of Afghanistan with instructors being transferred directly from al-Sadda camp.[588] In December 1994, Jemaah Islamiyya member, Nasir Abas, was instructed to travel to Southern Philippines to train Moro fighters. Nasir opened a training camp in the jungle that was called Camp Hudaybiyah that was based on the training he had provided in AMMA.[589] Although Camp Hudaybiyah was established to teach Moro fighters, by

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[585] Benjamin Weiser, "Hostage Testifies About Post-Rescue Meeting With Imam Charged in Kidnapping," *The New York Times*, May 8, 2014, sec. New York, https://www.nytimes.com/2014/05/08/nyregion/hostage-testifies-about-post-rescue-meeting-with-imam-charged-in-kidnapping.html.

[586] Bergen, "Abu Hamza and Yemeni Kidnapping (Excerpt from Holy War Inc)"; "Abu Hamza and the Islamic Army: The Trial so Far"; "jaīsh 'adin abyan [Aden Abyan Army]," *Al Jazeera*, December 29, 2014, https://www.aljazeera.net/encyclopedia/movementsandparties/2014/12/29/جيش-عدن-أبين; "I'dām al-Miḥḍār Fī al-Yaman [The Execution of Al-Mihdhar in Yemen]," *Al-Bayan*, October 18, 1999, https://www.albayan.ae/last-page/1999-10-18-1.1064230.

[587] Darryl Li, *The Universal Enemy: Jihad, Empire, and the Challenge of Solidarity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2019), 29.

[588] Kohlmann, *Al-Qaida's Jihad in Europe*, 19; Moore, "When Do Ties Bind?," 2019, 201.

[589] Abas, *Inside Jamaah Islamiyah*, 160–65.

1997 the camp would exclusively train JI recruits.[590] Zarqawi took what he had experienced in Afghanistan and adapted his training camps to the geography of Iraq. Zarqawi increased the religious education provided to recruits[591] and, later, in Iraq, Zarqawi would transform al-Qaeda in Iraq's training camps into mobile units in the desert that could quickly move to avoid state detection.[592]

6.3 CONCLUSION

This chapter has demonstrated the formation of the Afghan Network. I argue that this network—made up of armed groups embedded in a transnational network—has been a site of continued coordination and cooperation between veteran foreign fighters. First, I outline how the isolation of the foreign fighters in the Afghan conflicts served to form new armed groups that defy our normal expectations of group formation. I argue that the Afghan conflicts provided protection from the state, protection from the conflict, and was a site of mass convergence that allowed the resultant armed groups to survive the nascent, and most dangerous, stages of group formation. Second, I visualised the Afghan Network for the first time and demonstrated how the network changed and, overtime, becomes denser, indicating the actors are increasing ties with each other. I then provide evidence of exchanges between members of this network that leveraged the skills and resources of its members including finances, relationships, and resources. I also briefly include examples of the sharing of conflict expertise throughout the network. This conflict expertise will be the focus of the subsequent empirical chapter that examines the types and degree of expertise—and its legitimacy—within the Afghan Network.

The Afghan Network contains some of the most dangerous armed groups to international security. AQ and her affiliates have been responsible for global terrorist attacks and, in the case of AQI, the destabilisation of entire regions. LeT was responsible for the 26 November 2008 attack in Mumbai that killed almost 260

[590] Abas, 168.

[591] Fu'ad Husayn, "Al-Zarqawi: The Second Generation of Al-Qa'ida, Book by Fu'ad Husayn," *Atc2005* (blog), June 10, 2006, https://atc2005.blogspot.com/2006/06/al-zarqawi-second-generation-of-al.html.

[592] Truls Hallberg Tønnessen, "Training on a Battlefield: Iraq as a Training Ground for Global Jihadis," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 20, no. 4 (September 18, 2008): 559, https://doi.org/10.1080/09546550802257242.

people.[593] MILF and ASG led decades long opposition to the Philippine state culminating in the 2017 five-month Siege of Marawi where ASG fought in an alliance with Islamic State fighters.[594] However, as important as many of these groups and actors are to international security, others have proven themselves to be less competent. Association with the Afghan Network does not equate to conflict proficiency or terrorism. Beyond the victory of the Libyan opposition militias—including those led by veteran foreign fighters—none of these new armed groups have successfully overthrown the state. Yet, the connection of these armed groups to the transnational network allowed them to move across borders, gain new expertise, and share resources that facilitated survival for many groups that would have been destroyed by the state. Here I propose that it is not necessarily the case that being attached to the network automatically strengthens those connected to the network, but that the network contributed to the resilience and persistence among its members.

The implications of this chapter are numerous. First, the introduction of the dataset is an important empirical contribution to the field. This original dataset is the first to attempt to capture the participation of foreign fighters in the Afghan conflicts but also the largest public ally available source that traces foreign fighter trajectories. The inclusion of foreign fighters that return to domestic settings also allows us to better conceive of the violent pathways—and their consequences—for domestic security. The ability to visualise this network using SNA allows us to understand the shape and connections within the Afghan Network and examine the potential loci for cooperation. I also greatly increase the number of armed groups known to associate with the Afghan Network. While literature points to the importance of the future participation of veteran foreign fighters in armed groups, among the Afghan Network, the number of groups included within the network was often limited to those bigger and more obvious conflicts. In contrast, I identify veteran foreign fighters from the Afghan conflicts across 69 armed groups.

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[593] Sarita Azad and Arvind Gupta, “A Quantitative Assessment on 26/11 Mumbai Attack Using Social Network Analysis,” *Journal of Terrorism Research* 2, no. 2 (October 30, 2011), https://doi.org/10.15664/jtr.187.
[594] Rohan Gunaratna, “The Siege of Marawi: A Game Changer in Terrorism in Asia” 9, no. 7 (2017): 6, https://www.jstor.org/stable/26351533.

Second, this chapter expands theoretically on what we know about how armed groups are formed and the processes that these nascent groups undertake before they are recorded as armed groups within datasets. Two core assumptions exist within social movement and armed group literature: mobilisation and formation are generated along existing networks and the greatest threat to nascent movements are detection and destruction by the state. In the case of foreign fighters in the Afghan conflicts, because of their isolation, were able to build new networks as the basis of their organisations while also being protected from both the state and the violence of the conflict itself. I argue this isolation resulted in the emergence of actualised new armed groups or with the increased networks and skills to form new armed groups rapidly. This is not a feature of other generations of foreign fighters. The chief concern surrounding more recent foreign fighters is the security threat that they pose as terror actors after they leave conflict rather than the emergence of new armed groups that threaten security through insurgency or other forms of opposition to the state.

Chapter 7: Expertise Development

It is often noted that foreign fighters had little to no impact on the outcomes during the Afghan conflicts. It is also widely agreed that their participation in the conflict was transformative, leading to the emergence of its veterans as skilled conflict actors.[595] However, among the narratives of foreign fighters themselves, the role of Afghanistan as a site of training and gaining conflict expertise is contested. Khattab, one of the most important leaders to emerge from this period and renowned for his fighting ability, notes the limited role of foreign fighters during this period:

> In my opinion, we didn't really do jihad in Afghanistan. The Afghans did almost everything. Many brothers came to Afghanistan after 1985/1986 and the majority of them in 1988. The brothers who came in the beginning faced the difficulties. At that time most of the matters were already arranged.[596]

In contrast, senior AQ figure Muhammad Ilyas Kashmiri attributes his military knowledge to his experience in Afghanistan:

> I have learned the art of war from the Arabs. The Arabs fighting in Afghanistan, including Egyptians and Palestinians, have adopted a separate style combining the war strategies of the Russians and Americans. I am an expert in that style. We have trained our boys also in that mode so that they can fight better than India's regular army commandos.[597]

In previous chapters, I referred to a quote by President Obama that described veteran foreign fighters as 'trained and battle-hardened'[598] and the prominence of this

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[595] Bruce, "The Azzam Brigades."
[596] Al-Suwailem, *Memories of Amir Khattab*.
[597] Syed Saleem Shahzad, "Al-Qaeda's Guerrilla Chief Lays out Strategy," *Asia Times*, October 15, 2009, https://web.archive.org/web/20091016221531/http://atimes.com/atimes/South_Asia/KJ15Df03.html.
[598] President Barack, "Statement by the President on ISIL."

assessment among media, policymakers, and scholars alike. This chapter seeks to provide clarity to this statement by drawing on the experiences and trajectories of foreign fighters from the Afghan conflicts. Certainly, foreign fighters emerge with greater expertise than those armed group members with no conflict experience, but the isolation of the Afghan conflicts presented limited opportunities for developing expertise.

This chapter seeks to unpack this contention and understand what expertise foreign fighters developed in the Afghan conflicts and how this expertise mattered for the future trajectories of these fighters. This chapter proposes that the two seemingly conflictual claims about expertise development can both be true. I argue that foreign fighters did, overall, gain a set of expertise—building training camps and gaining conflict skills—but that this expertise was limited. I also argue that expertise of foreign fighters in the Afghan conflicts was bound up within the mythology of participation and the victory of the Mujahideen, allowing those veterans to gain legitimacy in the Afghan Network and wider jihadist movement. Therefore, the conflict expertise of these foreign fighters was limited but reified by their membership of the Afghan Network.

The first section of this chapter outlines the mythology of the Afghan Network. The victory of the Mujahideen against the Soviets and later the communist government allowed foreign fighters to exaggerate their contributions to the conflict. The Afghan Network then became the site of mythology: one's participation in the conflict acted as a marker about one's authority as a fighter and dedication to the cause. As will be demonstrated throughout, the expertise and practice of foreign fighters during this period is often viewed, internally, as valuable and legitimate, regardless of the objective limitations of this reality. Wenger usefully outlines the concept of internally recognised expertise in relation to youth gangs while outlining the concept of communities of practice. Youth gangs often have a shared identity as a group member and within this identity, there are a set of competencies that allow the group to survive. While few people external to a gang would identify these activities, often criminal, as

expertise, within the gang this expertise is valued and shared.[599] The victory in Afghanistan acted as inspiration for future insurrection and veteran foreign fighters were promoted to senior positions within these movements because of this perceived competence and expertise. Drawing on my original dataset, I demonstrate how these veteran foreign fighters consistently achieve higher positions within subsequent armed groups despite their limited conflict exposure.

The second section of this chapter outlines the actual expertise developed among foreign fighters in the Afghan conflicts and how this expertise was transferred from the Afghan Network to other armed groups. I argue that some expertise was developed through widescale training but also through—although rare—participation in conflict. I outline how the training modules for foreign fighters developed overtime and were eventually transported into other conflict zones. Gradually, foreign fighters established dedicated camps with more advanced training in terms of both duration and tactics. Eventually, foreign fighters were able to break away from the two main groups providing training—AQ and MAK—to build nationalist camps. The transfer of established training modules allowed future armed groups to skip the trial and error process of training development that took place in the Afghan conflicts. I then outline specific explosive expertise developed among foreign fighters. Although hit and run or guerrilla tactics featuring explosives were not a central feature of the Mujahideen's fighting strategy, foreign fighters regularly reported training in explosives at training camps. I demonstrate how explosives have been utilised and shared throughout the Afghan Network.

7.1 MYTHOLOGY OF THE AFGHAN CONFLICTS AND VETERAN TRAJECTORIES

In the overview of foreign fighter participation in the Afghan conflicts in Chapter 4, I outlined the limited participation of foreign fighters in combat. If foreign fighters had limited participation in combat roles and most only had a few weeks of training, how did foreign fighters of the Afghan Network become renowned as experienced and

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[599] Etienne Wenger, "Communities of Practice: A Brief Introduction," *Communities of Practice*, 2011, 1–2, http://hdl.handle.net/1794/11736.

hardened fighters? I argue that foreign fighters leveraged the mythology of the Afghan conflicts. The mythology of foreign fighters in the Afghan conflicts—often marked through the identifier of Arab Afghan or 'nationality' Afghan (as was the case of Algerian Afghans)—carried imbued meaning. This mythology then became entangled with the victory of the Mujahideen in Afghanistan which inspired other Islamist opposition groups, providing evidence that victory was possible.[600] The network effect of this mythology carried important meaning and a weight among certain communities that provided legitimacy of the members of the Afghan Network.

Abdullah Azzam built the foundations for mythology of Afghanistan in his book, *Signs of the Merciful in the Afghan Jihad*.[601] Azzam recorded the miracles the Afghan fighters witnessed during the jihad. This myth building continued in the martyr notices published in *al-Jihad*. The virtues of the martyrs are listed with claims of fighters having dreamt of their martyrdom. The bodies of martyrs were said to carry the scent of musk and did not decompose.[602] Even in his own death, despite being killed by a car bomb, Azzam's body was said to have been found intact, leaning against a wall. Reports claimed that the only sign that the Sheikh was dead was a line of blood emanating from his nose.[603] In an interview with Azzam's eldest son, Hegghammer was offered Azzam's jacket from the time of his assassination and asked to smell it for musk. Hudhayfa stated, 'I know you probably don't believe this stuff…You would, though, if you had been to Afghanistan.'[604]

The mythic qualities of the Afghan conflicts transformed into a shared identity among foreign fighters. The two of the main drivers of this mythology stem from the defeat of the Soviet Union and the victory of Jaji.[605] These two events were portrayed as intrinsically linked by foreign fighters. The battle of Jaji was credited with the withdrawal of the Soviets from Afghanistan: 'When the red army failed this shameful

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[600] Hussein, "The Façade of the Afghan Jihad."
[601] Shaykh Abdullah Azzam, *Signs of Ar-Rahman in the Jihad of Afghan* (Birmingham: Maktabah Booksellers and Publishers, 1986), https://www.kalamullah.com/Books/Signs_of_ar-Rahman.pdf.
[602] Hegghammer, *The Caravan*, 402; Anas and Hussein, *To The Mountains*, 155; Azzam, *Signs of Ar-Rahman in the Jihad of Afghan*, 32.
[603] Hegghammer, *The Caravan*, 450.
[604] Hegghammer, xvii.
[605] Williams, "On the Trail of the 'Lions of Islam,'" 219; Hafez, "*Jihad* after Iraq," 78.

failure in Jaji, Gorbachev produced the withdrawal of the army from Afghanistan.'[606] The battle of Jaji also secured bin Laden as the leader of the Arabs and led to an increase in foreign fighters.[607] The victory was widely publicised with bin Laden personally paying for issue 31 and 32 of *al-Jihad* magazine that included the martyrs of Jaji to be printed 35,000 and 50,000 times in contrast to the usual printing run of 15,000.[608] As a result, there was an increased flow of foreign fighters to Afghanistan.[609] The battle of Jaji 'helped create one of the foundational myths about the fighting prowess of the Afghan Arabs and made us overlook many things. It created heroes.'[610] This mythology was often exploited by those who only stayed in Afghanistan for a short time. Anas recalls that those who left after only a few weeks training, foreign fighters 'were received as veterans of the Afghan war and viewed as heroes in those days but are nowadays viewed with suspicion.'[611] Some veteran foreign fighters would return home wearing Afghan clothes as evidence of their contribution, like Azzam when he travelled to the US wearing Afghan clothes.[612]

While the mythology of veteran foreign fighters may have been exploited for propaganda, it also provided confidence that, they too, could defeat tyrannical regimes. The Afghan conflicts stood as evidence of the power of Islamists to overthrow corrupt regimes. As highlighted by journalist Tam Hussein, 'To some Arabs, the Afghan mujahedeen were examples of who they could be as men and what they could achieve for Islam after a succession of catastrophic military defeats.'[613] For veteran foreign fighters, victory was a 'balm to the wounded masculinity of a new generation of fighters.'[614] After many Islamists were forced to travel to Afghanistan as exiles, veteran foreign fighters now had the confidence to begin their opposition movements at home, or continue on in their mission to protect and liberate Muslims around the

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[606] al-Qandahari, *Dhikrayat 'arabi Afghani [Memories of an Arab Afghan]*, 38.
[607] Hamid and Farrall, *The Arabs at War in Afghanistan*, 98; Coll, *Ghost Wars*, 163; Williams, "On the Trail of the 'Lions of Islam,'" 221.
[608] Hegghammer, *The Caravan*, 234.
[609] Hegghammer, 169.
[610] Anas and Hussein, *To The Mountains*, 179.
[611] Anas and Hussein, 161.
[612] Hegghammer, *The Caravan*, 260.
[613] Hussein, "The Façade of the Afghan Jihad."
[614] Hussein.

world. Participation in the Afghan conflicts, imbued in the mythology, told a story of veteran foreign fighters. Membership of the Afghan Network signalled expertise, experience, and virtue that allowed veteran foreign fighters to achieve more senior roles in subsequent armed groups. This internal recognition within jihadist movements of the expertise of the Afghan Network was not an objective assessment of veteran expertise but constructed and reified within the community.

7.1.1 Veteran Foreign Fighters' Career Trajectories

This section presents an overview of the career trajectories of veteran foreign fighters from the Afghan conflicts. I demonstrate how the participation in Afghan conflicts impacted the positions of veteran foreign fighters in subsequent armed groups. In this section, I trace the position of veteran foreign fighters within armed groups across time and space to demonstrate their increasing expertise over time. This data confirms, and builds upon, the findings of Daymon et al: foreign fighting results in higher positions in subsequent armed groups.[615] However, I deviate from Daymon et al in my assessment of the cause of these career progressions. Veteran foreign fighters in the Afghan conflicts did not necessarily objectively possess advanced fighting experience or conflict skills. Therefore, career progression may reflect advanced conflict skills, but this trajectory into higher positions should also be seen as the network effect of the internal recognition among armed groups of a perceived expertise that was attached to the veteran foreign fighter status.

As outlined in the methods chapter, during the data collection for the original Afghan Conflict Foreign Fighter dataset, I recorded the highest position of a foreign fighter in each armed group. I recorded twenty-three (23) positions across sixty-nine (69) armed groups.[616] Table 9 presents these positions of the 404 veteran foreign fighters included in the dataset. The greatest number of armed groups joined by a single veteran captured in the dataset is six. These veterans are Abdul Wahid al-Qahtani (Abu Ma'iz al-Qahtani), Abu Faraj al-Masri (Ahmad Salama Mabruk) and Mokhtar Belmokhtar. If information could not be found about the specific position an individual held, but it

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[615] Daymon, de Roy van Zuijdewijn, and Malet, "Career Foreign Fighters."
[616] Outlines of each position can be found in Chapter 4.

was clear that they had participated in the conflict, I took the conservative approach of recording the individual as a 'fighter.' This was the case with al-Qahtani who I have noted as a fighter throughout all six (6) armed groups. Al-Qahtani fought in Afghanistan, Palestine, Chechnya, and Kosovo before being killed in an American airstrike in Afghanistan in 2001.[617] Abu Faraj al-Masri is a well-known Egyptian Jihadi who participated in the Afghan conflicts, the Yemen civil war, was a senior figure of Egyptian Islamic Group (EIJ), a senior figure in Ansar al-Sharia Egypt after his release from prison, before joining al-Nusra Front in Syria and remaining in Jabhat Fateh al-Sham as a senior figure when al-Nusra cut ties with al-Qaeda in 2016. Al-Masri was killed in Syria in 2016.[618] Mokhtar Belmokhtar returned to his native Algeria after his time in Afghanistan and became a Commander of a GIA unit before joining al-Qaeda aligned Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC)—later al-Qaeda in the Maghreb (AQIM). Belmokhtar then when on to lead his own groups—al-Mulathamun Battalion (AMB) and al-Mourabitoun (AM)—before becoming a senior figure in the umbrella group Jama'at al Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM). Belmokhtar has been reported as killed on three separate occasions, all of which have proven to be incorrect.[619]

As shown in the table, there is a drop off in the total number of veteran foreign fighters between Group 2 and Group 3. This drop-off can be attributed to several factors: death, retirement, or group success. Being a member of a greater number of armed groups is also not necessarily associated with being a higher or lower quality fighter: some veteran foreign fighters obtained the top position as leader in the armed group following the Afghan conflicts and retained this position. Take the most notable

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617 Kohlmann, *Al-Qaida's Jihad in Europe*, 79; Hegghammer, "Violent Islamism in Saudi Arabia, 1976-2006," 649.

618 "Abu al Faraj al Masri," Counter Extremism Project, October 10, 2016, https://www.counterextremism.com/extremists/abu-al-faraj-al-masri.

619 Andrew Black, "Mokhtar Belmokhtar: The Algerian Jihad's Southern Amir," *Terrorism Monitor* 7, no. 12 (May 8, 2009), https://jamestown.org/program/mokhtar-belmokhtar-the-algerian-jihads-southern-amir/; Jason Burke, "Mokhtar Belmokhtar: The 'uncatchable' Chief of Africa's Islamic Extremists," *The Guardian*, January 21, 2016, http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jan/21/mokhtar-belmokhtar-uncatchable-chief-africas-islamic-extremists; Brian Fung, "Mokhtar Belmokhtar, the Terrorist Behind Algeria's Hostage Crisis," *The Atlantic*, January 17, 2013, https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2013/01/mokhtar-belmokhtar-the-terrorist-behind-algerias-hostage-crisis/267286/.

example of Osama bin Laden. Despite arriving in Afghanistan having no military or weapons training, bin Laden was able to form and lead his own armed group, al-Qaeda, until his assassination in Pakistan in 2011.[620] While bin Laden's transformation into a leader is attributable in part to the vast quantities of funding that he injected into the Afghan conflicts and future armed groups, his ambitious projects in Afghanistan, and subsequent victory at Jaji, contributed substantially to his reputation.[621]

Table 9 Foreign Fighter Positions Across Armed Groups

Position	Afghan Conflict	Position 2	Position 3	Position 4	Position 5	Position 6
Accountant	0	1	0	0	0	0
Affiliate	0	8	1	0	0	0
Bodyguard	0	2	0	0	0	0
Bomb-maker	2	4	0	0	0	0
Commander	9	11	5	0	0	0
Deputy Commander	0	1	0	0	0	0
Doctor	1	1	0	0	0	0
Employee	0	1	0	0	0	0
Fighter	366	185	32	13	4	1
Financer	1	2	1	2	0	0
Forger	0	2	0	0	0	0
Hijacker	0	1	1	0	0	0
Leader	1	43	16	4	2	0
Media	0	3	1	0	0	0
Member	1	13	1	1	0	0
NGO	1	0	0	0	0	0
Operative	0	20	2	0	0	0
Plotter	0	1	1	0	1	0
Recruiter	1	0	1	0	0	0

[620] Jon lee Anderson, "Bin Laden and His Followers," *The New Yorker*, May 2, 2011, https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/bin-laden-and-his-followers.
[621] See accounts of bin Laden in Anas and Hussein, *To The Mountains*; Hamid and Farrall, *The Arabs at War in Afghanistan*.

Senior Figure	6	91	30	8	2	2
Suicide Bomber	0	1	1	0	0	0
Trainer	15	12	14	2	0	0
Unknown	0	1	0	0	0	0
Total (N)	404	404	107	30	9	3

As demonstrated in Table 9, the positions veteran fighters hold between Afghanistan and Group 2 shifts dramatically with fewer holding the position of general fighter (366 to 185) and Leaders increasing from 1 (Osama bin Laden) to 43. Although the discrepancy in total fighters between Group 2 and subsequent Groups makes direct comparison difficult, the ratio of fighters to leaders continues to decrease. Also of note is the increase in Senior Figures across Groups. Senior Figures in the dataset are defined as 'founders, ideological leaders and members of the senior leadership of an armed group but are not the overall leaders.' Senior Figures rise from 6 to 91 between the Afghan Conflict and Group 2.

The data also indicates that the type of positions that veteran foreign fighters held shifted between the Afghan conflict and Group 2. Group 2 sees the introduction of the categories of operatives, hijackers, suicide bombers, and plotter. Each of these positions was assigned to veteran foreign fighters that participated in a specific terrorist event. As will be outlined in Chapter 8, the transformation of tactics can be directly linked to the religious education of foreign fighters into new ideas about conflict and appropriate uses of violence. This data suggests that participation in conflict developed a perceived expertise of veteran foreign fighters, leading them to hold more senior positions within subsequent groups. The following section looks at both the training and conflict participation in Afghanistan to demonstrate the protected development of expertise that acted as a base for the practice and expertise of future armed groups.

7.2 TRAINING AND CONFLICT EXPOSURE IN THE AFGHAN CONFLICTS

This section outlines what expertise foreign fighters gained during the Afghan conflicts. Observing the acquisition of conflict skills presents a unique data collection challenge. This section draws heavily on the profiles of veteran foreign fighters in my

dataset and pulls out three core themes: minimal combat experience, the development of training camps and their transferability into other conflicts, and explosives training. The aim here is to demonstrate that these foreign fighters did develop expertise but, for most foreigners, this expertise was limited by their isolation. This experience did not create an army of battle-hardened and expert fighters, instead it created a model for training that would be instrumental in the development of future armed groups and their modes of violence. By establishing training models while protected, veteran foreign fighters were able to side-step the trial and error process usually associated with establishing camps. The training programs progressed from two weeks of basic training to advanced training, including bombmaking. The Afghan Network would continue to draw and build upon the expertise developed in the Afghan conflicts.

By tracing the development of expertise in the Afghan conflicts, I inevitably address the assumption within some literature that foreign fighters bring advanced skills with them to conflicts, thus altering conflict dynamics.[622] What is often lacking in these assessments is an acknowledgement of the varying conflict experience of foreign fighters on arrival. For most foreign fighters, the Afghan conflicts were their first experience of any military or conflict experience. There were exceptions among some senior foreign fighters such as Abdullah Azzam and Mustafa Hamid who had prior experience in the 1978 Lebanon-Israeli war. Libyan and Egyptian fighters also benefited from having compulsory military service but not necessarily conflict experience. For those with no experience, anecdotes from foreign fighters demonstrate how little capacity some foreign fighters arrived at the Afghan conflicts possessed. Abu Zubaydah's diary notes his struggle with the physical demands of basic training. Zubaydah would place himself at the end of the line during the morning running exercise and halfway through he would 'switch from running to walking or…leave the line.'[623] An Algerian fighter had to teach Zubaydah how to run properly, teaching him how to breathe, technique and how to warm up.[624] Masood Azhar from Pakistan

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[622] Bakke, "Help Wanted?," 167; Mironova, *From Freedom Fighters to Jihadists*, 136; Daymon, de Roy van Zuijdewijn, and Malet, "Career Foreign Fighters"; Bacon and Muibu, "The Domestication of Al-Shabaab"; Malet, "Why Foreign Fighters? Historical Perspectives and Solutions," 97.
[623] "The Secret Diary of Abu Zubaydah," F3-2002-804705–154.
[624] "The Secret Diary of Abu Zubaydah," F3-2002-804705–153.

travelled to Afghanistan in 1983. Articles repeatedly refer to Azhar as 'stout'[625] or 'weak physical condition'[626] or 'overweight'[627] or 'soft around the middle.'[628] Azhar was quickly moved into propaganda and recruitment before finishing his 40-days training.[629] Yet, both Zubaydah and Azhar would become powerful Jihadi figures. After the Afghan conflicts, Zubaydah oversaw Khaldan camp for several years before being arrested in Pakistan. Zubaydah is currently being held in the American prison, Guantanamo Bay.[630] Azhar splintered from Harakat-ul-Mujahedeen (HUM) after being released from prison in India in 2000 after supporters hijacked a commercial plane.[631] Azhar's new group, Jaish-e-Mohammed (JEM), took most of the men and resources from HUM.[632] This section will outline how foreign fighters developed and reified the expertise and its impact on subsequent participation.

7.2.1 Conflict Experience

A key feature of the Afghan conflicts was the hesitation among Mujahideen leaders to utilise foreign fighters in conflict. While already outlined in Chapter 5, it is important here to reiterate the minimal exposure to conflict among this generation of fighters.[633] In Chapter 6, I highlighted how this protection resulted in minimal casualties among foreign fighters, thus making them more able to transfer their expertise among new armed groups after the Afghan conflicts. However, it also meant that foreign fighters

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625 Bharti Jain, "Stout Masood Azhar Failed to Complete Terror Training," *The Times of India*, March 15, 2019, https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/stout-masood-azhar-failed-to-complete-terror-training/articleshow/68417550.cms.

626 Zahid Hussain, *Frontline Pakistan: The Struggle with Militant Islam* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2007), 64.

627 Farhan Zahid, "Profile of Jaish-e-Muhammad and Leader Masood Azhar," *Counter Terrorist Trends and Analyses* 11, no. 4 (2021): 1–5, https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/26631531.

628 Yudhijit Bhattacharjee, "The Terrorist Who Got Away," *The New York Times*, March 19, 2020, https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/19/magazine/masood-azhar-jaish.html.

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630 "The Guantánamo Docket."

631 Muzamil Jaleel, "After Kandahar Swap, India Offered Taliban Cash to Get Me: JeM Chief," *The Indian Express* (blog), June 6, 2016, https://web.archive.org/web/20161107173305/http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-news-india/after-kandahar-hijack-indian-airlines-flight-ic-814-india-offered-taliban-cash-to-get-me-jem-chief-maulana-masood-azhar-2836668/.

632 Ashok Bhan, "'Global Terrorist' Masood Azhar of Jaish Has a Long History of Tirades against India," *The Asian Age* (blog), May 7, 2019, https://www.asianage.com/india/all-india/070519/global-terrorist-masood-azhar-of-jaish-has-a-long-history-of-tirades-against-india.html.

633 Anas and Hussein, *To The Mountains*, 141; Ibn Khattab in Al-Suwailem, *Memories of Amir Khattab*, 6; Kohlmann, *Al-Qaida's Jihad in Europe*, 8; Duyvesteyn and Peeters, "Fickle Foreign Fighters?," 6; Mendelsohn, "Foreign Fighters—Recent Trends," 190.

had limited opportunities to test and actualise their training. As most conflict training involves tacit knowledge—knowledge that are learnt through experience and practice or 'learning by doing'[634]—the lack of conflict exposure meant that many of these skills learnt remained untested.[635] This lack of conflict exposure was also inflated by the short stays of many foreign fighters.[636] Many foreign fighters from wealthy Gulf States only visited the Afghan conflicts for a short time, only allowing minimal training and experience to be gained.[637]

As almost all operations were planned and overseen by Afghan soldiers, foreign fighters also had limited opportunities to plan and execute their own operations. As a result, many of the initial operations carried out by veteran foreign fighters failed. For example, in Sudan, the EIJ were infiltrated by Egyptian security forces.[638] In Jordan, Zaraqawi and Maqdisi came to the attention of local authorities after a failed attack against a cinema in 1993 when a recruit ordered to blow up the local cinema for playing pornographic films blew off his own legs.[639] Zarqawi and Maqdisi were arrested separately in early 1994 before being reunited in Suwaqa prison in April 1995.[640] In Lebanon, the Denniyah Group (majmouat al-dennīyah)(MaD) or Takfir wal-Hijra (Excommunication and Emigration), led by Afghan veteran, Abu Aisha (Bassam Kanj) was destroyed in its first encounter with security forces.[641] In 1995, the LIFG

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[634] Richard Reed and Robert Defillippi, "Causal Ambiguity, Barriers to Imitation, and Sustainable Competitive Advantage," *Academy of Management* 15, no. 1 (January 1990): 89, https://www.jstor.org/stable/258107.
[635] See examples in Storr, *The Human Face of War*, 161.
[636] Anas and Hussein, *To The Mountains*, 161.
[637] Hegghammer, *The Caravan*, 267.
[638] Wright, *The Looming Tower*, 215–17; Hani Nasira, "The Role of Egyptian Militants in Developing Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula," *Terrorism Monitor* 9, no. 1 (January 6, 2011), https://jamestown.org/program/the-role-of-egyptian-militants-in-developing-al-qaeda-in-the-arabian-peninsula/.
[639] Weaver, "The Short, Violent Life of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi."
[640] Nibras Kazimi, "A Virulent Ideology in Mutation: Zarqawi Upstages Maqdisi," in *Current Trends in Islamist Ideology*, ed. Hillel Fradkin, Husain Haqqani, and Eric Brown, II vols. (Washington DC: Hudson Institute, 2006).
[641] Saud Al-Mawla, "min al-jihādīyah al-waṭanīyah al-salafīyah īlá al-salafīyah al-jihādīyah [From National Salafi Jihadism to Salafi Jihadism]," *Al Joumhouria*, March 20, 2013, https://www.aljoumhouria.com/ar/news/62313; Mohamed Barakat, "min majmū'at al- ḍīnīyah ilá ṣawārịkh al-qalīlīyah marwaran fatḥ al-islām: al-qā'idah fī lubnān ṣunduq barīd iqlīmī am ḥāl jihadīyah? [From the 'Dhinniyyah Group' to the few missiles, passing by 'Fatah al-Islam': Al-Qaeda in Lebanon, a regional 'mailbox', or a jihadist situation?]," *Alrai-media*, October 6, 2009, https://www.alraimedia.com/article/141415/متفرقات/القاعدة-في-لبنان-صندوق-بريد-إقليمي-أم-حال-جهادية-; Gary C Gambill, "Bin Laden's Network in Lebanon," *Middle East Intelligence Bulletin* 3, no. 9 (September 2001), https://web.archive.org/web/20080522163453/http://www.meib.org/articles/0109_l1.htm; Nivine H. Abbas, "The Islamist Groups in Tripoli: Its Reality, Effects and Connections" (MA Thesis,

was forced to reveal itself after an operation to rescue a member from hospital. [642] Benotman described the operation as 'amateurish and rogue' and 'destroyed everything that we had planned and developed over the years.'[643] In summary, there is a great variability among the conflict expertise developed among members of the Afghan Network. While some foreign fighters may have been able to participate in combat or survived the battle of Jalalabad, many more will have emerged with only basic two week training courses in foreign fighter camps. The following section points to observable skills developed within the Afghan Networks that were transferred throughout its membership and its spillover into other armed groups.

7.2.2 Training Camps

The deficit of prior conflict experience among foreign fighters necessitated the provision of at least basic training before being utilised in combat roles. Recognising this, Abdullah Azzam sought to organise training programs for foreign fighters. Over time, training camps were built exclusively for use by foreign fighters in both Pakistan and Afghanistan, particularly along the border. These training camps, isolated from Afghan fighters, had their own culture and training regimes. Here, I trace this evolution training for foreign fighters in the Afghan conflicts, highlighting the variation in competencies transferred to foreign fighters and the transformation of training camps across time. I demonstrate how foreign fighter training camps offered a range of training options for fighters beginning with two weeks basic training through to longer, more advanced courses. While not every camp provided the same quality, we can map the increasing competencies throughout the conflict.

Tying into the previous chapter, what is rarely noted about training camps is how vulnerable they are to the state. Many foreign fighters travelled to the Afghan conflicts specifically because they were too vulnerable to the security apparatus of their home

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Lebanese American University, 2008); Mshari al-Zaydi, "Nahr al Bared Up in Flames," *Asharq Al-Awsat*, May 23, 2007, https://eng-archive.aawsat.com/mshari-al-zaydi/opinion/nahr-al-bared-up-in-flames; Fida Itani, "Al-Tārīkh al-Maktūm Lil-Jihādīīn Kamā Arawnh [The Hidden History of the Jihadists as They See It]," *Al Akhbar*, September 22, 2007, https://al-akhbar.com/Archive_Local_News/184993.

[642] Tawil, *Brothers in Arms*, 65.

[643] Abedin, "From Mujahid to Activist."

state and faced arrest or death if caught. Training camps locate recruits in a single location, with experienced members acting as trainers. Pooling resources, human and material, in a single location makes training camps vulnerable to detection and destruction. While it is possible that foreign fighters receive training at home rather than overseas, this was not an option for many, or an extremely risky one compared to travelling to Afghanistan. The Afghan conflicts presented the opportunity to train its fighters in relative safety, with the added benefit of the possibility to gain conflict experience. As put by Benotman in reference to Libya in the 1980s: 'it was hard—if not impossible—to train people inside the country to the same standard as those who were trained Afghanistan. In Afghanistan we were fighting against real tanks, warplanes and professional troops.'[644] Algerian Islamists were facing government crackdowns after the victory of the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) in recent election. In Egypt, many Islamists were in prison and unable to operate, let alone launch major attacks against the state. In Indonesia, almost all Darul Islam's (DI) senior leadership was imprisoned after the state had all but destroyed the organisation in 1980s.

7.2.3 The Evolution of Foreign Fighter Camps

As the numbers of foreign fighters increased, Azzam recognised the need to provide training to ensure that foreign fighters were useful but also to prevent them becoming entangled in the politics of the Mujahideen.[645] There are two accounts of the first camps dedicated to foreign fighters. Hamid claims that the first camp was *al-Qais* under Nasrullah Mansur of the Harakat -i-Inqilab I Islami in 1984 near Sadda.[646] *At al-Qais*, Rashid Ahmad, a Pakistani major, organised the hiring, media, and training.[647] Only a few Arab Afghans were present during this training but included future senior AQ figures Abu Hafs al Masri and Abu Ubaydah al-Banshiri.[648] The second account claims that the first camp for foreigners was *Badr Camp*. In 1984, MAK established the Badr camp in the Pabbi region south of Peshawar on land controlled by Sayyaf. The Badr camp was funded by Saleh Kamel, a Saudi businessman, and set up to train

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[644] Abedin.
[645] Anas and Hussein, *To The Mountains*, 146.
[646] Hamid and Farrall, *The Arabs at War in Afghanistan*, 45.
[647] Hamid and Farrall, 45; Tawil, *Brothers in Arms*, 18.
[648] Hamid and Farrall, *The Arabs at War in Afghanistan*, 58.

Afghan fighters of different factions together.[649] According to some foreign fighters that participated in the training, basic training lasted two-months.[650] However, some fighters were sent to the front in Khost after just 15 days of training.[651] Basil Muhammad notes that at this time, the 'Arabs did not have a clear program'[652] and that 'neither this primitive training, nor the humble camp [Badr], were of course enough to prepare the men.'[653] Although this project failed in its initial intentions to unite Afghan fighters, it did allow foreign fighters to train.

The next camp established by MAK was al-Sadda camp in 1986 that acted as a bootcamp for inexperienced foreign fighters.[654] This camp initially consisted of only three tents.[655] The camp was initiated by bin Laden and, in a miscommunication, Azzam began sending recruits before it was fully established.[656] The group then had to borrow equipment, including tents, from Sayyaf. The training numbers were low—15 to 20 recruits by June 1986.[657] The quality of training improved with the arrival of Abu Burhan al-Suri in 1986.[658] Abu Burhan was a member of the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood and former-military officer from Syria.[659] Abu Burhan trained recruits in weapons—including mortars, rocket launchers and BM12—but also in topography to improve their surveillance and military strategy.[660] After basic training, foreign fighters were then sent to combat positions.[661] It was during his time at Sadda that Abu Buhran developed the *Encyclopedia of Jihad*. The encyclopedia was a manual containing a compendium of instructions for using weapons—including diagrams—and tactics.[662] Hamid also reports building a library of training manuals. These

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[649] Hamid and Farrall, 45,81; Hegghammer, *The Caravan*, 207.
[650] Muhammed, *Al-Ansar*, 81.
[651] Muhammed, 101; Anas and Hussein, *To The Mountains*, 160.
[652] Muhammed, *Al-Ansar*, 101.
[653] Muhammed, 111.
[654] Hegghammer, *The Caravan*, 337–38.
[655] Hegghammer, 335.
[656] Hegghammer, 37.
[657] Hegghammer, 336.
[658] Hamid and Farrall, *The Arabs at War in Afghanistan*, 75.
[659] Hamid and Farrall, 84–85; Hegghammer, *The Caravan*, 336.
[660] Hamid and Farrall, *The Arabs at War in Afghanistan*, 85.
[661] Hegghammer, *The Caravan*, 337.
[662] "Encyclopedia of Afghanistan Jihad," accessed August 13, 2019, https://ia800206.us.archive.org/27/items/Encyclopedia_of_Jihad_Arabic/Encyclopedia_of_Jihad_Arabic_text.pdf.

manuals were to be used as a repository of learning and the safeguarding of knowledge being developed within foreign fighter training camps.[663] Whether or not training manuals were an effective means of knowledge transfer, they demonstrated an attempt to formalise and professionalise their training regimes to be able to share this knowledge with the broader jihadi movement.

MAK also established a training in Khost called Khaldan. Here, I draw on the details provided by Abu Zubaydah from his diary. Zubaydah received his basic training at Khaldan after travelling to Afghanistan from India, where he was studying computer science. Here, trainees followed a schedule of dawn prayer, morning sports, breakfast, military lessons, noon prayer, lunch, rest until afternoon prayer, another military lesson or practical lesson, evening prayer followed by dinner.[664] Abu Zubaydah outlines the introductory weapons course at Khaldan. Zubaydah learnt to use: 'the Kalashnikov, Degtyaryov, RPD, Bruno, heavy Girinov, English Riffle GR, Ml7, Doshka, Ml6 machinegun, Dimitrov, RPG launcher, Mortar Gun, 82 mm Gun, and two more guns; BM1 & BM12 of the 12 cylinders.'[665] After the weapons course, Zubdaydah was told he would be sent to the front at Gardez for 'practical applications,' however, he chose to stay at Khaldan Camp to complete an advanced course including explosives.[666] During the explosives course, Zubaydah's day began with morning exercises at 6am featuring 'jogging, fast pace running, mountain climbing and special exercises.'[667] Explosives training took place after the afternoon prayer.[668]

With the development of exclusive foreign fighter training camps, we begin to see the emergence of expertise in organisation and the development training programs. Although still basic, we see in Zubaydah's description, the basic training program beginning to take shape. The integration of religious and combat training would become a key feature of future jihadi training camps. The development and collection of training manuals demonstrate the recording of practice and expertise to be used as

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[663] Hamid and Farrall, *The Arabs at War in Afghanistan*, 59.
[664] "The Secret Diary of Abu Zubaydah," F3-2002-804705–161.
[665] "The Secret Diary of Abu Zubaydah," F3-2002-804705–0111.
[666] "The Secret Diary of Abu Zubaydah," F3-2002-804705–127; F3-2002-804705–0111.
[667] "The Secret Diary of Abu Zubaydah," F3-2002-804705–0106.
[668] "The Secret Diary of Abu Zubaydah," F3-2002-804705–0106.

resources within the network. The next stage of the training program was the expansion of new camps and advanced training.

As time went on, some foreign fighters decided that they could improve upon the MAK camps. In 1986, bin Laden split from Azzam and the MAK and established his own training camps, including al-Masadah camp in Jaji. Azzam and bin Laden had an agreement that new recruits would receive their basic training in Sadda camp and advanced training in al-Masadah. Bin Laden persisted with establishing the camp despite the concerns of Azzam and other senior Mujahideen figures about how exposed the camps position was.[669] Al-Masadah was viewed by many as providing superior training. In his memoir, Faraj, an Egyptian foreign fighter, recalled:

> Normally, the new recruits went to camp Sadda run by the Services Bureau, but I preferred to go to a new camp that was advertised at this time for those who intend to spend a year or more in jihad. and training there will naturally be stronger and better than the training at Sadda. But this centre used … candidates to join Al Qaeda and the organisation advertised that it was going to be the core of the Islamic army organised to fight in any place from the land of God there is a struggle. I didn't care to join Al Qaeda. Rather, I wanted to train in good training.[670]

Even after the departure of the Soviets, new camps were being established to train foreign fighters. By 1991, AQ established Jihad Wal Camp near Khost.[671] The camp was in Hekmatyar's territory and AQ rented the area from him.[672] There are accounts that Jihad Wal was established in 1989 but was not fully functioning until 1992. Jihad Wal was the administrative heart of AQ and contained three separate camps: Jihad Wal, al-Faruq, and Abu Bakr al-Sadiq.[673] Abu Bakr al-Sadiq camp provided short

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[669] Hamid and Farrall, *The Arabs at War in Afghanistan*, 99.
[670] al-Qandahari, *Dhikrayat 'arabi Afghani [Memories of an Arab Afghan]*.
[671] Aaron Y Zelin, *Your Sons Are at Our Service: Tunisia's Missionaries of Jihad* (New York Chichester, West Sussex: Columbia University Press, 2020), 61, https://doi.org/10.7312/pear17184; Anne Stenersen, *Al-Qaida in Afghanistan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 26, https://doi.org/10.1017/9781139871501.
[672] Stenersen, *Al-Qaida in Afghanistan*, 35.
[673] Stenersen, 27.

training courses for those foreign fighters that came during their school or summer holidays.[674] These inexperienced foreigners were kept separate.[675] The basic training at Jihad Wal lasted for eight weeks. The first four weeks were dedicated to introductory skills including weapons theory, small arms, introduction to explosives, map reading and first aid. Weeks five and six were dedicated to infantry tactics. The final two weeks, known as Jabal [Mountain], taught fighters how to use heavy artillery including mortars, rockets, and anti-aircraft.[676] The heavy weapons training took place in Hekmatyar's camp.[677]

Bin Laden was not the only foreign fighter to open their own training camp. Nationalist groups also established their own camps. Belhaj noted: 'We [Libyans] did our basic training within a month, arms training, we had done national service, so it wasn't difficult.'[678] Libyan foreign fighters established their own training camps near Nanghar close to the Pakistan border with the main base at the Salman al-Farisi field near Ghinaw.[679] If a Libyan recruit proved themselves during basic training, they were transferred to these more advanced camps. Noman Benotman describes the camps as 'Very basic! Our soul objective was to train guerrillas. Life was very hard in these camps, especially since we were surrounded by tribal people.'[680] As was the case for many of the nationalist groups, despite their contribution to the Afghan conflicts, Libyans remained dedicated to a nationalist cause: to overthrow Gaddafi.[681]

Darul Islam also established their own camp in conjunction with Sayyaf. The Afghanistan Mujahideen Military Academy (AMMA) was set up to train Afghan children from Khaldan but expanded to also train Indonesians attached to DI. [682]

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[674] Stenersen, 27.
[675] Kohlmann, *Al-Qaida's Jihad in Europe*, 8.
[676] Stenersen, *Al-Qaida in Afghanistan*, 28.
[677] Stenersen, 35.
[678] Hussein, "Abdul Hakim Belhaj."
[679] Pablo Franco, "Radical Islamism in Libya. The Case of the Lybian Islamic Fighters Group." (Centro Studi Strategici Carlo de Cristoforis, 2011), https://www.academia.edu/14747220/Radical_Islamism_in_Libya_Pablo_Franco.
[680] Abedin, "From Mujahid to Activist."
[681] Abedin.
[682] Zahara Tiba and Arie Firdaus, "Interview: Former JI Operative Still 'A Strong Defender of Islam,'" *Benar News*, April 21, 2015, https://www.benarnews.org/english/news/indonesian/nasir-abas-04212015190223.html; Abas, *Inside Jamaah Islamiyah*, 56.

Initially, all instructors were ex-Army Afghan Commanders. Students were separated by nationality to avoid language issues with Indonesian recruits taught in English. The AMMA had six faculties: infantry, engineering, artillery, logistics and cavalry.[683] Islamic studies were provided by Arabs from the nearby Khaldan camp.[684] The AMMA provided Darul Islam recruits with three years of training with limited battlefield exposure during the holidays and after they had completed their training. Students usually joined the rear of Sayyaf's forces—Sayyaf held the view that Indonesians should not fight on the frontline in Afghanistan but should return to Indonesia to fight the government there.[685] After the second batch of DI recruits had been trained, there were enough Indonesians that could act as instructors for Indonesian recruits and they took over the training.[686] One of the DI members that took over the role of trainer was Nasir Abas from Malaysia. Abas was a member of the fifth batch of DI recruits, beginning his training in 1987.[687] Abas was in the artillery faculty and studied map reading, tactics, weapons training, and field engineering (including explosives).[688] After graduating, Nasir acted as an instructor at AMMA for a further three years.[689] During this time, Nasir also claims to have trained Kashmiri's at an Egyptian camp in Khost and run a two week training program for Bangladeshis.[690]

Throughout the Afghan conflict, foreign fighters were able to build their expertise by developing a practice of conflict skills. The expansion of training camps did not lead to radically different forms of training—camps were typified by similar training schedules merged with religious political education—but allowed a greater range of actors to hone their skills as training providers. These camps provided models for training that were exported to other armed groups, either developed directly by veteran foreign fighters who were thought to carry the necessary expertise.

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683 Abas, *Inside Jamaah Islamiyah*, 57.
684 Abas, 59.
685 Abas, 65.
686 Abas, 57.
687 Tiba and Firdaus, "Interview"; Abas, *Inside Jamaah Islamiyah*, 46, 57.
688 Abas, *Inside Jamaah Islamiyah*, 58.
689 Abas, 68.
690 Abas, 69.

7.2.4 Replication of Training Model

The expertise developed in the Afghan conflicts for training was replicated in other armed groups. Veteran foreign fighters from the Afghan conflicts went on to establish training camps that mirrored those—or improved upon—their experiences in Afghanistan. I outline camps established by veteran foreign fighters that improved or localised their training camps based on their experiences in Afghanistan. The replication of training camp demonstrates a process of knowledge sharing throughout the Afghan Network. This real expertise allowed other armed groups to build upon the successful learning and innovation processes achieved in the Afghan conflicts rather than undergoing the trial and error process to build their own models.

In the case of Darul Islam, later Jemaah Islamiyya, future training camps would be based on the experiences of recruits at the AMMA and its Towrkham. In December 1994, Nasir Abas was instructed to travel to Southern Philippines to train Moro fighters. Left in charge of operations, Nasir decided to open a training camp in the jungle that was called Camp Hudaybiyah that was based on the training he had provided in AMMA.[691] Although Camp Hudaybiyah was established to teach Moro fighters, the camp would exclusively train JI recruits by 1997.[692]

Similar replication of training camps also occurred in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). The first camp established by veteran foreign fighters was in Mehurići, in central BiH.[693] These camps were organised in the style of training camps in Afghanistan with instructors being transferred directly from al-Sadda camp in Afghanistan.[694] Those without prior experience were given two week's basic training.[695] Local fighters were also able to join the KEM. ICTY documents indicate that locals joined the KEM because of 'the stricter regime of discipline, better degree of organisation, superior

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[691] Abas, 160–65.
[692] Abas, 168.
[693] Li, *The Universal Enemy*, 29.
[694] Kohlmann, *Al-Qaida's Jihad in Europe*, 19; Moore, "When Do Ties Bind?," 2019, 201.
[695] Li, *The Universal Enemy*, 44.

equipment and combat morale, its religious dedication and certain material benefits awarded to members of the Detachment.'[696]

Even as recently as 2016, AQAP released a video featuring veteran foreign fighter al-Qosi, that noted the continuing impact of the Afghan conflicts on their training camps. First, Senior AQAP figure, Khalid Bataarfi, states: 'this camp is an extension of the training camps of the Mujahideen in Afghanistan since the 1980s…It is an extension of the Sadda, Furqan, Sadiq, Khalden, and Jihad Wal camps.'[697] Second, al-Qosi reiterates that, like in the early training camps of al-Qaeda in Afghanistan, there was no requirement to join AQAP forces to be trained, claiming: AQAP does not 'impose upon the trainee to work in our organization or to be bound by us.' Instead, the goal of al-Qaeda training camps was 'training any Muslim who wants to be trained in weaponry and skills of war. So, thousands of Mujahideen have benefited from these camps and they have had a clear impact in different jihadi fronts.'[698]

Zarqawi took what he had experienced in Afghanistan and adapted his training camps to the geography of Iraq. With the support of AQ and the Taliban, particularly Saif al-Adl, Zarqawi was first able to establish his own training camp in Herat, Afghanistan, on the border with Iran under the banner Jund al-Sham (Soldiers of the Levant) and sought to improve on the training he received in Afghanistan.[699] First, Zarqawi didn't believe that the Afghanistan experience provided sufficient religious training for recruits.[700] Zarqawi set up religious education at Herat to ensure recruits received adequate political education. [701] Later in Iraq, Zarqawi would transform AQI's camps into mobile camps in the desert that provided additional security.[702] For example, the mobile Rawah camp consisted of only 10-15 men and an instructor at any given

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[696] ICTY, "Judgement: Prosecutor v. Rasim Delić" (United Nations, September 15, 2008), 55, https://www.icty.org/x/cases/delic/tjug/en/080915.pdf; Schwampe, "Muslim Foreign Fighters in Armed Conflicts."
[697] Bill Roggio and Cabel Weiss, "AQAP Details 'special Forces' Training Camp," *FDD's Long War Journal* (blog), July 14, 2016, https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2016/07/aqap-details-special-forces-training-camp.php.
[698] Roggio and Weiss.
[699] Husayn, "Al-Zarqawi: The Second Generation"; Weaver, "The Short, Violent Life of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi."
[700] Husayn, "Al-Zarqawi: The Second Generation."
[701] Husayn.
[702] Tønnessen, "Training on a Battlefield," 559.

time.[703] The day began with prayer, then morning exercise, then a theoretical lecture about weapons, then a lecture on Islamic jurisprudence, and memorizing the Koran. Fighters were trained to use 60mm mortars, RPGs, explosives, and to shoot. In addition to mobile camps, training was also conducted in safe houses and AQI introduced training videos, particularly for bombmaking.[704]

7.3 EXPLOSIVES TRAINING

Although foreign fighter training included many practices familiar to other training models, one tactic that stands out is the widespread exposure to explosives training.[705] The use of explosives against targets such as suicide or car bombings was not a core feature of the Mujahideen's tactics. In fact, many Afghan commanders were resistant to more guerrilla strategies of warfare using explosives. There is also some evidence that it was only among foreign fighters where explosives were utilised.[706] Training with explosives does not require the same space as basic training but does come with heightened risk of exposure. For example, the IRA in Northern Ireland moved away from bombmaking for a number of reasons but one was that if a bomb detonated prematurely, it would identify safe houses and families connected to the IRA.[707] Authorities in the Philippines raided Yousef Ramzi's apartment—responsible for the 1993 bombing on the World Trade Centre and Khalid Sheikh Mohammad's nephew—after a chemical fire from bombmaking material.[708] There is also evidence of the importance of in-person training for explosives. Although online guides and magazines have attempted to transfer bombmaking knowledge, it has been noted that this information often falls short of in-person training.[709] The Afghan conflicts provided a unique opportunity for the development of expertise with explosives. This section highlights some of the different forms of explosives training and how this expertise was transferred throughout the Afghan Network.

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[703] Tønnessen, 551.
[704] Tønnessen, 553.
[705] From skills doc: illyas Kashmiri, Jamal al-Fadl, Belhaj, Zubaydah
[706] Shah, *The Storytellers Daughter: One Woman's Return to Her Lost Homeland*, 133.
[707] Mumford, "How Terrorist Groups 'Learn': Innovation and Adaptation in Political Violence," 24.
[708] "'būjīnkā' al-Ikhwānīyah.. al-Im al-Shar'Iah Liaḥadāth al-"11 Min Sabtambar" [Brotherhood 'Bojinka'.. the Legitimate Mother of the 'September 11' Events]," *24.Ae*, September 11, 2019, https://24.ae/article/525135/"بوجينكا" الإخوانية.. الأم الشرعية لأحداث الـ"11 من سبتمبر".
[709] Mendelsohn, "Foreign Fighters—Recent Trends," 198.

Training camps provided some foreign fighters with advanced training in explosives.[710] The Jihad Wal complex run by AQ offered advanced explosives courses run by Salim al-Masri, Haydar Dosair, and Abu Jaffar. [711] Jaffar's training included TNT and C4, including how to make a timer.[712] There were also more advanced explosives courses run at Jihad Wal to train fighters for specific operations. Both Jaffar and al-Masri transferred to Sudan where they continued to provide explosives training on al-Qaeda farms.[713] Muhammad Fazul, senior AQ operative responsible for the East Africa bombings, received his training in the al-Faruq section of Jihad Wal.[714] In a letter to his brother sometime between 1991 and 1995, Fazul describes the tactics that he learnt during his training:

> Dear Omar, I've done two months in a military base (mujahedin) on heavy weapons (bazookas) for planes and with smaller arms for urban warfare Russian, Israeli arms and another two months on explosives (how to blow up buildings, houses, palaces & etc), then I studied pistols (you fire when you are in a car, learning how you kill a president in full view while he's with his bodyguards. All that stuff I learned. Don't worry.[715]

Another East Africa Bombing operative, Muhammad Odeh, also claims to have received 45-days of explosives training in the Abu Bakr al-Sadiq camp, also within the Jihad Wal complex.[716] The AMMA camp provided training in explosives to Indonesian recruits, but this training was expanded when Towrkham camp opened for Southeast Asian Recruits. As noted by a JI recruit, 'Torkham was far from anywhere, so any kind of experiment was possible. You could blow up a mountain and it wouldn't bother anybody.'[717] Hambali, the mastermind of the 2002 Bali Bombings, trained here,

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[710] Noting that basic training sometimes included an introduction to explosives
[711] Southern District of New York, *S(7) 98 Cr. 1023, S.D.N.Y*, 185–86.
[712] Southern District of New York, 184.
[713] Southern District of New York, 186, 244.
[714] "Fazul Joins Camp to Begin Jihad."
[715] Abdullah Muhammad Fazul, "Letter To Omar Mohamed Fadhul," accessed February 22, 2021, https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/saudi/fazul/letter.html.
[716] Southern District of New York, *S(7) 98 Cr. 1023, S.D.N.Y*, 1641.
[717] International Crisis Group, "Jemaah Islamiyah in South East Asia: Damaged but Still Dangerous," ICG Asia Report (Jakarta/Brussels, August 26, 2003), 6.

as did JI explosives expert Nasir Abas. Members of the LIFG received explosives training in Afghanistan, this included the military commander, and later leader, Abdelhakim Belhaj. In an interview, Belhaj has admitted to having received four months of explosives training during his time in Afghanistan.[718] Belhaj returned to Libya on a forged passport in a plan centred around executing Gaddafi: 'The only person we would kill was Gaddafi, we never thought about taking out his ministers or targeting their families…We tried our best to kill Gaddafi but God's destiny is such.'[719] Approximately 300 other Libyan veteran foreign fighters returned during this period. The main tactic to assassinate Gaddafi, according to Belhaj, was through explosives. One attempt included a suicide bomber that 'blew himself up too early,' another was a 20kg bomb that was planted along Gaddafi's route that was bulldozed prior to Gaddafi's arrival. Belhaj himself claims to have built three bombs that were to be used in Derna, but the operatives were arrested prior to the placement.[720]

Similarly, in neighbouring Algeria, the GIA utilised explosives. The Algerian Afghans are widely credited with forming the FIS and GIA, but the details of each individual are scant. An Algerian judge stated:

> The most abominable crimes have been committed by the returnees from Afghanistan. I've had 40 'Afghans' in front of me, and only two, I think, actually took part in the fighting. But a certain number were trained by our Pakistani friends to handle explosives. Whether that was for operations in Afghanistan or elsewhere is an open question.[721]

In 1995, Afghan veterans were found guilty of the bombing of residences in the Olaya area of Riyadh that was housing American troops. The residences on Thalatheen (Thirty) Street were a part of the National Training Centre. The bomb, detonated from a truck, killed five American soldiers, two Indian soldiers, and injured 60.[722] It was the

[718] Hussein, "Abdul Hakim Belhaj."
[719] Hussein.
[720] Hussein.
[721] John-Thor Dahlburg, "Algerian Veterans the Nucleus for Mayhem," *Los Angeles Times*, August 5, 1996, https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1996-08-05-mn-31535-story.html.
[722] "Car Bomb Destroyed Military Building," *CNN*, November 13, 1995, http://edition.cnn.com/WORLD/9511/saudi_blast/11am/; "dirasat tawthīqīyat litfajīr maqari b'that al-

highest death toll of American soldiers in the Middle East since the 1983 Embassy bombing in Lebanon.[723] A fax sent by IMC states that the attack was in retaliation for the imprisonment of senior Islamic leaders Sheikh Salman al-Awda and Dr Safar al-Hawali.[724] In April 1996, the confessions of four men were broadcast on television before they were beheaded by the state.[725] Al-Sa'id admitted to being trained in explosives in Afghanistan while two others were only trained in weapons.[726] Al-Sa'id is thought to be the leader of the group as he constructed the bomb and was the first of the three to travel to Afghanistan.[727] It is reported that the four were tortured into their confessions.[728]

On August 7, 1998, AQ launched a coordinated bombing against three East African U.S. Embassies. In 1994, when Ali Mohammed identified the embassies as targets, Fazul was still a low-level operative under the supervision of Wadih el-Hage.[729] The attacks against the U.S. Embassy in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, and Nairobi, Kenya, killed 220 people and injured approximately 5,000 others. The attack on the embassy in Kampala, Uganda was foiled.[730]

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tadrīb al-'skarīyah al-amrīkīyah fī madīnat al-rīāḍ [Documentary Study of the Bombing of the Headquarters of the US Military Training Mission in the City of Riyadh]," *Al Haramain*, July 11, 2002, https://web.archive.org/web/20020711225054/http://www.alhramain.com/text/malafat/iwlaya/all.htm.

723 "Four Confess On Saudi TV To Bombing Of U.S. Center," *The New York Times*, April 23, 1996, Late Edition-Final edition, http://global.factiva.com/redir/default.aspx?P=sa&an=nytf000020011014ds4n00l21&cat=a&ep=ASE.

724 CIA, "Counterterrorist Centre Commentary: Riyadh Bombing: Islamic Movement for Change Threatens Further Attacks" (CIA, November 15, 1995), https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/DOC_0001433948.pdf; Douglas Jehl, "Bomb in Saudi Arabia Felt Round the Persian Gulf," *The New York Times*, November 16, 1995, https://www.nytimes.com/1995/11/16/world/bomb-in-saudi-arabia-felt-round-the-persian-gulf.html.

725 "Four Confess On Saudi TV To Bombing Of U.S. Center"; Reuters, "Saudi Arabia Beheads 4 in Riyadh Bombing," *Deseret News*, May 31, 1996, https://www.deseret.com/1996/5/31/19245890/saudi-arabia-beheads-4-in-riyadh-bombing; "dirasat tawthīqīyat litfajīr maqari b'that al-tadrīb al-'skarīyah al-amrīkīyah fī madīnat al-rīāḍ."

726 "dirasat tawthīqīyat litfajīr maqari b'that al-tadrīb al-'skarīyah al-amrīkīyah fī madīnat al-rīāḍ."

727 Hegghammer, "Violent Islamism in Saudi Arabia, 1976-2006," 123; Mishari al-Dhaidi, "ābd al-āzīz al-muqrin: kaīf taḥawal min hāris marmá īlá hāris mawt? [Abd al-Aziz Al-Muqrin: How did he change from a goalkeeper to a deathkeeper?]," *Al Watan Voice*, June 18, 2005, https://www.alwatanvoice.com/arabic/news/2005/06/18/23701.html.

728 "dirasat tawthīqīyat litfajīr maqari b'that al-tadrīb al-'skarīyah al-amrīkīyah fī madīnat al-rīāḍ."

729 Clint Watts, Jacob Shapiro, and Vahid Brown, "Al-Qaida's (Mis)Adventures on the Horn of Africa," The Harmony Project (West Point, N.Y.: Combating Terrorism Centre, 2007), 94, https://ctc.usma.edu/al-qaidas-misadventures-in-the-horn-of-africa/.

730 Watts, Shapiro, and Brown, 48.

Muhammad Jamal reportedly travelled to Afghanistan in the late 1980s and trained with AQ, including in bombmaking.[731] On release from prison in Egypt in 2011, Jamal established several training camps in Eastern Libya. The Muhammad Jamal Network (MJN) is reportedly a major faction in the Sinai[732] and repeatedly linked to the training of suicide bombers.[733]

While explosives did not feature heavily in the tactics of the Afghan Mujahideen, explosives training became a core feature of foreign fighter training from introductions to explosives in basic training to stand-alone explosive courses. This explosives expertise became a dominant feature of armed groups to emerge from the Afghan conflicts. As highlighted above, there was a surge of the use of explosives among the veteran foreign fighters. The dominance of explosives as a tactic demonstrates the continued shared practice of groups within the Afghan Network. Armed groups shared their expertise with others, sending their members as trainers to other armed groups.

7.4 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have sought to unify our understanding of the actual expertise developed by foreign fighters during the Afghan conflicts. Foreign fighter literature has struggled with the dual findings of foreign fighters as both 'experts'[734] and

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[731] Maher Farghali, "Muhammad Jamāl Al-Kāshif.. z'īm Tanẓīm al-Qā'īdah Bimiṣr [Muhammad Jamal Al-Kashef.. the Leader of Al-Qaeda in Egypt]," *Al Bawab News*, June 25, 2016, https://www.albawabhnews.com/1994948; Abdul Hadi Rabie, "Al-Kashif: Ḥāris Bin Lādin Aladhī Ḥāwal Ightiāl Ra'isīn Miṣrīīn [Al-Kashef: Bin Laden's Bodyguard Who Tied to Assasinate Two Egyptian Presidents]," *Al Marjie*, July 8, 2018, http://www.almarjie-paris.com/2329.
[732] "Jihadists See Sinai as 'next Frontier' in War against U.S., Israel," *UPI*, October 30, 2013, https://www.upi.com/Top_News/Special/2013/10/30/Jihadists-see-Sinai-as-next-frontier-in-war-against-US-Israel/44931383144187/; Thomas Joscelyn, "Egyptian Authorities Break Up Embassy Plot," *The Weekly Standard*, May 13, 2013, sec. Analysis, http://www.weeklystandard.com/blogs/egyptian-authorities-break-embassy-plot_722386.html; "Muhammad Jamal Network (MJN)," Global Security, accessed March 22, 2021, https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/para/mjn.htm; Thomas Joscelyn, "Benghazi Suspect Has 'extensive Contacts' with Jihadist Leaders in Libya," *FDD's Long War Journal* (blog), July 3, 2014, https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2014/07/benghazi_suspect_has.php; Farghali, "Muhammad Jamal Al-Kashef."
[733] "Muhammad Jamal Network (MJN)"; Thomas Joscelyn, "Analysis: UN Adds Benghazi Suspect to al Qaeda Sanctions List," *FDD's Long War Journal* (blog), October 24, 2013, https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2013/10/un_adds_benghazi_sus.php.
[734] Bacon and Muibu, "The Domestication of Al-Shabaab," 280–81; Bakke, "Help Wanted?"; Shinn, "Al Shabaab's Foreign Threat to Somalia," 203, 210.

'liabilities'[735] in conflicts. Here, I demonstrate that foreign fighters did acquire conflict expertise within the Afghan conflicts but that, because of their isolation, this expertise was limited. Simultaneously, the mythology that developed around the Afghan Network reified this limited expertise and transformed participants into respected conflict actors. This perspective makes two contributions to our understandings of foreign fighters. First, it allows us to better comprehend how foreign fighters were able to obtain more senior positions in future armed groups—including forming their own armed groups—despite their lack of expertise. Second, I provide evidence of both the development of expertise and how it moved both throughout the network and across new armed groups. As demonstrated by the positions data, the experience of foreign fighters—real or exaggerated—led to the acquisition of more senior positions within subsequent armed groups. I argue that even when foreign fighters objectively had received little more than basic training and minimal combat experience, their expertise carried an internal legitimacy. The practice developed within the Afghan conflict was retained and spread throughout the network of jihadi groups through either a replication of training camps or tactics.

[735] de Roy van Zuijdewijn and Bakker, "Returning Western Foreign Fighters," 2; Levitt, "Foreign Fighters and Their Economic Impact," 19; Mendelsohn, "Foreign Fighters—Recent Trends," 195.

Chapter 8: Socialisation

The Afghan conflicts are identified as the beginning of the first wave of Islamic foreign fighters.[736] Scholars argue that there is something fundamentally different about the doctrines and practices of the Afghan Network that would be replicated widely among future jihadists. This chapter analyses a third process: socialisation. In this chapter, I outline how socialisation processes in the Afghan Network internalised new identities and shaped the shared goals of the network.[737] Instead of being socialised among local Afghans, this generation of foreign fighters were largely socialised among themselves. These foreign fighters, disconnected from their everyday networks and relocated into new, unfamiliar states, were particularly vulnerable to new ideas and practices. Leaders within the foreign fighter community were able to recruit unconnected foreign fighters into their orbit and socialise them into a particular culture of jihad. This chapter explores the formal socialisation processes integrated into training, as well as the informal socialisation practices among foreign fighters. I demonstrate how, regardless of the specific doctrine that foreign fighters were exposed to, the socialisation processes can be typified, attempting to move foreign fighters towards a shared goal of overthrowing extant regimes through jihad and the implementation of some form of Islamic governance.

This chapter draws heavily on three concepts: domain, practice, and doctrine. Practice and domain are both borrowed from the Community of Practice literature.[738] Domain refers to the shared goals and interests of the community. The domain is the 'thing' that the group is about: the characteristic or focus that all members share.[739] Throughout this chapter, domain refers to the ultimate goals of the armed group,

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[736] Coolsaet, "Facing the Fourth Foreign Fighters Wave," 19.
[737] Lave and Wenger, *Situated Learning*.
[738] Mathew Davies, "A Community of Practice: Explaining Change and Continuity in ASEAN's Diplomatic Environment," *The Pacific Review* 29, no. 2 (March 14, 2016): 211–33, https://doi.org/10.1080/09512748.2015.1013495; Emanuel Adler and Vincent Pouliot, "International Practices," *International Theory* 3, no. 01 (March 2011): 1–36, https://doi.org/10.1017/S175297191000031X; Lave and Wenger, *Situated Learning*.
[739] Lave and Wenger, *Situated Learning*.

including (but not limited to) the specific shape of envisioned governance structure. Practice was introduced in the previous chapter as the accepted or typical types of violence or ways of operating in conflict. Practice refers to the 'shared repertoire of resources: experiences, stories, tools, ways of addressing recurring problems.'[740] Practice is the actions taken to achieve the domain to become a reality. Within armed groups, we usually view practice in terms of violence, but there are also social practices as outlined in this chapter that bind members together.[741] Doctrine refers to a belief or set of beliefs held by an individual or group that guide their actions. Doctrine stipulates both the domain of an armed group and the appropriate practices to achieve this domain. As I will demonstrate throughout, although some foreign fighters shared aspects of their domain, many held different doctrines that accounted for their varied practices.

This chapter proceeds in two parts. In part one, I first outline the formal socialisation processes implemented by foreign fighters and demonstrate how this process introduced a range of political and religious justifications for conflict, its specific conduct, and the goals of foreign fighters. Second, I outline the different everyday practices among foreign fighters beyond training and conflict experience that created meaningful relationships and shared identities among the Afghan Network. Finally, I outline the ongoing network effects of these socialisation processes for future trajectories, including the formation of new identities tied to shared participation in the Afghan conflicts and the persistence of the jihadi culture developed during this period. Observing the internalisation of new ideas and norms through socialisation presents challenges for researchers. In part two of this chapter, I trace the impact of socialisation among foreign fighters by observing how returnees interact with existing armed groups in their home countries. While foreign fighter experience should strengthen armed groups by injecting new skills, for many existing armed groups, the return of foreign fighters socialised into new domains, practices and doctrines led to fragmentation.

[740] Wenger, "Communities of Practice: A Brief Introduction," 1–2.
[741] Adler and Pouliot, "International Practices," 4.

8.1 SOCIALISATION IN THE AFGHAN CONFLICTS

Socialisation has long been a focus of military studies and insurgent groups as an organisational control mechanism.[742] Militaries and armed groups alike must ensure their recruits pursue the goals of the group, rather than individual, aims.[743] As defined by Hoover-Green, *combatant socialisation* is: 'the process of inducting new combatants into the norms and rules of a given armed group.' Manekin describes socialisation as having two goals: strip recruits of individual identities and recreating them as a part of the organisation and normalise sanctioned violence.[744] According to March and Olsen, the socialisation process constructs a 'logic of appropriateness.' Recruits are not adhering to group norms out of fear of punishment but because these norms are natural and legitimate.[745] Therefore, socialisation is both a process and outcome.[746]

Socialisation processes usually occurs in competition with existing socialising effects of an individual's context and networks. As outlined by Checkel, individuals do not enter socialisation processes as 'blank slates' but 'situated in a local normative context that will likely shape socialization dynamics.'[747] While foreign fighters arrive with extant norms and rules established in their local normative context, the difference, I propose, lies in foreign fighters' removal from this local context and insertion into a foreign context where they no longer hold these ties. In this chapter, I propose that foreign fighters, because of this separation, are more vulnerable to the socialisation processes. This section outlines the socialisation processes—both formal and informal, violent, and non-violent—that sought to socialise foreign fighters. What is highlighted in this section is that foreign fighters were not socialised into the norms and practices of the Mujahideen but into the doctrine of other pre-existing foreign fighters. I argue

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[742] Checkel, "Socialization and Violence"; Manekin, "The Limits of Socialization and the Underproduction of Military Violence"; Hoover Green, "Armed Group Institutions and Combatant Socialization"; Hoover Green, "The Commander's Dilemma."
[743] Manekin, "The Limits of Socialization and the Underproduction of Military Violence," 609.
[744] Manekin, "The Limits of Socialization and the Underproduction of Military Violence."
[745] James G. March and Johan P. Olsen, "The Logic of Appropriateness," in *The Oxford Handbook of Public Policy*, ed. Edited by Michael Moran, Martin Rein, and and Robert E. Goodin, Oxford Handbooks (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 689–708.
[746] Checkel, "Socialization and Violence," 593; Elisabeth Jean Wood, "The Social Processes of Civil War: The Wartime Transformation of Social Networks," *Annual Review of Political Science* 11, no. 1 (June 2008): 539–61, https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.polisci.8.082103.104832.
[747] Checkel, "Socialization and Violence," 595.

that, despite the variation in the doctrines that foreign fighters socialised in, that foreign fighters emerged with a shared characteristic in their domain: the commitment to the establishment of Islamic governance in domestic and international settings through jihad. I propose that this shared goal was sufficient to hold the network together when disagreements over doctrine emerged.

8.1.1 Religious Education

One mechanism for socialising recruits is incorporating formal education into training. Hoover-Green defines political education as 'formal instruction that explains specific social or political purposes of a particular conflict and connects conflict purposes to specific behavioural norms.'[748] In the Afghan conflicts, political education took a slightly different form as it was rooted in religious education. This section examines the religious education implemented in foreign fighter training camps during the Afghan conflicts. I argue the that the leaders among foreign fighters were also able to develop and instil a sufficiently unified domain among foreign fighters grounded in political interpretations of Islam that would determine the goals and practice within future conflicts. However, the specific doctrine within each faction varied.

Azzam understood that many of the foreign fighters arriving to fight in Afghanistan lacked experience or discipline. According to Azzam's son-in-law Abdullah Anas: 'Sheikh Abdullah realised that these men were naïve as all young men are before the fight. So he set up religious instruction.'[749] Recruits at MAK camps were taught the basics from making ablution to performing prayers. Religious education became a core feature of the training camps among foreign fighters and separate religious courses were also established for foreign fighters to attend.[750] As noted by Anas, '[T]hey could easily be manipulated and shaped if one wanted, for like many young men they were impressionable, they had only recently begun to practise their faith and were galvanised by the events in Afghanistan in the same way many young men were galvanised by the Arab Spring.'[751] Similarly, Anas believed that foreign fighters

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[749] Anas and Hussein, *To The Mountains*, 160.
[750] Southern District of New York, *S(7) 98 Cr. 1023, S.D.N.Y*, 1631.
[751] Anas and Hussein, *To The Mountains*, 156.

needed to be spiritually prepared for war and that it is when one loses connection to their spirituality that they are liable to commit war crimes.[752] In his biography of Azzam, Hegghammer outlines how this focus on religious education formed a core tenant of Azzam's beliefs: 'He believed that religious education of soldiers was crucial to military success, so he reserved a large part of the curriculum in the training camps to religious topics.'[753] This focus on religious education led Mustafa Hamid to claim 'what Azzam created was a mosque, not a training camp.'[754]

Religious training became a common feature within foreign fighter training camps. Religious education took place as a formal part of military training. Military practice would be followed by exercises including reading the Quran and attending lectures held by senior figures. Religious education models established in Afghanistan have been replicated in future conflicts. For example, at AQ's Soba farm in Sudan, lectures were held every Thursday, led by either bin Laden or other senior AQ members and addressed how to carry out jihad.[755] Zarqawi had an acute focus on developing greater religious education among his followers.[756] Zarqawi's Herat camp was often referred to as a 'mini Islamic Society.' [757] In Chechnya, Khattab's camp held lectures on Islam and conflict that were often at odds with the local populations views. One Chechen participant noted the extreme effects of the religious education:

> After the first war we were in Serzhen-Yurt. We thought this was the place where people worshiped God. The first week some Jordanian was lecturing. Gradually I started to feel tension; I saw people's eyes turning bloodshot. I thought this was some kind of hypnosis, they often repeated words – war, blood, murder. Then I told my friend- "something is wrong with this place" and we left.[758]

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[752] Anas and Hussein, 161.
[753] Hegghammer, *The Caravan*, 292.
[754] Hamid and Farrall, *The Arabs at War in Afghanistan*, 84.
[755] Southern District of New York, *S(7) 98 Cr. 1023, S.D.N.Y*, 263.
[756] Husayn, "Al-Zarqawi: The Second Generation."
[757] Husayn.
[758] Ekaterina Sokirianskaia, "Governing Fragmented Societies: State-Building and Political Integration in Chechnya and Ingushetia (1991-2009)" (Central European University, 2009), 216.

Within the training camps, these socialising practices also acted as a vetting mechanism. As noted by Faraj and his training at al-Masadah: ‘It was not the goal of this training to only learn to use weapons and the art of battle, but the goal was to screen trainees and expose them to harsh conditions and observe their obedience, discipline and good manners.’[759] In another instance, Faraj outlines the experience of a ‘brother’ from the city of Medina, Saudi Arabia in an AQ camp. The recruit wore a turban and carried a long rosary. The Emir of the camp asked him to leave with someone commenting ‘Even the city of the messenger [Medina] is full of heresy and mysticism!'[760] Within training camps, recruits were screened for shared doctrine, but also for dedication to the specific practices of violence. It should be noted that many recruits did not agree with the militant Salafist doctrine at AQ camps and most fighters that received training with AQ camps chose not to join the group.

What is interesting about the religious education within the Afghan conflicts was the decision to socialise foreign fighters in a way that would make them closer to Afghan locals.[761] While Azzam and the MAK were determined to make foreign fighters more tolerant and understand the differences in Islamic practices in Afghanistan, it was not in an attempt to make foreign fighters adopt these practices.[762] Instead, foreign fighters were socialised into different Islamic instruction often at odds with those both within Afghanistan and, in many instances, the dominant Islamic views in the foreign fighters’ country of origin.

During the Afghan conflicts, the Takfiri school, also referred to as the Jalalabad school, gained greater prominence among foreign fighters. Takfiri refers to the practice of declaring someone as apostate and ‘therefore legitimizing the killing of said individual or group.’[763] Although the Takfiri school was not new, it gained traction and shifted the goals and practices of some of the new armed groups that emerged from the Afghan conflicts. After the defeat at Jalalabad in 1989, AQ lost its standing among foreign fighters within the Afghan conflict. This defeat, taken with the assassination of Azzam,

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[759] al-Qandahari, *Dhikrayat ʻarabi Afghani [Memories of an Arab Afghan]*.
[760] al-Qandahari.
[761] Hegghammer, *The Caravan*, 387.
[762] Hegghammer, 391.
[763] Zelin, *Your Sons Are at Our Service*, 45.

provided the space for a new school of thought to gained greater traction.[764] Foreign fighters became disillusioned with the leadership of bin Laden and Azzam, preferring instead to establish their own groups guided by takfiri ideology.[765] The first group to adopt—and test—the takfiri approach was the GIA in Algeria who used it to declare anyone associated with the regime—including women and children, as well as members of other armed opposition groups—as takfir. Zelin also describes how the Jalalabad School had a long-running influence among Tunisians.[766] Despite the divergence between other Salafist interpretations and the Takfiri school, there was still ongoing coordination between members of the network. For example, in Al Qaeda in Iraq, Zarqawi would use takfiri ideology to justify the widespread violence against civilians—including Muslims—in Iraq that would be continued by ISIS. The use of violence against other Muslims was condemned internally by AQ leadership but was not sufficient for them to withdraw support or revoke AQI's associate status.[767]

Despite the variation in the Islamic doctrine driving religious education, there was a common characteristic in the domain of many of the groups: the commitment to the establishment of Islamic governance in domestic and international settings through jihad. While Azzam was focused on this establishment of an Islamic government within Afghanistan, other armed groups sought to install Islamic governance elsewhere. For example, and as outlined below, Jemaah Islamiyya sought to establish an Islamic Caliphate not only in Indonesia but throughout Southeast Asia.[768] The main aim of ASG was to establish an independent Islamic state in Southern Philippines in the Moro regions.[769] The KMM sought to overthrow the Malaysian government and establish an Islamic state throughout Southeast Asia.[770] Zarqawi and Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi established a group in Jordan to Zarqawi and Maqdisi known as Bay'at al-

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[764] Hamid and Farrall, *The Arabs at War in Afghanistan*, 164.
[765] Hamid and Farrall, 145–77.
[766] Zelin, *Your Sons Are at Our Service*.
[767] Office of the Directorate of National Intelligence, "DNI Releases Letter from Al-Zawahiri to al-Zarqawi."
[768] Elena Pavlova, "From a Counter-Society to a Counter-State Movement: Jemaah Islamiyah According to PUPJI," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 30, no. 9 (August 21, 2007): 795, https://doi.org/10.1080/10576100701501984.
[769] "Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG)," Counter Extremism Project, accessed January 14, 2021, https://www.counterextremism.com/threat/abu-sayyaf-group-asg.
[770] Aslam, "A Critical Study of Kumpulan Militant Malaysia," 102.

Imam (Allegiance to the Imam), also known as al-Tawhid (Monotheism in Islam) that targeted the local Jordanian monarchy.[771] Bassam Kanj (Abu Aisha) formed an armed group in Northern Lebanon known as both the Denniyah Group (majmouat al denniyah) or Takfir wal-Hijra (Excommunication and Emigration) to challenge the Lebanese state.[772] While these groups did not always share a unified doctrine or practice, groups shared this characteristic of their domain.

8.2 INFORMAL SOCIALISING PRACTICES

The second socialisation process outlined in this chapter is the adoption and ritualisation of specific practices that both tied foreign fighters together but also acted as a signalling mechanism. These types of socialisations are harder to identify as they happen at the micro, interpersonal level. Here, I identify different examples of everyday socialisation as recorded by foreign fighters themselves including the interpretation of dreams, discussions and commitment to martyrdom, and weeping. These practices are in addition to the practice of marriage between foreign fighter families highlighted in the network formation in Chapter 6. While not systematic, these practices represent distinct ideas being practiced by foreign fighters. Foreign fighters are acting out new identities and beliefs among the reinforcing influence around them.

Foreign fighters have often recorded the practice of interpreting dreams: 'brothers' shared stories of their dreams and attempt to interpret their meanings. Interpreting dreams play an important part in many Islamist conflicts. When fighters are martyred, their death notice might state that the fighter had dreamed of their death in the previous week. Anas recalls discussing dreams with other brothers in what he describes as a 'bubble':

> One brother would walk in and announce that he had seen Abu Hamza in a luscious garden in a dream during the night. And we would all huddle around him to find out more. It would infuse us with zeal, we would sit in that guest-house praying that God gave us the same fate. We would console each other

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[771] Husayn, "Al-Zarqawi: The Second Generation."
[772] Gambill, "Bin Laden's Network in Lebanon"; Abbas, "The Islamist Groups in Tripoli," 36.

> that next time it would be us who God would take to Himself and place us in the hearts of green birds.[773]

Martyrdom was a shared aim among many foreign fighters. Anas states, 'my going [to Afghanistan] however, had nothing to do with expressing my rage or rebellion, rather it was in search for martyrdom.'[774] In an interview, Benotman admits 'my first aim at the time, honestly, was just to be a martyr, you know? Fighting the enemy for Islam. That was the main aim.'[775] Zubaydah notes in his diary 'But, I cannot wait; I want to be martyr for Allah's cause quickly.'[776] In a 2006 interview, Belmokhtar claimed 'I was passionate about the Afghan jihad and I had no other goal but to make hijra [emigration] and wage jihad with the goal of obtaining martyrdom in the path of God in Afghanistan.'[777] The discussions about, and celebration of, martyrdom can be seen as a useful norm for two reasons. First, foreign fighters were often observed as being 'fearless of death.' Consequently, foreign fighters were willing participants in violence. As outlined by Benotman, '(y)ou see, many of the Arab fighters were not professionals and had no idea that you had to build up a siege before going for the kill. They just wanted to move in quickly and seize cities and other targets.'[778] Second, the concept of martyrdom presented an alternative narrative to battlefield losses. Martyrdom could be used to frame setbacks as assurance that foreign fighters had not died in vain.

Another Islamic practice observed among foreign fighters was 'weeping.' Hegghammer provides the first, in-depth exploration into the Islamic practice of weeping among jihadis. Hegghammer finds that Islamic tradition supports the practice of weeping for spiritual reasons with many references in support of weeping or crying featured in the Quran.[779] Within the Afghan conflicts, Hegghammer finds instances of weeping in six contexts: prayer, sermons, Anāshīd-listening (religious *acapella*

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[773] Anas and Hussein, *To The Mountains*, 163.
[774] Anas and Hussein, 9.
[775] *Stackeback, Noman Benotman.*
[776] "The Secret Diary of Abu Zubaydah," F3-2002-804705–147.
[777] Weiss, "Translation of a May 2006 Interview of Mokhtar Belmokhtar."
[778] Abedin, "From Mujahid to Activist."
[779] Thomas Hegghammer, "Weeping in Modern Jihadi Groups," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 31, no. 3 (September 1, 2020): 364, https://doi.org/10.1093/jis/etaa016.

hymns), pre- and post-combat, suffering of the Umma, and the loss of comrades.[780] Basil Muhammad, foreign fighter and historian, recalls Azzam giving a sermon in Badr camp while 'crying heavily.'[781] A dedicated but overweight fighter, Tamim al-Adnani, wept after bin Laden prevented him from participating in the battle of Jaji.[782] Others cried because they were not martyred in battle.[783] Hegghammer finds that most references to jihadi weeping are connected to spiritual experiences and conform to the existing Islamic norms.[784] Therefore, jihadi weeping has an important social function:

> Jihadi crying has an important social dimension in that it is usually performed in groups and can raise the in-group status of those who do it more. Jihadis also take pride in their weeping and display it to outside audiences through propaganda products. The social aspect of jihadi weeping suggests that it is, among other things, a way to signal piety within the group and to the outside world.[785]

While these observations have limitations, they point to an adoption and performance of specific practices that had a socialisation function. These practices were intended to convey information about piety and carry social meaning in connection to Islamic traditions. These practices may not have been internalised—foreign fighters may have only participated in the practices to fall in line with the behaviour of those around them[786]—but they served as a signalling tool and reinforcement of shared ideas within the network. Regardless of the level of internalisation among individuals, the performance of practice created a culture of jihad with an associated set of norms and behaviours that supported new identities to take hold. These new practices and identities would remain effectual in future armed groups.

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[780] Hegghammer, "Weeping in Modern Jihadi Groups."
[781] Muhammed, *Al-Ansar*, 101.
[782] Muhammed, 314.
[783] Hegghammer, "Weeping in Modern Jihadi Groups," 376.
[784] Hegghammer, 380.
[785] Hegghammer, 384.
[786] Hoover Green describes this as Type 1 socialisation. Hoover Green, "Armed Group Institutions and Combatant Socialization."

8.3 FRAGMENTATION OF FOREIGN FIGHTER RETURNEES

The difficulty with studying socialisation processes is measuring their impact. Checkel introduces three levels of internalisation ranging from performative to a deep change in behaviours and norms.[787] To understand if socialisation processes were effective and their impact on the Afghan Network, I examine a socialisation outcome not yet studied in socialisation literature: fragmentation. How can group fragmentation be utilised to observe the effects of socialisation? In Chapter 6, I demonstrated how nascent armed groups and opposition movements were given the opportunity to move through the early stages of group formation without detection or destruction by the state. Within this list (Table 6), I highlight new groups that fragmented from existing opposition groups or movements. This section demonstrates how foreign fighters, through the socialisation processes outline in the previous sections, internalised new norms and behaviours during the Afghan conflicts that were incompatible with existing armed groups. The consequences of these new practices, doctrines and domains can be connected to the fragmentation of returnees from existing armed groups in their home countries.

This section traces the experiences of three opposition groups that existed prior to the Afghan conflicts whose members experienced religious education that differed from the dominant doctrines and domains of existing armed groups: Darul Islam (DI), Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), and Moro National Liberation Front (MILF). In each of the three cases, I demonstrate how foreign fighters were socialised into new networks and divergent ideas about ultimate goals and accepted practices of conflict. Tracing this population of foreign fighters allows us to compare the effect of socialisation by contrasting the doctrines and practices of foreign fighters against those of the existing opposition group.

8.3.1 Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) and Groupe Islamique Arme (GIA), Algeria

Prior to the Afghan conflicts, the major opposition movement in Algeria was the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS). The FIS was primarily a political group that sought to

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[787] Checkel, "Socialization and Violence," 597; Jeffrey T. Checkel, "International Institutions and Socialization in Europe: Introduction and Framework," *International Organization* 59, no. 4 (2005): 801–26.

participate in the national elections. The FIS was allowed to run in the December 1991 election[788] and won an overwhelming majority of votes in the first round. However, the military, fearing FIS victory and resulting unrest, cancelled the next scheduled elections, and installed a new government. At the same time, the military detained 40,000 Islamists and FIS members in detention centres in the Algerian desert.[789] The military coup coincided with the return of many veteran foreign fighters from the Afghan conflicts who had adopted a takfiri doctrine inspired by Egyptian jihadists. In 1992, the new Armed Islamic Group (GIA) led by Afghan veterans splintered form the FIS.

Why did the GIA break away from the established and well supported FIS? The answers can be traced to the processes occurring in Afghanistan. Algerians in the Afghan conflicts were largely separated into two groups based on ideology: those who supported the FIS and those supporting violent opposition within Algeria. The FIS was aligned with the Muslim Brotherhood in terms of ideology—an ideology that EIJ leader, al-Zawahiri, rallied against.[790] Algerian fighters were initially staying at *Bayt al-Muhajirin,* a MAK guesthouse. Two Algerians, Qari Saïd, who had trained with al-Qaeda at al-Faruq, and Abou Leith, disowned the FIS for its position on participating in democratic processes—claiming participation in elections was against Islamic Law—and were expelled from the guesthouse.[791] Qari Saïd and other young Algerians then established their own camp and hostel, *Bayt al-Mujahideen,* which functioned as an extension of the EIJ and AQ's al-Faruq camp.[792] This separation into two camps led to Algerian foreign fighters being socialised into two distinct doctrines of Islam and develop distinct domains guiding their opposition to the Algerian state.

Most of the information on the socialisation processes among Algerian foreign fighters comes from Abdullah Anas. As previously noted, Abdullah Anas was a senior figure of the MAK and son-in-law of Abdullah Azzam. According to Anas, Algerian foreign

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[788] Mendelsohn, "The Battle for Algeria," 785–86.
[789] Tawil, *Brothers in Arms*, 67-68 n1; Alexander Thurston, "Algeria's GIA: The First Major Armed Group to Fully Subordinate Jihadism to Salafism," *Islamic Law and Society* 24, no. 4 (2017): 421; Mendelsohn, "The Battle for Algeria," 786.
[790] Tawil, *Brothers in Arms*, 45.
[791] Benotman in Tawil, 74.
[792] Tawil, 46.

fighters were socialised into the takfiri doctrine brought by the Egyptians, particularly the EIJ. Young, unaffiliated Algerians were at particular risk of 'falling prey to the Salafists.'[793] More radical and takfiri factions had always existed within the FIS: '[e]ven during the heyday of the FIS there was always an element…that accused the FIS of apostasy and heresy by taking part in the democratic system' and that '[d]uring the years of peace, those voices who expressed militant ideas had no space in the political discourse.'[794] Men would spend 24-hours a day within these environments, being provided food, training, and takfiri reading material. Anas observed that 'within a month or two, they become like robots you can use to do whatever you want.'[795] It was this group of men that would go on to form the GIA.

The return of foreign fighters coincided with the mass imprisonment of FIS leaders and members. Consequently, the GIA mushroomed.[796] The GIA was able to unite three core factions within the Algerian opposition movement: returnee foreign fighters, veterans of the Bouyali's movement,[797] and home-grown Salafists.[798] While FIS members also formed a militant wing, the Islamic Salvation Army (AIS), there was a clear divide in the accepted forms of violence—or practice—between the two groups. While the GIA had the same goal as the FIS and AIS—the overthrow of the military regime and the establishment of an Islamic state the GIA committed a widespread campaign of violence against both the state and civilians that it considered takfir. By contrast, the AIS only attacked regime targets.[799]

For many Algerian foreign fighters, their experience in the Afghan conflicts resulted in what was a fringe doctrine within the FIS becoming the core doctrine among the GIA. This new doctrine dictated the goals of conflict, and the accepted means of violence was embedded in the new networks developed. When this segment of foreign

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[793] Tawil, 45.
[794] Anas and Hussein, *To The Mountains*, 219.
[795] Tawil, *Brothers in Arms*, 46.
[796] Tawil, 83.
[797] Mustapha Bouyali was the leader of the Armed Islamic Movement (MIA) that led an armed insurgency in 1987 that was defeated by the state. Bouyali was killed in the violence. Mendelsohn, "The Battle for Algeria," 786.
[798] Thurston, "Algeria's GIA: The First Major Armed Group to Fully Subordinate Jihadism to Salafism," 421; Tawil, *Brothers in Arms*, 77.
[799] Mendelsohn, "The Battle for Algeria," 791.

fighters began returning to Algeria, they rallied against the democratic participation of the FIS and took advantage of the incarceration of FIS supporters to become the dominant opposition force.

8.3.2 Jemaah Islamiyya (JI), Indonesia and Southeast Asia

Indonesia has a long history of opposition movements. This section focuses specifically on Darul Islam (DI) and its fragmentation into Jemaah Islamiyya (JI). DI formed as an opposition movement and insurgent group—known as the Indonesian Islamic Army (Tentara Islam Indonesisa)—in 1948 West Java in opposition to the Dutch and Japanese occupations.[800] The Indonesian government largely destroyed DI in the mid-1950s when the national army retook West Java, with an amnesty signed by senior leaders in 1962.[801] DI experienced a resurgence in the 1970s before it experienced another government crackdown in the lead up to the 1977 general election.[802] JI splintered from DI in 1992 or 1993 in Afghanistan, expanding its reach beyond Indonesia throughout Southeast Asia.

The emergence of JI is connected to two senior DI figures: Abdullah Sungkar and Abu Bakar Ba‘syir (also commonly spelt Bashir). Sungkar and Ba‘syir were arrested along with most of DI leadership in 1978 and received nine-year prison sentences. After being released in 1985, both men fled to Malaysia to re-establish the group beyond the reach of the Indonesian state.[803] From here, Sungkar and Ba‘syir began dispatching Indonesian and Malaysian recruits to the Soviet-Afghan War for training in order to rebuild and strengthen the group.[804] Many of the DI recruits had no previous conflict experience and few connections to Darul Islam prior to its demise in Indonesia. As stated by Nasir Abas: ‘To be truthful I am not a person who had much capability to help the mujahideen of Afghanistan. My age at the time had just reached eighteen years old, but hopefully with my presence there I would strengthen the ranks of mujahedeen

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[800] Temby, "Imagining an Islamic State in Indonesia," 3; Karnavian, *Explaining Islamist Insurgencies*, 40.
[801] Temby, "Imagining an Islamic State in Indonesia," 6.
[802] Gordon and Lindo, "Jemaah Islamiyah," 2; Temby, "Imagining an Islamic State in Indonesia," 13.
[803] Gordon and Lindo, "Jemaah Islamiyah," 2.
[804] Gordon and Lindo, 1.

in Afghanistan.'[805] On arrival in Karachi, Pakistan, DI recruits were escorted by an Indonesian who took them to a guesthouse run by Sayyaf before being transferred to the Afghanistan Mujahideen Military Academy (AMMA).[806]

The AMMA camp was in Sadda in Pakistan near the border with Afghanistan.[807] The camp was originally set up to train Afghan children from Khaldan but expanded to also train Indonesians attached to DI.[808] Initially, all instructors were ex-Army Afghan Commanders. Students were separated by nationality to avoid language issues with Indonesian recruits taught in English. After the second batch of Indonesian recruits had been trained, Indonesian graduates took over training recruits.[809] The AMMA had six faculties: infantry, engineering, artillery, logistics and cavalry.[810] Unlike some camps for foreign fighters that only provided basic training before sending fighters to combat, Indonesians trained for three-years. Students visited combat positions during school holidays, usually at the rear of Sayyaf's forces. Sayyaf held the view that Indonesians should not fight on the frontline in Afghanistan but should return to Indonesia to fight the government there.[811]

In 1993, the newly formed JI moved their training camp from Sadda to Towrkham just across the Afghan border. Like the camp in Sadda, the Towrkham camp was located in an area controlled by Sayyaf.[812] It was also here in Towrkham that JI socialised and built relationships with Filipino fighters that would later facilitate the establishment of JI training camps in Philippines.[813] Due to the geographic isolation of Towkrham and it being located in Afghanistan, JI recruits were able to undertake a wider range of

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[805] Abas, *Inside Jamaah Islamiyah*, 40.
[806] Abas, 45.
[807] Tiba and Firdaus, "Interview"; Abas, *Inside Jamaah Islamiyah*, 46, 57.
[808] Abas, *Inside Jamaah Islamiyah*, 56.
[809] Abas, 57.
[810] Abas, 57.
[811] Abas, 65.
[812] Temby, "Imagining an Islamic State in Indonesia," 32; Kenneth J. Conboy, *The Second Front: Inside Asia's Most Dangerous Terrorist Network* (Equinox Publishing, 2006), 57.
[813] International Crisis Group, "Jemaah Islamiyah in South East Asia: Damaged but Still Dangerous," 6.

training including advanced explosives training.[814] A JI member recalled: 'We got permission from Sheikh Sayyaf to turn the land into a military training centre. We were freer here, not just because we could supervise ourselves but we could undertake any kind of training. Torkham was far from anywhere, so any kind of experiment was possible. You could blow up a mountain and it wouldn't bother anybody.'[815] This new camp instilled an independence among JI recruits, allowing them to be socialised into deeper relationships among themselves and Filipino fighters.

The shift away from DI towards a Salafism resulted from Sungkar's engagement with the Salafi-Jihad movement in Afghanistan that became a core tenant of JI ideology.[816] Rather than being provided religious education from members of DI, Islamic instruction was provided by Arab fighters from the nearby Khaldan camp.[817] Between 1992 and 1993, Sungkar and Ba'asyir separated from DI, accusing its leader, Ajengan Musduki, of having 'Sufi' tendencies.[818] JI outlined its new domain and doctrine in the General Guide for the Struggle of Al-Jama'ah Al-Islamiyah (Pedoman Umum Perjuangan Al-Jama'ah Al-Islamiyah, PUPJI).[819] Pavlova outlines that the manual 'is geared toward providing religious, strategic, and tactical directions to the top leaders.'[820] The manual made a conscious effort to distance JI from DI. The aims of JI grew from the desire of DI to establish an Islamic State of Indonesia (Negara Islam Indonesia, NII) to a transnational Islamic caliphate through South-East Asia. Whereas DI had emerged from an anti-colonial movement framed by the possibility of an Islamic state, JI was grounded in a purist Salafi-Jihadist principles acquired by senior figures during the Afghan conflicts.[821] The religious education provided to Sungkar, and his recruits was distinct in domain, practice and doctrine to those held by DI. The

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814 Susan Sim, "Leveraging Terrorist Dropouts to Counter Violent Extremism in Southeast Asia" (Qatar International Academy for Security Studies, January 2013), 35, https://qiass.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/QIASS-Leveraging-Terrorist-Dropouts_Susan-Sim-final-101514.pdf.
815 International Crisis Group, "Jemaah Islamiyah in South East Asia: Damaged but Still Dangerous," 6.
816 Karnavian, *Explaining Islamist Insurgencies*, 46; Pavlova, "From a Counter-Society to a Counter-State Movement," 781.
817 Abas, *Inside Jamaah Islamiyah*, 59.
818 Gordon and Lindo, "Jemaah Islamiyah," 3; Pavlova, "From a Counter-Society to a Counter-State Movement," 795.
819 Pavlova, "From a Counter-Society to a Counter-State Movement."
820 Pavlova, 780.
821 Pavlova, 795.

experience of foreign fighting also connected Indonesian recruits to a network of likeminded actors that they were able to leverage to expand their reach into Southeast Asia.

8.3.3 Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), the Philippines

Opposition movements in the Bangsamoro region of the Philippines are also rooted in colonial resistance. The colonial occupation of the Spanish and then Americans displaced Muslims in Bangsamoro from the centre to the periphery.[822] Violent clashes between Muslims and Christian settlers began as early as 1940 and the push for Muslim self-determination continues today. This section begins in the 1970s with the establishment of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) as I examine the eventual splintering of the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) in the early 1990s.

The MNLF was established as an Islamic separatist group in 1972 based in Bangsamoro. The MNLF was supported by Libya who provided both weapons and political weight within the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). With Libya's assistance, the MNLF and Philippines government signed the Tripoli Agreement in 1976 which would have established an autonomous region, but the agreement was rejected in a 1977 referendum. Some members of the MNLF were disgruntled with the decision to negotiate with the government, forming their own splinter group, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). MNLF would sign a ceasefire with the government in 1986 after defeats but peace talks failed. In the early 1990s, disgruntled MNLF members and Afghan veterans would again splinter and form ASG.

The leader of ASG and orchestrator of the splinter was Abdurajak Abubakar Janjalani. Although there are limited details about Janjalani's time in the Afghan conflicts, reports note that he travelled to the conflict in 1988 or 1989 alongside approximately 300 to 500 Moro fundamentalists.[823] Janjalani is supposed to have trained at a camp run by Sayyaf in either Khost or Sadda. Due to the ongoing relationship between JI

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[822] Georgi Engelbrecht, "The Logics of Insurgency in the Bangsamoro," *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 32, no. 6 (August 18, 2021): 891–92, https://doi.org/10.1080/09592318.2021.1940424.
[823] Abuza, "Balik Terrorism."

and ASG, it is possible that Janjalani was associated with the JI training camp in Sadda, at the Afghanistan Mujahideen Military Academy (AMMA) or the training camp at Towrkham that trained fighters from South-East Asia.[824]

It is widely reported that Janjalani established a relationship with al-Qaeda and emerged from the Afghan conflicts with an entrenched Salafist-jihadi ideology.[825] Abuza claims that when bin Laden decided to deepen AQ's networks in Southeast Asia, he contacted Janjalani[826] and as a consequence, ASG received the bulk of its early funding from AQ. Materials were facilitated by Mohamed al-Khalifa, the brother-in-law of Osama bin Laden, and head of the International Islamic Relief Organization[827], as well as Ramzi Yousef, the 1993 WTC bomber, who was also based in the Philippines.[828] AQ is also reported to have sent trainers to help establish ASG, as well as MILF.[829] This relationship not only helped establish ASG but also provided the framework to distinguished ASG from the existing armed groups in the region.

When Janjalani formed ASG in 1991, it was known as al-Harakatul al-Islamiya.[830] Some reports also cite the initial name as Mujahedeen Commando Freedom Fighters (MCFF).[831] Abuza claims that Janajalani travelled between the Moro area and the Peshawar-Afghan border seeking recruits among Moro fighters who, like members of the GIA, had become disillusioned with the MNLF due to their negotiations with the government and who were insufficiently Islamic. Janjalani initially convinced ten leading MNLF officials to join the ASG.[832]

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824 Temby, "Imagining an Islamic State in Indonesia," 32; Conboy, *The Second Front*, 57.
825 Abuza, "Balik Terrorism," 2.
826 Abuza, "Tentacles of Terror," December 2002, 440.
827 Alfredo L. Filler, "The Abu Sayyaf Group: A Growing Menace to Civil Society," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 14, no. 4 (December 2002): 16, https://doi.org/10.1080/714005638.
828 Abuza, "Balik Terrorism," 3.
829 Abuza, 3.
830 Mapping Militant Organizations, "Abu Sayyaf Group," Stanford University, August 2018, https://cisac.fsi.stanford.edu/mappingmilitants/profiles/abu-sayyaf-group; Abuza, "Balik Terrorism," 2.
831 Garrett Atkinson, "Abu Sayyaf: The Father of the Swordsman" (American Security Project, 2012), 3, https://www.americansecurityproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/Abu-Sayyaf-The-Father-of-the-Swordsman.pdf; Rommel Banlaoi, "The Abu Sayyaf Group: From Mere Banditry to Genuine Terrorism," *Southeast Asian Affairs*, 2006, 248, https://www.jstor.org/stable/27913313.
832 Abuza, "Balik Terrorism," 3.

The main aim of ASG was to establish an independent Islamic state in Southern Philippines in the Moro regions.[833] Janjalani wrote four tenants of the ASG, known as the 'Four Basic Truths' that distinguished the ASG from MILF and MNLF.[834] Again, in line with both JI and GIA, ASG went against the practices of the extant armed groups to commit violence against civilians. During Janjalani's leadership, ASG was responsible for bombings, kidnappings, and assassinations, particularly against Christians and foreigners. The first reported attack was in 1991 with the bombing of a Christian missionary ship, M.V Doulos, in Zamboanga, which killed more than 70 people.[835] Despite MILF often distancing themselves from ASG, ASG also made use of its relationship with MILF and the camps they established with financial and logistical assistance of AQ and JI.[836] AQ operative Omar al-Faruq worked for MILF as a trainer between 1994-1995 and sought to strengthen the relationship between ASG and MILF.[837] MILF maintained Camp Hudaybiyah and Palestine inside the larger Camp Abubakar.[838] In a 1996 interview, Salamat Hashim, leader of MILF, didn't publicly distance MILF from the ASG. Instead, Hashim stated that the ASG share many of the same goals in terms of independent Islamic state, but MILF committed less violence against civilians.[839]

The origins of the ASG—and the training of Philippine fighters in the Afghan conflicts more broadly—lack detail. However, participation in the Afghan conflicts and the relationships with AQ led Jajalani not only to leave the MNLF but form a new, more radical group driven by a Salafist-jihadi ideology. The continued relationships with AQ and JI not only facilitated resource exchange, but there was also a commonality in the practice of violence.

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[833] "Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG)."
[834] Janjalani in Banlaoi, "The Abu Sayyaf Group," 250; also summarised in "Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG)."
[835] Atkinson, "Abu Sayyaf: The Father of the Swordsman," 6; Mapping Militant Organizations, "Abu Sayyaf Group"; Abuza, "Tentacles of Terror," December 2002, 441.
[836] Abuza, "Balik Terrorism," viii.
[837] Abuza, 14.
[838] David Martin Jones, Michael L. R. Smith, and Mark Weeding, "Looking for the Pattern: Al Qaeda in Southeast Asia--The Genealogy of a Terror Network," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 26, no. 6 (November 2003): 446, https://doi.org/10.1080/10576100390248284.
[839] Salamat Hashim, *Referendum: Peaceful, Civilized, Democratic, and Diplomatic Means of Solving the Mindanao Conflict* (Agency for Youth Affairs, MILF, 2002), 46.

8.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter has examined the socialisation processes among foreign fighters within the Afghan conflicts to understand how socialisation affected the doctrine and practice within the resulting Afghan Network. This chapter has focused on the institutional socialisation of foreign fighters through religious education in training camps, as well as the informal processes of socialisation through the performance and participation in different Islamic practices. I find that the socialisation process helped unify foreign fighters across one aspect of their domain—the overthrow of extant governments and the implementation of Islamic governance—that helped hold the network together despite diverging doctrines.

This chapter also demonstrated that while the shared aspect of their domain helped the disparate parts of the network together, for some members of extant armed groups, the socialisation in the Afghan conflicts pulled foreign fighters away from existing armed groups and opposition movements in their home countries. While foreign fighter experience should strengthen armed groups by injecting new skills, for many existing armed groups, the return of foreign fighters socialised into new domains, practices and doctrines led to fragmentation. While observing the internalisation or transformative outcomes of socialisation processes presents empirical challenges, this chapter drew on cases where veteran foreign fighters who splintered from their existing opposition groups to demonstrate the roles of the socialisation in the fragmentation process. The cases of the GIA, JI and ASG share similarities in that each group held distinct doctrines and acceptable practices of violence, as well as the ideal shape of governance if successful from the existing opposition movements within their home states.

These new ideas did not come from nowhere. These new domains were adopted after exposure to and socialisation in new norms and practices driven by divergent Islamic interpretations of jihad. The commonality and endurance of the domain among the Afghan Network does not mean that it was successful: the only group within the Afghan Network linked to an overthrow in government is in Libya. Jihadist groups lost civil wars or been widely destroyed in Algeria, Iraq, Syria, the Philippines, Indonesia and more. Hafez argues that these groups' 'pursue transformational goals that are too ambitious…producing violent ruptures between doctrinaire jihadis and

pragmatic Islamists.'[840] And yet, this domain persisted because it was reinforced and replicated among both the Afghan Network and spilt over into other jihadist groups.

[840] Mohammed Hafez, "Fratricidal Jihadis Fail to Learn from Their Mistakes," *CTC Sentinel* 10, no. 10 (2017): 1.

Chapter 9: Partitioned and Embedded Foreign Fighters

The core claim of this thesis is that the Afghan Network emerged because of the specific isolated conditions of foreign fighters during the Afghan conflict. However, limiting analysis to a single case presents challenges for establishing the external validity of these claims. In the theoretical framework, I introduced three ideal types of integration—embedded, partitioned, and isolated—and argued that the network development, expertise development, and socialisation processes differ according to this integration type. I differentiate the typologies according to two characteristics: where foreign fighters are located vis-à-vis the local armed group structure, and how foreign fighters are utilised during combat. Isolated foreign fighters, as demonstrated through the case of the Afghan conflicts, are separated from local fighters and were, with a few exceptions, excluded from participating in combat. Partitioned foreign fighters are separated from local fighters but participate in combat. Embedded foreign fighters are integrated with local fighters and participate in combat. While this typology of integration types is simple, it challenges many of the current measurements that treat foreign fighters as a dichotomous value—present or absent—and demonstrates that, as there is no universal way that foreign fighters participate in conflict, there should be no universal impact of foreign fighters during conflict, nor should we expect foreign fighters to have a single trajectory post-conflict.

This chapter provides an overview of the experiences of partitioned and embedded groups to demonstrate the differential trajectories of their veteran foreign fighters. I draw on four cases: the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, al-Shabaab in Somalia, Katibat el-Mudžahid (KEM) in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the International Brigades in Spain. To contrast the experiences of isolated foreign fighters with their embedded and partitioned counterparts, I follow the same structure as the core of the thesis by examining the network formation, expertise development, and socialisation processes of both types of integration. What is most notable among the cases of embedded and partitioned typologies presented in this chapter is the higher casualty rate among

foreign fighters. I argue that the higher casualty rate significantly inhibits the onwards impact of these two typologies. While both typologies should emerge with greater conflict experience than isolated foreign fighters, and the experience of conflict itself should have a socialising effect, the higher casualty rate inhibits resilience and transferability of the networks and expertise established during conflict.

As foreign fighters are predominantly externally coordinated, most armed groups choose to partition foreign fighters that arrive to conflict zones. Embedded foreign fighters, like isolated foreign fighters, are a relatively unusual integration structure. This chapter does not propose any integration type will lead to foreign fighters posing a greater or lesser threat to domestic and international security. Instead, I argue that integration determines the experience of foreign fighters, and this experience should influence the trajectories, and therefore the types of threat, that foreign fighter veterans pose.

9.1 EMBEDDED FOREIGN FIGHTERS

Embedded foreign fighters are treated as full members of the armed groups that they join. This proximity to local fighters affects how they experience conflict and their potential trajectories of future violent action. This section draws on the cases of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, and al-Shabaab in Somalia to contrast the experiences of embedded foreign fighters with those in the Afghan conflicts. In both cases, foreigners were actively asked to join the conflict. In June 2014, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi declared a caliphate from the al-Nuri Mosque in Mosul. In the same speech, al-Baghdadi called for all Muslims to make the pilgrimage to Iraq and Syria: 'rush O Muslims to your state. Yes, it is your state. Rush, because Syria is not for the Syrians, and Iraq is not for the Iraqis…the State is a state for all Muslims…O Muslims everywhere, whoever is capable of performing the hijrah (emigration) to the Islamic State, then let him do so, because hijrah to the land of Islam is obligatory.'[841] Foreign fighters had limited options as to which group they joined in Syria and Iraq with the vast majority joining Jabhat al-Nusra (an al-Qaeda affiliate) and the Islamic State.

[841] Islamic State, "A New Era Has Arrived of Might and Dignity for the Muslims," *Dābiq*, July 2014, 11, Jihadi Document Repository.

Most other factions within the conflicts did not accept foreign fighters or were later absorbed into these larger groups.[842]

In Somalia, foreign fighters have been embedded into two armed groups: Aden-Abyan Islamic Army (AIAI) and al-Shabaab. The first AQ personnel travelled to Somalia in 1993 under the leadership of Abu Hafs al-Masri (also known as Mohammad Atef). The operation, known as Operation MSK, provided military and religious education to AIAI fighters.[843] Al-Shabaab called for foreign fighters to join their forces through propaganda videos.[844] This call was reinforced by bin Laden's earlier message calling for Muslims to support the Islamic Courts Union (ICU) and commitment to fighting international forces in Somalia.[845] By examining the network formation, expertise development and socialisation of foreign fighters in these two cases, this section demonstrates how group membership and high casualty rates helped determine the future pathways of foreign fighters that is distinct from the isolated foreign fighters in the Afghan conflicts.

9.1.1 Network Formation

The network formation of embedded foreign fighters differs isolated foreign fighters for two core reasons. First, as full members of the armed groups that they join, there are fewer incentives and opportunities for group formation external to the group that they join. Second, the higher casualty rate among embedded foreign fighters will hamper the development of leadership and network structure among foreign fighters. This section outlines the network formation among embedded foreign fighters in the Islamic State and al-Shabaab.

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[842] Mironova, *From Freedom Fighters to Jihadists*, 101.

[843] Agbiboa, "Terrorism without Borders," 28; Michael Taarnby and Lars Hallundbaek, "Al-Shabaab: The Internationalization of Militant Islamism in Somalia and the Implications for Radicalisation Processes in Europe" (Justitsministeriet, February 26, 2010), 26; Shinn, "Al Shabaab's Foreign Threat to Somalia," 205; "AFGP-2002-800597: Abu Hafs Report on Operations in Somalia" (Combating Terrorism Center, 2002), https://ctc.usma.edu/harmony-program/abu-hafs-report-on-operations-in-somalia-original-language-2/; "AFGP-2002-600104: The Ogaden File: Operation Holding (Al-Msk)" (Counter-Terrorism Centre, 2002), https://www.ctc.usma.edu/harmony-program/the-ogaden-file-operation-holding-al-msk-original-language-2/.

[844] Voice of America News, "Al-Shabab Asks Foreign Fighters to Come to Somalia."

[845] Stig Jerle Hansen, *Al-Shabaab in Somalia: The History and Ideology of a Militant Islamist Group, 2005-2012* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 41, https://books.google.com/books/about/Al_Shabaab_in_Somalia.html?id=ZTtpAgAAQBAJ.

The Islamic State accepted foreign fighters as full members. The Islamic State's propaganda called on all Muslims—excluding children, the disabled, women and infirm—to join their ranks.[846] The number of foreign fighters in Iraq and Syria is estimated to be 40,000, higher than those that travelled to the Afghan conflicts. If the experiences of these two groups of foreign fighters were the same, a similar number of new armed groups to emerge from the conflict. However, these new groups have not eventuated. The centralised leadership of the Islamic State actively prevented the formation of independent units.[847] Foreign fighters were trained with fighters from all backgrounds rather than separated by nationality.[848] Whereas normally foreign fighters can leave the armed group and return home, Islamic State fighters were prohibited from leaving leading to either great risks to escape the group or a higher casualty rate among participants.[849] As the conflict progressed, the Islamic State had increasing control over the movements of foreign fighters with fighters having to seek formal permission to move between units.[850] With the exception of Chechen fighters, foreign fighters were not able to build their own units or develop a distinct domain outside of the Islamic State.[851] For example, in 2015, the Islamic State broke up longstanding Russian-speaking units of up to 1000 foreign fighters.[852] The operational tactics of the Islamic State meant that foreign fighters were less able to build the networks, especially those along nationalities, that could be exported elsewhere.

Thus far, foreign fighter veterans have been able to carry out some attacks elsewhere. However, rather than being on behalf of a new armed group or grounded in local grievances, these attacks have been perpetrated in the name of the Islamic State.[853] Armed groups across the world have also aligned themselves with, or formed in the name of, the Islamic State including (but not limited to) Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISKP), Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) and Islamic State Sinai Province. However, these groups do not appear to be formed by veteran foreign

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[846] Mironova, *From Freedom Fighters to Jihadists*, 168.
[847] Mironova, 216.
[848] Mironova, 163–64.
[849] Mironova, 102.
[850] Mironova, 148.
[851] Mironova notes that Chechen fighters were able to form their own unit for training with the intention of returning to Chechnya to fight. Mironova, 109, 164.
[852] Mironova, 177.
[853] Cragin, "The November 2015 Paris Attacks."

fighters but are leveraging the Islamic State brand within new contexts. Some factions within Boko Haram in Nigeria and Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) in the Philippines have switched allegiance from AQ to the Islamic State as a result of their initial success in Syria and Iraq.

AIAI and al-Shabaab's integration of foreign fighters is slightly more complicated. Early AQ members acted as trainers for AIAI and there are unsubstantiated rumours that some participated in combat roles.[854] Those senior AQ members that remained in Somalia—for example, Saleh Nabhan, Fazul Mohammed and Abu Talha al-Sudani—influenced the leadership of al-Shabaab but never fully joined the organisation as members of AQ.[855] Foreign fighters that arrived after the Ethiopian invasion were integrated into the organisational structure and were full members of al-Shabaab. Many of the early leaders in AIAI including Aden Hashi Ayro, Ahmed Godane, Mukhtar Robow (Abu Mansur), Abdullah Salad and Ibrahm Haji Jama Mi'ad [al-Afghani] all trained in Afghanistan in the 1990s and early 2000s.[856] Local leaders saw the value of integrating foreign fighters into their organisational structure.[857] While it is often noted that Somalians held xenophobic views towards foreign fighters, foreign fighters were leveraged by leadership for two core reasons. First, by embedding foreign fighters into their organisational structure, al-Shabaab demonstrated their commitment to, and role in, the narrative of pan-Islamism.[858] Connecting their struggle to the broader struggle of the Islamic world sought to increase the external support for

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[854] It is often reported that senior AQ figure, Zakariyya al-Tunisi ('Abd Allah al-Tunisi), fired the grenade that downed the US helicopter. Though, these claims are disputed. Zelin, *Your Sons Are at Our Service*, 61.
[855] Taarnby and Hallundbaek, "Al-Shabaab," 32–33; Shinn, "Al Shabaab's Foreign Threat to Somalia," 205.
[856] Ted Dagne, "Somalia: Current Conditions and Prospects for a Lasting Peace," *Congressional Research Service*, December 16, 2010, 6; Nathan Mugisha, "The Way Forward in Somalia," *The RUSI Journal* 156, no. 3 (June 2011): 29, https://doi.org/10.1080/03071847.2011.591084; Taarnby and Hallundbaek, "Al-Shabaab," 11.
[857] Seth Jones, Andrew Liepman, and Nathan Chandler, *Counterterrorism and Counterinsurgency in Somalia: Assessing the Campaign Against Al Shabaab* (RAND Corporation, 2016), 11, https://doi.org/10.7249/RR1539; Shinn, "Al Shabaab's Foreign Threat to Somalia," 206–7.
[858] Hansen, *Al-Shabaab in Somalia: The History and Ideology of a Militant Islamist Group, 2005-2012*, 135–36; Rob Wise, "Al Shabaab" (Centre for Strategic and International Studies: AQAM Futures Project Case Studies Series, July 2011), 10, http://www.operationspaix.net/DATA/DOCUMENT/4039~v~Al_Shabaab.pdf; Ido Levy and Abdi Yusuf, "How Do Terrorist Organizations Make Money? Terrorist Funding and Innovation in the Case of al-Shabaab," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, June 17, 2019, 7, https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2019.1628622.

al-Shabaab. Second, mobilisation and recruitment in Somalia was hamstrung by local clan loyalty. The use of foreign fighters allowed al-Shabaab to appeal beyond clan loyalty and reinforced this commitment to global, rather than national, jihad.[859]

Neither the Islamic State nor al-Shabaab produced networks of foreign fighter veterans that emerged from the Afghan conflicts. Instead, foreign fighters were members of the groups that they participated with during the conflict. As we are still temporally proximate to the defeat of the Islamic State, it is possible that veteran foreign fighters may still form new armed groups in the future. However, as many of those foreign fighters that stayed in Syria and Iraq were killed during conflict or counter-terrorism efforts, and others remain imprisoned, there are not the wide-reaching opportunities for network building that there was during the Afghan conflicts. In the case of Somalia, as almost all foreign fighters were killed by al-Shabaab there are few veterans available to build new networks.

9.1.2 Expertise Development

Embedded foreign fighters have greater opportunities to gain conflict expertise but experienced foreign fighters will also be able to share their expertise with the armed groups. For example, AIAI and al-Shabaab leveraged the experience of veteran foreign fighters to fill gaps in expertise, allowed them to take leadership roles.[860] Abu Khalid Rajah, a Yemeni member of AQAP, introduced the construction of camouflaged anti-tank ditches. These ditches—later referred to as 'the Khalid tactic'—became an effective defence mechanism within Mogadishu.[861] AQ members are also attributed with establishing training camps specifically for suicide bombers[862] and introducing the suicide bombing as a tactic.[863] Wise also notes that al-Qaeda members were

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[859] Hansen, *Al-Shabaab in Somalia: The History and Ideology of a Militant Islamist Group, 2005-2012*, 135–36.
[860] Sudarsan Raghavan, "Foreign Fighters Gain Influence in Somalia's Islamist al-Shabab Militia," *Washington Post*, June 8, 2010, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/06/07/AR2010060704667.html.
[861] Hansen, *Al-Shabaab in Somalia: The History and Ideology of a Militant Islamist Group, 2005-2012*, 74–75.
[862] Bacon and Muibu, "The Domestication of Al-Shabaab"; Wise, "Al Shabaab," 8.
[863] Samantha Kruber and Stephanie Carver, "Insurgent Group Cohesion and the Malleability of 'Foreignness': Al-Shabaab's Relationship with Foreign Fighters," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, February 22, 2021, 7, https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2021.1889091.

responsible for moving al-Shabaab towards committing international terrorism, including the attack on the Westgate Mall in Kenya in 2013.[864]

While the narrative of foreign fighters in al-Shabaab has focused on the introduction of more radical or extreme tactics, less discussed is the burden of inexperienced foreign fighters that also travelled to the conflict. As outlined in the theoretical framework, armed groups that embed foreign fighters are also responsible for their training and management. Consequently, al-Shabaab was responsible for training foreign fighters, many of whom came from the diaspora living in western states,[865] as well as fighters from the Middle East.[866] The complaints levelled at these fighters were numerous: draining resources, unsuited to the environmental conditions of conflict, insufficient language skills.[867] Some of the newer generation of foreign fighters did gain prominence as commanders. For example, in 2009, Omar Hammami [Abu Mansoor al-Amriki], a young American with no prior conflict experience, became a commander within al-Shabaab, Hammami featured heavily in al-Shabaab recruitment videos, encouraging other foreign fighters to join.[868]

The Islamic State benefited from the conflict experience of some of its foreign fighters. In Syria, Mironova found that many foreign fighters 'brought the necessary military experience including North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) training and worked as combat instructors for Syrian fighters, or as elite fighters.'[869] Foreign fighters with prior conflict or military experience were often given training roles within camps.[870] As the Islamic State called on all Muslims to join their ranks, they were less able to leverage the existing expertise among their recruits and instead spent its energy training thousands of new fighters.[871] All inexperienced arrivals had to complete basic

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[864] Wise, "Al Shabaab," 8; D. M. Anderson and J. McKnight, "Kenya at War: Al-Shabaab and Its Enemies in Eastern Africa," *African Affairs* 114, no. 454 (January 1, 2015): 2, https://doi.org/10.1093/afraf/adu082.
[865] for example, in Canada see Paul Joosse, Sandra M. Bucerius, and Sara K. Thompson, "Narratives and Counternarratives: Somali-Canadians on Recruitment as Foreign Fighters to Al-Shabaab," *British Journal of Criminology* 55, no. 4 (July 2015): 811–32, https://doi.org/10.1093/bjc/azu103.
[866] Taarnby and Hallundbaek, "Al-Shabaab," 30.
[867] Taarnby and Hallundbaek, 31.
[868] Andrea Elliott, "The Jihadist Next Door," *The New York Times*, January 27, 2010, sec. Magazine, https://www.nytimes.com/2010/01/31/magazine/31Jihadist-t.html.
[869] Mironova, *From Freedom Fighters to Jihadists*, 136.
[870] Mironova, 157.
[871] Mironova, 168.

training that featured both military and religious education.[872] As foreign fighters were full members of the Islamic State, they were as likely to participate in combat as local fighters. Even those foreign fighters who proved less capable in fighting roles were given positions within the organisation as religious police within occupied territories and participated in the deployment of violence against civilians.[873]

Exposure to combat, and the opportunity to put training into practice, under the direction of the armed group should make embedded foreign fighters more advanced and disciplined fighters than isolated foreign fighters. However, within both the Islamic State and al-Shabaab the high casualty and incarceration rate presents a significant obstacle to the transfer of this expertise to subsequent armed groups.

9.1.3 Socialisation

Embedded foreign fighters are socialised into the domain and practices of the local fighters. However, because of their proximity to local fighters and capacity to achieve leadership positions, embedded foreign fighters can also influence the domain and practice of the armed group. These socialisation processes will further contribute to the notion of group membership outlined in the network formation section. Little information is recorded as to how foreign fighters were socialised within al-Shabaab. However, there is a plethora of information on the socialisation processes enacted by the Islamic State.

As in the Afghan conflicts, few foreign fighters in the Islamic State arrived with formal Islamic education. The Islamic State's religious education, referred to as 'Sharia training,' focused on the works of the thirteenth century scholar Ibn Taymiyyah and varied in length depending on the religious knowledge of the recruit.[874] Publicly, there are a number of well-known practices within the Islamic State that fall into the category of socialisation including sexual violence and the use of sexual enslavement

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[872] Roel de Bont et al., "Life at ISIS: The Roles of Western Men, Women and Children" (Security and Global Affairs, 2017), 8; Anne Speckhard and Ahmet S Yayla, "Eyewitness Accounts from Recent Defectors from Islamic State," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 9, no. 6 (2015): 102.
[873] Mironova, *From Freedom Fighters to Jihadists*, 161, 183.
[874] Speckhard and Yayla, "Eyewitness Accounts from Recent Defectors from Islamic State," 104.

that were distinct from those observed during the Afghan conflicts.[875] As outlined by Cohen, sexual violence can be utilised within armed groups as a socialisation mechanism to create stronger ties between fighters while degrading opposition members or civilians.[876] There was also the practice of destroying heritage and cultural artifacts such as the UNESCO World Heritage cities of Hatra and Palmyra that were publicised in Dābiq magazine.[877] Then, most well-known, was the decapitation of prisoners, including Westerners, for propaganda.[878] The murder of James Foley by four British foreign fighters known as 'the Beatles' was widely distributed as propaganda.[879] Children of foreign fighters were also asked to practice violence or participate in it. The most famous examples are those of children holding guns or posing with severed heads of the Islamic States' victims.[880] Committing violence against civilians was a part of the everyday practices of the Islamic State and socialised its members within these violent practices.

The aim of the Islamic State's socialisation processes was to fully indoctrinate local and foreign fighters, as well as civilians under Islamic State control, into a shared doctrine. Therefore, foreign fighters were given less opportunities to develop domains and practices that related to their domestic contexts. The ideas emanating from foreign fighters that joined the Islamic State were not those developed and adapted by foreign fighters but imported directly from the Islamic State itself. Therefore, the violence perpetrated by veteran foreign fighters is in line with the practices of the Islamic State, namely violence against civilians, and terrorist tactics.

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[875] Ariel I. Ahram, "Sexual Violence and the Making of ISIS," *Survival* 57, no. 3 (May 4, 2015): 57–78, https://doi.org/10.1080/00396338.2015.1047251.
[876] Dara Kay Cohen, "The Ties That Bind: How Armed Groups Use Violence to Socialize Fighters," *Journal of Peace Research* 54, no. 5 (September 2017): 701–14, https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343317713559.
[877] Sofya Shahab and Benjamin Isakhan, "The Ritualization of Heritage Destruction under the Islamic State," *Journal of Social Archaeology* 18, no. 2 (June 2018): 212–33, https://doi.org/10.1177/1469605318763623; Islamic State, "Erasing the Legacy of a Ruined Nation," *Dābiq*, March 2015, Jihadi Document Repository.
[878] Adam Goldman, "Member of Brutal ISIS 'Beatles' Cell Pleads Guilty in Hostage Cases," *The New York Times*, September 3, 2021, https://www.nytimes.com/2021/09/02/us/politics/isis-beatles-alexanda-kotey.html; Islamic State, "By the Sword," *Dābiq*, July 2016, Jihadi Document Repository.
[879] Goldman, "Member of Brutal ISIS 'Beatles' Cell Pleads Guilty in Hostage Cases."
[880] Helen Davidson, "Children of Isis Terrorist Khaled Sharrouf Removed from Syria, Set to Return to Australia," *The Guardian*, June 23, 2019, https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2019/jun/24/children-isis-terrorist-khaled-sharrouf-return-australia-removed-syria; "Australia Boy 'Displays Severed Head in Syria,'" *BBC News*, August 11, 2014, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-28736345.

9.1.4 Summary

One would expect that embedded foreign fighters would pose a much greater threat to international security. Their increased combat participation and socialisation into armed groups should, theoretically, lead to embedded foreign fighters emerging as more competent conflict actors and better able to lead their own armed groups. However, beyond the limited number of attacks by foreign fighter veterans, this threat has not come to fruition. I attribute this to two factors. First, as full members of armed groups, foreign fighters are less likely to spend their time building up the organisational and leadership capacity to import into other conflicts. Second, both al-Shabaab and the Islamic State had high casualty rates among their foreign fighters. By 2019, the Islamic State had been largely defeated and its territory regained by the state or other rebel factions. Islamic State foreign fighters were at high risk of casualties. Foreign fighters were seen as more willing to die and become martyrs. As a consequence, they were more compliant in dangerous missions and were perceived as fighting until the end.[881] Foreign fighters were targeted by the state and other opposition factions, including the Free Syrian Army.[882] Then, in 2015, western military operations began targeting the Islamic State.[883] Some western states have even voiced a preference for their citizens to be killed in air strikes rather than risk their repatriation.[884] Much of the Islamic States' membership, including foreign fighters, have been killed, imprisoned, or held in detention camps in the desert.[885] Due to the temporal proximity to these events, there is still much to learn about the future trajectories of its surviving foreign fighters.

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[881] Mironova, *From Freedom Fighters to Jihadists*, 160.
[882] Mironova, 139.
[883] Mironova, 131.
[884] "IS Conflict: France Launches Air Strikes in Syria," *BBC News*, September 27, 2015, sec. Middle East, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-34372892.
[885] "US Withdrawal from Syria: How Many Isis Suspects Are Being Held in Makeshift Jails?," *The Times*, October 9, 2019, https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/us-withdrawal-from-syria-how-many-isis-suspects-are-being-held-in-makeshift-jails-00rc5lxqw; Lila Hassan, "Repatriating ISIS Foreign Fighters Is Key to Stemming Radicalization, Experts Say, but Many Countries Don't Want Their Citizens Back," *Frontline*, April 6, 2021, https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/article/repatriating-isis-foreign-fighters-key-to-stemming-radicalization-experts-say-but-many-countries-dont-want-citizens-back/; "Where Are Isis Fighters Now?," *The Week UK*, October 9, 2019, https://www.theweek.co.uk/103713/where-are-isis-fighters-now.

Foreign fighters in al-Shabaab were driven out of Somalia or killed. The exit of foreign fighters is attributable to two conditions. First, foreign fighters were the target of international counterterrorism efforts. This not only killed foreign fighters but weakened their appeal.[886] Second, between 2011 and 2013 al-Shabaab underwent a process of 'domestication.' Al-Shabaab leaders purged remaining foreign fighters among their ranks. Hammami was killed after repeatedly publicly criticizing al-Shabaab and the treatment of foreign fighters.[887] There are also rumours that al-Shabaab was responsible for the ambush of senior AQ figure, and long-term al-Shabaab collaborator, Fazul Muhammad Abdullah.[888] Although foreign fighters were embedded within AIAI and al-Shabaab and initially viewed as valuable collaborators, foreign fighters ultimately fell out of favour and were removed or killed.

In summary, embedded foreign fighters do not have the same opportunities to build the institutions required for network formations as their isolated counterparts in the Afghan conflicts. The high casualty rates among foreign fighters in ISIS, AIAI and al-Shabaab and full membership limited the capacity of foreign fighters to build independent groups and networks that could be used to export violence elsewhere. Terrorist attacks committed by veteran ISIS foreign fighters demonstrate that embedded foreign fighters still pose a risk to international security but, thus far, the attacks have been committed on behalf of ISIS rather than grounded local grievances, limiting the potential spread of violence throughout local communities.

9.2 PARTITIONED FOREIGN FIGHTERS

Partitioned foreign fighters are structurally located in the same position as isolated foreign fighters. Consequently, partitioned foreign fighters should experience the same opportunities for network development and socialisation, but also have more advanced conflict skills. However, their exposure to conflict, like embedded foreign fighters,

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[886] Bacon and Muibu, "The Domestication of Al-Shabaab," 280; Jones, Liepman, and Chandler, *Counterterrorism and Counterinsurgency in Somalia*.

[887] Elena Mastors and Rhea Siers, "Omar Al-Hammami: A Case Study in Radicalization: Omar al-Hammami: A Case Study in Radicalization," *Behavioral Sciences & the Law* 32, no. 3 (May 2014): 377–88, https://doi.org/10.1002/bsl.2108.

[888] Nelly Lahoud, "The Merger of Al-Shabab and Qa`idat al-Jihad," *CTC Sentinel* 5, no. 2 (February 16, 2012), https://ctc.usma.edu/the-merger-of-al-shabab-and-qaidat-al-jihad/.

makes them more likely to experience casualties. These casualties disrupt the processes that I observed in Afghan conflicts and make it more difficult for resilient networks to form. Therefore, partitioned foreign fighters that survive conflict will likely have greater conflict skills than their isolated counter-parts, their networks will be less capable of forming new groups. If partitioned foreign fighters participate in subsequent armed groups or conflicts, they are more likely join existing groups, thus strengthening old threats rather than developing new ones. In this section I outline the experiences of the Katibat el-Mudžahid (KEM) as the major unit of foreign fighters during the Bosnian War (1992-1995) and the International Brigades in the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939).[889]

Foreign fighters first arrived in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the summer of 1992. Bosnian President, Alija Izetbegovic, had appealed to the Islamic world for assistance[890] but officials have always distanced themselves from claims that they invited foreign fighters to join the Bosnian Army (ABiH).[891] As numbers of foreign fighters increased, Izetbegovic found a solution to managing foreign fighters. On 13 August 1993, Izetbegovic authorized the formation of the Katibat El-Mudžahid (KEM) unit and for the incorporation of all foreign fighters into this unit.[892] Although formally falling under the command of the 3rd Corps of the ABiH, the KEM functioned as a semi-autonomous unit, separate from local fighters and leadership. The KEM could be utilised by the ABiH during combat, but the ABiH would play almost no role in its day-to-day affairs. In the case of the International Brigades, following a decision by the Kremlin in September 1936 to assist Spanish Republicans, the Comintern launched an international drive for recruits.[893] The Comintern organised logistics, paying travel

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[889] Here, I draw back on the observation made in the theoretical framework: many consider foreigners that join foreign militaries as separate conflict actors to foreign fighters that join non-state groups. The driving logic of this separation between foreign fighters and foreign volunteers is that state armies will have greater control over foreigners, making them less of a risk as returnees. As will demonstrated in this section, this delineation seems to have less to do with inherent risk than with how foreigners are attached to armies.
[890] Mustapha, "The *Mujahideen* in Bosnia," 747.
[891] International Crisis Group, "Bin Laden and the Balkans: The Politics of Anti-Terrorism," 11; Mustapha, "The *Mujahideen* in Bosnia."
[892] ICTY, "Order for the Formation of the El Mujahedin Detachment in the 3rd Corps, No. 14/75-86, Dated 13 August 1993" (The Hague: ICTY, 1993), https://icr.icty.org/.
[893] Dan Richardson, *Comintern Army: The International Brigades and the Spanish Civil War* (University Press of Kentucky, 2015), 31–33, https://books.google.com/books/about/Comintern_Army.html?id=H-ceBgAAQBAJ.

fares, accommodation and facilitating frontier crossings.[894] By the war's end, 36,000 foreigners had served in the International Brigades.[895]

9.2.1 Network Formation

Unlike embedded foreign fighters, partitioned foreign fighters are usually externally recruited and arrive without the explicit invitation of the group. As both the KEM and International Brigades were separated from local fighters—for reasons of convenience such as language barriers but also because of scepticism among locals[896]—that the networks that emerge would resemble the Afghan Network. While some foreign fighters that participated in the KEM continued into other armed groups--two of the September 11 hijacker, Khalid al-Mihdhar and Nawaf al-Hamzi, were veteran foreign fighters in the Bosnian War before joining al-Qaeda[897]—there was not the proliferation of armed groups as just a few years prior. The International Brigades left Spain in 1938 under a repatriation plan by the League of Nations.[898] Their trajectories are greatly skewed by the outbreak of World War II. Many of these foreign fighters were excluded from joining national forces during WWII because of their association with communism, others were leveraged by states because of their experience fighting German and Italian weapons and soldiers deployed in Spain.[899]

Like embedded fighters, the network formation among foreign fighters was also disrupted by the casualty rates among partitioned fighters. The ABiH utilised foreign fighters in dangerous but foreign fighters were also known for their tactics that put

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[894] Jackson, *Fallen Sparrows*, 3; Richard Baxell, *British Volunteers in the Spanish Civil War: The British Battalion in the International Brigades, 1936-1939*, 1st ed. (Routledge, 2004), 3, https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203357101.
[895] Jackson, *Fallen Sparrows*, 1; M. Alpert, *A New International History of the Spanish Civil War: Second Edition* (Springer, 2004), 103.
[896] Jackson, *Fallen Sparrows*, 2, 4.
[897] National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States, "The 9/11 Commission Report: Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States," 147, 155; O'Neill, "The Bosnian Connection"; Zosak, "Revoking Citizenship in the Name of Counterterrorism," 219.
[898] League of Nations, "Situation in Spain - Withdrawal of Non-Spanish Combatants from Spain - Appointment of an International Commission: General Correspondence," September 21, 1938, LON Box (375x270x150): R3661, UN Archives Geneva, https://archives.ungeneva.org/situation-in-spain-withdrawal-of-non-spanish-combatants-from-spain-appointment-of-an-international-commission-general-correspondence.
[899] Hochschild, *Spain in Our Hearts*.

them at a heightened risk of casualty. A Newsweek article in 1992 reported that the foreign fighters '(struck) terror in the hearts of Serbian fighters, who cringe at the sound of war cries to Allah.'[900] A captured Serbian officer was reported as saying 'I don't fear facing Bosnians in the battlefield for they and I fight to live. However, I am not prepared to face those men in black who fight to die.'[901] It is also widely cited that the International Brigades were poorly resourced, poorly trained and tasked with near impossible missions. Casualty rates varied between nationalities, but it is estimated 30 to 40 per cent of the IB were killed.[902] The level of depletion was so great that by the end of both conflicts, the KEM and IBs were no longer majority foreign. By 1995 approximately half of KEM members were local fighters, mostly from the Zenica and Travnik area.[903] By the battle of Ebro in July 1938, it is estimated that three-quarters of the International Brigades were Spaniards.[904] The success of the network formation in the Afghan conflicts is attributable to the intensive organisational formation that isolation allowed, but also the minimal casualty rate that allowed continuity in network development. The high casualty rates in the KEM and International Brigades prevented the same network formation despite the same positioning relative to isolated foreign fighters.

9.2.2 Expertise Development

Both the KEM and IB had combat exposure, however, the IB had varied training provided by the Comintern. Most of the IB did not have prior conflict experience, unless they had participated in WWI.[905] Volunteers for the IB came from a range of backgrounds. Jewish men joined as an opportunity to fight fascism and oppose Hitler. African Americans joined in response to the lack of international intervention over Fascist Italy's military takeover of Ethiopia in the Second Italo-Abyssinian War from

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[900] Tom Post and Karen Breslau, "Help from the Holy Warriors," *Newsweek* (New York, United States: Newsweek Publishing LLC, October 5, 1992), http://search.proquest.com/docview/214303806/A33A96E13828412FPQ/11.
[901] Ghanem, "Dancing with Arab Mujahedeen in the Hills of Bosnia."
[902] Andy Durgan, "Freedom Fighters or Comintern Army? The International Brigades in Spain," *International Socialism Journal*, no. 84 (1999): 109–32, http://pubs.socialistreviewindex.org.uk/isj84/durgan.htm.
[903] Li, *The Universal Enemy*, 87.
[904] Malet, "Foreign Fighters," 123; Matthew Hughes, "The British Battalion of the International Brigades and the Spanish Civil War, 1936–39," *The RUSI Journal* 143, no. 2 (April 1998): 63, https://doi.org/10.1080/03071849808446252.
[905] Baxell, "Myths of the International Brigades," 13.

1935-1937. There were also European exiles such as Hungarians who fled a failed revolution, Poles from dictatorship, Yugoslavs pursued by royalist police, and those fleeing Nazis in Germany or fascists in Italy.[906] Despite the general lack of experience, members of the IB were known to have been sent to the front with two weeks of training—or sometimes no training at all—and, on occasion, without weapons.[907]

IB forces first made headlines during the battle to defend Madrid in University City in 1936. The International Brigade was reported as door-to-door within the university and were credited with saving Madrid.[908] The IB units were present at every major offensive throughout the war and often the first to head into battle.[909] During their last, and most disastrous, operation, the battle of Ebro, half of the foreign fighters were deployed unarmed and untrained.[910] The conditions at Ebro were reportedly so bad that some members of the International Brigades attempted suicide and Spanish conscripts were shot for refusing to advance.[911]

The expertise of the KEM was different in that some of the early foreign fighters were veterans of the recent Afghan conflicts.[912] The first commander of the foreign fighters was Abu ʻAbd al-Aziz (commonly referred to as Barbaros), a veteran of the Afghan conflicts, as well as reportedly fighting in Kashmir, the Philippines, and Africa.[913] In a 1992 interview, Aziz noted that of the foreign fighters, '(m)ost of them (are) from Afghanistan but there are others from different countries. Even some of them this is the first time they are involved in Jihad.'[914] Veteran foreign fighters established training camps in central BiH with the first camp established in the town of Mehurići. Training camps were organized in the style of camps in Afghanistan with instructors

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[906] Jackson, *Fallen Sparrows*, 42.
[907] Hochschild, *Spain in Our Hearts*, 79–82, 103; Jackson, *Fallen Sparrows*, 101.
[908] Jackson, *Fallen Sparrows*, 4; Richarson, *Comintern Army: The International Brigades and the Spanish Civil War*, 34; Vincent Brome, *The International Brigades, Spain, 1936-1939* (Heinemann, 1965), 89–97.
[909] Jackson, *Fallen Sparrows*, 3.
[910] Jackson, 101.
[911] Rob Stradling, "English-Speaking Units of the International Brigades: War, Politics and Discipline," *Journal of Contemporary History* 45, no. 4 (October 2010): 762, https://doi.org/10.1177/0022009410375253.
[912] Ghanem, "Dancing with Arab Mujahedeen in the Hills of Bosnia"; Kohlmann, *Al-Qaida's Jihad in Europe*.
[913] Moore, "When Do Ties Bind?," 2019, 249.
[914] ICTY, "Transcript of Conversation Between Andrew Hogg (Journalist) and Abdel Adiz."

being transferred directly from al-Sadda camp.[915] Local fighters were also able to join the KEM. ICTY documents indicate that locals joined the KEM because of 'the stricter regime of discipline, better degree of organization, superior equipment and combat morale, its religious dedication and certain material benefits awarded to members of the Detachment.'[916] The KEM had little impact on fighting early in the war but fought in three important battles in 1995. According to Kohlman, drawing heavily on KEM media, foreign fighters did not win any major battles until 1995. The major battles were Operations Black Lion, Miracle and Badr that were led by veteran foreign fighters with experience either in Afghanistan or their respective national armies.[917]

9.2.3 Socialisation

The rapid deployment of the International Brigades after arrival meant there was little opportunity for formal socialisation. However, the Comintern did establish a strict discipline around their operations. Foreign fighters that disagreed with these positions often joined other units such as the Workers Party of Marxist Unification (POUM). Disagreement with the Comintern position could lead to imprisonment or death.[918]

The KEM mirrored its socialisation processes observed in the Afghan conflicts. Recruits received six weeks' religious training then six weeks' military training before deploying to battles led by veteran foreign fighters.[919] This makes sense as the trainers of the KEM were transferred directly from foreign fighter camps in Afghanistan. Like in the Afghan conflicts, there were conflicts between locals and foreign fighters. During training, the KEM often tried to 'convert' ABiH soldiers, including chastising soldiers for drinking alcohol and soldiers. In one report from 1995, such action is reported to have 'resulted in revolt and disapproval'.[920] Military reports that the KEM destroyed Serb and Croat religious and social monuments including churches and

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[915] Kohlmann, *Al-Qaida's Jihad in Europe*, 19.
[916] ICTY, "Judgement: Prosecutor v. Rasim Delić," 55; Schwampe, "Muslim Foreign Fighters in Armed Conflicts."
[917] Kohlmann, *Al-Qaida's Jihad in Europe*, 139.
[918] Hochschild, *Spain in Our Hearts*, 445–46.
[919] European Court of Human Rights, "Case of Al Husin v. Bosnia and Herzegovina (Application No. 3727/08)," Judgement (Strasbourg, July 9, 2012), 54, https://lovdata.no/static/EMDN/emd-2008-003727.pdf.
[920] "Information from the Security Services Department of the 3rd Corps to the Security Administration, No. 03/1-174-149-1, Dated 3 July 1995," Exhibit 00798.E (The Hague: ICTY, November 9, 2007), 1, https://icr.icty.org.

tombstones.[921] In 1994, reports to the Ministry of Defence indicate that the KEM would often intimidate civilians at gunpoint, threaten women for being inappropriately dressed and demand local women marry them.[922] Moore lists multiple civilian accounts of being intimidated and frightened of foreign fighters in the Zenica and Travnik area. In 1993, locals protested against foreign fighters in Zenica.[923] Those foreign fighters that settled in BiH often established themselves in separate communities and continued practicing Salafist Islam.

9.2.4 Summary

In both BiH and Spain, foreign fighters were given the opportunity to safely leave the conflict. In BiH, as a part of the Dayton Agreement, foreign fighters were forced to leave within 30-days.[924] While some foreign fighters found loopholes by marrying local women or being awarded citizenship for their participation, the majority did leave.[925] In Spain, the withdrawal of the foreign fighters was coordinated by the International Commission established by the League of Nations. Foreign fighters were moved to evacuation zones over three months and then repatriated.[926] All else equal, we would expect partitioned fighters to emerge from conflict with similar characteristics to isolated foreign fighters but with greater conflict expertise. However, as demonstrated here, the high casualty rate among both the KEM and International Brigades impeded the intensive network formation observed in the Afghan conflicts. The trajectories of foreign fighters in both groups were also altered by temporality. The International Brigades were repatriated in 1938 just before the outbreak of WWII. Any domestic causes that International Brigade members may have wished to pursue might have been superseded by the war. In the case for the KEM, the proximity of the

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[921] "Report on Desecration of Tombstones, Curici, Zavidovici Municipality, Dated 26 May 1995," Exhibit 00934.E (The Hague: ICTY, November 30, 2007), https://icr.icty.org.
[922] "Ministry of Defence, Security Sector, Bulletin, No. 211, Dated 15 October 1994," Exhibit 00723.E (The Hague: ICTY, November 7, 2007), 3, https://icr.icty.org; "Ministry of Defence, Security Sector, Bulletin, No. 162, Dated 14 August 1994," Exhibit 00721.E (The Hague: ICTY, November 7, 2007), 2, https://icr.icty.org/.
[923] Moore, "When Do Ties Bind?," 2019, 325.
[924] "General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina A/50/790," Article III, p 10, accessed March 7, 2020, https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/BA_951121_DaytonAgreement.pdf.
[925] Zosak, "Revoking Citizenship in the Name of Counterterrorism," 219.
[926] League of Nations, "Situation in Spain - Withdrawal of Non-Spanish Combatants from Spain - Appointment of an International Commission: General Correspondence."

Afghan conflicts may have altered veterans' capacity to form new armed groups in a crowded marketplace.

9.3 CONCLUSION

This chapter provides confirmatory evidence that the conditions of the Afghan conflicts were unique. By highlighting how foreign fighters were arranged in similar, but not identical, structural conditions, partitioned foreign fighters are able to benefit from conflict experience but were less capable of building foreign fighter networks as durable and transferable as isolated foreign fighters during the Afghan conflicts. Across the cases of both embedded and partitioned foreign fighters presented here, I have demonstrated that the isolation of foreign fighters during the Afghan conflicts created unique conflict conditions that are rarely replicated in other conflicts. While both partitioned and embedded foreign fighters have greater exposure to combat, the casualty rate in all four conflicts examined here demonstrate the challenge of building and maintaining new conflict networks necessary for the formation of new armed groups without the continuity afforded by isolation. For embedded foreign fighters, the formation of new networks for group formation was also impeded by their full participation in the armed group.

These differing experience does not imply that other types of integration present less of a threat to domestic and international security but that these threats will be distinct. Embedded and partitioned veteran foreign fighters are exposed to higher levels of combat and, thus, should be more effective conflict actors. However, their higher casualty rates limit the potential spread of their expertise and networks.

Conclusion

The Afghan conflicts are credited as the first truly global mobilisation of foreign fighters.[927] Veteran foreign fighters of the Afghan conflicts went on to form and participate in terrorist and insurgent groups that would reshape international security. This outcome appears at odds with the limited participation that these fighters had in the conflict itself. Foreign fighters contributed little to the Mujahideen victory and were kept away from combat roles. In this thesis, I have provided a theoretical framework of foreign fighter integration to understand how these inexperienced and ineffectual fighters were transformed into a renowned networked threat to international security. This thesis has demonstrated how the position of foreign fighters within an armed group, their integration, determines how foreign fighters participate in conflict and thus, their future trajectories. This network perspective—how foreign fighters are connected to local fighters and located within the organisational structure of armed groups—explains the variation of how different generations of foreign fighters' participation and outcomes by introducing three ideal types of integration: embedded, partitioned, and isolated.

In the Afghan conflicts, foreign fighters were isolated from local Mujahideen forces. This isolation created three conditions for foreign fighters in the Afghan conflicts: protection from their domestic security apparatus, protection from the risks of participating in the conflict itself and created a site of mass convergence of like-minded individuals from around the world. Within this conflict, foreign fighters were able to undertake altered processes that facilitated rapid network formation, developed conflict expertise, and socialisation among other foreign fighters. The end of the conflict did not mean the end of the network. I utilise network perspectives to demonstrate how these three processes created the Afghan Network as a site for ongoing knowledge exchange, innovation, and resource sharing. This network was tied together by the joint enterprise of pursuing institutional changes in governance—both domestic and transnational—guided by a specific interpretation of violent jihad. The

[927] Hegghammer, *The Caravan*, 1.

practices of the Afghan Network are typified by modes of violence developed in the Afghan conflicts but also in the everyday performances that reify the beliefs of the network members. Continued coordination among the Afghan Network allowed its members to draw on valuable expertise, increasing their effectiveness as conflict actors, while building resilience that generated a threat to international security.

This theoretical framework is the first to systematically examine how integration determines how foreign fighters participate in conflict and connect this experience to future impacts on international security. I build on the limited existing work to distinguish between different models of integration and trace how this integration type shapes the processes foreign fighters undergo. In past research, scholars have assumed that foreign fighter experience is transformative in terms of post-conflict consequences but the actual experiences of foreign fighters within conflict has received scant attention. While much has been made of the transition of armed groups to online radicalisation and mobilisation, recent data suggests in-person—or offline—socialisation plays the primary role in this radicalisation process.[928] Hamid and Ariza find that individuals radicalised offline are three times more likely to commit or plot to commit an attack than those radicalised online.[929] This work emphasises the need to understand the in-person interaction within conflict processes. This thesis also connected different models of conflict participation to future trajectories of armed actors. I have argued that isolation within the Afghan conflicts led to the distinct shape, characteristics, and identity of the Afghan Network. As highlighted in Chapter 9, other forms of integration still generate threats to international security but have a different quality.

This thesis also reinforces the role of the connection to everyday networks at home in prevention work. If foreign fighters are vulnerable to socialisation processes due to their dislocation from their everyday networks, then the importance of connecting and embedding those at risk of mobilisation in community cannot be overstated. Evidence for this can eb found in extant case studies where recruiters often initiate relationships

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[928] Hamid and Ariza, "Offline Versus Online Radicalisation: Which Is the Bigger Threat?: Tracing Outcomes of 439 Jihadist Terrorists Between 2014-2021 in 8 Western Countries."
[929] Hamid and Ariza.

with potential recruits while slowly separating these individuals from their everyday networks. Individuals are susceptible to recruitment because they lack a meaningful connection to their everyday networks. Within foreign fighter literature, the connection of recruits to everyday and quotidian networks is sometimes referred to 'life embeddedness.'[930] Similar patterns of isolation can be seen in movements driven by conspiracy theorists, domestic extremist groups, and cults. Research on domestic violence also notes that one tactic of abusers is to separate victims from family and friends to increase control. In each of these forms of recruitment or victimisation, the separation of an individual from their everyday networks makes them vulnerable. Therefore, the need for policy that focuses on the role of belonging and community is not only important in the prevention of foreign fighters but to other forms of recruitment into extreme organisations within society.

The empirics of this thesis were drawn from an original dataset of 404 veteran foreign fighters of the Afghan Network. This dataset was built using publicly available data found in biographies, martyr notices, government databases, and published materials from armed groups. This dataset is the largest available dataset of the Afghan Network and the first to be used to trace the movements and career trajectories of a single generation of foreign fighters across space and time using Social Network Analysis. I locate veteran foreign fighters across 69 groups and conflicts spanning from those immediately after 1992 to 2022. What distinguishes this dataset from other research on foreign fighters is that it includes foreign fighters that went on to join or form armed groups in their country of origin. In past research, these foreign fighters by virtue of returning home are no longer deemed 'foreign' and often drop out of subsequent analysis. Instead, foreign fighter returnees—those that return to their country of origin—are broadly conceived as a terror threat.[931] This thesis asserts that to understand the full reem of security implications of veteran foreign fighters emerging

[930] Coolsaet, "Facing the Fourth Foreign Fighters Wave," 12; Lindekilde, Bertelsen, and Stohl, "Who Goes, Why, and With What Effects."
[931] Azinović and Jusić, "The Lure of the Syrian War: The Foreign Fighters' Bosnian Contingent," 6; Benmelech and Klor, "What Explains the Flow of Foreign Fighters to ISIS?," 1; Byman, "The Homecomings," 581.

from conflict, we must consider all potential violent pathways that they may take.[932] While many of the veteran foreign fighters in the dataset were members of armed groups that participated in terrorist tactics, many were equally utilising conventional insurgent tactics. This thesis demonstrates the need to expand our conceptions of foreign fighter veterans as terrorist actors and understand the full ream of trajectories and their consequences,

The original data allowed for the Afghan Network to be visualised for the first time. The data also allows me to capture the breadth of the different armed groups tied to the Afghan Network. While foreign fighter veterans of the Afghan conflicts are often referred to as a network, little is known about how this network, devoid of the usual pre-existing social ties that mobilises fighters formed. I demonstrate how the shared participation of foreign fighters acted as a site of mass convergence and protection that allowed foreign fighters to build new networks, including armed groups, built on a shared domain of installing Islamic forms of governance.

Yet, the greatest challenge to forming armed groups within domestic settings is early detection from the state, as most armed groups do not survive their nascent stages of development. Foreign fighting provided protection from the state to build the expertise necessary to take an armed group through the expansion phase while the isolation from combat all allowed a greater number of foreign fighters to survive and take this expertise with them into the next conflict. As demonstrated in chapter 9, survival is vital for the continuation of foreign fighter networks. The Afghan Network to act as sites of exchange. The Afghan Network shared money, material resources, and expertise that, I argue, increased its resilience against security apparatus. Drawing on the in-depth profiles, I provide examples of the different types of cooperation and its consequence for strengthening armed groups or, at minimum, facilitating their survival.

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[932] Jean-François Ratelle, "North Caucasian Foreign Fighters in Syria and Iraq: Assessing the Threat of Returnees to the Russian Federation," *Caucasus Survey* 4, no. 3 (September 2016): 222, https://doi.org/10.1080/23761199.2016.1234096.

This examination of network formation—and its deviation from domestic network processes—opens the possibility for new research on how deep social networks can be formed during times of conflict. Network formation is observed across the macro (transnational networks), the meso (within armed groups) and the micro (between individual fighters). Networks have a strong socialisation function and the embeddedness within networks, whether formal or informal should play a role in the development of a shared identity and political consciousness of participants.[933] The proximity and protection of foreign fighters in the Afghan conflicts saw the emergence of new armed group networks with new identities, norms and behaviours embedded within a transnational network. This thesis points to the possibility of observing new network formation where actors meet and interact for the first time. The shape of networks arising from other generations of foreign fighters should be further examined to determine if this network formation is a shared trait or specific characteristic of the Afghan conflicts.

Building on the work of Daymon et al., I have also utilised this dataset to examine the positions that foreign fighters hold as they move through armed groups.[934] Chapter 7 examines the expertise development of foreign fighters in the Afghan conflicts. My positions data demonstrates that foreign fighters achieve higher positions as they move between armed groups. While Daymon et al. argue that career progression of Sunni foreign fighters between armed groups is reflective of an increase in expertise, I have argued that in the case of the Afghan Network is more complex. Throughout this thesis, I have demonstrated how the isolation of foreign fighters from the Afghan conflicts resulted in limited combat exposure.[935] Yet, members of the Afghan Network were reified for their expertise allowing them to gain legitimacy throughout the broader jihadist movement. I argue that it is the network effect of this legitimacy, more than the development of conflict expertise, that allowed members of the Afghan Network to rise through the ranks or form their own armed groups. I also outline the real expertise that foreign fighters gained in the Afghan conflicts and how members of the Afghan Network shared and transferred this expertise, as well as with the wider jihadist

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933 Diani and McAdam, *Social Movements and Networks*, 2003, 30.
934 Daymon, de Roy van Zuijdewijn, and Malet, "Career Foreign Fighters."
935 Anas and Hussein, *To The Mountains*, 200.

community. I identify the development of training camps and modules, as well as explosives expertise, and trace the transfer of this expertise to other armed groups.

This thesis challenges the notion that foreign fighters emerge from conflict as 'battle-hardened.' In the case of the Afghan conflicts, most foreign fighters stayed for a limited period for basic training and had no combat exposure. Despite this, many states have taken the blanket stance of revoke citizenship of citizens that chose to participate as foreign fighters. This approach has several drawbacks. First, if foreign fighters arrive and are disillusioned with what they are presented with, preventing their return arbitrarily lengthens their participation, increasing the risk of becoming more integrated. As was seen with veteran foreign fighters from the Afghan conflicts, the introduction of legislation to prevent returnees led to many veterans continuing to other conflict zones when they may have otherwise returned home.[936] Further, a lack of repatriation options, as witnessed after the defeat of ISIS, has led to foreign fighters imprisoned by Kurdish forces, as well as regimes. The role of prisons in the process of radicalisation is well known[937] with ISIS emerging from the defeated, imprisoned members of AQI.[938] Both options—being forced to continue participation in armed groups and the prospective radicalisation in overseas prisons—serve to increase the risk of foreign fighters to both domestic and international security. As advocated by Renard and Coolsaet, repatriation policies need not be an either-or situation. States can, and should, make decisions on repatriation based on a risk assessment grounded in the actual participation of foreign fighters.[939]

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[936] Hamid and Farrall, *The Arabs at War in Afghanistan*, 183.
[937] Elizabeth Mulcahy, Shannon Merrington, and Peter James Bell, "The Radicalisation of Prison Inmates: A Review of the Literature on Recruitment, Religion and Prisoner Vulnerability," *Journal of Human Security* 9, no. 1 (March 31, 2013): 4–14, https://doi.org/10.12924/johs2013.09010004; Andrew Silke, "Terrorists, Extremists and Prison: An Introduction to the Critical Issues," in *Prisons, Terrorism and Extremism* (Routledge, 2013); Lorenzo Vidino and Bennett Clifford, "A Review of Transatlantic Best Practices for Countering Radicalisation in Prisons and Terrorist Recidivism," *Europol Public Information*, 2019, 15, https://www.europol.europa.eu/cms/sites/default/files/documents/a_review_of_transatlantic_best_practices_for_countering_radicalisation_in_prisons_and_terrorist_recidivism.pdf.
[938] Mia Bloom, "Constructing Expertise: Terrorist Recruitment and 'Talent Spotting' in the PIRA, Al Qaeda, and ISIS," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 40, no. 7 (July 3, 2017): 603–23, https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2016.1237219; Jessica D Lewis, "Al-Qaeda in Iraq Resurgent: Breaking the Walls Campaign, Part 1," Middle East Security Report (Institute for the Study of War, 2013), https://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/AQI-Resurgent-10Sept_0.pdf.
[939] Thomas Renard and Rik Coolsaet, "Losing Control Over Returnees?," *Lawfare* (blog), October 13, 2019, http://www.thomasrenard.eu/uploads/6/3/5/8/6358199/losing_control_over_returnees__-_lawfare.pdf.r

Second, those foreign fighters that attempt to return anyway, if successful, may evade security apparatus. Undetected returnees pose a greater security problem than regulated repatriations where monitoring, tracking and reintegration programs can be implemented.[940] Undetected ISIS returnees were responsible for the planning and execution of several attacks against Western Europe, most notably the 2015 attacks in Paris and Brussels, demonstrates the very real risk of undetected returnees.[941] Having a pathway for returnees would allow for greater surveillance and management of foreign fighter returnees.

Third, and often neglected in rhetoric, is the advantage of returnee foreign fighters as a source of intelligence both about the organisations that they join but also fellow citizens who also joined. Little has been written about the potential intelligence value of returned foreign fighters. The prominence gained by the podcast *Caliphate* by the New York Times highlights the desire for information about returnees and their participation in the Islamic State.[942] Journalist Rukmini Callimachi sought to understand how foreign fighters participated in the Islamic State, but also, highlight the dissatisfaction among foreign fighters and their role. Callimachi's subject, Shehroze Chaudhry, has since been charged with terrorism hoax charges after it was proven that he had never travelled to Syria.[943] However, the astronomical rise of Chaudhry's story, the interest and attention with which it was received, reinforces the general lack of available information about how foreign fighters participate in conflict and the public's willingness to readily accept stories of war crimes and torture. There is some evidence of the role in retired fighters in domestic counterterrorism or counter-

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[940] Alastair Reed, Jeanine de Roy van Zuijdewijn, and Edwin Bakker, "Pathways of Foreign Fighters: Policy Options and Their (Un)Intended Consequences," *The International Centre for Counter-Terrorism- The Hague* 6, no. 1 (2015): 6,12, https://doi.org/10.19165/2015.2.01; Renard and Coolsaet, "Losing Control Over Returnees?"; Daniel Byman, "The Jihadist Returnee Threat: Just How Dangerous?: The Jihadist Returnee Threat," *Political Science Quarterly* 131, no. 1 (March 2016): 69–99, https://doi.org/10.1002/polq.12434.

[941] Pokalova, *Returning Islamist Foreign Fighters*, 90–91.

[942] Rukmini Callimachi, "Caliphate," *The New York Times*, March 10, 2018, sec. Podcasts, https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/podcasts/caliphate-isis-rukmini-callimachi.html.

[943] Leyland Cecco, "Canada Drops Charges against Man Who Claimed to Be IS Executioner," *The Guardian*, October 11, 2021, sec. World news, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/oct/11/canada-drops-charges-man-lied-about-being-is-executioner-shehroze-chaudhry-terrorism-hoax-laws.

extremism work. There are two individuals in the Afghan Network who have actively contributed to deradicalization work. Nasir Abas, a former senior figure within Jemaah Islamiyah now works with the Indonesian government in counter-terrorism work. In a deal with the government, Nasir was released from prison in 2004.[944] Nasir is thought to be responsible for the arrest of hundreds of JI members.[945] A comic book has been written about Nasir's life to de-radicalise young people called 'I Found the Meaning of Jihad.'[946] Nasir's de-radicalisation work has led many members of JI consider him a traitor. Baya'sir stated in an interview: 'This is a traitor, a betrayer.'[947] The second is Noman Benotman, whose accounts have featured prominently throughout this thesis. Benotman was the President of the controversial and now defunct counter-extremism organisation, Quilliam Foundation, based in London.[948] Both Nasir and Benotman are viewed as controversial figures[949] but if foreign fighter returnees can act as bridge figures to recruitment,[950] there is the potential for returnees to prevent recruitment of new foreign fighters.

The final empirical chapter examined the role of socialisation. Identifying socialisation processes and their impact poses challenges. As highlighted in Hoover Green's work, there are different degrees of internalisation of socialisation, including modelling expected practices within armed groups simply to fit in, rather than a change of

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944 Milda Istigqomah, "De-Radicalization Program in Indonesian Prisons: Reformation on the Correctional Institution," PDF (1st Australian Counter Terrorism Conference, Security Research Institute (SRI), Edith Cowan University, 2011), 30, http://ro.ecu.edu.au/act/13.
945 *The Convert - Indonesia* (Journeyman Pictures, 2007), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4n0UpcavKQE.
946 Robin Dowell, "Captain Jihad: Ex-Terrorist Is Now Comic Book Hero," *NBC News*, September 9, 2011, https://www.nbcnews.com/id/wbna44449487.
947 Atran, "The Emir."
948 "Former Jihadist Leader Joins Quilliam," *Manchester Evening News*, August 31, 2010, sec. Local News, http://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/local-news/former-jihadist-leader-joins-quilliam-897744; Malia Bouattia, "The Quilliam Foundation Has Closed but Its Toxic Legacy Remains," *Al Jazeera*, April 20, 2021, https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2021/4/20/the-quilliam-foundation-has-closed-but-its-toxic-legacy-remains.
949 In a pinned tweet that features images of Benotman in a suit and one during conflict, reads "When you live an unauthorized life, you will find people who love you and who hate you, some call you a terrorist and some call you a politician, but they all agree that you are the most controversial person." noman benotman [@nbenotman], " عندما تعيش حياة غير مصرح بها ، ستجد من يحبك و من يكرهك ، بعضهم يصفك بالأرهابي و بعضهم يصفك بالسياسي ، و لكنهم جميعاً يتفقون كونك الشخصية الأكثر إثارة للجدل. https://t.co/1tKQHBgWJp," Tweet, *Twitter*, January 1, 2018, https://twitter.com/nbenotman/status/947618835544158209.
950 Bakke, "Help Wanted?," 63; Cilluffo, Cozzens, and Ranstorp, "Foreign Fighters: Trends, Trajectories & Conflict Zones," 11.

beliefs.[951] However, it is well established that the Afghan conflicts were the starting point of major shifts within the ideologies and behaviours of Islamic armed groups. Of note was the spread of Salafi-Jihad among armed groups, including the more extremist Takfiri ideology often referred to as the Jalalabad School. I examine the political education—usually framed as religious education—within the Afghan conflicts to demonstrate the shared methods of formal socialisation among the Afghan Network. I have argued that although grounded in different doctrines of Islamic thought, most foreign fighter groupings in the Afghan conflicts shared a common domain: installing Islamic forms of governance. This domain included overthrowing domestic regimes and installing Islamic governance structures but also the implementation of new governance structures like establishing transnational caliphates. While there was variation between the different groups in terms of beliefs in the Afghan conflicts, this difference has grown overtime, where ideological disagreements among jihadists have led to intra-jihadist violence.[952] I argue that the shared domain of the Afghan Network was sufficient to hold the network together despite differing practices to reach the goal of Islamic governance. In large part, this sufficiency can be attributed to the difficulty of non-state actors obtaining resources and support for opposition. The Afghan Network, built on shared identity and trust, acted as a secure site of exchange. I also outlined the everyday socialising practices among foreign fighters in the Afghan conflicts. Hegghammer notes that many of the practices associated with jihad today—poetry, *anashid*, weeping—were cultivated among foreign fighters in the Afghan conflicts. These same practices were then promoted in the new propaganda that emerged in the Afghan conflicts, namely magazines such as *al-Jihad*.[953]

Taken together, these new ideas and identities embedded in the participation of the Afghan conflicts contributed to the fragmentation of existing armed groups that sent its members to gain experience. While observing the internalisation or transformative outcomes of socialisation processes presents empirical challenges, this chapter drew on cases where veteran foreign fighters splintered from their existing opposition groups to demonstrate the roles of the socialisation in the fragmentation process. The

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[951] Hoover Green, "Armed Group Institutions and Combatant Socialization."
[952] Mohammed M Hafez, "Fratricidal Rebels: Ideological Extremity and Warring Factionalism in Civil Wars," *Terrorism and Political Violence*, no. 3 (2020): 604–29.
[953] Hegghammer, *The Caravan*, 405–8; Hegghammer, "Weeping in Modern Jihadi Groups."

cases of the GIA, JI and ASG share similarities in that each held distinct ideas about acceptable practices of violence in overthrowing the state, as well as the ideal shape of governance if successful from the existing opposition movements within their home states. While literature has focused on the impact of foreign fighters on fragmentation of the groups that they join,[954] to date, there is no explicit analysis of the role of foreign fighter returnees on the fragmentation of the domestic groups that sent them. In the cases of returnee foreign fighters from the Afghan conflicts, we see how returnees' fragment from parent organisation and form their own organisations. As fragmentation is known to add complexity to conflict environments—including increasing the duration of conflicts—it is important to understand the implications of returnee foreign fighters on domestic group cohesion. Future research should consider how the introduction of external ideas can contribute to or drive patterns of fragmentation of armed groups. Observing and identifying changes to political ideas and their root causes poses great challenges to researchers. Returnee foreign fighters offer a traceable actor that may be identified as a proxy for the introduction of external ideas and behavioural norms. Further research is necessary to determine if the relationship between foreign fighter returnees and fragmentation is a product of the specific context and socialisation processes of the Afghan conflicts or can be further extrapolated to other conflict settings.

While this thesis is focused on one generation of foreign fighters, I introduced a framework that includes two other types of integration: embedded and partitioned. The common difference between these two types of integration and the isolation of the Afghan conflicts is the use of foreign fighters in combat roles. I briefly outline the expected differences in foreign fighter trajectories in Chapter 9. In each of the three cases, the participation, and trajectories of the generation of foreign fighters differs from that of the Afghan Network. I have argued that isolated foreign fighters are protected from the state, protected from the conflict and a site of mass convergence of like-minded individuals. This comparison of different generations suggests that the

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[954] Victor Asal and David Malet, "Nobody More Terrible than the Desperate: Conflict Conditions and Rebel Demand for Foreign Fighters," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, August 24, 2021, 1–19, https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2021.1961715; Bakke, "Help Wanted?"

most important difference in the resultant Afghan Network was the protection from the conflict. In the cases of al-Shabaab, the Islamic State and the KEM in Bosnia and Herzegovina, these foreign fighters did not form their own armed groups. I have proposed that participation in combat roles, whilst increasing the expertise of foreign fighters—reduces their capacity to form their own organisation through casualties and time. In the case of embedded fighters, there is the added challenge of being full members of the groups that they join: the intent is not forging group allegiance that might be transferred elsewhere but the strengthening the group that they join. Whereas the Afghan conflicts where foreign fighters were able to build their own armed groups embedded in a transnational network that acted as the site of future cooperation, these later generations of foreign fighters were either full members of the armed group or unaffiliated veterans. This resulted in different opportunities for future violent pathways.

Chapter 9 only provides brief vignettes of other generations of foreign fighters as separate from the Afghan Network, but we know that this generation is inherently linked to other generations of newer foreign fighters. Take for example, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, leader of the Islamic State. Al-Baghdadi didn't travel to the Afghan conflicts but ran his own armed group in Iraq after the US invasion. Al-Baghdadi pledged allegiance to AQI's umbrella group, Mujahideen Shura Council, in 2006 after being released from the US detention centre, Camp Bucca, in 2005. After the death of Zarqawi and subsequent AQI leader, Abu Umar al-Baghdadi, al-Baghdadi was named leader of AQI in 2010.[955] So, although al-Baghdadi was not a member of the Afghan Network, he was deeply connected to the Afghan Network. It would be useful to expand the dataset in a way that demonstrated these connections to subsequent generations as a means of understanding how foreign fighter networks have changed over time. Research should expand to encompass other generations to help demonstrate how the practice of foreign fighting has shifted overtime. The Afghan Network and their impact on international security has led to a global effort to legislate against and prevent foreign fighters. How, then, have the established practices within

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[955] Brian Fishman, "The History of the Islamic State," in *Routledge Handbook of U.S. Counterterrorism and Irregular Warfare Operations*, by Michael A. Sheehan, Erich Marquardt, and Liam Collins, 1st ed. (London: Routledge, 2021), 61, https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003164500-6.

training camps and socialisation changed with this increased securitisation? Do these changes suggest a fundamental shift in how foreign fighters impact conflict or is there a consistency over time? I proposed throughout this thesis that the Afghan Network is fundamentally different from other generations of foreign fighters. While this difference is grounded in the isolation of foreign fighters, this isolation is not devoid of the effects of temporality. As the first 'global' mobilisation of foreign fighters and its resultant mythology, I have demonstrated how the Afghan Network was able to leverage their new identities and transfer their new ideas and expertise throughout the jihadist movement. The Afghan Network fundamentally reshaped future generations of foreign fighters.

An interesting turn in the final months of this thesis has been the emergence of foreign fighters—or foreign volunteers due to their attachment to an Army—in Ukraine after the Russian Invasion. On 27 February 2022, President of Ukraine, Vlodymyr Zelensky, established the International Legion of Territorial Defense of Ukraine.[956] Initial reports suggested over 20,000 foreigners had contacted Ukrainian Embassies and Consulates to volunteer to fight.[957] These numbers have not eventuated, and most foreign fighters travelled from neighbouring states, but there are certainly foreign fighters participating in the conflict.[958] Unlike those foreign fighters that sought to travel to Iraq and Syria—or those examined within this thesis—some states have even given permission for their citizens to join the International Legion.[959] An American volunteer, James Vasquez, has recently returned to America with no threat of charges. Instead, Vasquez, has been received as a hero, publicly tweeting his experiences in both Ukraine and on his return to America. These accolades resound as reports of

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[956] "International Legion of Defence of Ukraine (ILDU): Join Ukraine's Foreign Legion.," accessed March 17, 2022, https://ukrforeignlegion.com/.
[957] Malet, "The Risky Status of Ukraine's Foreign Fighters."
[958] Kacper Rekawek, "A Trickle, Not a Flood: The Limited 2022 Far-Right Foreign Fighter Mobilization to Ukraine," *CTC Sentinel* 15, no. 2 (June 23, 2022): 6–14, https://ctc.westpoint.edu/a-trickle-not-a-flood-the-limited-2022-far-right-foreign-fighter-mobilization-to-ukraine/.
[959] Steven Chase, "Up to Canadians Whether They Fight for Ukraine Foreign Legion, Foreign Minister Says," *The Globe and Mail*, February 27, 2022, https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/article-up-to-individual-canadians-to-decide-if-they-wish-to-join-the/; Mariya Petkova, "Ukraine's Foreign Legion Joins the Battle against Russia," *Al Jazeera*, March 14, 2022, https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/3/14/russia-ukraine-war-international-legion-foreign-fighters.

Vasquez's domestic criminal convictions—driving under the influence and battery—were made public.[960]

The relative acceptance or encouragement of foreign fighters in Ukraine comes at a critical juncture as the terror threat posed by jihadist extremism is being subsumed by the threat of far-right extremism.[961] Despite this confluence of threats, in response to investigations into far-right extremism in the military, the United States Senate Armed Services Committee released a report on 20 July 2022 that stated: 'spending additional time and resources to combat exceptionally rare instances of extremism in the military is an inappropriate use of taxpayer funds, and should be discontinued by the Department of Defense immediately.'[962] The threat of non-Islamic foreign fighters, in conjunction with the rise of far-right extremism, to date, has been viewed as a different beast from its jihadist predecessor. It is claimed that the attachment to the Ukrainian Army, and its vetting process, make this generation of foreign fighters far less problematic to domestic and international security. This threat assessment, however, does not feature granular assessments regarding how these individuals are participating in the conflict or the networks that they formed. While the previous treatment of Islamic foreign fighters—denial of citizenship, lack of repatriation options, the application of counterterrorism laws, and active targeting in airstrikes—did not necessarily improve international security, the contradiction in the differential

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[960] "James Vasquez (@jmvasquez1974)," *Twitter*, accessed July 22, 2022, https://twitter.com/jmvasquez1974.

[961] Joanna Walters and Alvin Chang, "Far-Right Terror Poses Bigger Threat to US than Islamist Extremism Post-9/11," *The Guardian*, September 8, 2021, sec. US news, https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2021/sep/08/post-911-domestic-terror; Vikram Dodd and Jamie Grierson, "Fastest-Growing UK Terrorist Threat Is from Far Right, Say Police," *The Guardian*, September 19, 2019, sec. UK news, https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2019/sep/19/fastest-growing-uk-terrorist-threat-is-from-far-right-say-police; Rik Coolsaet and Thomas Renard, "What the Zeitgeist Can Tell Us About the Future of Terrorism," *The International Centre for Counter-Terrorism – The Hague*, June 9, 2022, https://icct.nl/publication/zeitgeist-future-of-terrorism/; Sonam Sheth and John Haltiwanger, "War at Home: 20 Years after 9/11, Jihadists Are No Longer the Biggest Threat Facing the US," *Business Insider*, September 10, 2021, https://www.businessinsider.com/white-supremacists-biggest-extremist-threat-us-september-11-20th-anniversary-2021-9.

[962] John M Donnelly, "Senate NDAA to Pentagon: 'Immediately' Halt Fight against Extremism," *Roll Call*, July 20, 2022, https://www.rollcall.com/2022/07/20/senate-ndaa-to-pentagon-immediately-halt-fight-against-extremism/; Jordan Williams, "Senate Defense Bill Signals Opposition to Pentagon's Extremism Efforts," *The Hill*, July 20, 2022, https://thehill.com/policy/defense/3567244-senate-defense-bill-signals-opposition-to-pentagons-extremism-efforts/; Susan Ferrechio, "Defense Bill Directs Pentagon to End Costly Search for Extremism in Military Ranks," *The Washington Times*, July 20, 2022, sec. Politics, https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/jul/20/senators-flag-pentagon-excessive-spending-looking-/.

treatment of these foreign fighters creates an unnecessary, and well understood, vulnerability.

This thesis introduced a new theoretical framework to introduce conceptual clarity of how foreign fighters participate in conflict. By focusing on the Afghan Network, I demonstrated how their integration—isolated—determined how and with whom foreign fighters participated in conflict. I then link this experience in conflict with the future trajectories of foreign fighters. In tracing the Afghan Network across time and space, I have demonstrated how distinct the experience of isolation is in contrast to partitioned and embedded foreign fighters. The Afghan Network was able to have such a dramatic impact on domestic and international security because, in contrast to popular interpretations, they lacked the battle-hardened qualities usually associated with the foreign fighter experience. The Afghan conflicts protected foreign fighters from the threats they faced at home and from the conflict itself while socialising individuals from around the world into a shared goal of instituting Islamic governance in its many forms. This framework of integration can be applied to other generations for foreign fighters to understand their unique participation and threat to international security.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Armed Groups in Foreign Fighter Dataset

Group (in dataset)	Full name	Location	Formation	Description
AaI	Ansar al-Islam	Iraqi Kurdistan	2001	Ansar al-Islam is a Kurdish Salafist organization in Iraqi Kurdistan. Ansar al-Islam fought alongside Jahbat al-Nursa in Syria from 2011. Although membership was initially dominated by Kurds, it has expanded to include Sunni Arabs.[963]
AAIA	Aden-Abyan Islamic Army	Yemen	1997	Aden Abyan Islamic Army (AIAA) was formed after the civil war in 1997.[964] The AIAA gained prominence for its

[963] Mapping Militant Organizations, “Ansar Al-Islam,” Stanford University, December 2018, https://cisac.fsi.stanford.edu/mappingmilitants/profiles/ansar-al-islam.
[964] “jaīsh abyan al-islāmī”; Bin Lazraq, “Al-Qīṣah al-Kāmilah Liẓuhūr Tanẓīm al-Qāʻīdah Fī Abīyan [The Full Story of the Emergence of al-Qaeda in Abyan].”

				kidnapping of 16 Western tourists in December 1998.[965] Connected with UK-based cleric Abu Hamza. [966]
AaSE	Ansar al-Sharia Egypt	Egypt	2012	Formed in 2012 calling for the implementation of sharia law and a caliphate. Leader Ahmed Ashush who has ties with AQ.[967]
AFG2	Afghanistan post-2001	Afghanistan	post-2001	Assigned for veteran foreign fighters that were located in Afghanistan post-September 11 attacks but can be identified as not AQ members.
AhaS	Ahrar al Sham	Syria	2012	Ahrar al-Sham is a Sunni Salafist opposition group in Syria. Ahrar al-Sham led the Syrian Islamic Front, which was Syria's largest umbrella opposition group.[968]

[965] Bergen, "Abu Hamza and Yemeni Kidnapping (Excerpt from Holy War Inc)."
[966] "Abu Hamza and the Islamic Army: Kidnapping of Tourists, 28-29 1998," *Al Bab* (blog), February 16, 1999, https://al-bab.com/albab-orig/albab/yemen/hamza/hostage.htm.
[967] Thomas Joscelyn, "Ansar al Sharia Egypt Releases Founding Statement," *FDD's Long War Journal* (blog), November 20, 2012, http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2012/11/_defending_al_qaeda.php.
[968] Mapping Militant Organizations, "Ahrar Al-Sham," Stanford University, April 2019, https://web.stanford.edu/group/mappingmilitants/cgi-bin/groups/view/523.

AjaS	Ajnad al Sham	Syria	2013	Ajnad al-Sham was the second biggest opposition coalition in the Damascus area around 2014 and was less hardline than groups like ANF and ISIS.[969]
AM	al-Mourabitoun	North Africa	2013	Formed in 2013 in a merger between al-Mulathamun Battalion (AMB) and Movement of Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO). Al-Mourabitoun merged with Al Qaeda in the Maghreb (AQIM) in 2015.[970]
AMB	al-Mulathamun Battalion	North Africa	2012	AMB was established by Mokhtar Belmokhtar after he left AQIM.[971] In 2013, AMB merged with MUJAO to form al-Mourabitoon (AM).[972]
ANF	al-Nusra Front // Jabhat al-Nusra	Syria	2011	AQ affiliate in Syria.[973] In 28 July 2016, ANF split with AQ and rebranded themselves as Jabhat Fath al-Sham (Conquest

[969] "The Ajnad Al-Sham Islamic Union," Carnegie Middle East Center, accessed November 26, 2021, https://carnegie-mec.org/diwan/54750.
[970] Counter Extremism Project, "Al-Mourabitoun."
[971] Baba Ahmed, "Leader of Al-Qaida Unit in Mali Quits AQIM," *Associated Press*, December 3, 2013, https://web.archive.org/web/20130121233220/http://bigstory.ap.org/article/leader-al-qaida-unit-mali-quits-aqim, Wayback Machine.
[972] Cabel Weiss, "Alleged Statement from Mokhtar Belmokhtar Denies His Group Swore Allegiance to the Islamic State," FDD's Long War Journal, *Threat Matrix* (blog), May 15, 2015, https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2015/05/alleged-statement-from-mokhtar-belmokhtar-denies-his-group-swore-allegiance-to-the-islamic-state.php.
[973] Charles Lister, "The Dawn of Mass Jihad: Success in Syria Fuels al-Qa`ida's Evolution," *CTC Sentinel* 9, no. 9 (September 7, 2016), https://18.235.207.32/the-dawn-of-mass-jihad-success-in-syria-fuels-al-qaidas-evolution/.

				of the Levant Front) later known as Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS).[974]
AoM	Army of Muhammad	Jordan	early 1990s	AoM was an armed group formed by Khalil al-Deek. Very little information about the group exists beyond references made by Roy.[975]
AQ	al-Qaeda Central	Global	1988	Terrorist organisation formed, reportedly, in 1988 in Afghanistan by Osama bin Laden. First attack in 1998. AQ operatives detonated car bombs in front of US Embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, known as the East Africa Embassy bombings.[976]

[974] *Al Jazeera Exclusive: Former Leader of al-Nusra Front Confirming Split from al-Qaeda*, 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XOJpzGws4mY&feature=emb_logo; Thomas Joscelyn, "Analysis: Al Nusrah Front Rebrands Itself as Jabhat Fath Al Sham," *FDD's Long War Journal* (blog), July 28, 2016, https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2016/07/analysis-al-nusrah-front-rebrands-itself-as-jabhat-fath-al-sham.php; Waleed Abdul Rahman, "Divisions among Radicals after Masri's Surprising Appearance Next to Jolani," *Asharq Al-Awsat*, July 30, 2016, https://eng-archive.aawsat.com/waleed-abdul-rahman/news-middle-east/divisions-among-radicals-masris-surprising-appearance-next-jolani.

[975] Olivier Roy, *Globalised Islam: The Search for a New Ummah* (Hurst & Company, 2004), 298.

[976] Mapping Militant Organizations, "Al Qaeda," Stanford University, January 2019, https://cisac.fsi.stanford.edu/mappingmilitants/profiles/al-qaeda.

AQAP	al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula	Arabian Peninsula	2009	Merger of Saudi and Yemen branches of AQ.[977]
AQI	al-Qaeda in Iraq	Iraq	1999	Formed from Tanzim al-Jihad. AQI renamed to Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) in 2013. Founding leader was Abu Musab al-Zarqawi.[978]
AQIM	al-Qaeda in the Maghreb	North Africa	1998	Originally called Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC). GSPC was a splinter group from GIA in Algeria. Formal alliance between GSPC and AQ in 2006.[979]
AQSP	al-Qaeda in the Sinai Peninsula	Sinai Peninsula	2006	AQSP is an umbrella organisation of armed groups on the peninsula still loyal to AQ. Many groups in Sinai switched loyalty to ISIS.[980]
ASG	Abu Sayyaf Group	Philippines	1991	ASG a splinter group of Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF). Aims to establish an independent Muslim state in

[977] Mapping Militant Organizations, "Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula," Stanford University, August 2018, https://cisac.fsi.stanford.edu/mappingmilitants/profiles/al-qaeda-arabian-peninsula.
[978] Mapping Militant Organizations, "Islamic State," Stanford University, accessed February 7, 2020, https://cisac.fsi.stanford.edu/mappingmilitants/profiles/islamic-state.
[979] Mapping Militant Organizations, "Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb," Stanford University, July 2018, https://cisac.fsi.stanford.edu/mappingmilitants/profiles/aqim.
[980] Evan W Burt, "The Sinai: Jihadism's Latest Frontline," *Wilson Center*, September 13, 2017, https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/the-sinai-jihadisms-latest-frontline.

				southern Philippines. Formed by Abdurajak Abubakar Janjalani who is a veteran of the Soviet-Afghan War.[981]
ASMB	Abu Salim Martyrs' Brigade	Libya	2011	Based in Derna and named after Gaddafi's infamous prison Abu Salim where over 1000 LIFG members were massacred. ASMB is said to be led by LIFG veterans.[982]
BGD	Bangladesh	Bangladesh		Recorded as fighting in Bangladesh but no specific group is identified.
BIF	Benevolence International Foundation	Global	1992	Financial supporter of AQ. Often used as a cover for movement of fighters. The precursor to BIF was the Islamic Benevolence Committee (Lajnar al-Birr al-Islamiah) that formed in 1987 to raise money for fighters in Afghanistan. BIF offices in BiH were raided in 2002 and revealed a large number of AQ documents.[983]

[981] Mapping Militant Organizations, "Abu Sayyaf Group."
[982] Mary Fitzgerald, "A Notorious Prison and Libya's War of Memory," *Newlines Magazine*, March 10, 2021, https://newlinesmag.com/essays/a-notorious-prison-and-libyas-war-of-memory/.
[983] Al Qaeda Sanctions Committee, "Benevolence International Foundation," United Nations Security Council, accessed February 7, 2020, https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/sanctions/1267/aq_sanctions_list/summaries/entity/benevolence-international-foundation.

BiH	Bosnian War	Bosnia and Herzegovina	1992-1995	The dominant contingent of foreign fighters in Bosnia were the KEM but the data isn't granular enough to distinguish between foreign groups.
CHE	Chechen Civil Wars	Chechnya	1994-1996 // 1999-2009	Foreign fighter contingent in Chechnya led by Ibn al-Khattab. Khattab was a veteran of Afghanistan and was independent from AQ. Khattab formed the Islamic International Peacekeeping Brigade in 1998.[984]
DI	Dural Islam	Indonesia and SEA	1942	Islamic movement in Indonesia. In the 1980s, most of DI's senior leadership were imprisoned. Two senior figures, Abdullah Sungkar and Abu Bakar Ba'syir, organised for the training for members in the Soviet-Afghan War from Malaysia. Split in 1993 to form Jemaah Islamiyya.[985]
EIJ	Egyptian Islamic Jihad // al-Jihad al-Islami al-Masri	Egypt	1979	Also known as al-Jihad or the Jihad Group. Splintered from the Muslim Brotherhood. Responsible for the assassination of

[984] Al-Suwailem, *Memories of Amir Khattab*.

[985] Mapping Militant Organizations, "Jemaah Islamiyah," Stanford University, June 2018, https://cisac.fsi.stanford.edu/mappingmilitants/profiles/jemaah-islamiyah.

				President Anwar Sadat in 1981. Formally merged with AQ in 1998.[986]
ETH	Ethiopia	Ethiopia		Fighter identified as being in Ethiopia but no group is identified.
FIS	Islamic Salvation Front	Algeria	1989	Moderate Islamic political party in Algeria. In 1991, the Algerian government arrested its leaders and prevented democratic elections that the FIS was predicted to win.[987]
GI	Islamic Group // al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya	Egypt	1970	Commonly referred to as the Islamic Group. Radical group that formed in opposition to the Muslim Brotherhood's renunciation of violence in the 1970s. GI signed a ceasefire with the Egyptian government in 1997. The other major group at the time was EIJ.[988]
GIA	Groupe Islamique Arme	Algeria	1992	Splinter group of FIS. Founded by veteran foreign fighters from the Afghan conflicts who disagreed with FIS'

[986] Mapping Militant Organizations, "Egyptian Islamic Jihad," Stanford University, October 2015, https://cisac.fsi.stanford.edu/mappingmilitants/profiles/egyptian-islamic-jihad.
[987] Mapping Militant Organizations, "Groupe Islamique Arme," Stanford University, July 2018, https://cisac.fsi.stanford.edu/mappingmilitants/profiles/groupe-islamique-arme.
[988] Mapping Militant Organizations, "Al Jama'a Al-Islamiya," Stanford University, August 1, 2012, https://web.stanford.edu/group/mappingmilitants/cgi-bin/groups/view/265?highlight=April+19.

				dedication to democratic process. GIA was responsible for terrorist attacks throughout Europe.[989]
GICM	Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group	Morocco	1993	GICM is a Sunni Islamic militant group formed by veterans of SAW. GICM was an initially allied with the LIFG. Disbanded 2000s.[990]
HAM	Hamas	Palestine	1987	Hamas is an offshoot of the Muslim Brotherhood in Palestine. Hamas is Sunni Islamist in contrast to PLO that is more secular and nationalist. Has formed Palestinian Authority in conjunction with its competitor, Fatah.[991]
HDS	Houmat al-Da'wa al-Salafyyia // Defenders of Salafist Preaching	Algeria	1996	HDS was led by Kada Ben Chiha who left the GIA.[992]

[989] Mapping Militant Organizations, “Groupe Islamique Arme.”
[990] Mapping Militant Organizations, “Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group,” Stanford University, July 2018, https://cisac.fsi.stanford.edu/mappingmilitants/profiles/moroccan-islamic-combatant-group.
[991] Counter Extremism Project, “Hamas,” Counter Extremism Project, accessed February 12, 2020, https://www.counterextremism.com/threat/hamas.
[992] Anneli Botha, “Terrorism in the Maghreb” (ISS Monograph Series, June 2008), https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/103660/MONO144FULL.pdf.

HEZ	Hezbollah	Lebanon	1983	Shia military and political group based in Lebanon. Hezbollah formed during the Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon in 1982.[993]
HUJI	Harakat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami	Pakistan	1979	Deobandi militant founded in Pakistan with branches in Bangladesh. Founded by veterans of the Afghan conflicts. Under pressure from ISI, merged with HuM to form Harkat-ul-Ansar (HuA) in 1993. Members were also active in Tajikistan and Chechnya in 1990s.[994]
HUJI-B	Harakat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami Bangladesh	Bangladesh	1992	HUJI-B was f formally founded on 30 October 1992 at the Jatiya Press Club in Dhaka by veterans of the Afghan conflicts but was reported as operating in Afghanistan from 1989.[995] HUJI-B is considered a first-generation militant group of Bangladesh alongside Muslim Millat Bahini (MMB)

993 Mapping Militant Organizations, "Hezbollah," Stanford University, July 2019, https://cisac.fsi.stanford.edu/mappingmilitants/profiles/hezbollah.

994 Mapping Militant Organizations, "Harkat-Ul-Jihadi al-Islami," Stanford University, July 2019, https://cisac.fsi.stanford.edu/mappingmilitants/profiles/harkat-ul-jihadi-al-islami.

995 Matiur Rahman, "Such Brutality Must End," *Prothomalo English*, August 23, 2019, https://en.prothomalo.com/opinion/Such-brutality-must-end; R Upadhyay, "Harkat-Ul-Jihad-al-Islami Bangladesh- A Cocktail of ISI, Al-Qaeda and Taliban," *Intellbriefs* (blog), August 10, 2007, http://intellibriefs.blogspot.com/2007/08/harkat-ul-jihad-al-islami-bangladesh.html; South Asia Terrorism Portal, "Harkat-Ul-Jihad-al-Islami (HuJI), Extremist Group, Bangladesh," accessed April 6, 2021, https://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/bangladesh/terroristoutfits/huj.htm.

				that was established in 1989. [996] HUJI-B fighters are known as ‘Bengali Taliban.’[997] One of HUJI-B’s slogans was: “Amra Sobai Hobo Taliban, Bangla Hobe Afghanistan (We will all become Taliban and we will turn Bangladesh into Afghanistan).[998]
HUM	Harakat-ul-Mujahedeen	Pakistan	1985	Splintered from from HuJi in 1985 but rejoined in 1993 to form Harkat-ul-Ansar (HuA). HuA later renamed back to HuM.[999]
IJM	Islamic Jihad Movement	Yemen	1990-1992	Al-Fadhli was the leader of a group known as the Islamic Jihad Movement—also referred to as the Islamic Jihad Movement (IJM) and Islamic Jihad Organization (IJO).[1000]

[996] Animesh Roul, “Al-Qaeda-Linked Group HUJI-B Attempts to Regroup in Bangladesh,” *Terrorism Monitor* 17, no. 20 (October 23, 2019), https://jamestown.org/program/al-qaeda-linked-group-huji-b-attempts-to-regroup-in-bangladesh/.

[997] Roul; Upadhyay, “Harkat-Ul-Jihad-al-Islami Bangladesh- A Cocktail of ISI, Al-Qaeda and Taliban.”

[998] Roul, “Al-Qaeda-Linked Group HUJI-B Attempts to Regroup in Bangladesh.”

[999] Mapping Militant Organizations, “Harakat-Ul-Mujahedeen,” Stanford University, July 2019, https://cisac.fsi.stanford.edu/mappingmilitants/profiles/harakat-ul-mujahedeen.

[1000] Gabriel Koehler-Derrick, “A False Foundation? AQAP, Tribes and Ungoverned Spaces in Yemen” (Combating Terrorism Centre, September 2011), 23–24, https://ctc.usma.edu/a-false-foundation-aqap-tribes-and-ungoverned-spaces-in-yemen/; Eric Watkins, “Landscape Of Shifting Alliances,” *Terrorism Monitor* 2, no. 7 (April 8, 2004), https://jamestown.org/program/landscape-of-shifting-alliances-2/.

				The IJM supported the President Ali Abdullah Saleh I nthe Yemen Civil War.[1001]
IJMB	Islamic Jihad Movement of Bangladesh	Bangladesh		Islamic group based in Bangladesh supported by AQ.[1002]
IMC	Islamic Movement for Change	Saudi Arabia	1995	The IMC is most connected to the 13 November 1995 bombing of residences in the Olaya area of Riyadh that was housing American troops. The bombing, detonated from a truck, killed five American soldiers and two Indian soldiers and injured 60.[1003] In 1996, Saudi Arabia arrested four men, three of whom had fought in Afghanistan, for the attack.[1004]
IND	Independent			Assigned when the fighter is not a member of a particular group but is participating in violence.

[1001] "ṭāriq al-faḍlī..sīrah dhātīyah [Tariq al-Fadli..a Biography]," *Al Jazeera*, January 4, 2010, https://www.aljazeera.net/news/reportsandinterviews/2010/1/4/طارق-الفضلي-سيرة-ذاتية; Robert F. Worth, "Ex-Jihadist Defies Yemen's Leader, and Easy Labels," *The New York Times*, February 26, 2010, sec. World, https://www.nytimes.com/2010/02/27/world/middleeast/27tareq.html.
[1002] Jalaluddin Haqqani, "Letters of Support for Islamic Jihad Movement of Bangladesh," *Combating Terrorism Center at West Point*, 1997 1993, AFPG-2002-800928, https://ctc.usma.edu/harmony-program/letters-of-support-for-islamic-jihad-movement-of-bangladesh-original-language-2/.
[1003] "Car Bomb Destroyed Military Building"; "dirasat tawthīqīyat litfajīr maqari bʻthat al-tadrīb al-ʻskarīyah al-amrīkīyah fī madīnat al-rīāḍ."
[1004] "dirasat tawthīqīyat litfajīr maqari bʻthat al-tadrīb al-ʻskarīyah al-amrīkīyah fī madīnat al-rīāḍ."

ISIS	Islamic State	Syria and Iraq	2013	Also known as ISIL and IS. Name changed from AQI in 2013. Before AQI, the armed group was known as Jama'at al-Tawid. Held large swaths of Syrian and Iraqi territory 2013-2014. In 2017, ISIS had lost all territorial control.[1005]
JaS	Jund al-Sham	Afghanistan	1999	First armed group formed by Zarqawi in Afghanistan after his release from prison in 1999.[1006]
JEM	Jaish-e-Mohammed	Pakistan	1994	Sunni extremist group operating in Kashmir. Splinter of HUM.[1007]
JI	Jemaah Islamiyya	Indonesia and SEA	1993	Splinter group from Darul Islam. Disagreement of formation date from late 1980s to early 1990s. JI has strong ties with Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in Philippines. Responsible for the Bali Bombings in 2002.[1008]
JFS	Jabhat Fatah al-Sham	Syria	2016	Splinter group from ANF in Syria led by Abu Muhammad al-Jolani. Became Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) in 2017 after merging with four other groups.

[1005] Mapping Militant Organizations, “Islamic State.”
[1006] Counter Extremism Project, “Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi,” Counter Extremism Project, February 19, 2016, https://www.counterextremism.com/extremists/abu-musab-al-zarqawi.
[1007] Mapping Militant Organizations, “Jaish-e-Mohammed,” Stanford University, July 2018, https://cisac.fsi.stanford.edu/mappingmilitants/profiles/jaish-e-mohammed.
[1008] Mapping Militant Organizations, “Jemaah Islamiyah.”

JMB	Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh	Bangladesh	1998	JMB is a splinter group of HUJI-B. JMB first came to the attention of authorities in 2002. In 2007, the top six leaders of JMB were executed and the group has since lost significant influence.[1009]
JNIM	Jama'at al Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin	North Africa	2017	JNIM is a merger of AM, Ansar Dine and AQIM led by Iyad Ag Ghaly.[1010]
KOS	Kosovo	Kosovo		Most foreign fighters were associated with the KLA, but this is not explicit in the data.
KMM	Kumpulan Mujahidin Malaysia	Malaysia	1995	Veteran foreign fighter, Zainon Ismail (Cikgu Non), established Kumpulan Mujahidin Malaysia (also referred to as the Malaysian Mujahidin Movement) in 1995.[1011] The KMM sought to overthrow the Malaysian government and establish an Islamic state—Daulah Islamiyah Nusantara—throughout Southeast Asia.[1012]

[1009] Md. Nurul Momen, "Jamaat-Ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh: Analysis of Organizational Design and Activities," *Dynamics of Asymmetric Conflict*, September 16, 2020, 1–13, https://doi.org/10.1080/17467586.2020.1821072.
[1010] Joscelyn, "Analysis," March 13, 2017.
[1011] "Kumpulan Mujahidin Malaysia (KMM)"; Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict, "Killing Marwan in Mindanao," 2; Aslam, "A Critical Study of Kumpulan Militant Malaysia," 102.
[1012] Aslam, "A Critical Study of Kumpulan Militant Malaysia," 102.

KWT	Gulf War	Kuwait	1991	Assigned for veteran foreign fighters that fought for Kuwait during the Gulf War.
LeT	Lashkar-e-Taiba	Pakistan (Kashmir)	1990	Founded by the ISI during the Afghan conflicts. Trained and fought in Afghanistan and re-located to Kashmir region.[1013]
LIFG	Libyan Islamic Fighting Group	Libya	1995	Prior to SAW, there was a secret, unnamed opposition group operating in Libya. LIFG itself was first identified in 1995. Allegedly connected with AQ but had a hostile relationship with GIA. Disbanded in 2010 after renouncing violence in a deal with the Gaddafi government.[1014]
MaD	Majmouat al-Denniyah	Lebanon	1996	MaD was established by veteran foreign fighter, Bassam Kanj (Abu Aisha).[1015] Kanj recruited between 200-300 fighters.[1016] Kanj established training camps in Dinniyeh in Northern

[1013] Mapping Militant Organizations, "Lashkar-e-Taiba," Stanford University, June 2018, https://cisac.fsi.stanford.edu/mappingmilitants/profiles/lashkar-e-taiba.

[1014] Mapping Militant Organizations, "Libyan Islamic Fighting Group," Stanford University, July 2018, https://cisac.fsi.stanford.edu/mappingmilitants/profiles/libyan-islamic-fighting-group; Gary Gambill, "The Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG)," *Terrorism Monitor* 3, no. 6 (May 5, 2005), https://jamestown.org/program/the-libyan-islamic-fighting-group-lifg/.

[1015] Gambill, "Bin Laden's Network in Lebanon"; Abbas, "The Islamist Groups in Tripoli," 36.

[1016] Joshua L Gleis, "National Security Implications of Al-Takfir Wal-Hijra," *Al Nakhlah* Spring 2005, no. 3 (2005): 2, https://ciaotest.cc.columbia.edu/olj/aln/aln_spring05/aln_spring05c.pdf; Are Knudsen, "Islamism in the Diaspora: Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon," *Journal of Refugee Studies* 18, no. 2 (June 1, 2005): 14, https://doi.org/10.1093/refuge/fei022.

				Lebanon.[1017] On New Year's Eve 1999, Kanj launched a pre-emptive attack on an army patrol and captured a nearby radio station.[1018] Kanj was killed by Lebanese security forces on 31 December 1999/1 January 2000 and most members of MaD were killed or arrested.[1019]
MaH	Muhammad al-Hami Battalion	Libya	1990s	Very little information is known about the battalion beyond the mentions by Roy.[1020]
MBY	Muslim Brotherhood Yemen	Yemen		Muslim Brotherhood Yemen
MEI	Movement for an Islamic State	Algeria	1992	An armed group during the Algerian Civil War formed by Abdelkader Chebouti and Said Mekhloufi and Azzedin Ba'a.[1021]

[1017] Gambill, "Bin Laden's Network in Lebanon."
[1018] Tine Gade, "Fatah Al-Islam in Lebanon: Between Global and Local Jihad" (Norwegien Defence Research Establishment, 2007), 15, https://publications.ffi.no/nb/item/asset/dspace:3400/07-02727.pdf.
[1019] Al-Mawla, "min al-jihādīyah al-waṭanīyah al-salafīyah īlá al-salafīyah al-jihādīyah"; Barakat, "min majmū'at al- ḍīnīyah ilá ṣawāṛīkh al-qalīlīyah marwaran fatḥ al-islām: al-qā'idah fī lubnān ṣunduq barīd iqlīmī am ḥāl jihadīyah? [From the 'Dhinniyyah Group' to the few missiles, passing by 'Fatah al-Islam': Al-Qaeda in Lebanon, a regional 'mailbox', or a jihadist situation?]."
[1020] Roy, *Globalised Islam*, 298.
[1021] Mohammed M Hafez, "Armed Islamist Movements and Political Violence in Algeria," *Middle East Journal* 54, no. 4 (2000): 574, https://www.jstor.org/stable/4329544.

MILF	Moro Islamic Liberation Front	Philippines	1977	Formally known as New Moro National Liberation Front, split from MNLF in 1977. Seeks an autonomous state or region in Southern Philippines.[1022]
MJIM	Moroccan Islamic Youth Movement	Morocco	mid-1990s	Militant armed group in Morocco with several SAW veterans.[1023] Very little is known about the group.
MJN	Muhammad Jamal Network	North Africa	2011	Network established by Muhammad Jamal. Set up training camps and acquired weapons. Connected with AQ and AQAP.[1024]
NPFL	National Patriotic Front of Liberia	Liberia	1989	Libreian rebel group that forught during the First Liberian Civil War led by Charles Taylor.
PSE	Palestine	Palestine		Assigned when the fighter participated in conflict in Palestin, but the group is not clear.
RIM	Rohingya Islamic Front	Myanmar		Islamic armed group in Burma.[1025] Featured in a letter of recommendation from 1997.

[1022] Mapping Militant Organizations, "Moro Islamic Liberation Front," Stanford University, January 2019, https://cisac.fsi.stanford.edu/mappingmilitants/profiles/moro-islamic-liberation-front.
[1023] Gérard Chaliand and Arnaud Blin, *The History of Terrorism: From Antiquity to ISIS* (University of California Press, 2016), 303.
[1024] Al Qaeda Sanctions Committee, "Muhammad Jamal Network (MJN)," United Nations Security Council, April 17, 2018, https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/sanctions/1267/aq_sanctions_list/summaries/entity/muhammad-jamal-network-%28mjn%29.
[1025] Haqqani, "Letters of Support for Islamic Jihad Movement of Bangladesh."

RUF	Revolutionary United Front	Sierra Leone	1991	Rebel group in Sierra Leonne. Trained by Gaddafi in Libya.
SDN	Sudan	Sudan		AQ and other armed groups relocated to Sudan after Afghanistan. Sudan used when the group is unclear but also to provide temporal clarity.
SM	Southern Movement	Yemen	2007	The SM began as a peaceful protest movement seeking succession from Northern Yemen. The SM then took up arms against the Yemen government.[1026]
SOM	Somalia	Somalia		Veteran foreign fighters joined both AIAI and al-Shabaab in Somalia. As some AQ members participated in both armed groups, the more general assignment of 'Somalia' is used. Further details about individual participation are included in the notes within the dataset.
TAK	Independent Takfiri Group	Afghanistan		Unnamed and unallied group of Takfiri fighters operating in Afghanistan.

[1026] Linah Alsaafin, "Who Are South Yemen's Separatists?," *Al Jazeera*, September 20, 2019, https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/9/20/who-are-south-yemens-separatists; "About the Southern Movement (Al-Hirak)," *Southern Movement* (blog), accessed November 26, 2021, http://www.southernhirak.org/p/abouthirak.html.

TJK	Tajikistan Civil War	Tajikistan	1992-1997	Used for all opposition groups during the Tajik Civil War. Usually associated with the foreign fighters who joined Ibn al-Khattab.
TLB	Taliban	Afghanistan	1994	The Taliban took control of Afghanistan between 1996-2001. The Taliban regained control of Afghanistan in 2021.
TRIP	Tripoli Brigade	Libya	2011	The Tripoli Brigade, also known as 'February 17 Brigade ', was one of the largest militias during the Libyan Uprising and was led by Abdelhakim Belhaj.[1027] In August 2011, the Tripoli Brigade that tool control of Gaddafi's compound, Bab al-Aziziya.[1028]
VoC	Vanguards of the Conquest	Egypt	1993	The Vanguards of the Conquest is a splinter group of the EIJ but has since re-merged.
YEM	Yemen	Yemen		Assigned for veteran foreign fighters that fought during the Yemen Civil War but the group that they joined is unclear.

[1027] "'abd al-Ḥakīm Belhāj"; Rajavan, "Riḥalat 'abd al-Ḥakīm Belhāj Min al-Taṭruf Ilá Barīq al-Māl Wal-Sīāsah [Abdelhakim Belhaj's Journey from Extremism to the Glamour of Money and Politics]"; "Abdul Hakim Belhaj."
[1028] "'abd al-Ḥakīm Belhāj"; Rajavan, "Riḥalat 'abd al-Ḥakīm Belhāj Min al-Taṭruf Ilá Barīq al-Māl Wal-Sīāsah [Abdelhakim Belhaj's Journey from Extremism to the Glamour of Money and Politics]"; "Abdul Hakim Belhaj."

	There were multiple armed groups led by veteran foreign fighters from the Afghan conflicts.

Appendix B

Template of the Foreign Fighter Profiles

Foreign Fighter Name:

Groups:
Position:
Years in Afghanistan:
Kunyas:

Additional Resources not included and why:

Background: Biographical history of the foreign fighter

Skills: What foreign fighter was trained in or specialises in

Training: Where foreign fighter was trained and in what.

Operations: What violent operations has the individual participated in or overseen either in Afghanistan or in subsequent armed groups.

Materials: Who paid for their travel? How did the individual or armed group acquire its resources? Were they supported by other armed groups?

Cohesion: Were there any issues of cohesion or tension between the individual and group, or the group they joined and other groups. Was there any group fragmentation?