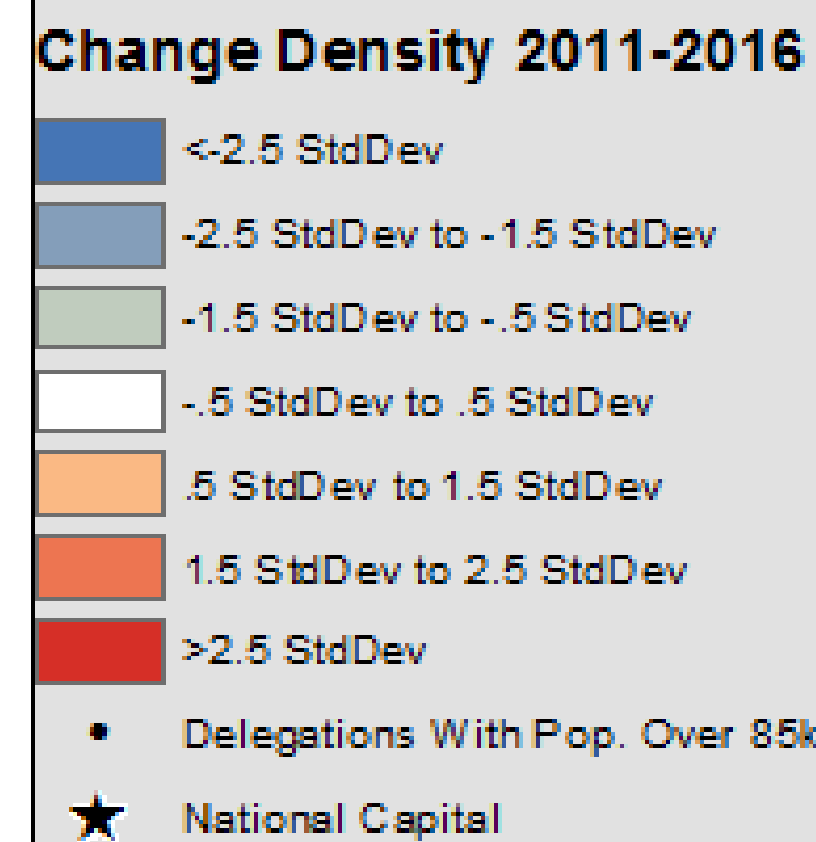
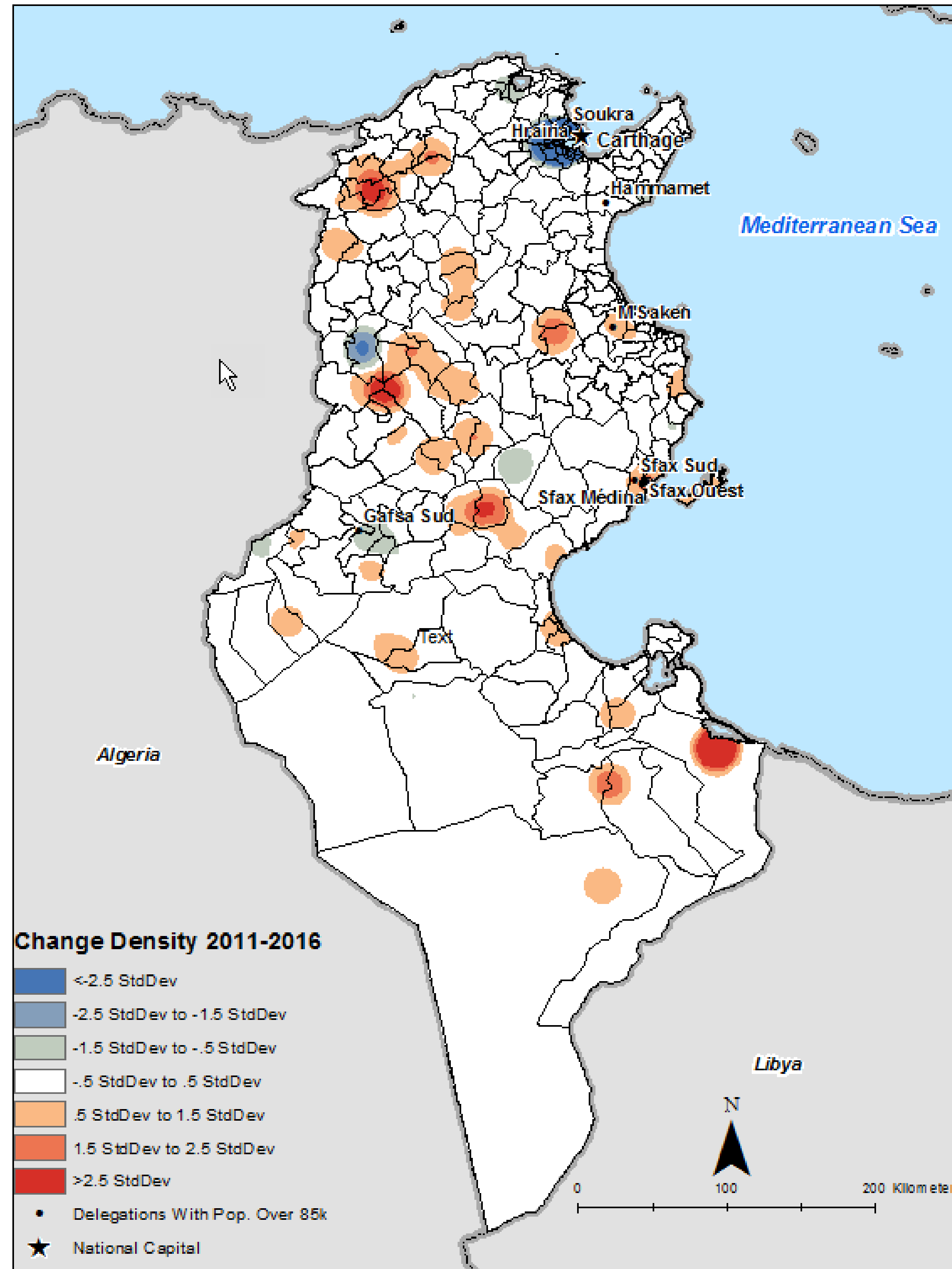
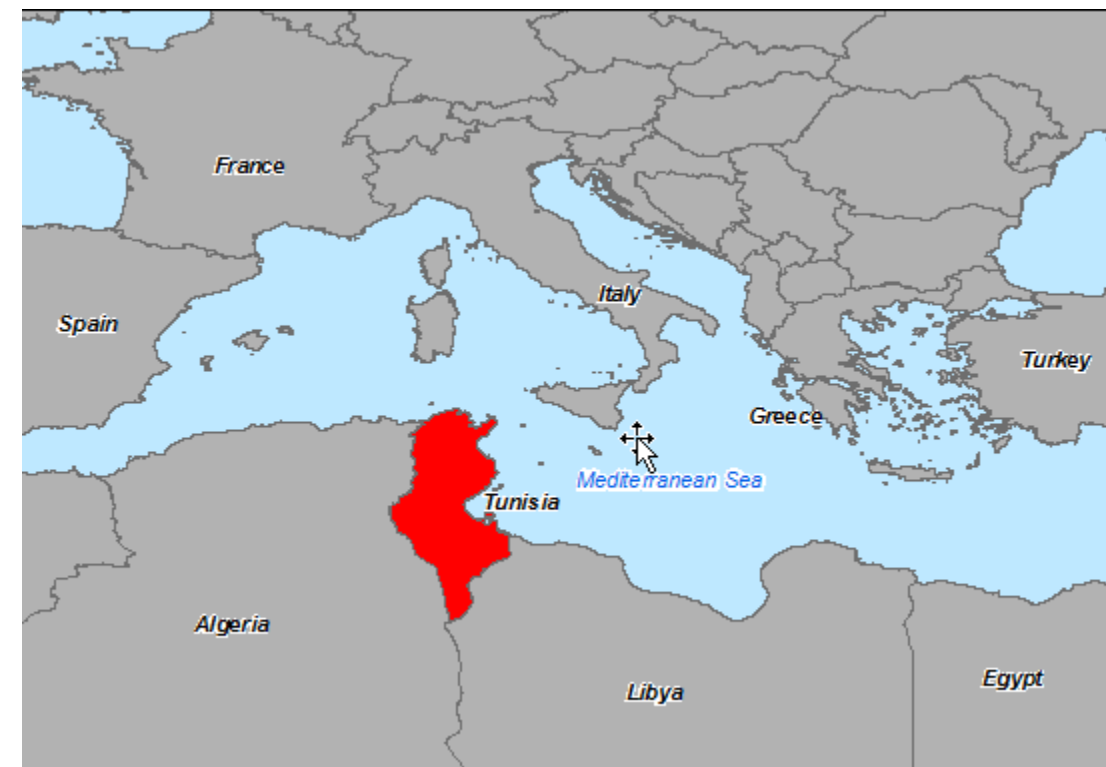


TUNISIA: THE ARAB SPRING SUCCESS STORY?

A Change Density Analysis of Incidents of Political Violence in Tunisia 2011-2016

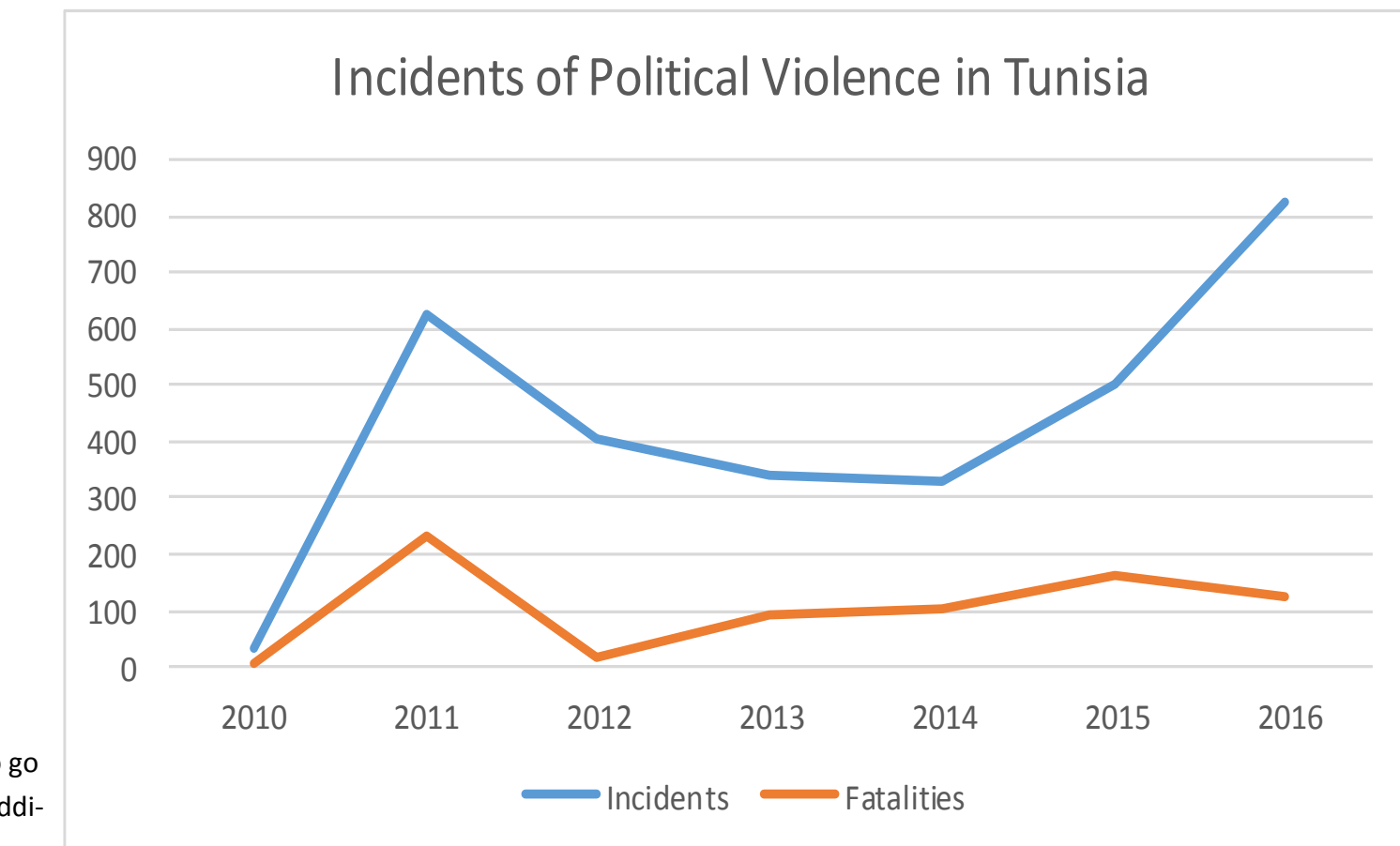
BACKGROUND

In December 2010, Tunisia became the birthplace of the phenomenon that soon came to be known as the Arab Spring. The Tunisian public's cry for democracy after decades of dictator rule spread to its Middle Eastern and North African neighbors. Unfortunately, Tunisia is now considered as an outlier of success from the Arab Spring; a country that was able to democratize without falling into civil war or reverting back to the previous regime.¹ It is now "the first Arab country listed as "free" by the U.S.-based democracy advocacy group Freedom House in over 40 years."² However, treating it as a success story would be a pitfall that could lead to policy-makers taking its stability for granted.³ Indeed, exclamations of success are tempered by a great deal of turmoil and political violence that could derail the progress Tunisia has made. Conflict has put a strain on the delicate balance between freedoms and security.⁴ It has also tempted policy-makers to use a heavy-handed security approach which diverts attention from the country's economic necessities. There are many scenarios that can threaten this still-fragile state, including incidents of violence and terrorism.⁵ Internal conflict from its bordering neighbor Libya has also spilled over to imperil the country's stability.⁶



RESULTS

This analysis produced three insights regarding political violence in Tunisia. The first is that while the overall number of violent incidents in Carthage, the nation's capital, has gone down dramatically since 2011, trends from the past two years show that violence is actually *increasing* in that area. The second is that, unsurprisingly, the number of violent incidents near Tunisia's border with Libya has gone up every year. And the third is that three of the four areas with the largest increase in incidents of political violence are in rural areas, indicating the urban-rural divide that precipitated the revolution may still be an issue.



While the number of incidents of Political Violence continues to go up in Tunisia, the incidents have a diverse geographic spread. Additionally, the number of fatalities has remained at or around the same level for the last few years.

PROJECT GOAL and SPATIAL QUESTIONS

This project's primary goal is to determine the change (increase or decrease) in political violence from 2011 through 2016, and where that change is taking place. In doing so, it will endeavor to answer two spatial questions: a) Where has violent conflict been geographically located in Tunisia since the Arab Spring?; and, b) What areas of Tunisia have shown the greatest change (increase or decrease) in political violence in the last five years? The results will hopefully form a foundation, or supplement, for further empirically-based analysis on the matter.

METHODOLOGY

In order to answer the spatial questions presented, this project utilized data from the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED) on incidents of political violence, and census data from Tunisia's National Institute of Statistics. First, the census data was joined to boundary data by delegation. The ACLED data was then converted using a kernel density analysis in order to indicate the location and density of violent incidents. It then used a raster calculation tool to subtract the incident density from one year to the next (i.e. 2016—2015) to create a final visual presentation of the change (shown in the maps on this poster). The data was also used to perform a similar change density analysis using vector techniques; however, the results of those analyses proved to be inconclusive.

REFERENCES

Cartographer: Drew Kenally
 Date Produced: May 8, 2017
 Developed For: DHP207: GIS for International Applications; The Fletcher School at Tufts University
 Projected Coordinate System: WGS_1984_UTM_Zone_32N ; Geographic Coordinate System: GCS_WGS_1984
 Sources: Conflict Data: Armed Conflict Location and Event Data (ACLED); Census Data: Tunisia National Institute of Statistics (NIS); Administrative Boundaries: GADM; Water Background: ESRI; Picture of Protest: Amine Ghrabi via Flickr
 Footnotes:
¹Shelly Culbertson. "Tunisia is an Arab Success Story." *The Observer*; April 20, 2016. Last accessed on April 12, 2017 at <http://observer.com/2016/04/tunisia-is-an-arab-spring-success-story/>
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