YEMEN AS A WEAK STATE: CONTEXTUALIZING THE YEMENI CIVIL WARS OF 1962 AND 2014 IN REGIONAL POLITICS

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis aims to analyse the Yemeni civil wars of 1962 and 2014 by using weak state literature and contextualize them in the regional politics of the 1960s and the 2010s. Yemen has become a battlefield for Egyptian-Saudi rivalry in the Arab Cold War through the 1962-70 Yemeni civil war and for Saudi-Iranian rivalry in the Middle East Cold War because of the Yemeni civil war (2014-). This thesis argues that both of the wars have been results of first and foremost internal Yemeni problems and their roots have gone back to decades; however, Yemen has easily become subject to the regional competition of the 1960s and the 2010s through these wars since it has been a weak state. The Yemeni civil wars have been shaped by mainly two interlinked environments: domestic, and regional. This thesis advocates that Yemeni civil wars have fairly reflected the Middle Eastern politics; so, analyzing regional politics will give a framework to interpret the wars in the regional context.

Keywords: the 1962-70 Yemeni civil war, the Yemeni civil war (2014-), weak state, regional politics

ÖZ

BİR ZAYIF DEVLET OLARAK YEMEN: 1962 VE 2014 YEMEN İÇ SAVAŞLARININ BÖLGESEL SİYASETTE BAĞLAMSALLAŞTIRILMASI

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Bu tez, zayıf devlet literatürünü kullanarak 1962 ve 2014 Yemen iç savaşlarını analiz etmeyi ve 1960'ların ve 2010'ların bölgesel siyaseti içinde onları bağlamsallaştırmayı amaçlamaktadır. Yemen, 1962-70 Yemen iç savaşı nedeniyle Arap Soğuk Savaşı'nda Mısır-Suudi rekabeti için ve Yemen iç savaşı (2014-) nedeniyle Orta Doğu Soğuk Savaşı'nda Suudi-İran rekabeti için bir savaş alanı haline gelmiştir. Bu tez, her iki savaşın da ilk ve her şeyden önce Yemenin iç sorunlarının sonucu olduğunu ve köklerinin onlarca yıl öncesine gittiği belirtilmektedir. Ancak Yemen, zayıf bir devlet olduğu için bu savaşlarla 1960'ların ve 2010'ların bölgesel rekabetine kolayca maruz kaldı. Yemen iç savaşları temel olarak birbirine bağlı iki ortam tarafından şekillendirilmiştir: iç ve bölgesel. Bu tez, Yemen iç savaşlarının Ortadoğu siyasetini oldukça iyi yansıttığını; bu nedenle, bölgesel siyaseti analiz etmek, savaşları bölgesel bağlamda yorumlayacak bir çerçeve sağlayacağını savunmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: 1962-70 Yemen iç savaşı, Yemen iç savaşı (2014-), zayıf devlet, bölgesel politika

To My Dear Mother and All Yemeni Children

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PLAGIARISM iii
ABSTRACT iv
ÖZ vi
DEDICATION viii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS ix
TABLE OF CONTENTS x
LIST OF TABLES xii
LIST OF ABBREVATIONS xiii
CHAPTER
1. INTRODUCTION 1
1.1. Literature Review of the 1962-70 Yemeni Civil War and the Yemeni Civil War (2014-) 2
1.2. Weak State Literature 9
1.3. Methodology 19
1.4. The Contents 20
2. THE REGIONAL CONTEXT OF THE 1960S- THE ARAB COLD WAR.. 23
2.1. Introduction 23
2.2. Middle Eastern Politics from the End of the Second World War to the Egyptian Revolution of 1952 24
2.3. The Middle East Politics during the Arab Cold War 25
2.4. The 1962-70 Yemeni Civil War and the Collapse of Pan Arabism 40
2.5. Conclusion 42
3. THE 1962-70 YEMENI CIVIL WAR 43
3.1. Introduction 43
3.2. A History of Coups and Yemeni Politics Since 1940s to Early 1960s..... 44
3.3. The Yemeni Civil War 49
3.4. The Six-Day War and End of the War 57
3.5. The Role of External Powers 61

3.5.1. Egyptian Role 61
3.5.2. Saudi Role 66
3.5.3. Israeli Role 71
3.5.4. Soviet Role 72
3.5.5. United States' Role 76
3.5.6. The British Role 82
3.6. Conclusion 84
4. THE MIDDLE EASTERN POLITICS AFTER THE 2003 IRAQI WAR 86
4.1. Introduction 86
4.2. The Middle Eastern Politics From 2003 to the Arab Uprisings 87
4.3. The Middle Eastern Politics in the Aftermath of the Arab Uprisings 98
4.4. Conclusion 106
5. THE YEMENI CIVIL WAR (2014-) 108
5.1. Introduction 108
5.2. Yemeni Politics in the 2000s 109
5.3. The Yemeni Uprising and the Civil War (2014-) 116
5.4. Role of External Powers 129
5.4.1. Iranian Role 129
5.4.2. Saudi Role 137
5.4.3. United Arab Emirates' Role 143
5.4.4. Israeli Role 148
5.4.5. Russian Role 149
5.4.6. United States' Role 150
5.5. Conclusion 153
6. CONCLUSION 155
BIBLIOGRAPHY 177
APPENDICES
A. MAPS / HARİTALAR 201
B. TURKISH SUMMARY / TÜRKÇE ÖZET 205
C. TEZ İZİN FORMU / THESIS PERMISSION 221

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. 1. Histories of the 1962-70 Yemeni Civil War and Yemeni Civil War (2014-) 162
Table 1. 2. Roles of Regional Actors in the 1962-70 Yemeni Civil War and the Yemeni Civil War (2014-) 168
Table 1. 3. The Roles of International Actors in the 1962-70 Yemeni Civil War and the Yemeni Civil War (2014-) 172

LIST OF ABBREVATIONS

AQAP	Al Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula
EVI	Economic Vulnerability Index
FLOSY	Front for the Liberation of Occupied South Yemen
FSA	Federation of South Arabia
FYM	Free Yemeni Movement
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GPC	General People’s Congress
IMAFT	Islamic Military Alliance to Fight Terrorism
IR	International Relations
ISY	Islamic State in Yemen
JCPOA	Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action
MB	Muslim Brotherhood
MBS	Mohammed bin Salman
NDF	National Democratic Front
NDC	National Dialogue Conference
NLF	National Liberation Front
NSA	Non-State Actor
NSA	Non-State Actor
PDRY	People's Democratic Republic of Yemen
PMU	Popular Mobilization Units
PRSY	People's Republic of South Yemen
STC	Southern Transnational Council
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UAR	United Arab Republic
UAS	United Arab State
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations

UNDP	United Nations Development Program Human
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
US	United States
USSR	Union Soviet Socialist Republics
WW II	World War II
YAR	Yemen Arab Republic
YSP	Yemeni Socialist Party

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The modern state of Yemen was born in 1962 and ever since, it has faced numerous conflicts and several civil wars. Today, Yemen has been facing a civil war which led to the worst humanitarian crisis in the world. The 1962-70 Yemeni civil war and the Yemeni civil war (2014-)[1] are fairly connected with regional politics. Examining these will provide a better insight to comprehend the regional politics of the 1960s and 2010s and show how and why weak states of the Middle East are directly affected by regional politics and influenced by rival regional powers in the regional competition periods.

In this thesis the first and second Yemeni civil wars will be analysed by using weak state literature and contextualize within regional politics. While analysing these wars, this thesis will focus on the question "why and how did Yemen become subject to regional competition in two different regional political contexts of the 1960s and the 2010s?" In order to understand why and how Yemen has easily become a battlefield for the rivalry of regional powers who avoid confronting directly in different regional political contexts; weak state literature will be examined and then, the regional politics of the 1960s and the 2010s and two Yemeni civil wars will be analysed by covering three interacting and interlinked dimensions: the domestic, regional and international politics.

This thesis will argue that Yemen has been a weak state and therefore, it suffers from the regional rivalry. These two wars reflect characteristics of regional politics of both the 1960s and the 2010s by absorbing it inside the country. As

[1] The term "the first Yemeni civil war" will be used to refer to the 1962-70 Yemeni civil war and "the second Yemeni civil war" for the Yemeni civil war (2014-) throughout the thesis.

Gregory Gause and Bassel Salloukh argue, regional struggles have been taking place in the weak states of the region, and one of them is Yemen.[2]

This thesis takes Rotberg's criteria of weak state and argues that Yemen with its economic and political problems and security challenges is a weak state. Avoiding calling Yemen as a failed or collapsed state, analysing Yemen as a weak state gives us an opportunity to look at it in a historical continuity.

1.1. Literature Review of the 1962-70 Yemeni Civil War and the Yemeni Civil War (2014-)

Analysing frameworks covering the Yemeni civil wars in the literature is significant to contextualize the wars in regional politics as this will reveal two things: why and how Yemen easily associated with regional tensions and what is the impact of regional dynamics over Yemen.

There is a great deal of consensus among scholars regarding under which framework the first Yemeni civil war could be studied. The review of literature reveals the frameworks focus on the Arab Cold War. That means many scholars have analyzed the war by considering the regional politics of the 1960s. The politics of the Middle East between the Egyptian revolution and the death Gamal Abdel Nasser in 1970 is examined through Malcolm Kerr's concept, Arab Cold War. Kerr, in his seminal book "*The Arab Cold War 1958-1967: a Study of Ideology in Politics,"* argued that "[…] Yemen had been a testing ground for the struggle for influence between the forces of revolution and conservatism under

[2] Bassel F. Salloukh, "Overlapping Contests and Middle East International Relations: The Return of the Weak Arab State," *Political Science & Politics* 50, no. 3 (2017): 661, https://doi.org/10.1017/S1049096517000348; F. Gregory Gause, "Beyond Sectarianism: The New Middle East Cold War" (Doha, 2014), 3, https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/English-PDF-1.pdf.

Egyptian and Saudi leadership […]”[3] Some scholars interpret the war as a hot war of the Arab Cold War. Bahgat Korany expresses best “divergent leadership claims transformed the Arab cold war into a hot one around the mountains of Yemen from 1962 to 1967.”[4]

This thesis considers likewise the first Yemeni civil war from a similar perspective. Thesis argues that regional division, Egyptian-Saudi rivalry and ideological characteristic of the term were all represented in the war; and it was “the hot war” of the Arab Cold War. Therefore, the war reflects the characteristic of the regional politics of the term. Thesis in the context of its weak state concept also argues that the war turned the country into a battlefield for Egyptian-Saudi rivalry as these confronted each other indirectly through opposite Yemeni groups.

The literature over the second Yemeni civil war is mainly based on regional politics. Scholars agree that the war cannot be study isolating from regional politics. However, there are various approaches that examine the second civil war through different frameworks. The literature covers sectarian approach, proxy approach, the approach focusing domestic drivers and the approach emphasizing geopolitical rivalry. The first two have their own sub-categorizes. The literature first and foremost considers the war in the context of regional politics. Scholars examining the war in the regional context, emphasizing the geopolitical rivalry, mainly underline that the crises in Yemen is part of Saudi

[3] Malcolm Kerr, *The Arab Cold War-1967: A Study of Ideology in Politics*, 2nd ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), 148.

[4] Bahgat Korany, “The Glory That Was? The Pan-Arab, Pan-Islamic Alliance Decisions,” *International Political Science Review* 5, no. 1 (1973): 48–49, https://www.jstor.org/stable/1600958. See also: Toby Matthiesen, “Saudi Arabia and the Cold War,” in *Salman’s Legacy: The Dilemmas of a New Era in Saudi Arabia* , ed. Madawi al-Rasheed (ed.) (London: Hurst & Co, 2018), https://www.academia.edu/35883543/Saudi_Arabia_and_the_Cold_War and Morten Valbjørn and André Bank, “The New Arab Cold War: Rediscovering the Arab Dimension of Middle East Regional Politics,” *Review of International Studies* 38, no. 1 (2012): 1–22, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210511000283.

Iranian rivalry in the region and so, the war in Yemen is another ring in the chain of other crisis in the region. Salloukh correctly expresses that "a Saudi-Iranian contest over regional dominance played out mainly in Iraq, Lebanon, and the West Bank and Gaza Strip, but also in Yemen and Bahrain."[5]

Some scholars take up the war by underlining the "sectarianism." There are two opposite sub approaches in this group. The first one considers the war primarily as a sectarian war. They see the second Yemen war through the lens of historical animosity between Sunnis and Shiites. This explanation emphasizes differences between them as a root cause of the crisis in Yemen as Clausen argues.[6] While they do not neglect the regional and local dimensions of the war, their emphasis lies on the sectarian dimension. They take sectarian dimension of the war within the regional context and consider that the rise of sectarian conflict in Yemen is connected with other regional sectarian conflicts provoked by Saudi Arabia and Iran.[7] Another approach on which the literature is mainly centred emphasizes the non-sectarian interpretations of war. This group does not examine the war through mere sectarian lens per se. Scholars in this group first and foremost argue that the crisis in Yemen is a civil war including international interference and the war is driven mainly by local and political factors. Hence, the war in

[5] Bassel F. Salloukh, "The Arab Uprisings and the Geopolitics of the Middle East," *International Spectator* 48, no. 2 (2013): 34, https://doi.org/10.1080/03932729.2013.787830. See also: Salloukh, "Overlapping Contests and Middle East International Relations: The Return of the Weak Arab State," 661; Ruth Hanau Santini, "A New Regional Cold War in the Middle East and North Africa: Regional Security Complex Theory Revisited," *International Spectator* 52, no. 4 (October 2, 2017): 14, https://doi.org/10.1080/03932729.2017.1371487; Marcel Serr, "Understanding the War in Yemen," *Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs* 11, no. 3 (September 2, 2017): 5, https://doi.org/10.1080/23739770.2017.1419405.

[6] Maria-Louise Clausen, "Understanding the Crisis in Yemen: Evaluating Competing Narratives," *International Spectator* 50, no. 3 (2015): 17, https://doi.org/10.1080/03932729.2015.1053707.

[7] Farea Al-Muslimi, "How Sunni-Shia Sectarianism Is Poisoning Yemen," *Carnegie Middle East Cente*, 2015, https://carnegie-mec.org/diwan/62375; Jeff D. Colgan, "How Sectarianism Shapes Yemen's War," *Washington Post*, April 13, 2015, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2015/04/13/how-sectarianism-shapes-yemens-war/.

Yemen is not a sectarian conflict. First, Yemen is not naturally sectarian like Iraq where the society is divided according to sectarian lines. Second, Zaydism differs from the Twelver Shi'ism of Iran even though the Houthis are Zaydis which is a sub branch of Shi'ism. Finally, the Houthis are not that much a religious group. The evolution of the Houthis, analyzed in Chapter V, will provide detailed information about all these arguments. The non-sectarian approach of the second civil war does not mean that the sectarian dimension of the war is totally ignored. Scholars mostly consider that sectarianism is used as a tool and a war narrative by local and external actors of the war. Alliance relations are one of the original points of non-sectarian group to demonstrate that the war is not merely driven by sectarian motives: Saudi Arabia-Yemeni Muslim Brotherhood alliance is the most significant example. Another one is Iran's support for the Southern secessionists who are secular; indeed Sunni. Last but not least, Iranian support for Houthis is not based on religion but the anti-status quo stance of the Houthis. This is the main consideration of Iran to support any non-state actor in Middle East. Iran has supported Hamas and Islamic Jihad, Sunni groups, because they oppose given status quo in the region. This group also considers the possible threats of sectarianism for the future of the country. The sectarian dimension of the war makes the conflict less localized and increasingly internationalized and hence the conflict resolution becomes more difficult.[8]

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[8] May Darwich, "The Saudi Intervention in Yemen: Struggling for Status," *Insight Turkey* 20, no. 2 (2018): 131, https://doi.org/10.2307/26390311; May Darwich, "The Yemen War: A Proxy Sectarian War?," in *Saudi Arabia and Iran: The Struggle to Shape the Middle East*, ed. Simon Mabon (The Foreign Policy Center, 2018), 19–20, https://fpc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Saudi-Arabia-and-Iran-The-Struggle-to-Shape-the-Middle-East-Report.pdf; Thomas Juneau, "Iran's Policy towards the Houthis in Yemen: A Limited Return on a Modest Investment," *Foreign Affairs* 92, no. 3 (2016): 647–59, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/302064592_Iran's_policy_towards_the_Houthis_in_Yemen_A_limited_return_on_a_modest_investment; Thomas Juneau, "Iran's Failed Foreign Policy: Dealing from a Position of Weakness," *Middle East Institute*, 2015, 2–6, https://www.mei.edu/publications/irans-failed-foreign-policy-dealing-position-weakness; Elisabeth Kendall, "Iran's Fingerprints in Yemen: Real or Imagined?," *Atlantic Journal*, 2017, 2–6,https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Irans_Fingerprints_in_Yemen_web_1019.pdf; Clausen, "Understanding the Crisis in Yemen: Evaluating Competing Narratives," 22; Emile Hokayem and David B. Roberts, "The War in Yemen," *Survival* 58, no. 6 (November 21, 2016): 172–73, https://doi.org/10.1080/00396338.2016.1257202; Adam Baron, "What We Get Wrong About

The second group under general framework examines the war from the perspective of "proxy war." There are two sub approaches. The proxy war explanation sees the Houthis as an Iranian proxy and the Saudi-led coalition's intervention is a reaction to Iranian effect over Yemen. Indeed, very few scholars[9] have considered the second Yemeni civil war as a merely proxy conflict despite the fact that Iranian support for the Houthis is widely accepted. The second sub group assumes that Yemen war is not a proxy war since main drivers of the war rest within the country's history due to several reasons. First, overview of the Yemen history will make clear that the Houthis existence is result of long-years of marginalization. Secondly, their aim is to put an end to their marginalisation. They do not aim to be Iran's fifth column in Yemen and create an Iranian enclave inside Yemen. Third, the group's decisions are made by local Yemeni leadership, so Iran is not a top-decision maker for the Houthis.

Lastly, Iran's military reach is not as it is exaggerated. However, it is worth to note that these scholars do not downplay the Iranian involvement in the war; they consider that as limited and not able to affect the underlying structure of the war. Some of them assume that the proxy war discourse is used as a toll; Saudis use the discourse of Iranian proxy Houthis to justify their intervention. Scholars in this group rightly warn about the vulnerability of the Houthis for more Iranian support and influence as the war is prolonged.[10]

Yemen," *PoliticoMagazine*, March 2015, https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2015/03/yemen-intervention-116396; Annalisa Perteghella, "Yemen: The Sectarianization of a Political Conflict," *Italian Institute for International Political Studies*, 2018, https://www.ispionline.it/en/pubblicazione/yemen-sectarianization-political-conflict-19933; W. Andrew Terrill, "Iranian Involvement in Yemen," *Orbis* 58, no. 3 (2014): 429–40, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.orbis.2014.05.008.

[9] Santini, "A New Regional Cold War in the Middle East and North Africa: Regional Security Complex Theory Revisited"; Aneeta Mathur-Ashton, "Sectarianism Is an Ugly Beast and It's Destroying Yemen," *International Policy Digest*, 2018, https://intpolicydigest.org/2018/12/11/sectarianism-is-an-ugly-beast-and-it-s-destroying-yemen/.

[10] Clausen, "Understanding the Crisis in Yemen: Evaluating Competing Narratives," 21; Gerald M Feierstein, "Yemen: The 60-Year War," 2019, 20, https://www.mei.edu/sites/default/files/2019-02/Yemen The 60 Year War.pdf; Juneau, "Iran's

Another approach on the Yemeni war highlights the domestic drives of the war without leaving the framework of analysis of regional politics. The roots of the war are based on unrest of marginalized groups over decades, unequal distribution of resources and power struggle for the state by examining the Yemeni politics. Considering the war by this way not as a primarily either sectarian or proxy war is important. Adam Baron summarizes the main opinion of this group:

> The conflict is the fruit of more than two decades of missed opportunities […] ranging from the flawed handling of the 1990 unification of Yemen's formerly independent north and south, to the marginalization of southerners following the defeat of pro-secession forces in the country's 1994 civil war, to the Saleh regime's botched responses to the Houthi movement—which only served to radicalize the group. Last but not least, there's the spectacular failure of the internationally backed, post-Arab Spring transitional government established under the rule of Saleh's successor and long time vice president, Abdu Rabbu Mansour Hadi. [11]

This thesis follows the general framework in literature and argues that the second Yemeni civil war like the first civil war, is a part of the regional politics and cannot be examined by isolating from that. Moreover, thesis argues that all approaches emphasizing the different dimensions of the war are parts of the same puzzle; however, none of them as alone is sufficient to explain which framework is the best to comprehend it. First and foremost, thesis argues that the crisis in Yemen is mainly a civil war whose roots go back to decades-old problems of Yemen. While the marginalization of the Houthis and Southerners within decades is the main driver of the war, the regional politics, which is

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Policy towards the Houthis in Yemen: A Limited Return on a Modest Investment," 647, 660; Joost Hiltermann and Apil Longley Alley, "The Houthis Are Not Hezbollah," *Foreign Policy*, February 2017, https://foreignpolicy.com/2017/02/27/the-houthis-are-not-hezbollah/; Kendall, "Iran's Fingerprints in Yemen: Real or Imagined?," 5–6; Darwich, "The Yemen War: A Proxy Sectarian War?,"19.

[11] Adam Baron, "Unraveling Yemen's Civil War," The Cairo Review of Global Affairs, 2015, https://www.thecairoreview.com/tahrir-forum/unraveling-yemens-civil-war/. For similar interpretation see also: Clausen, "Understanding the Crisis in Yemen: Evaluating Competing Narratives"; Juneau, "Iran's Policy towards the Houthis in Yemen: A Limited Return on a Modest Investment," 651–52.

labelled the Middle East Cold War by this thesis, is accepted as the main phenomenon affecting the war. The country has been turned into one of the areas that become a battleground for the struggle of Saudi Arabia and Iran which avoid confronting each other directly. Therefore, Yemen as a weak state is considered as a ring in the chain such as Iraq, Lebanon, and Syria where regional power struggle takes place. Thesis considers neither that sectarianism is as one of the main drivers of the war, nor that it is inherent in the country. However, the sectarian dimension of the war can also not be discarded. As one of the basic features of the regional politics sectarianism has inevitably become a part of the war. Thesis argues that it is used as a tool by all actors in the sake of their interests and the more the war lasts, the sectarianism will be more affective both for the continuity of the war and for the post war era. However, thesis by following Kendall does not take the sectarianism only as tool and argues that sectarianism is one of the motivations of radical Islamist non state actors such as AQAP and Islamic State of Yemen (ISY).[12] Besides these, as Peter Salisbury argues "the rise of the Salafists risks fuelling religiously motivated violence and deepening sectarian divisions."[13] Similar to his argument, thesis has also argued that sectarianism can be deepened more in Yemen with the rise of radical Salafists, AQAP or ISY. Finally, thesis does not examine the war as a proxy war and argues that the Houthis are not Iran proxy even though the clear Iranian support to the Houthis is evident.

Despite the extensive literature over the first Yemeni civil war and the second Yemeni civil war, it is interesting to see that Yemeni civil wars have not been studied in the context of weak state literature extensively with the exception of a few theses that do not mainly focus on Yemeni civil wars and some articles that do not exceed a few pages. Besides that, there are vast resources on comparison

[12] Kendall, "Iran's Fingerprints in Yemen: Real or Imagined?," 42.

[13] Peter Salisbury, "Yemen : National Chaos, Local Order," 2017, 23, https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/publications/research/2017-12-20-yemen-national-chaos-local-order-salisbury2.pdf.

of the regional politics of the 1960s and the 2010s; however, the literature comparing the Yemeni civil wars is scarce. This thesis aims to make a contribution to the literature by analysing these two wars under the weak state literature and giving a brief comparison of them.

1.2. Weak State Literature

The Republic of Yemen is as weak as North Yemen and South Yemen. Yemen has further weakened following the uprising of 2011. The concept of weak state is capable of explaining how Yemen became one of the battlefields for the rivalry of regional powers that avoid confronting each other directly both in the 1960s and 2010s. Although the concept of weak state has been discussed by many scholars and even though there is no unanimous definition in the relevant literature; most definitions explain similarly the characteristics of weak states. The main indicators are economic, political, and security as defined by many scholars to categorize weak states. However, the meanings attached to these may vary according to the perspectives of each scholar.

Among the scholars working on the concept of weak state, Michael Handel claims in his seminal book "Weak States in the International System" he claims that the relative strength of states matters in the study of international relations. In this context, he categorizes states as super, great, middle, weak, and mini states in the international power hierarchy. Handel proposes a set of criteria to distinguish them: population, area, economy, and military power. A weak state scores relatively low on most of the criteria used by Handel. In his approach, qualitative characteristics of weak states are the continuous question of survival, difficulty in defending themselves, military weakness and limited scope of interests (not worldwide), little or no influence on balance of power.[14] Handel's approach, particularly arguments about the qualitative criteria are valuable; yet, his quantitative criteria should not be individualized to categorize states.

[14] Michael I. Handel, *Weak States in the International System* (London: Routledge, 1990), 1–37.

Otherwise, it might be misleading to call a state as weak just because of its territory or population.

Hanna Samir Kassab defines weak states through a specific concept, systemic vulnerability. He claims that measures such as geography, GDP and population size are wrong-headed. According to Kassab, weak states are simply systemically vulnerable states. Vulnerability means a lack of sovereignty and minute autonomy. It is "defined as susceptibility to economic, environmental, political and social shocks, over which they have little, if any, control and their ability to resist and bounce back from the effects of such shocks." Vulnerability is quantitatively measured by the UN's Economic Vulnerability Index (EVI) and takes a number of different factors from population sizes (unit capability) to susceptibility to external shocks. The higher the index score, the more vulnerable, and the less powerful the state.[15] According to "UN Least Developed Countries of 2018"[16] Yemen is one of 47 least developed countries and its economic vulnerability is 38.6.[17]

Stewart Patrick categorizes states in the basis of their strength through their ability and willingness to provide the fundamental political goods: physical security, legitimate political institutions, economic management, and social welfare. According to this distinguishing, he gives four different categories of

[15] Hanna Samir Kassab, *Weak States in International Relations Theory The Cases of Armenia, St. Kitts and Nevis, Lebanon, and Cambodia* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 7–12.

[16]The following three criteria are used by determine Least Developed Countries status: Per capita income (gross national income per capita), Human assets (indicators of nutrition, health, school enrolment and literacy) and Economic vulnerability (indicators of natural and trade-related shocks, physical and economic exposure to shocks, and smallness and remoteness). ("Handbook on the Least Developed Country Category: Inclusion, Graduation and Special Support Measures," 2018, 6–7, https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/wp-content/uploads/sites/45/2018CDPhandbook.pdf.)

[17] In order to interpret Yemen's score the lowest and the highest scores of least developed forty seven countries will be given: Gambia 72.2 and Bangladesh 25.2 in 2018 economic vulnerability index. ("The Least Developed Country Category: 2018 Country Snapshots," 2018, https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/least-developed-country-category.html.)

weak states: "relatively good performers, states that are weak but willing, states that have the means but not the will, and those with neither the will nor the way to fulfil the basic functions of statehood."[18] While Patrick is arguing that weak states are not only one kind, he does not tell how exactly to distinguish them. Patrick's argument over ability and willingness is rather significant; however, from his perspective it is not easy to decide why, when and how states become willing or not.

Robert I. Rotberg is one of the leading scholars in weak state literature. According to Rotberg, the prime function of states is to provide (political) public goods to their people. There are many different types of political goods which are not equally important. However, the most critical one is security, the second is an effective judicial system and rule of law, and the third is providing citizens to participate freely, openly, and fully in politics and the political process. There are many other political goods from health care to the banking system as well. Rotberg uses their levels of effectiveness over providing of political goods to categorize states. He distinguishes states as strong, weak, failed, and collapsed. Rotberg argues strong states obviously perform well across these categories and with respect to each, separately; yet weak states have a mixed profile. Weak states fulfil expectations in some areas and perform poorly in others. The more poorly weak states perform, the weaker they become and the more that weakness tends to edge towards failure. Many failed states flunk each of the tests outlined earlier. However, they need not flunk all of them to fail overall in all of them, particularly at the security since it weighs more heavily than others. High levels of internal violence are associated directly with failure and inclined to fail. Yet, violence per se is not a pre-condition for failure, and the absence of violence does not necessarily imply that the state is unfailed. It is necessary to judge the

[18] Stewart Patrick, "Weak States and Global Threats: Fact or Fiction?," *Washington Quarterly* 29, no. 2 (2006): 29–30, https://doi.org/10.1162/wash.2006.29.2.27.

extent to which an entire failing or failed profile is less or more than its components.[19]

Rotberg emphasizes the concept of failed state and uses a broad set of economic, political, and security indicators to explain that. Economically, failed states have rapid reduction in incomes, living standards, and GDP. On the political front, subverted democratic norms, restricted participatory processes, cessation judicial independence, curtail the media, and blocked civil society by the leader and his associates are main signs of a failed state. Failed states have no legitimacy. Moreover, political goods become scarce, or are granted to the leading class only and the rulers surround themselves with family, clan, or ethnic allies. Security is the third indicator according to Rotberg. As national human security rates fall, the probability of failure rises. Ordinary police forces become paralyzed. Rotberg argues that civil wars characterize failed states; however, he warns about that not every civil conflict implies a failed state and it is not the absolute intensity of violence rather, it is the enduring character of that violence describing a failed state. His indicators of a failed states also include disharmony between communities and loss of control over peripheral regions. In short, he defines a state in anarchy. Similar to Patrick, Rotberg argues that a failed state is not able or willing to perform the fundamental tasks of a state. The last category defined by Rotberg is collapsed state. A collapsed state is a rare and extreme version of a failed state. The vacuum of authority is the basic characteristic of collapsed states. Hence, political goods are obtained through private or ad hoc means and security is equated with the rule of the strong.[20]

This thesis takes into consideration Rotberg's criteria and following them determines Yemen as a weak state and shows it is neither a failed state nor a

[19] Robert I. Rotberg, "The Failure and Collapse of Nation-States: Breakdown, Prevention, and Repair," in *When Satets Fail: Causes and Consequences*, ed. Robert I. Rotberg (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 2–4.

[20] Rotberg, 5–25.

collapsed state. Economically, Yemen is the poorest Arab country and one of the poorest countries in the world.[21] The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) value of Yemen represents 0.03-0.04 percent of the world economy[22] and Yemen is 104th among 205 countries in the world ranking with this percentage in 2018.[23] Socioeconomically, Yemen ranks 177th within 189 countries[24] in the United Nations Development Program Human (UNDP) Development Index.[25] Politically, Yemen ranks 189th within 193 countries in 2017 according to World Bank's Rule of Law Index.[26] In the security dimension, Yemen has faced insecurity from domestic factors as well as regional factors. North and South could not to unite until 1990 despite their many attempts; so, Yemen was divided as two politically and economically different Yemens until 1990. The unification of North and South has not been as successful as it had been expected and the Yemen Arab Republic could not manage to create a real unified and secure Yemen. The civil war aiming secessionism from the united Yemen broke out in 1994 after four years of creation of the Republic of Yemen. In 2007 the

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[21] Navtej Dhillon, "Addressing Yemen's Twin Deficits: Human and Natural Resources," *Brookings*, September 2008, https://www.brookings.edu/opinions/addressing-yemens-twin-deficits-human-and-natural-resources/.

[22] "Yemen GDP," Trading Economics, accessed August 19, 2019, https://tradingeconomics.com/yemen/gdp?user=nunote.

[23] "Gross Domestic Product 2018," 2019, https://databank.worldbank.org/data/download/GDP.pdf.

[24] "Inequalities in Human Development in the 21st Century: Yemen," 2019, 2, http://hdr.undp.org/sites/all/themes/hdr_theme/country-notes/YEM.pdf.

[25] A composite index measuring average achievement in three basic dimensions of human development—a long and healthy life, knowledge and a decent standard of living. See: "Human Development Indices and Indicators 2018 Statistical Update" (New York, 2018), 1, http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/2018_human_development_statistical_update.pdf.

[26] "Rule of Law- Country Rankings," TheGlobalEconomy.com, 2017, https://www.theglobaleconomy.com/rankings/wb_ruleoflaw/.

foundation of al- Hiraak[27] demonstrated that a separated South Yemen idea has been still vivid in the minds of Southern Yemenis considering themselves to be subordinated by the North. Tribal structure, main characteristic of Yemeni politics, is rather strong in Yemen. It emerges as a domestic challenge for central government of Yemen since tribal leaders have held considerable power in Yemen limiting authority of the central government leading to domestic security concerns. Within the regional context, Yemen's strategic location is significant as it is a bridge between the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean through Bab el Mandeb Strait and the Gulf of Aden. Yemen has had concerns about regional states having broader regional objectives due to its strategic location. Finally, Yemen has been surrounded by neighbours which are economically and militarily strong. All these factors contribute to the atmosphere of insecurity in Yemen.

Yemen cannot not be labelled as a failed state or collapsed state as many would argue[28] despite all these challenges argued above. Although the GDP value of Yemen is rather small in the world economy and despite the fact that it sometimes shows rapid reduction in GDP, it manages to improve in subsequent term.[29] Therefore, it does not have enduring reduction. In the security realm, despite unrests against the government, civil wars, and order breakdown, violence could not destroy communities and Ali Abdullah Saleh succeeded to control Yemen for more than thirty years. Saleh clearly managed to "stay above

[27] The Southern Movement known as al-Hiraak was established in 2007 demanding secession of South Yemen from The Republic of Yemen. Their goal is liberation and independence. They want the return of the independent South Yemen that existed before 1990. ("About the Southern Movement (Al-Hirak)," Southern Movement, accessed December 17, 2019, http://www.southernhirak.org/p/abouthirak.html.)

[28] Lisa Weeden, "Don't Call Yemen a 'Failed State,'" *Foreign Policy*, 2010, https://foreignpolicy.com/2010/03/30/dont-call-yemen-a-failed-state/; Maria-Louise Clausen, "Justifying Military Intervention: Yemen as a Failed State," *Third World Quarterly* 40, no. 3 (March 4, 2019): 488–502, https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2019.1573141.

[29] "Yemen GDP Growth Rate 1991-2019," MacroTrends, 2019, https://www.macrotrends.net/countries/YEM/yemen/gdp-growth-rate.

the fray in local tribal conflicts"[30] during the most part of his rule and Yemen has achieved to keep its sovereignty despite many challenges. In political sphere, North and South Yemen achieved unification after thousands of years of separation. Despite challenges over unification, Yemen has not disintegrated. Following the Yemeni uprising, Yemen became a model for other Middle Eastern states during the National Dialogue Process of peaceful transition with the participation of many actors in the process. Yemen has been more democratic than many countries in the Middle East. Not only democracy, but also political and civil rights and press freedom in Yemen are higher than in other countries in the region.[31] Aforementioned tribalism has been characteristic to the country for thousands of years. Examining Yemen on the mere basis of Western states model could mislead to comprehend the unique characteristic of the country. In the context of the Weberian state definition[32] tribes seem a major challenge over state. However, they can be used for positive improvement because, they can become mediators in conflicts between government and tribes and between various tribes. Tribes play an important role in holding Yemen together.[33] Hence, it is important to examine the unique characteristic of the country within its historical background and its own structural features.

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[30] Sarah Phillips, *Yemen' Democracy Experiment in Regional Perspective* (New York: Macmillian, 2008), 71.

[31] Laurent Bonnefoy and Marine Poirier, "Civil Society and Democratization in Yemen. Enhancing the Role of Intermediate Bodies," *HAL*, 2009, 1, https://hal-sciencespo.archives-ouvertes.fr/hal-01066200.

[32] In Weberian state definition, a state is "a human community that (successfully) claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory." (André Munro, "State Monopoly on Violence," in *Britannica*, accessed December 17, 2019, https://www.britannica.com/topic/state-monopoly-on-violence.)

[33] Nadwa Al-Dawrasi, "Tribal Governance and Stability in Yemen - Carnegie Endowment for International Peace," *Carnegie Endowment For International Peace*, 2012, https://carnegieendowment.org/2012/04/24/tribal-governance-and-stability-in-yemen-pub-47838.

Calling a state weak, failed or collapsed is not only a simple categorization. As Pinar Bilgin and Adam D. Morton argue, state failure and collapse are used to establish both a justification and legitimacy for intervention, because since 9/11 it is believed that they are the source of international terrorism.[34] Bilgin and Morton's argument matches up with Yemen's current situation. Saudi Arabia began the intervention calling Yemen a failed state and claimed that it is necessary to protect Yemen and Yemenis. Western states do not object the Kingdom's calling, so they implicitly support the calling of Yemen as failed and so the intervention.[35]

There is some consensus among scholars in the weak state literature. First of all, weak states cannot affect the international system, unlike their more powerful counterparts.[36] Secondly, weak states exhibit a low level of participation in world affairs and have a narrow scope of interests and so, they act on their immediate geographic arena.[37] The arguments of these scholars are valid for Yemen; Yemen has no ability to impact neither international nor regional system and shows a low level of participation in world affairs. Indeed, the domestic problems create an obstacle to deal with world affairs and even with regional affairs in the crisis times. Finally, Kassab also argues that "vulnerability gives weak states an unexpected degree of autonomy, because they are more nonthreatening and that is used to acquire aid and other means to develop and

[34] Pinar Bilgin and Adam David Morton, "From ' Rogue ' to ' Failed ' States ? The Fallacy of Short-Termism," *POLITICS* 24, no. 3 (2004): 171–75.

[35] Clausen, "Justifying Military Intervention: Yemen as a Failed State."

[36] Kassab, *Weak States in International Relations Theory The Cases of Armenia, St. Kitts and Nevis, Lebanon, and Cambodia*, 7; Handel, *Weak States in the International System*, 45.

[37] Handel, *Weak States in the International System*, 21–22.

escape vulnerability."[38] One of the best examples of the last argument is that Yemen achieved to receive $10 million per month from Saudi Arabia in 2007 during the six rounds war[39] by using Saudi concern over the Houthis. In 2009 Saleh claimed that the Houthis were Iranian proxy; his claim can be thought in the same context and can be considered as an attempt to get more aid and support from the Saudi Kingdom by this way.

Another dimension of weak state argument is about state-civil society relations. Michael Mann's distinction between "despotic power" (DP) and "infrastructural power" (IP) is significant for the weak state concept. According to him, DP is the range of actions the state elite is empowered to undertake over civil society and IP is the capacity of the state to penetrate civil society and to implement political decisions throughout the realm. According to this division, he defines four ideal types: feudal, bureaucratic, imperial, and authoritarian.[40] Mann argues that "all real-world states are mixed,"[41] because they have both IP and DP. However, they do not have equally DP and IP and their extents do not have to be the same.

Following Mann's distinction, Linda Weiss and John Hobson argue that strong states use IP which is fundamentally negotiated power, not DP and they develop cooperation strategies with civil society. They make a distinction between three dimensions of IP: social penetration, resource extraction, and negotiated aspect

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[38] Kassab, *Weak States in International Relations Theory The Cases of Armenia, St. Kitts and Nevis, Lebanon, and Cambodia*, 5–12. For similar approach see: Handel, *Weak States in the International System*, 52.

[39] David Hughes, "Yemen's Problems Are the Region's Problems," *NATO Review*, 2010, https://www.nato.int/docu/review/articles/2010/09/13/yemens-problems-are-the-regions-problems/index.html.

[40] Michael Mann, *States, War and Capitalism Studies in Political Sociology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1988), 5-7.

[41] Michael Mann, "The Infrastructural Powers of Authoritarian States in the 'Arab Spring,'" *Unpublished Paper*, 2014, 4, http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/soc/faculty/mann/Morocco.pdf.

(collective coordination). Penetrative power is the ability of a state to reach into and directly interact with the population. Extractive power is the ability of a state to extract resources, both material and human, from society. Negotiated aspect of IP is the most important dimension and refers to a developed strategic, institutionalized form of collaboration between state and society.[42]

Joel Migdal is another scholar who studies about state-society relations. He also benefits from the concept of IP and distinguishes states as strong and weak according to their capabilities to achieve the kinds of change in society. From his perspective, penetration to society, regulation of social relationship, extracting resources, and using resources in determined ways are main measures of the capacity. Weak states are on the low end of a spectrum of capabilities.[43]

Following discussion made above it could be said that Yemen is a weak state in regard to IP. Yemen has both DP and IP, but its IP is weaker than its DP. Yemen has been weak in terms of its penetrative power. Its capacity to reach into and directly interact with the population relatively has been low. Taxation and recruitment are the main extraction apparatus of a state; Yemen has been weak in that dimension too. Taxation in Yemen has inherently been problematic. The best example of that situation was experienced in 1971; nearly 40 million riyals were allocated to tribes, while the government collected taxes were less than 11 million riyals.[44] According to Transparency International, searches the

[42] Linda Weiss and John M. Hobson, *States and Economic Development: A Comparative Historical Analysis* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995), 7; Linda Weiss, "Infrastructural Power, Economic Transformation, and Globalisation," in *An Anatomy of Power: The Social Theory of Michael Mann.*, ed. John A. Hall and Ralph Schroeder (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 172.

[43] Joel S. Migdal, *Strong Societies and Weak State: State-Society Relations and State Capabilities in the Third World* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1988), 4–5.

[44] Serge Dominique Elie, "State Politics in Yemen: Antinomies of Nation and State," *Global Journal of Anthropology Research* 5, no. 1 (2018): 6, https://doi.org/10.15379/2410-2806.2018.05.01.01.

corruption level of Middle East states, puts that people in Yemen see that the most corrupt public sector is tax officials (%83) and with this percentage, Yemen was the worst case within nine countries in the report.[45] Yemen's army is also relatively weak; the political split and the crisis in the country led to intra-tribal rifts within the army and the disintegration of armed forces had begun in 2011[46] and completed in 2014. Finally, Yemen has relatively been weak to exercise a permanent and institutionalized collaboration in state-society relations.

1.3. Methodology

This thesis analyses the first and second Yemeni civil wars in terms of the roles of the regional actors. The thesis is a qualitative research. While analysing wars secondary sources are used to obtain information. In this regard, this thesis benefited from books, academic papers, articles, news, agreements, the reports and discussion papers produced by the related think tanks, and reports of the Panel of Experts on Yemen addressed to United Nations Security Council (UNSC).

There have been difficulties on working on an ongoing war[47] which is changing and evolving every day. While writing this thesis, I encountered problem of working on a topic which has already being taking shape in a different direction every day. The information flow from within the country is not possible and adequate all the time. Moreover, there is always the risk of deviating from the overall picture while following daily events.

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[45] "People And Corruption: Middle East and North Africa Survey 2016," 2016, 30, https://www.transparency.org/whatwedo/publication/people_and_corruption_mena_survey_2016

[46] Florence Gaub, "Whatever Happened to Yemen's Army?," *European Union Institute for Security Studies*, 2015, 3, https://www.iss.europa.eu/sites/default/files/EUISSFiles/Brief_9_Yemen.pdf.

[47] The second Yemeni civil war is still ongoing while this thesis writing.

1.4. The Contents

Apart from this Introduction Chapter, thesis consists of five more chapters. Chapter 2 will examine the regional politics between early the 1950s and 1970 after giving a brief overview of the regional politics between the end of World War II and 1952. It is believed that the examination of this period helps to comprehend the first Yemeni civil war was a part of regional competition between Pan-Arabist republican and conservative monarchist blocs and a part of Egyptian-Saudi rivalry. The chapter will analyse main characteristics of the regional politics of the Arab Cold War period: the division between two blocs; traditional monarchies and radical republics, the rivalry between Egypt and Saudi Arabia, ideology and its impact in regional politics, and the interplay between domestic and regional politics. The chapter takes up the Six Day War in 1967 since it had an important regional impact and also had an impact on the Yemeni civil war. Thesis argues that the 1967 war points out the culmination of the collapse of pan Arabism that had started in 1962 with the regional actors' roles in the first Yemeni civil war. It will be also discussed in that chapter. The chapter argues that the 1967 war accelerated the withdrawal of Egypt and Saudi Arabia from Yemen and had an impact on towards the end of the Arab Cold War. The examination of the regional politics in the Arab Cold War will fundamentally help us to comprehend the war in Yemen is a part of regional competition in the second chapter.

Chapter 3 looks at the first Yemeni civil war. Firstly, the chapter tries to explain the Yemeni domestic politics between early 1940s and 1962 to clarify the domestic drivers of the 1962 coup and the civil war. This section will demonstrate that the 1962 coup was first and foremost the culmination of two decades anti-Imam sentiments. Secondly, the chapter examines the war including advance of the war, attempts of peace throughout the war, the effect of the 1967 war on the first war and the end of that. Finally, the chapter takes up the role of external actors both regional and international including their motivations and

extent of involvement on the war. The chapter also covers the war international dimension of the war. Examining the motivations of international actors to intervene the Yemeni civil war will provide a general insight to the Union Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and the US foreign policies in the Middle East.

The fourth chapter covers the regional developments in the Middle East in the 2000s and the 2010s. About the first Yemeni civil war F. A. Gerges argues that "Egypt and Saudi Arabia's behavior shows the importance of regional dynamics. This behavior cannot be understood without comprehending their positions within the inter-Arab state system and their need for local and external allies."[48] His unique argument is also valid for the second Yemeni civil war and its main external actors Saudi Arabia and Iran. Therefore, the thesis attempts to picture of the regional politics of 2000s like for the 1960s and it believes on that the examination of the post-2003 era and particularly post-Arab Uprisings era will fundamentally help to clarify how the second Yemeni civil war reflects the regional politics. This chapter will analyse main characteristics of the regional politics of the post 2003: the fragmentation between the anti-status quo block and pro-status quo bloc, the rivalry between Saudi Arabia and Iran, the rise of non-Arab actors particularly Iran, the rise of non-state actors, and sectarianism will be examined. The chapter covers the 2006 Lebanon war since it reflects the shift in the regional politics after the 2003 Iraq War. The chapter will also scrutinize the regional politics in aftermath of Arab Uprisings: turning weak states into a battlefield between the main opponents of the regions, overlapping the domestic and regional politics and multipolarity as well as aforementioned characteristics. The regional politics of post 2003 era will be discussed under the title of "the Middle East Cold War".

In the fifth chapter, the second Yemeni civil war will be scrutinized until December 2018 when the Stockholm Agreement was signed. The Stockholm

[48] Fawaz A. Gerges, "The Kennedy Administration and the Egyptian-Saudi Conflict in Yemen : Co-Opting Arab Nationalism," *Middle East Institute* 49, no. 2 (2018): 307, https://www.jstor.org/stable/4328805.

agreement has been the first and the most important step towards the peace in the war even though it is not fully implemented while this thesis writing. Firstly, the Yemeni politics of 2000s, as well as a brief overview the period between 1970s and early 2000s, will be examined including the evaluation of the local sides of the war. It will show that Yemen is a weak state and the Yemeni uprising and following war are results of culmination of decades of domestic problems. Secondly, the chapter takes up the Yemeni uprising of 2011 and the evolution of the war including advance of the war and peace attempts. In this thesis, the war is dated to set September 2014 when the Houthis took the control of capital Sana'a. However, the roots of the war go back to decades. The analysis of the Yemeni politics from the early 1970s to the late 2010s shows that the roots of the war arises from the problems of all these decades. The points which created a fertile ground for war were the Yemeni uprisings and the collapse of the National Dialogue Conference (NDC). Thus, the second Yemeni civil war must be thought within a historical process. Finally, the role of outside powers both regional and international including their motivations and extent of involvements will be analysed. This analysis will demonstrate that the Halliday's argument about the first civil war which was that "the 1962-70 Yemen civil war was the war of intervention"[49] is today relevant for the second civil war.

The conclusion chapter covers several things. Firstly, a comparison will be made in four dimensions: regional politics of the 1960s and 2000s, Yemeni politics in pre-wars periods, the first and second wars and the role of external actors. The main similarities and differences of the two wars will be argued in there. Secondly, the main conclusions of thesis regarding general discussion and the comparison will be put. Thirdly, the war in the post-Stockholm will be briefly covered. Fourthly, recommendations, what makes this thesis precious, regarding the second Yemeni civil war conclusions drawn from the first Yemeni civil war will be given in the conclusion part. Finally, research ideas for the future will be given.

[49] Fred Halliday, *Arabia Without Sultans* (London: Saqi Books, 2002), 106.

CHAPTER 2

THE REGIONAL CONTEXT OF THE 1960S- THE ARAB COLD WAR

2.1. Introduction

It is possible to analyse the developments in the Middle East through two opposite approaches. One of those looks at the regional actors like Malcolm Kerr's approach. In his view, Arab politics was first and foremost about Arab agency. In his book, the Arab Cold War, one of his aims was to dispel the notion of Arab politics as a projection of decisions made in Washington, London, Moscow and Jerusalem. The second approach was symbolized as the interpretation of the "Chatham House Version," as termed by Elie Kedorie. The Chatham House version of Middle Eastern history emphasizes external actors' role on the Middle East politics.[50] The most extreme interpretation of these two readings misleads to understand the Middle Eastern politics. This chapter examines the Middle Eastern politics in the post-World War II (WW II) using a mixed approach considering both regional and international actors.

This chapter aims to analyse three things: The Middle East politics from the end of the World War II to 1952, the regional politics from 1952 to 1970 and the connection between the first Yemeni civil war and the collapse of Pan Arabism. Hereby, this chapter aims to respond to the following questions: How was the regional politics from the end of the WW II to 1952? How was the regional politics from 1952 to 1970? Why do the 1952 Egyptian revolution and 1956 Suez crisis matter for regional politics? How did Pan Arabism collapse and what was the importance of the first Yemeni civil war in the collapse of Pan Arabism?

[50] Jesse Ferris, *Nasser's Gamble : How Intervention in Yemen Caused the Six-Day War and the Decline of Egyptian Power.* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2013), 14.

2.2. Middle Eastern Politics from the End of the Second World War to the Egyptian Revolution of 1952

The post-WW II was a new era for the Middle East. First of all, the end of the war pointed out the real independence of the Arab states. Central Arab states such as Egypt, Iraq, Syria, and Jordan[51] had already gained their independence. However, they were "nominally independent" [52] because France and Britain were still playing an important role in economy and politics of these Arab states fostering the rule of the monarchies of the Middle Eastern states.

The Palestinian Question has been one of the main affairs of the region and been able to affect the Middle Eastern politics any time since the Balfour Declaration of 1917. Thus, the second development in the post WWII was about that. Israel was established on May 14, 1948. The next day following the announcement of the establishment of Israel, five Arab states; Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, Syria and Lebanon have invaded Israel and a war broke out. It turned into a catastrophe for the Arab states as they were defeated by Israel. Moreover, besides the humiliation of the defeat, the war revealed a bigger threat; namely the opposition against corrupt rulers. As Mehran Kamrava aptly put "yet as it turned out, 1948 did become a matter of life or death for many of the Arab leaders involved, as their defeated armies, one after another, avenged their loss by turning against leaders seen as incompetent, corrupt, belonging to an era whose time had long passed."[53] The 1950s turned a decade which many Arab states faced opposition and coups from their armies.

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[51] Jordan gained its independence in 1921, Egypt in 1922, Iraq in 1932, Lebanon in 1943, Syria in 1946, Tunisia in 1956, Morocco in 1956, Algeria in 1962, South Yemen in 1967. North Yemen and Saudi Arabia were only two Arab states which had been already independent and were not mandated.

[52] Mehran Kamrava, *The Modern Middle East A Political History Since the First World War* (California: California University Press, 2005), 89.

[53] Kamrava, 88.

Subsequent to WW II, the Cold War was one of the main factors shaping the regional politics and vice versa. The dominance struggle of the two superpowers in the Middle East was sometimes used by the regional states to obtain financial and military aid or to counterbalance their regional rivalries. Their two blocs politics was effective in the Middle East. Conservative monarchies were pro-Western and were concerned about the influence of communism and the USSR. Some states, especially Egypt under Nasser, claiming to follow neutrality and being far from bloc politics was able to gain aid from both the US and the Soviet Union till 1963.

2.3. The Middle East Politics during the Arab Cold War

On July 23, 1952, a group of Egyptian junior army officers, the Free Officers Movement, realized a coup, the Egyptian Revolution of 1952, and overthrew the monarchy and created a republic. The Egyptian revolution was turning point for not only Egypt but also for the Middle East. Its impact could be better understood looking at how revolutions have affected the regional and international system.

> It has long been noted that the international ramifications of revolutions are no less profound than their domestic impact. This is not only because revolutions often give rise to powerful states, thus potentially undermining the extant balance of power, but also because they sometimes infuse those states with norms and objectives that are antithetical to those subscribed to by other members of the international system. They also exert a demonstration effect beyond the boundaries of their country of origin, with a potential for triggering waves of revolution and counter-revolution both within and between societies.[54]

The atmosphere of the Middle Eastern politics in the post-Egyptian Revolution was as described above. Egyptian Revolution of 1952 created a model for many to follow, changed the balance of power of the region and led to emerge out an era which was turbulent with many coups and demonstrations based on Nasserist

[54] Maridi Nahas, "State-Systems and Revolutionary Challenge: Nasser, Khomeini, and the Middle East," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 17, no. 4 (1985): 507, https://www.jstor.org/stable/163416.

opposition of corrupt regimes of the Arab world. Therefore, this section examines the Middle East starting from 1952 on.

After the revolution, Mohammed Naguib, an Egyptian army officer, became the first president of the newly formed republic. In 1954 Nasser consolidating his power covertly removed Naguib from the power and the era of Nasser started. He was an ambitious leader and he had his own vision for both a new nation and the Arab World. These were; centralised parliamentary rule; implied domestic social programs; expansion of his own brand of socialism and the unity of Arabs for a strong resistance against colonial powers, the aim of the liberation of Palestine, and the spread of the revolution.[55] Nasserism begun to sweep the region since the first half of the 1950s. Nasser supported Algeria's struggle for independence from the French since 1954, rejected Baghdad Pact backed by the US and the Unit Kingdom (UK), put pressures Jordan not to join the Pact, and severely criticised Iraq to join the pact. However, he would have to wait for 1956 for his ideas to be influential throughout the region.

Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal on July 26, 1956. France, Britain which were considered as colonialist powers, and Israel invaded Egypt in October to topple him. They failed and contrary to their pre-war expectations he emerged from the crisis as a hero in the eyes of both Egyptians and other Arabs and nationalization was perceived as a victory of Arab nationalism over Western colonialism by masses. However, conservative leaders saw the nationalization as a threat to the stability of their regimes.[56] This was the general characteristic of countries whose regimes do not rest on public support and mainly were supported by international powers which were considered as colonialist, imperialist or invaders.

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[55] "Arab Unity: Nasser's Revolution," *Al Jazeera*, June 20, 2008, https://www.aljazeera.com/focus/arabunity/2008/02/200852517252821627.html.

[56] Elie Podeh, "The Struggle over Arab Hegemony after the Suez Crisis," *Middle Eastern Studies* 29, no. 1 (1993): 92–93, https://doi.org/10.1080/00263209308700935.

The period between the late 1950s and the1960s has been called the Arab Cold War following Malcolm Kerr. He first used the notion in his study of ideology in international politics, where he examined the inter-Arab rivalry in these years. Despite its link to the global Cold War, the Arab Cold War was the foremost result of regional dynamics and had a distinctly Arab dimension.[57] The main features of the term were division, Egyptian-Saudi rivalry, ideology, and the interplay between the domestic and regional politics. These years implied turbulent years of the Arab world; a wave of coups and countercoups swept the Arab world as a new generation of military officers to cast aside the previous order and tried to construct another throughout the 1950s and early 1960s, revolutions, the birth and disintegration of unity states (the UAR, the United Arab State (UAS) and the Arab Union), civil wars, and quarrel of superpowers of the Cold War over the region. Another feature of the region was that spheres of contestation were in weak states of the region.[58] The weak states turned into battlegrounds between regional great powers; Egyptian-Iraqi rivalry over Syria and the broader roles of Egypt and Saudi Arabia in the first Yemeni civil war demonstrated that. However, that feature of the Arab Cold War was not remarkable and common at that time compare with the Middle East Cold War. Thus, weak states in regional politics will be deeply analysed in Chapter IV.

In this period the Arab world was divided between two blocs as the world had split into two in the global dimension in the second half of the 1940s. The first was conservative and pro-Western monarchies, Jordan, Lebanon and pre 1958 Iraq led by Saudi Arabia; the second was radical, secular, nominally socialist, pan-Arabist and mostly pro-Soviet Arab republics, Syria, Iraq after 1958 and Algeria led by Egypt. The conservatives had good relations with Western countries and criticized pro-Soviet republics for opening a door to spread of

[57] Morten Valbjørn and André Bank, "Signs of a New Arab Cold War: The 2006 Lebanon War and the Sunni-Shii Divide," *Middle East Report* 242 (2007): 7.

[58] Anoushiravan Ehteshami, "Middle East Middle Powers: Regional Role, International Impact," *Uluslararası İlişkiler* 11, no. 42 (2014): 34.

communism; they were against radical revolutionary movements that could affect their regimes' stability, domestically, and their positions in the regional politics; and sought to maintain the regional status quo that recognized the sovereignty and territorial integrity. Throughout the Arab Cold War, they perceived pan Arabism as a threat. The republics subscribed to an Arab nationalist position aiming a pan-system. They generally allied with the Soviet Union, appeared against the pro-Western monarchies in the region, criticized pro-Western regional states being the pawns of colonial powers, and became a challenge over existed status quo of the region. Republicanism as a form of government called into question the legitimacy of the regimes in power, and pan-Arabism as a focus of loyalty threatened the main organizing principle of the state system, namely sovereignty within recognized territorial boundaries.[59] In this period the Middle Eastern politics had an Arab character.[60] The struggle between the two main blocs centred around three main issues: the type of political system of Arab states, their choice of superpower alliance, and the ideological inclination.

Egypt and Saudi Arabia represented divergent leadership poles in the Middle East during the Arab Cold War. They were in a rivalry over the leadership of the Arab world by using opposite ideologies. Thus, the Egyptian Saudi rivalry which characterized the Arab Cold War years had two main pillars: the struggle over the dominance of the region and the ideological rivalry. The struggle was throughout the region and driven by coups, counter coups, supports, radio programs, conferences and so on. Their rivalry continued without confronting

[59] Nahas, "State-Systems and Revolutionary Challenge: Nasser, Khomeini, and the Middle East," 513–14.

[60] This does not mean that the actors of the Middle Eastern politics were only Arab states. Turkey as 1955 Baghdad Pact showed was somehow connected with regional politics. Israel was integral part of regional politics since 1948 and especially in 1956 and 1967 wars and it was main actors in return Arab states. Finally, Iran was another non-Arab actor through her support for Saudi Arabi and royalists in Yemen Civil War of 1962-70. What it is wanted to say is that non-Arab states of the region were not engaged the regional politics that much.

each other directly. The closest point to direct fight was the first Yemeni civil war, but Saudi Arabi did not involve war directly.

If the Cold War is to be described as the clash of ideologies, the Arab Cold War could also be described likewise. Ideology was not only the main pillar of Saudi-Egyptian rivalry, but it was also the main characteristic of the region affecting the structure of two blocs, preference of alliances with regional actors as well as superpowers. The ideological cleavage of the region was based on pan Arabism and conservatism. Pan Arabism of the Arab Cold War was a secular ideology and its ultimate goal was territorial unity of Arab speaking people with anti-imperialist and socialist principles.[61] It emerged out in the 19th century and became the foremost ideology in the late 1950s and the 1960s. It was based on Arab Nationalism which is that "the general idea about the existence of special bonds between Arabic-speaking people, who are assumed to be part of a single Arab nation constituted by common language, history, culture and tradition."[62] Nationalism in the Middle East does not have always the same characteristic; its dynamic structure has changed after the 1948 defeat. The post-1948 Arab nationalism, driven by mainly the discomfort of their corrupt, defeated, Western puppet regimes and a sense of solidarity with Palestinians, has three main principal features; modernity, militarism and unity of Arabs. Modernity was necessary to get rid of feudal traditions; militarism was immediate remedy for the defeat; and unity of the Arabs would be necessary to prevent other subsequent defeats. These three were personified in Nasser.[63]

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[61] Lawrence Rubin, "A Typology of Soft Powers in Middle East Politics," 2010, 9, https://www.mbrsg.ae/home/publications/research-report-research-paper-white-paper/a-typology-of-soft-powers-in-middle-east-politics.

[62] Valbjørn and Bank, "The New Arab Cold War: Rediscovering the Arab Dimension of Middle East Regional Politics," 9.

[63] Kamrava, *The Modern Middle East A Political History Since the First World War*, 89.

Pan Arabism was in the mindset of Nasser since the Revolution and in time by consolidating his power, he became not only leader of a revolutionary pan-Arabism, but also Nasserism. Nasserism was a revolutionary and pan-Arab ideology including a number of elements which were Arab nationalism and unity, the social reform program called Arab socialism which was a system halfway between Marxism and capitalism, reformist version of Islam endorsing secularism, and modernization,[64] and anti-imperialism. However, the adoption of Arab socialism was not based on ideological concerns, it was mainly result of pragmatic reasons and; actually, it was a kind of state capitalism.[65] In an anti-imperialist framework, Nasser had a substantial opposition stance against the conservative monarchies which had close relations with the West, because of the negative implications of Western mandate and the colonial period over the Middle Eastern states.

Pan Arabism adopted by revolutionary Egypt was incompatible with the ethos of the dynastic state-system, based on territorial integrity, independence, and sovereignty, because of the unity discourse. However, the main issue creating the division and a serious concern over the pro-Western Arab states was not primarily revolutionary character of Nasserist pan Arabism; it was "its vast and continuing public acceptance"[66] in the Arab world. Ideologies must be accepted and moved by the masses in order to be broadly influential in regional politics. Nasserism dominated Arab politics in the 1950s and in less degree in the 1960s through its acceptance in the Arab world. It was the Suez Crisis that generated a revolutionary spark and pan-Arabist wave which swept the region by shaking the

[64] Albert Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples* (London: Faber and Faber, 2005), 405–6.

[65] William L. Cleveland and Bunton Martin, *A History of the Modern Middle East*, 4th ed (Philadelphia: Westview Press, 2009), 316.

[66] Madawi Al-Rasheed, *A History of Saudi Arabia* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 126.

ground beneath the feet of Arab rulers.[67] The crisis created a negative image over the conservative regimes that were associated with the Western powers, especially Britain one of the invaders, which were perceived as colonialists by the Arab public and enhanced the appeal of the radical, pro- Nasser ideals, because Nasser was the one who challenged and put an end hundreds of years Western colonialism.

Pan-Arabism wave, frightening conservative Arab regimes, was not imaginary. It had been begun to take place in 1957. In spring 1957, the authority of Jordanian King Husayn was challenged by pro-Nasserist Jordanian army officers and Palestinians. Jordan, a pro-Western conservative monarchy, was threatened from the spread of pan Arabism and applied the US for help and under the terms of the new Eisenhower Doctrine; the US "external guard of the status quo of the region" replied her through dispatching the Sixth Fleet in the East of the Mediterranean.[68]

The establishment of the UAR between Egypt and Syria on February 1, 1958 was a "major step"[69] for pan-Arabism; two Arab states under Nasser's leadership created a single state. The establishment of the UAR was not the result of a mere pan-Arabist sensation even though both the Syrian Ba'th and Egypt were Arab nationalists. Firstly, the Ba'th assumed they could gain supremacy against their Communist rivals and preserve their dominance. The second was the struggle taking place in Syria between Egypt and Iraq.[70] The Syrian Ba'th chose the

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[67] Michael Scott Doran, "The Heirs of Nasser Who Will Benefit From the Second Arab Revolution?," *Foreign Affairs*, 2011, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/algeria/2011-04-14/heirs-nasser.

[68] Cleveland and Martin, *A History of the Modern Middle East*, 331.

[69] Cleveland and Martin, 314.

[70] Kerr, *The Arab Cold War-1967: A Study of Ideology in Politics*, 2.

unification with Egypt for protection against the pro-Western Baghdad monarchy. From Egypt's side, the unification would also be a tool that could keep Syria away from Iraq. Lastly, Nasser and his lieutenants had assumed that Egypt would be the leader of the Arab world so closely united that the outside world could deal with it only by the way of an agreement with Cairo.[71] The UAR made conservative states of the Arab world worry as these were considering it as a threat to their regimes by encouraging their people to take action for a unified Arab world. Under this perceived threat, two pro -Western monarchies Jordan and Iraq on February 14, 1958 merged a union, called Arab Union, which lasted just five months, "the better to protect themselves against the spread of the Nasserist tide."[72] The last political union of 1958 was UAS. The Kingdom of Yemen, North Yemen, federated the UAR and set up a loose federation.

The revolutionary wave was spreading in full swing making conservative regimes seriously worried. In Lebanon, the tension generated between the country's Western-leaning Maronite community and the pan-Arab Muslim community that wanted to join the UAR finally sparked off a civil war in May.[73] On 14 July 1958, a group of Iraqi Free Officers, emulating Egyptian revolution, led by Brigadier Abdul Karim Qasim captured power through a coup and overthrew the pro-Western Hashemite monarchy. Thus, revolutionary wind starting in Egypt swept over to Iraq too. President Chamoun of Lebanon was concerned by the Iraqi coup and requested US assistance under Eisenhower Doctrine to save his country from pro-Nasserists. The US sent marines into Lebanon within 48 hours of the Baghdad coup to preserve the friendly regime of

[71] Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples*, 413.

[72] Avi Shlaim, "Israel, the Great Powers, and the Middle East Crisis of 1958," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 27, no. 2 (1999): 181, https://doi.org/10.1080/03086539908583063.

[73] Nahas, "State-Systems and Revolutionary Challenge: Nasser, Khomeini, and the Middle East," 514.

Lebanon from pan-Arabism wave. There was an immediate threat for Jordan too which was ruled by the other branch of the Hashemites, because of internal coalition of Jordanian and Palestinian nationalists who were supporters of Nasser's revolutionary ideas. While Lebanon was applying the US for help, Jordan applied Britain.[74]

Syria seceded from UAR on September 28, 1961 following a military coup. Even though Nasserists and Ba'athists shared simple ideological notions; these were not enough to sustain the UAR. Disenchantment and discontent aroused from Egyptian policy over Syria. Gerges argues that "if the 1958 marriage between Egypt and Syria represented the high point in the history of the Arab nationalist movement, the dissolution of their union marked one of its low points."[75] Gerges is right in his comment. This thesis accepting his argument claims that the secession was "one" of the lowest points. However, the lowest point of the Arab nationalist movement was roles of regional actors in the first Yemeni civil war.

Even though the Syrian secession from the UAR was a blow to Nasser's prestige he did not abandon his role as a champion of Arab unity and did not hesitate to intervene in the affairs of other Arab states when these fit his purposes such as the Yemeni civil war. Moreover, radical revolutionary ideas were still influential and they continued to sweep the region; Yemen in 1962, Iraq and Syria in 1963 and more remarkable Libya and Sudan in 1969.

Two years after the failure of the UAR in 1963 a new unification talks following two Ba'thi coups on February 8 Iraq, and on March 8 Syria begun. Their motivations to set up a united state were not based on a mere pan-Arabist ideal, but primarily on pragmatic reasons. Mistrust between Nasser and the Syrian

[74] Shlaim, "Israel, the Great Powers, and the Middle East Crisis of 1958," 184.

[75] Gerges, "The Kennedy Administration and the Egyptian-Saudi Conflict in Yemen : Co-Opting Arab Nationalism," 294.

Ba'ath, inherited from the former UAR, characterized the unity talks. On 17 April 1963, three signed a treaty of unity. Conservative states of the region felt threatened one more time due to the declaration, because they believed declaration could create a revolutionary blow. However, the three partite unity plan failed soon in September 1963. Following the failure, Syria and Iraq formed a military union on October 8. Egypt refused to join that union.[76]

In the years of ideological rivalry in the Middle Eastern politics the other pole consisted of conservative monarchies led by Saudi Arabia, the main challenge of Nasser aftermath of the 1958 Iraqi coup. The antagonism between Egypt and Saudi Kingdom was not historical as in the Hashemite case, Jordan, Iraq and Saudi animosity; however, the tension was deeper because of their uncompromising differences: keeping or changing the status quo, allies chosen, governance type, and stance towards the religion. First was the struggle of keeping or changing the status quo. Saudi Arabia has always been tried to purse the status quo and stability in the region to guarantee the continuity of the regime. However, Pan-Arabist revolutionary wave pioneered by Egypt was threatening the status quo of the region. When Nasser's revolutionary ideas were accepted by Arab public following the Suez crisis, the Saudis felt threaten. Secondly, according to Nasser Saudi Kingdom with its close ties to the West and preference of allies was opening the region to imperialist powers. Thirdly, Saudi regime type, monarchy, was also what Nasser rejected and overthrew in his country in 1952. Fourthly, the Islamic stance of the Kingdom was unacceptable for Nasser following secular pan Arabism. Last but not least, a republican and Pan-Arabist ideals that aimed the unity of Arab states were totally at odds with the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity of Arab states. However Saudi Arabia was not the only monarchy feeling threatened, Jordan was also rather concerned about revolutionary pan-Arabist ideas' influence over her country.

[76] Elie Podeh, "Unite or Not to Unite: That Is Not the Question: The 1963 Tripartite Unity Talks Reassessed," *Middle Eastern Studies* 39, no. 1 (2003): 176, https://www.jstor.org/stable/4284280.

Contrary to Egypt's secular Pan Arabism, Saudi Arabia has usually represented conservatism. The conservatism in Saudi mindset has included both religious and political aspects that refer the anti-secular and pro-status quo stance. The promotion of Islam has been central to Saudi Arabia's foreign policy and soft power even though it is not the primary motivation. First and foremost, conservatism led by Faisal throughout the Arab Cold War must primarily be considered a counter ideology against Pan Arabism led by Nasser. Back in the 1960s, King Faisal cast about for a source of legitimacy that would aid him in his competition with the immensely popular leader of pan-Arabism, Nasser. Religion was a convenient option as the Saudis held custody over the holy sites of Islam, Nasser's Arab socialism left him open to charges of impiety, and Faisal shared his Muslim faith with Iran, one of the main allies against Egypt.[77]

The establishment of the UAR and the UAS and the Lebanon civil war encouraged the masses in the Arab world to rise against their leaders. Followers of Pan Arabism believed that it was required to overthrow of conservative Arab regimes for the unification of the Arabs. This revolutionary and radical wave frightened the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia because of both domestic and foreign political reasons. The opponent groups of the Saudi regime could be affected by this wave and it could lead to turmoil. Besides internal concerns, Saudi Arabia had a leadership goal like Egypt; and these pan-Arabist events hampered the dominance of Saudi Arabia over the Arab world. Saudi Arabia under the leadership of crown prince Faisal, became the king in 1964, took action and sponsored an Islamic conference including both Arab and non-Arab Muslim states to reduce Egypt's influence in May 1962 in Mecca. Madawi Al Rasheed in her seminal book A History of Saudi Arabia has explained Faisal's attempt as:

[77] Jesse Ferris, "Egypt's Vietnam," *Foreign Policy*, 2015, https://foreignpolicy.com/2015/04/03/egypts-vietnam-yemen-nasser-sisi/.

> Main purpose was to devise ways to fight secularism and radicalism. The conference declared that those who disavow Islam and distort its call under the guise of nationalism are actually the bitter enemies of Arabs. Aversion to nationalism and secular trends dominated the Faisal's policy. The Mecca meeting resulted in the establishment of the World Muslim League.[78]

Saudi Arabia was aware of Egyptian supremacy; that's why, it tried to stand against Egypt and its ideological influence with non-Arab Muslim states. The conference referred to the rivalry between Egypt and Saudi Arabia. The organization was become a means to counterbalance radical ideologies such as Pan-Arabism, secularism and Nasserism.

Saudi-Muslim Brotherhood (MB) relations from the late 1950s to the mid-1970s was another evidence of Saudi stance in the ideological rivalry. King Faisal opened Kingdom's doors wide to the MB which was a precise anti-Nasser group. In return, MB backed Faisal's Islamic solidarity attempts across the region.[79] The fact bringing them together was the anti-Nasser stance of both.

The Egyptian-Saudi rivalry peaked in the first Yemeni civil war and Faisal's efforts to terminate the secular wave of Arab nationalism lasted throughout his reign. In 1965, when Egypt was to the edge of withdrawal from Yemen, he undertook to organize an alignment of Muslim states. Even though Faisal professed to include revolutionary regimes in the region,[80] Nasser believed that it was an attempt to transplant the center of Middle East politics from Cairo to

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[78] Al-Rasheed, *A History of Saudi Arabia*, 127.

[79] Martyn Frampton, *The Muslim Brotherhood and the West: A History of Enmity and Engagement* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Hardvard University, 2018), 301, https://books.google.com.tr/books?id=PkRMDwAAQBAJ&pg=PA302&lpg=PA302&dq=saudi+king+faisal+supported+egyptian+muslim+brotherhoods+during+the+faisal+era&source=bl&ots=r_6bX9Dlsf&sig=ACfU3U3oKHlF_1xWgxgpHwJgvwqI6M66AA&hl=tr&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwj5lv6SmKvnAhXT8eAK.

[80] Kerr, *The Arab Cold War-1967: A Study of Ideology in Politics*, 145.

Riyadh.[81] It was not an exaggerated suspicion as Saudi initiatives to counterbalance Egypt were already evident. For a conservative alliance among pro-Western countries, Faisal visited nine Muslim countries from Asia to Africa in 1965 and 1966. While Faysal was going to Iran, he was planning to offer Iran an "Islamic pact" against the Egypt.[82] Iran, particularly, was important; as she was also pro-Western regime and ally of Israel visa-vis Egypt at that time. Since they took the power, the Free Officers believed that Egypt possessed unquestioned leadership of the Arab world. Consequently, any challenge to supremacy of pan Arabism represented a challenge to the legitimacy of their regime. Nasser perceived a threat to his leadership in the Arab world and pan Arabism from Faisal's conservative stance which was embodied by anti-nationalism and secularism.[83] Thus, Nasser decided the reversal of Egyptian withdrawal from Yemen to respond Faisal's initiative which had aimed to undermine the superiority of pan Arabism.[84]

Under the general two blocs structure of the region, considering the regional politics throughout the Arab Cold War only as a binary contest between Saudi Kingdom and Egypt would not yield the exact picture as the Egyptian-Iraqi struggle over the hegemony of the Arab world clearly demonstrates that. Iraq was one of the main challenges of Nasser till 1963 Iraqi coup; Iraq was in the pro-Western monarchies' bloc before 1958 and in the radical republican pan-Arabist bloc after 1958 coup. Syria was also sceptical about Nasser since the UAR was marginalized by Egyptians and there was a relatively tension till 1966 Syrian coup.

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[81] Ferris, *Nasser's Gamble : How Intervention in Yemen Caused the Six-Day War and the Decline of Egyptian Power.*, 255.

[82] Ferris, "Egypt's Vietnam."

[83] Al-Rasheed, *A History of Saudi Arabia*, 127.

[84] Asher Orkbay, *Beyond the Arab Cold War: The International History of the Yemen Civil War, 1962-68* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 106.

The interplay between domestic and regional politics was one of the most remarkable features of the Arab Cold War. The Arab world of the 1950s and the 1960s was like a set of interconnected organisms separated only by porous membranes. On the one hand, from domestic politics perspective, Arab regimes used the sensitive issues bringing Arabs together such as the Palestinian question. On the other hand, regional rivalries involved the domestic politics of Arab countries. The first Yemeni civil war was the clearest and most radical example of that; however, it was an extreme case. The classic expression of this was Egyptian radio station *Sawt al-'Arab* (Voice of the Arabs) that first started on July 4, 1953.[85]

Sawt al-Arab was important for several reasons. Firstly, Nasser through Sawt al-Arab achieved to bypass local leaders and reach directly to populations in other Arab countries. It was important, because he was the first leader in the region who could appeal effectively to masses.[86] So, it was a clear example of the Egyptian soft power. Secondly, this was the point creating the threat for conservative monarchies of the region. Reaching the masses passing the artificial borders was shaking the ground under the Arab regimes mobilizing masses against them. Lastly, 1953 was a rather early date; it had revealed that Nasser before became the hero of Arab World following the Suez had have long-running ideals.

In Yemen domestic battle and regional confrontation overlapped. The weakness of Yemeni state led the country to become a battlefield. The first Yemeni civil war was the scene of both the interplay between domestic and regional politics and had both soft and hard power struggle of Saudi Arabia and Egypt. Local actors applied to external actors for support and external actors replied with aid

[85] Valbjørn and Bank, "The New Arab Cold War: Rediscovering the Arab Dimension of Middle East Regional Politics," 11–12.

[86] Valbjørn and Bank, 12; Doran, "The Heirs of Nasser Who Will Benefit From the Second Arab Revolution?"

including hard and soft power tools. Radio broadcasts by following the technology of the time were used as the main ideological soft power tool. Egypt provided thousands of free radios to Yemenis. Saudi Arabia to counterbalance Nasser's soft power broadcasted its *Voice of Islam;* "however, it paled in comparison with Nasser's propaganda initiatives."[87]

Before the 1967 June war demolished Nasser's ideological influence, he lingered like a kind of the sword of Damocles over conservative monarchies. The defeat of the Six Day War in 1967 would change many things in the Middle East in general and the relationship between Saudi Arabia and Egypt, in particular. The 1967 defeat was the tipping point in which the collapsing of Arab nationalism had reached its culmination and after that Pan-Arabism giving way to Islamist ideologies started to retreat from regional politics. The defeat significantly weakened Nasser's leadership and pan-Arabist ideology. Egypt had to forge its relations with conservative regimes, Saudi Arabia and Jordan and the bipolarity of the regional politics came to an end. Egypt immediately made an agreement with Saudi Arabia and withdrew its forces from Yemen. Egypt was integrated into Middle Eastern state system; conservative monarchies such as Saudi Kingdom, started to provide financial assistance to her old enemy and in return Egypt put an end to her efforts to destabilize the conservative regimes, and to respect the principle of independence.[88] Despite all these, the Saudi Kingdom had still concerns until the death of Nasser**.** First of all, Faisal believed that any regime in South Yemen would be a pro-Nasserist. Secondly, the May 1969 coup in Libya and the September 1969 coup of Sudan aiming unification of Arabs[89]

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[87] Orkbay, *Beyond the Arab Cold War: The International History of the Yemen Civil War, 1962-68*, 178.

[88] Nahas, "State-Systems and Revolutionary Challenge: Nasser, Khomeini, and the Middle East," 518.

[89] Fouad Ajami, "The End of Pan-Arabism," *Foreign Affairs* 57, no. 2 (2004): 362–63, http://fbemoodle.emu.edu.tr/pluginfile.php/71427/mod_resource/content/1/%28Lec Pan Arabism%29 The End of Pan Arabism.pdf.

strengthened Faisal's suspicion. The coup of Sudan that was carried by pro-Egypt army officers encouraged the pro-Nasserite officers in the Saudi army to attempt a similar move against their government.[90]

Nasser lived three years after the 1967 defeat. Even though his position was badly shaken in the world, it was strong inside Egypt. It was not the 1967 defeat; it was his death which brought the end of an era of hope for the Arab world to be united.[91] The 1970s saw a decline in ideological quarrels; and with the removal of Nasser from the Arab politics, Saudi Arabia came on the scene as the state that could play a dominant role in regional politics on the basis of its Islamic heritage.

2.4. The 1962-70 Yemeni Civil War and the Collapse of Pan Arabism

As Fouad Ajami correctly stated political ideas turn to ashes and leave behind them a trail of errors, suffering and devastation[92] as it was clearly seen in the first Yemeni civil war. Even though Saudi Arabia and Egypt intervened in the war with pragmatic causes rather than ideological, they were leaders of two ideologically different blocs and their interests and political ideas affected the war. Their ideologies turned Yemen into a hell and brought for the Yemenis suffering and devastation through their extensive involvement in the war. After the Yemen war had begun, it immediately turned the country into a battlefield where the Saudi and the Egyptians, who would avoid confronting each other directly, would clash. While Saudi Arabia was supporting the royalists, who were pro-monarchist and conservative, Egypt supported the republicans who

[90] Joseph Mann, "King Faisal and the Challenge of Nasser's Revolutionary Ideology," *Middle Eastern Studies* 48, no. 5 (2012): 755–57, https://doi.org/10.1080/00263206.2012.706220.

[91] Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples*, 416–18.

[92] Ajami, "The End of Pan-Arabism," 355.

were revolutionary, pro-republic, and pan-Arabist. For both Yemen was the first step.

The war was important from several aspects. It was an example of the Arab Cold War, the point in which the opposing sides of the Arab Cold War used hard military power, the matter paving the way for the Six Days War and the point where the Arab Cold War turned into a hot war. The war, furthermore, was an indication of the process that pan Arabism began to contradict with itself.

In the literature some claim that the 1967 failure marked the beginning of the end of pan Arabism.[93] Another interpretation argues that Arab nationalism met its first major defeat in 1961 with the dissolution of the union rather than in the 1967 war. The breakup also revealed the bankruptcy of ideology in Arab politics and the predominance of national interests.[94] The latter claim is weak as the establishment of UAR cannot be examined divorcing earlier mentioned Egypt and Syrian Ba'ath's interests**.** Therefore, the secession of Syria was not the major defeat even though the UAR was the most important success of Pan Arabism. As Hourani argued, the dissolution of the union showed the limits of the Arab states' common interests and the 1967 debacle showed that more decisively.[95] Another interpretation argues that the decline of Pan Arabism began with the dissolution of the UAR and culminated in the 1967 defeat; but much of the process of decline took place in Yemen.[96] This thesis argues that the collapse of Pan Arabism occurred in the process that was over the five years of Egyptian and

[93] Valbjørn and Bank, "Signs of a New Arab Cold War: The 2006 Lebanon War and the Sunni-Shii Divide," 8; Valbjørn and Bank, "The New Arab Cold War: Rediscovering the Arab Dimension of Middle East Regional Politics," 13.

[94] Gerges, "The Kennedy Administration and the Egyptian-Saudi Conflict in Yemen : Co-Opting Arab Nationalism," 295.

[95] Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples*, 411–12.

[96] Ferris, *Nasser's Gamble : How Intervention in Yemen Caused the Six-Day War and the Decline of Egyptian Power.*, 295.

Saudi involvements in the first Yemeni civil warand culminated in 1967. Two Arab states with pragmatic incentives for their national interest more than Pan-Arabist sense were fighting in another Arab state's territory against each other and were shedding blood of their Arab brothers. This view does not disdain the importance of the defeat of 1967 when the champions of pan-Arabism were defeated in the Arab system; the idea had lost its magic[97] and secession of Syria was a serious blow to the Pan-Arabism hope and implied it went beyond its power.

2.5. Conclusion

The main features of the Arab Cold War years were divergence of the regional politics between two main blocs, Saudi-Egyptian rivalry, the ideological competition and the interplay between domestic and regional politics. The rivalry years passed with mostly soft power struggle. Hard power was employed only in the Yemeni civil war. The radio broadcasts, the unity initiatives between several Arab states and organisation in the context of Islamic solidarity demonstrated how ideology characterized regional politics.

The chapter shows that main features of the region during the Arab Cold War were seen in the first Yemeni civil war and the progress of war was affected by the Egyptian-Saudi rivalry. Moreover, on account of Pan Arabism the war is important too. Because the collapse of Pan Arabism occurred in a period with the regional powers' involvements in the Yemen war and culminated with 1967 defeat.

[97] Ajami, "The End of Pan-Arabism," 357.

CHAPTER 3

THE 1962-70 YEMENI CIVIL WAR

3.1. Introduction

Nasser affiliated army officers carried out a coup in September 1962 in the North Yemen. The coup was the success of opposition, arising from the long years dissent against the autocratic Imamate rule and backwardness of the country, led by the Free Yemeni Movement. The coup led a civil war that lasted eight year's even though the coup achieved to establish a Republic and so was considered as a revolution. The struggle of republicans and royalists ended in 1970 with a stalemate and the formation of a unified country including representatives from both sides.

The history of the first Yemeni civil war will show that it was more than a simple civil war as it pulled external actors into the war. It was the role of external actors in the war to shape the war's fate and thus the fate of the country. In order to analyse the war, regional and international dimensions which have based on two main pillars -the structure of regional and international politics and the role of regional and international actors- alongside domestic dimensions are to be considered. External actors' motivations to intervene within the war had a broad perspective.

The chapter aims to analyse three things: the political structure of Yemen following the coups, the first Yemeni civil war, and the role of regional and international actors including motivations and the extent of the involvements. In this respect this chapter aims to answer the following questions: How was the domestic politics of Yemen between the early 1940s and 1962? What is the 1962

coup's importance in Yemeni history? How did the war develop and continue, how did the domestic, regional and international actors act and what were the important events in the war? How was Yemen used by regional actors in the direction of their interests? What were the motivations of regional and international actors to intervene in the war? What was the extent of their involvements?

3.2. A History of Coups and Yemeni Politics Since 1940s to Early 1960s

At 11 pm on September 26, 1962, a Nasserite group[98] of nationalist Yemeni army officers assaulted the Imam al-Badr's palace in Sana'a. While his palace was being bombed throughout the night, another group of Yemeni soldiers seized the Sana'a radio station and announced that Imam al-Badr had been killed. The Yemen Arab Republic (YAR) was declared**,** the coup was achieved and everything seemed as revolutionary Yemeni officers had planned. However, al Badr could not be killed, he managed to flee and made his way North to gather tribal forces for a counter assault on Sana'a,[99] so the eight years long civil war, between the republicans led by Abdullah al- Sallal, the first president of YAR, and supported by Egypt and the royalists led by Imam al-Badr and supported by Saudi Arabia, broke out in North Yemen.[100] Halliday; however, argued that this upheaval led not only to the civil war in North Yemen but also to guerrilla war in the South against the British rule, and to the war in Dhofar province of Oman.

[98] Halliday, *Arabia Without Sultans*, 102.

[99] Orkbay, *Beyond the Arab Cold War: The International History of the Yemen Civil War, 1962-68*, 6.

[100] Yemen has rarely been under the rule of a single government. The line separating north and south reflected the country's division under British and Ottoman rule. In 1904 the British and Ottoman empire signed a treaty to separate the Ottoman North and British ruled South. Ottoman rule was dissolved in 1918 and the Mutawakkilite Kingdom of Yemen was established in the North. The British captured Aden in 1839 and following that increased its influence in the south and east of Yemen. ("Mapping the Yemen Conflict," European Council on Foreign Relations, 2019, https://www.ecfr.eu/mena/yemen; Alice R Buchalter, "Country Profile: Yemen," 2008, https://www.loc.gov/rr/frd/cs/profiles/Word/Yemen-new.doc.)

The 1962 revolution, in short, initiated a period of conflict and war that can only be said to have ended after 20 years, in 1982 with the end of the guerrilla war in North Yemen and the establishment of diplomatic relations between Oman and South Yemen were achieved.[101]

The September 1962 coup was an action more than a group of army officers' taking the power from Imam al-Badr through force within one night. Its roots can be traced back to the 1940s through the discontent which had been about the autocratic rule of the Hamid al-Din family, backwardness of Yemen, and her isolation from the rest of the world. During his long reign (1904-48), Imam Yahya was suspicious of foreigners, especially Europeans, due to the colonial history of European states. Moreover, at that time except North Yemen and Saudi Arab, the remaining parts of the Arabian Peninsula were under the rule of British since the nineteenth century. Thus, he tried to guard his sovereignty by his own way that was the isolation of Yemen from the world. While he was closing the country against the rest of world, he was being more autocratic day by day. He gradually transferred senior posts of the Government to his sons and this increased the dissent in the country.

The Free Yemeni Movement, (FYM), (al-Ahrar al-Yamaniyyun) was the centre of the opposition against the Imam. The members of the FYM were the students educated in Baghdad or Cairo. They were wishing reforms to stop despotism, backwardness and underdevelopment of Yemen and to return the rule of consultation. The Movement's opposition against Hamid al-Din family started in the early years of the 1940s and continued until the September 1962 revolution.[102] The movement was the main driver of the February 1948 coup

[101] Fred Halliday, "The Yemens: Conflict and Coexistence," *The World Today* 40, no. 8/9 (1984): 355, https://www.jstor.org/stable/40395651.

[102] A. Z. Al-Abdin, "The Free Yemeni Movement (1940-48) and Its Ideas on Reform," *Middle Eastern Studies* 15, no. 1 (1979): 36–38, https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/4282728.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3A9af3cbabdad952211601de60b6cf76dd.

against Imam Yahya. Abdullah Ahmad al-Wazir, a rival tribal sayyid of Imam Yahya's family, engineered the 1948 coup and seized the power. Imam Yahya was assassinated and Al Wazir managed to seize power only for a very short period. The coup was a failure due to several reasons even though the Imam had been killed. The plan to simultaneously murder crown prince Ahmad who was able to gather tribal support in Yemen's north was not carried out.[103] Al Wazir could not manage to be in the power for long time; he did not have enough military support and international support, because of the assassination of the Imam Yahya. In March the crown prince Ahmad with the help of the northern tribes invaded Sana'a and took the rule.[104]

Ahmad had a more outward looking policy than his father. During his rule, he attempted to break the isolation of his country, even though relations were limited, because Ahmad feared the influence of foreigners like his father.[105] He invited the first US delegation to Yemen, hoping diplomatic and material support, signed a defense pact with Egypt and Yemen became a member of Arab League.[106] Moreover, in 1958 the monarchy federated with the UAR. All of them; however, could not save Ahmad from the criticism of the opposition.[107]

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[103] Orkbay, *Beyond the Arab Cold War: The International History of the Yemen Civil War, 1962-68*, 13.

[104] Al-Abdin, "The Free Yemeni Movement (1940-48) and Its Ideas on Reform," 45–46.

[105] Orkbay, *Beyond the Arab Cold War: The International History of the Yemen Civil War, 1962-68*, 25.

[106] Uzi Rabi, *Yemen : Revolution, Civil War and Unification* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2015), 27, https://books.google.com.tr/books?id=zv3PBgAAQBAJ&pg=PT36&lpg=PT36&dq=1955+coup+yemen&source=bl&ots=Xms4zS-tRB&sig=gK-e0JSdbAusKQxUBuZSo0MNkS8&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwiG-c_Eq4DfAhWOxYsKHXViBM0Q6AEwEXoECAAQAQ#v=onepage&q=1955 coup yemen&f=false.

[107] Ferris, *Nasser's Gamble : How Intervention in Yemen Caused the Six-Day War and the Decline of Egyptian Power.*, 33.

During the 1950's, the FYM continued to operate through its international branches of the Yemeni Union. It tried to spread anti-Imam sentiment. On April 2, 1955, Prince Abdullah, one of Imam Yahya's fourteen sons, and Colonel Ahmad al-Thalya organized a coup against the rule of Imam Ahmad. However again, as in 1948, the Northern Zaydi tribes responded quickly to save Ahmad. With the help of tribal forces, Ahmad managed to suppress the coup and took back the rule and so the April 1955 coup was failed like the one in 1948. Although both the 1948 and 1955 attempted coups failed, the foundation of FYM would remain at the core of the 1962 coup.[108]

Analysing Yemeni politics from the 1940s to the early 1960s does not only show the background of the 1962 coup, but it also puts two significant things. First, Yemen had many challenges in that period and was a weak state. Second, the first Yemeni civil war was not merely the result of the coup; it was the result of long years of unsolved Yemeni issues.

The September 1962 coup was quite different from the 1948 and 1955 failed coups. The 1962 coup was successful and brought the end of eleven hundred years (A.D. 897-1962)[109] Zaydi Imamate; on contrary to the first two which had not aimed to turn the Imamate into a republican system. That's why it was a turning point in the history of Yemen. It was the culmination of decades of popular anti-Imam sentiment, planning and failed coups led by the FYM. On contrary to the first two failed coups, the September coup caused to turn the struggle which had started two decades earlier between Yemeni traditionalists and modernists into the civil war. The civil war turned the country into a battlefield for Egypt and Saudi Arabia. It was not the only war that caused that. The history of North Yemen shows it was a weak state from the very beginning even though it was one of the only a few countries which had independency and

[108] Orkbay, *Beyond the Arab Cold War: The International History of the Yemen Civil War, 1962-68*, 11–15.

[109] Al-Abdin, "The Free Yemeni Movement (1940-48) and Its Ideas on Reform," 36.

had not been colonized in the Middle East. Moreover, it contributed to the beginning of the 1967 Six Days War, raised the opposition in South Yemen against the British rule, and led a strong presence of the Soviet Union in the Arabian Peninsula through the Marxist government of South Yemen, People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY). Therefore, the war was also the turning point in the Middle East. The new government in contrast to others established following the 1948 and 1955 coups achieved to take international support which is a quite important element for a successful coup.

There is an endless debate in the literature about Egyptian role in the September 1962 coup. Firstly, it must be understood that the Egyptian role in the coup and the intervening the war are different issues even though they should be examined together at some points. The increased presence of Egyptian advisers and teachers in Yemen,[110] the incredible speed of the Egyptian response to republicans' request when the war broke out, Egypt's support to the Yemeni Union, using of Egyptian media by Yemeni opposition, and the conscious emulation to Egypt by the Yemeni Free Officers all referred that the revolution was hatched by Egypt. Contrary to the first view, both the Egyptian and Yemeni narratives argue that the coup was a Yemeni affair. Moreover, Egypt emphasizes that they responded to the Yemeni request to save them from Saudi Arabia. Beyond these two extreme interpretations there is another one which argues that the Egyptians had known about preparations for the coup and prepared to aid it in advance, but they did not take an active role in the coup itself.[111] The coup first and foremost must be considered as a result of long years of political, social and economic unrests in the country as it had been seen in 1948 and 1955. However, it was important to take Egyptian support to protect the coup aiming a republican revolution following Nasser.

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[110] Orkbay, *Beyond the Arab Cold War: The International History of the Yemen Civil War, 1962-68*, 9.

[111] Ferris, *Nasser's Gamble : How Intervention in Yemen Caused the Six-Day War and the Decline of Egyptian Power.*, 31.

The YAR government quickly realized that they could not kill al-Badr. It was a disaster for a newly founded government for the recognition by other countries. If any country had known that Imam was still alive, it seemed unlikely that Abdullah al-Sallal, the first president of YAR, would receive any recognition. However, the administration managed to conceal the fact until November 12, 1962 when an official media said that al-Badr was still alive and leading the counterrevolutionary forces in the north by controlling access to information.[112]

3.3. The Yemeni Civil War

The history of the eight years war could be divided into three periods from 1962 till 1970. The first period, from the outbreak of the war in September 1962 till 1965, witnessed intense fighting during which all domestic sides and their regional allies were reluctant to compromise. The second period, between 1965 and 1967, witnessed stalemate. Saudis and Egyptians attempted negotiations and Egypt started to reduce its troops before the summer of 1967. During this period the opposition within Republican, the "Third Force," arose with resentment against Egyptian domination in their affairs[113] within the YAR emerged. Arab states' defeat in the Six Days War ended the second period. In the third period the regional dimension of the Yemen Civil War ended with the withdrawal of Egyptian troops and the cessation of Saudi aid to royalists. The war ended in 1970 with the formation of the cabinet including both republicans and royalists and dismissal of Hamid al-Din family.[114]

On October 3, Sallal invoked the tripartite of Jeddah Military Pact, a collective defense clause between Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Yemen. After Sallal's call

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[112] Orkbay, *Beyond the Arab Cold War: The International History of the Yemen Civil War, 1962-68*, 30–32.

[113] Kerr, *The Arab Cold War-1967: A Study of Ideology in Politics*, 142.

[114] Halliday, *Arabia Without Sultans*, 109.

Nasser declared its support to Yemen on October 3 and sent first Egyptian troops to Yemen on October 6. The supporters of the Imam declared publicly their opposition on October 8. King Saud watched nervously as Egyptian troops poured into Yemen. Within the first month of the coup 13,000 Egyptian troops arrived in Yemen and would stood by Saudi Arabia's poorly trained 15,000 troops. Egyptian troops were bombing the Saudi border in spring 1963 in an attempt to destabilize royalist bases. Egyptian and YAR incursions into Saudi territory and British administered Aden Protectorate continued throughout the first few months of 1963. Thus, Egypt's presence in Yemen made Saudis and the British nervous. The Saudis also prepared for a military confrontation by ordering troops to Red Sea coastal positions. Both Sallal and the deposed Imam were unable to subdue the other side and they were depending on their regional allies.[115]

The first severe clashes of the eight years' war occurred on the battlefield was for Saada, a northern city and traditionally the epicenter of the Imam supporters, in the second half of October 1962. The battle for Saada ended in a stalemate. The Egyptian army, trained to fight in a desert, not in a highland, was ill-equipped to conduct mountainous combat. Moreover, the royalist tribes had access to heavy artillery and munitions, were experienced about the geography and so were able to confront with the Egyptian army directly. After Imam al-Badr's resurrection in November 1962, more northern Yemeni tribes contributed to the royalists for the offensive against Egyptian army. From December 1962 to January 1963, the royalist counteroffensive was intense. However, the creation of the Ramadan Offensive, a counter-guerrilla strategy and a future model for international counterinsurgency made possible securing the strategic triangle, Sana'a, Taiz, and Hodeidah, and responding to the royalist counter-offensive. Meanwhile, the Egyptian army increased the troop numbers to over 30,000. With the success of the Ramadan Offensive, Nasser agreed to the presence of the UN

[115] Orkbay, *Beyond the Arab Cold War: The International History of the Yemen Civil War, 1962-68*, 34–35, 41–52.

mission to oversee the withdrawal and to the Bunker agreements and committed to withdraw Egyptian forces in April 1963. His commitment would, however, be short-lived, because the success did not last long. Many of the YAR gains were lost during the Saudi-aided royalist offensive in the subsequent months.[116]

From February to April of 1963, Ellsworth Bunker, the former ambassador and the seasoned US mediator, dedicated a shuttle diplomacy between Saudi Arabia and Egypt for a successful disengagement settlement during this term.[117] There were two factors which made successful disengagement in this term. The first was the success of Egyptian troops on the battlefield after the Ramadan Offensive. It led a sense of triumph which made the moment proper for negotiations. Another success was in the political arena. On February 8, a coup in Iraq overthrew Qasim, the enemy of Nasser. Moreover, the coup in Syria came true after one month and Egypt, Syria and Iraq began the tripartite unity talks. These events led Nasser to think that he achieved to break the isolation and saved his reputation as a leader of the Arab world, the driving forces for Egypt to intervene in the Yemeni civil war. Moreover, Nasser's strategy throughout the war was that after each successful offensive he applied for international diplomacy and a ceasefire to secure the gains. However royalists came back down and pushed the Egyptian frontline positions back to the general confines of the strategic triangle that was the most important concern of the YAR and Egyptian army; and in order to respond to royalists, Nasser repeatedly renewed his offensive, reneging on international commitments for ceasefire and troop withdrawal.[118] The reason behind this strategy had two dimensions. In the region, Nasser could lose his influence and threaten Egypt's image in

[116] Orkbay, *Beyond the Arab Cold War: The International History of the Yemen Civil War, 1962-68*, 63-74.

[117] Orkbay, 53.

[118] Orkbay, 61–78.

international arena with withdrawal without a victory. The internal concern was explained by Ferris:

> […] the return of tens of thousands of disgruntled veterans from Yemen might conceivably have imperiled the regime itself. Indeed, defeat in Yemen on the heels of the humiliation of the secession might have well produced a revolutionary situation in the armed services. What Nasser needed was a settlement in Yemen that guaranteed the survival of the republic in the absence of Egyptian troops.[119]

Talks process led by Bunker and guided by the US was not easy because of the diverging Egyptian and Saudi interests. Nasser wanted the Saudis to cease their aid to the royalists immediately and promised a gradual withdrawal at some time thereafter and thus securing the YAR. He was thinking to secure the YAR through this way. However, the Saudis demanded Nasser's simultaneous withdrawal and not sometime after them.[120] Despite the contrasting demands of Saudis and Nasser, Bunker obtained the agreement which was signed on April 10, 1963, by all parties concerned on a phased withdrawal of the UAR troops; withdrawal to begin simultaneously with the termination of Saudi assistance to the royalists. Both sides also agreed on the establishment of a 40-kilometer- wide demilitarized zone on the Saudi-Yemeni border and the stationing of neutral troops on the Saudi sides of the border, at Yemeni airports and at the port of Hodeidah.[121]

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[119] Ferris, *Nasser's Gamble : How Intervention in Yemen Caused the Six-Day War and the Decline of Egyptian Power.*, 214.

[120] Orkbay, *Beyond the Arab Cold War: The International History of the Yemen Civil War, 1962-68*, 53; Ferris, *Nasser's Gamble : How Intervention in Yemen Caused the Six-Day War and the Decline of Egyptian Power.*, 115–20.

[121] Ahmed Noman Kassim Almadhagi, *Yemen and the United States: A Study of a Small Power and Super-State Relationship 1962-1994* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1996), 63–64, https://books.google.com.tr/books?id=vZ-Mje7LKbQC&pg=PA63&lpg=PA63&dq=the+bunker+agreement+april+1963&source=bl&ots=dyuhzOyfMB&sig=MWyq33ov--ZShIOuiz0NZ7UPEdg&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwiz6uz-6Y3fAhXC_iwKHTeHByUQ6AEwAnoECAgQAQ#v=onepage&q=the bunker agreement.

Even though the agreement was a big step in the right direction, it had some basic short-comings. The deal did not include a timetable for the withdrawal of the UAR forces, omitted provisions for a full cease-fire, and moreover ignored the Yemeni side of the dispute.[122] The agreement led to the royalist attacks because they were ignored in the international arena. The royalists tried to gain control of some northern areas of Yemen to demonstrate their existence and demand, to be part of the solution. The UAR and YAR air forces had bombed Saudi targets where the rebels were gathering to cross the border. As a result, American military units engaged in joint manoeuvres with Saudi military personnel in May 1963 even though any decisive American reaction was not accepted.[123]

The royalist offensives with modified tactics in early 1964 scaled back Egypt's military gains and caused Nasser's visit to Sana'a on April 23, 1964 announcing an increase in the size of the Egyptian garrison to over 36,000 in preparation for the massive offensive, Haradh Offensive, in the summer. On August 14, 1964, Nasser launched a determined push on the Imam's base in al- Qarah with a massive bombing campaign. Although al-Badr remained at large, royalist forces had been pushed back to the border with Saudi Arabia. Nasser was satisfied with the success of the Haradh offensive. Therefore, he followed the same pattern as in each success in the battlefield and applied diplomatic ways to keep the upper hand and gains and approached King Faisal during the Arab Summit in September proposing a ceasefire and a resolution to the Yemeni conflict.[124]

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[122] Ferris, *Nasser's Gamble : How Intervention in Yemen Caused the Six-Day War and the Decline of Egyptian Power*., 121.

[123] Almadhagi, *Yemen and the United States: A Study of a Small Power and Super-State Relationship 1962-1994*, 65.

[124] Orkbay, *Beyond the Arab Cold War: The International History of the Yemen Civil War, 1962-68*, 77–78.

In the Arab Cold War, there was a détente era, "reconciliation" in words of Kerr, from 1964 till 1966. During the détente era, there were a number of positive developments such as Nasser and Faisal's willingness for a resolution in Yemen both in the first Arab Summit in January 1964 and in the second Arab summit in September 1964 Faisal and Nasser's mutual decision to bring the opposing Yemeni fractions together in Sudan.[125] At the second Arab Summit in Alexandria, following the measured Egyptian gains of the Haradh offensive, Nasser and Saudi King Faisal once again declared their desire for mutual withdrawal. Rather than renewing the Egyptian offensive when the royalists attacked in October 1964, Nasser chose to hold on to defensive positions, to a gradual withdrawal of the troops and organize additional meetings that included representatives from both the republican and royalist camps. Nasser appeared to be withdrawing from Yemen with the intention of redeploying his troops in Sinai for a confrontation with Israel. The reason why Nasser left his strategy, renewing the offensive to reply royalist attacks, was that the economic costs of the continued intervention in Egyptian economy, the domestic discontent because of the increasing number of casualties, problems about the US food aid to Egypt, and the opponent group within the Republican camp called Third Force that criticized Egyptian presence in the YAR.[126] The peace conferences were highlighted by the Saudi-Egyptian Jeddah Agreement in August 1965 and the Yemeni National Conference in Haradh in November 1965.[127] The two Yemeni sides convened in Haradh Conference in November to arrange for the creation of a provisional regime that would organize a plebiscite; however, because of two problems it was soon in a deadlock; the name of the state, whether it should

[125] Kerr, *The Arab Cold War-1967: A Study of Ideology in Politics*, 140–41.

[126] Orkbay, *Beyond the Arab Cold War: The International History of the Yemen Civil War, 1962-68*, 106–11; Ferris, *Nasser's Gamble : How Intervention in Yemen Caused the Six-Day War and the Decline of Egyptian Power.*, 232.

[127] Orkbay, *Beyond the Arab Cold War: The International History of the Yemen Civil War, 1962-68*, 106.

include the title of republic or not, and the future of deposed Imam's family members in politics.[128]

The Jeddah Agreement, signed on August 23, 1965, between Nasser and Faisal, seemed to be an attempt to buy a little time. Despite of the royalist gains, Nasser's intense insistence for a ceasefire was due to the fact that the Egyptian military was haemorrhaging funds, munitions, and soldiers and had little tangible success as well as economic problems and discontent[129] and he was hoping to facilitate the resumption of American surplus food deliveries. Faisal wanted to avoid an Egyptian attack on his territory while he was searching stronger Western diplomatic and military support. According to the agreement, Egyptian forces would withdraw by September 1966 and Faisal would stop all assistance to the Yemeni royalists; however, both Saudi and Egyptian involvements would officially come to a halt with the outbreak of Arab-Israeli War of June 1967. The vital mistake was made as in the process of the Bunker Agreements. Nobody consulted the Yemenis; however, the war was their war even though they took support of countries that negotiated for the Jeddah Agreement. Thus, Yemenis became the first to undercut that.[130]

By the end of 1965, Nasser's policy in Yemen took a reverse course, renewing the Egyptian occupation in what was called the long-breath strategy**.** The motivations not to pull out troops from Yemen were the issuance of the British's withdrawal from Aden**,** relations between Saudi Arabia and Iran, an opponent of Egypt, and renewed royalist attacks against Egyptian troops**.** Saudi-Iranian rapprochement under the theme of conservatism against the Egyptians was considered an ideological counterbalance initiative by Nasser. Moreover, there

[128] Kerr, *The Arab Cold War-1967: A Study of Ideology in Politics*, 143.

[129] Orkbay, *Beyond the Arab Cold War: The International History of the Yemen Civil War, 1962-68*, 110.

[130] Kerr, *The Arab Cold War-1967: A Study of Ideology in Politics*, 143–44.

was an encouraging support of the US and the Soviet Union to Nasser to remain in Yemen. However, following Kerr, this thesis argues that Faisal's attempt to organize an alignment of Muslim states as argued in the Introduction was more decisive than others.[131] Throughout this thesis, the war is primarily examined in the context of the Arab Cold War, referring to the ideological rivalry between Arab states, so in this context Kerr's arguments are valid. Egypt's decision to renew the occupation as a reaction to Faisal's initiative was one of the strongest motivations; however, this explanation does not ignore other motivations. The issuance of the British Defence White Paper which declared a withdrawal from Aden and the Federation of South Arabia (FSA)[132] (See Appendices: Map-1) by 1968 on February 22, 1966, was the most known explanation for Nasser's decision to maintain Egyptian troops in Yemen. From the Saudi perspective, it was a disaster. They believed that the declaration of the British withdrawal was an opportunity for Egypt to gain more power in the Southern Arabian Peninsula.[133] The British withdrawal was the way to salvage an otherwise disastrous military expedition by expanding Nasser's influence and to fill the political vacuum that would result from the British withdrawal in Southern Yemen. Domestically a renewed royalist attack against Egyptian troops repeated after successful Egyptian offensives was one of the reasons of the reversal of the Egyptian withdrawal. The international dimension can never be downplayed for the 1962-1970 Yemeni civil war. The main opponents of the Cold War were following similar policies in Yemen in order to keep Egypt in Yemen more even though they mainly followed different policies in the war. The primary reason behind of two superpowers' policy was keeping Egypt away from the Sinai

[131] Kerr, The Arab Cold War-1967: A Study of Ideology in Politics, 145.

[132] The British ruled Aden from 1839 to 1937 and as part of British India. In 1938, it became a British Colony. In 1959, the British established The *Federation of the Emirates of the South* (Federation of South Arabia) consisting of the various Arab Emirates and sheikhdoms of the area. A treaty was signed in 1959 for independence by 1968. Aden joined the Federation in 1963. ("Federation of South Arabia (1962-1968)," GlobalSecurity.org, accessed December 17, 2019, https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/yemen3.htm.)

[133] Mann, "King Faisal and the Challenge of Nasser's Revolutionary Ideology," 751.

border with Israel and forestalling a superpower nuclear confrontation over an Egyptian-Israeli war. Through this way, both the US and the Soviet Union tried to escape a nuclear confrontation and the US also protected her ally, Israel. Furthermore, maintaining a continued presence in Yemen would drain Egypt's economy and cage Nasser's Arab nationalist foreign policy.[134] This situation also made the Saudis pleased, because the more Egypt stayed in Yemen, the more they got stuck both economically and politically. Nasser could not threaten the stability of the region when his 40,000 troops bogged down in Yemen and his image was deteriorating due to economic crisis and discontent within the country and in the international arena. Furthermore, as Orkbay has stated many Egyptians viewed Nasser's colonization of Yemen at the expense of war with Israel as a national treason.[135] This was a clear example of the use of Yemen by external actors for their interests. It was the weakness of Yemen to make all these possible.

3.4. The Six-Day War and End of the War

The Arab-Israeli conflict has been the phenomenon with the potential to influence the politics of the Middle East from the past to the present. This was the case in the Yemen Civil War; however, there was something different. The Arab-Israeli conflict did not only influence the Yemeni war, but it was in turn also influenced by the war. On June 5, 1967, the Israeli army instigated a surprise attack on the Egyptian army in Sinai. The tension between Egypt and Saudi Arabia was pushed off the Arab agenda by the Israeli-Arab war. The Egyptian withdrawal which had already begun before the Six-Day War stepped up.

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[134] Orkbay, *Beyond the Arab Cold War: The International History of the Yemen Civil War, 1962-68*, 106–13.

[135] Orkbay, 125–27.

Nasser, who emerged as a charismatic leader in the Arab world in the second half of the 1950s after the Suez Crisis, was actually not so much lucky in the 1960s. Even though the Yemeni war seemed as an opportunity, it ultimately turned into a disaster for him. The cost of the Yemeni war economically and politically had taken a toll on Egypt's domestic prosperity and on Nasser's Arab Nationalist prestige abroad. The decision to reoccupy the Sinai Peninsula in May 1967 and provoke Israel into a war was for an honorable withdrawal from Yemen.[136] Actually, he was making the same mistake; he was creating a bigger disaster in order to get rid of the previous disaster. Israel forestalled and staged a sudden pre-emptive air assault on June 5 and within six days Egypt, Syria, and Jordan were defeated. By December 1967, Nasser completed the withdrawal from Yemen. The war in Yemen; however, would last for more than two years. The defeat brought a premature closure to Nasser's story in Yemen and led Nasser to ameliorate the relations with Saudi Arabia.

Some have claimed that Egyptian defeat against Israel in 1967 was due to the Yemen war. Almost a third of Egyptian land forces, supported by the air force and navy were engaged in an operation in Yemen. Moreover, the more experienced fighters were stationed in Yemen and they were kept in Yemen, even after June 1967, in order to avoid a military coup against Nasser. However, these accounts were not accurately right about the impact of the war in Yemen on Egyptian military performance during the 1967 war. According to the estimates, there were between 20,000 and 30,000 Egyptian soldiers and the majority of combat-ready Egyptian troops had already been stationed along the Sinai border at this time. As Orkbay puts aptly even if Nasser had withdrawn all the troops from Yemen before the 1967 war, it was not clear how they would have made a difference, considering the near-total loss of air superiority in Sinai. The last accounts have claimed that the devastating loss on the lack of Egyptian

[136] Orkbay, *Beyond the Arab Cold War: The International History of the Yemen Civil War, 1962-68*, 174.

military planning and the difficulties of inter-Arab coordination were the main reasons for the defeat.[137]

The Arabs convened a summit conference in order to discuss the results of the war and make peace in August 1967. Nasser and Faisal agreed on a Yemen Peace Plan on the basis of the Bunker Agreement of 1963. Egypt pledged to withdraw its troops, and Saudi Arabia committed to cease its aid to royalists.[138] Nasser's Egypt was economically too weak. The costs of Yemen and Six Days Wars, the rising birth rate, high unemployment, a failing manufacturing sector, and growing dependence on the Soviet Union triggered Nasser to improve relations with Saudi Arabia, because he desperately needed Saudi money to salvage his country. Not only Egypt, but also Saudi Arabia had problems; the war had taken a heavy toll on the Saudi society and economy. In exchange for Saudi funding, Nasser would not attempt anymore to undermine the Saudi Kingdom. However, the Egyptian withdrawal did not accurately cease the threat and bring relaxation for the Kingdom. The British retreat from Aden left the Saudis alone to deal with Yemenite groups that wanted to spread their revolutionary doctrines to all Arabian Peninsula. Egypt, however, did not leave his new fellow, the Saudis, and tried to solve the Yemenite problem in order to please them, who were providing generous financial aid.[139]

In November 1967, Abdullah Sallal went to Baghdad in exile and the third force took the rule of the YAR. After the Egyptian withdrawal, Imam al-Badr attacked the republicans to seize Sana'a in December 1967. The National Liberation Front (NLF), an anti-British Arab nationalist militant organization, and Front for the Liberation of Occupied South Yemen (FLOSY), an Egyptian backed

[137] Orkbay, *Beyond the Arab Cold War: The International History of the Yemen Civil War, 1962-68*, 174-175.

[138] Orkbay, 197.

[139] Mann, "King Faisal and the Challenge of Nasser's Revolutionary Ideology," 754–56.

organisation that sought to expel Britain from South Yemen, fighters arrived in Sana'a to protect the revolution and to fight against al-Badr's forces. With the onset of the royalist siege of Sana'a in December 1967, Iryani requested the Soviet help, because they were weak without Egypt's support. Moscow responded with emergency airlifts of medical supplies, food, and ammunition and the Soviet assistance was important to end the royalist siege of Sana'a. The YAR eventually broke the siege, which lasted seventy days, in February 1968. The ending of the siege was one of the defining moments in Yemen history; it was the announcement of the republican victory and marked the practical end of the Yemeni civil war while sporadic fighting continued for two years.[140]

Saudi Arabia ended all aid to the royalists by March 1968.[141] Official negotiations between republicans and royalists took place during the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, held in Jeddah during March 23-26, 1969. Both sides agreed to form a unified government with a representation of both and excluding the Hamid al-Din family, exiled to Britain. Several weeks later, Saudi Arabia recognized the YAR, officially ending the era of international involvement in Yemen.[142]

The real victors in the Yemeni civil war were Saudi Arabia and the USSR. The YAR government after the war was weak and less radical; so it was not a threat of Saudi Arabia in the region. Moreover, the new state in North Yemen became a buffer zone between Saudi Arabia and Marxist South Yemen. The Soviets were pleased through the establishment of a Marxist state in South Arabia; it would be

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[140] Orkbay, *Beyond the Arab Cold War: The International History of the Yemen Civil War, 1962-68*, 197–99.

[141] Christopher Paul et al., "Yemen, 1962-1970 Case Outcome: COIN Loss," in *Paths to Victory: Detailed Insurgency Case Studies* (RAND Corporation, 2013), 259, https://apps.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a586472.pdf.

[142] Orkbay, *Beyond the Arab Cold War: The International History of the Yemen Civil War, 1962-68*, 200.

a base for the Soviet aims in the region. Contrary to these two states, Egypt got bogged down in Yemen and left Yemen through the only war, the war with Israel. Hence, Nasser managed to rescue the country's and his honour and prevent a possible coup which could have occurred after the withdrawal from Yemen without a victory. Saudis and Egyptians ended the war and renewed the relations. When the war was over there was a great difference in the Middle East; a humiliating defeat of the Arabs against Israel in the Six Days War in 1967, de-escalation of the Arab Cold War, destruction of pan Arabism and the establishment of the first and last Marxist state of the Arab world. All these events were linked with the Yemeni war. Consequently, the war was pretty significant in Middle Eastern history.

3.5. The Role of External Powers

As the history of civil war demonstrates, the civil war in Yemen is a continuation of both international and regional actors' interests and policies inside Yemen. The following section is going to look at each one of these actors and argues that how Yemen served the interest of external actors.

3.5.1. Egyptian Role

From the beginning of the war, regional actors were the key player in the war and by the time international actors also became key players. Egypt was undisputedly the most important external actor. Her support for the YAR was fairly important to maintain the revolution and the support for the South to gain independence from the British. Egypt's considerations led to intervene the war had two interlinked dimensions: domestic and regional.

Egyptian intervention in the war is considered either as a response to the secession of Syria from the UAR or as a consequence of the Egypt's revolutionary foreign policy which was to spread revolution throughout the Arab

world by supporting revolutionaries. However, considering the Yemeni civil war as a theatre for Egyptian Saudi rivalry, the interpretation of that Nasser intervened in the war to destabilize the rival Saudi regime is also worth to mention. However, in order to understand how Egypt became a part of the war alongside these interpretations, it is also necessary to examine the domestic struggle for political power within Nasser's regime and the importance of the geographic location of Yemen.

In the very early years of the 1960s, the hero of the Arab world, Nasser was isolated, alone and his reputation tarnished. Syria's secession from the UAR struck at the very basis of Nasser's political legitimacy, his claim to the leadership of pan Arabism, and threatened to reverse Cairo's international achievements. The breakup of the UAR, thus, must be considered in the context of domestic, regional, and international politics. Domestically, the feeling of the consequent insecurity of and tensions within its ruling elite increased after the secession. The secession and the humiliating expulsion of Egyptian marshal Abd al-Hakim Amir in charge of the Syrian province and deputy chief of the UAR armed forces from Damascus, in 1961, heightened the rift within the Egyptian ruling elite. Nasser did not blame Syrians for the collapse of the union; he held Amir responsible for the debacle. Nasser believed that Amir wielded excessive influence over the armed forces and began to worry about the existence of two centres of the power-the army and the presidency. He feared a coup in Egypt similar to the 1961 coup in Syria; so, sending his experienced competitor within the army to Yemen might let him to feel safe. Regionally, Egypt reconsidered his foes and allies throughout the Middle East. In the beginning of the 1960s, he was alone. He refused to recognize the new Syrian regime; he broke off diplomatic relations with Jordan and Turkey which quickly recognized the new Syrian regime. He already had bad relations with his primary enemies with Saudi Arabia and Iraq. Nasser accused two conservative monarchies, Saudi Arabia and

Jordan, of conspiring and financing the sabotage of his union with Syria.[143] As long as he could not mobilize revolutionary movements which threatened the stability of the region, he was not a threat to the US. So, all these undermined Nasser's bargaining power internationally.

The secession of Syria paved the way for Egyptian intervention in the war along with other reasons. Nasser felt urge to demonstrate that he was still a force to be reckoned with. In order to salvage his tarnished reputation and regain the initiative in Arab affairs[144] he believed that he must gain a victory and carry the banner of revolution to the rest of the Arab world and beyond. That's why he immediately took action to intervene into the war. However, he would not salvage his reputation through the Yemeni civil war as Egyptian forces were shedding Arab blood in Yemen upon his order.

The roots of the revolutionary Egyptian foreign policy went back to the years after the Egyptian revolution in 1952. Egypt had revolutionary intensions toward Yemen since 1953 when Egyptian intelligence formulated plans to spread the revolution throughout the Arab world. As the leader of pan-Arabist, secular, and republican bloc in the Arab Cold War Nasser wanted to inspire other countries to join the pan-Arabist bloc. This interpretation of the Egyptian intervention is consistent considering contacts between Egypt and opposition of Yemen during the 1950s, the presence of Egyptian military training mission in Yemen, and the vast number of protagonists who had studied in Egyptian military institutions and operated under an assurance of Egyptian support are considered.[145]

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[143] Gerges, "The Kennedy Administration and the Egyptian-Saudi Conflict in Yemen : Co-Opting Arab Nationalism," 265–98. For the struggle for political power in Egypt see: Ferris, *Nasser's Gamble : How Intervention in Yemen Caused the Six-Day War and the Decline of Egyptian Power.*, 37–49.

[144] Kerr, *The Arab Cold War-1967: A Study of Ideology in Politics*, 141.

[145] Ferris, *Nasser's Gamble : How Intervention in Yemen Caused the Six-Day War and the Decline of Egyptian Power.*, 32.

Rivalry with Saudi Arabia also motivated Egypt for intervention. This rivalry led Egypt to consider the Yemeni war as a chance to destabilize his main rival, Saudi Arabia.[146] Nasser knew that coup rose the Saudi concerns and the events in Yemen could affect the stability of Saudi Arabia more and could undermine the dominance of the Kingdom in the region. In this context, the Egyptian intervention to the war on behalf of the YAR was primarily against Saudi Arabia.

The geographic location of Yemen provided a two-dimensional advantage to Nasser. Nasser could pressure the Saudis for economic aid and more importantly by supporting anti-British nationalists in the South of Yemen could make him gain his old reputation, the hero of pan Arabism. Egypt would be considered as a hero again like after the Suez success in 1956 when Egypt had achieved to expel the British and was welcomed in the Arab world by supporting rebels' struggling against the over a hundred years British rule. All would give Egypt unchallenged and political preeminence over both sides of the Red Sea.[147] Kerr aptly stated this fact as follows;

> It was also important as a foothold in the Peninsula, bordering on both the British-protected FSA and Saudi Arabia. Therefore the YAR embodied important Egyptian hopes for future influence over events as well as more immediate prestige.[148]

Egyptian intervention resulted from all these considerations. Therefore, the Egyptian intervention was rather an ideological consideration based on Nasser's Arab nationalism than a pragmatic need. The legal explanation for the Egyptian intervention was that it was a response to Saudi assistance given to royalist rather

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[146] Joseph Mann, "Yemeni Threat to Saudi Arabia's Internal Security, 1962-70," *Journal of Arabian Studies* 4, no. 1 (2014): 37, https://doi.org/10.1080/21534764.2014.918468.

[147] Orkbay, *Beyond the Arab Cold War: The International History of the Yemen Civil War, 1962-68*, 7.

[148] Kerr, *The Arab Cold War-1967: A Study of Ideology in Politics*, 142.

than an Egyptian invasion; however, it was beyond a response as this chapter has clarified. Muhammed Heikal, Nasser's close friend and editor of Al Ahram, claimed in his article published in Al Ahram, founded in Alexandria in 1875 and published in Cairo daily: "We did not go to Yemen to start a war but to prevent a war."[149] Even though they did not go to there to start the war which had already been started, they caused it to prolong and escalated that. Nasser used the Jeddah Military Pact of 1956 for the legal explanation based on Sallal's call for the collective defense. Article 2 of the Jeddah Pact stated "the contracting states consider that any armed aggression upon any one of them […] is an aggression directed against all of them, […] and they are all bound to take at all necessary measures."[150]

As Ajami quotes from Kerr Nasser's "incredible luck stayed with him into the grave."[151] However, this statement of Kerr is open for discussion**.** In the year of 1962, Kerr was right. The September 1962 coup gave an opportunity to Nasser to fix his reputation, to break out of his isolation, to regain the initiative in Arab affairs for Egypt on the basis of revolutionary leadership, to strike back at the pro-Western, Arab conservative forces, such as Saudi Arabia and lastly to improve his international standing. When Nasser dispatched Egyptian troops in October 1962, he was optimistic about the conclusion. However, with the transformation of Yemen into a quagmire for Egypt and, more importantly, the desperate humiliating defeat of Egypt in 1967 was a serious blow to the luck of Nasser, expressed by Kerr.

The first Yemeni civil war is depicted as the Vietnam of Egypt. The situation of Egypt both in Yemen and in her country throughout the war demonstrates that

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[149] Orkbay, *Beyond the Arab Cold War: The International History of the Yemen Civil War, 1962-68*, 35–36.

[150] Orkbay, 34.

[151] Ajami, "The End of Pan-Arabism," 359.

this label is rather convenient. Egyptian troops bogged down in Yemen over the course of the five years in Yemen where Nasser sent them with great hopes. During this time, Nasser lost more than 10,000 men, squandered billions of dollars, sent nearly 70.000 Egyptian troops. The Egyptian army was trained for desert warfare; the mountainous habitat of Yemen, at that time, became a graveyard for Egyptians. The Egyptian air force was ineffective; they did not have proper maps and were unfamiliar with the terrain. The distance between Yemen and Egypt, 1,200 miles, was causing logistic problems. Moreover, the Egyptian army was fighting a guerrilla war in an unknown territory. Nasser and painted himself into a diplomatic corner; the only way out of it was a war with Israel. He too accepted that the war in Yemen had become his Vietnam. The longer the Egyptian army remained in Yemen, the more difficult it became to disengage. Even Egypt and Saudi Arabia negotiated many times, they came to naught soon and Egypt could not leave Yemen until 1967. Actually, as Salah al-Din Mahrizi, a perceptive battalion commander who had spent some years in Yemen at the Egyptian military delegation, had stated very well that the defense of Yemen should have left to Yemenis.[152]

3.5.2. Saudi Role

Contrary to Nasser, King Saud was displeased at breaking out of the war. The war was a challenge of Saudi Arabia's vital concerns, the regime and state survival. Containing Pan-Arabist revolutionary influence of Nasser, direct threat of Egypt to the Kingdom, struggle between Saudi Arabia and Egypt over the regional dominance, the influence of communism, the rise of internal opposition, and the Asir problem were main motivations driving Saudi motivation.

The idea of containing Pan-Arabist and revolutionary ideas led by Egypt was the primary motivation for Saudi motivation to the Yemeni war. It was a necessity in the ideological rivalry years of the Arab Cold War. When the war broke out,

[152] Ferris, "Egypt's Vietnam."

Saudis were worried not only about the extension of Egyptian power in Yemen, but also about the subversiveness of Arab nationalist and republican ideas. The newly founded YAR was pro Nasserist and Nasser's revolutionary aspirations were presenting a serious threat to the Saudi regime since it could spread masses in the region against the regimes. Moreover, the revolutionary and Pan-Arabist ideas were not only threatening Yemen and Saudi Arabia; but also all Arabian Peninsula. Under the threat of these ideas, Saudi Arabia took action and intervened the war on behalf of the royalists.

Secondly, Saudi Kingdom was scared of a direct threat of Egypt. Sa'ud and Faisal believed that Nasser's real objective was to overthrow the Saudi monarchy and gain control of the vast oil resources.[153] The Kingdom also suspected that Yemen was just a starting point, Egyptians wanted to take the control of the entire Arabian Peninsula. Even though the Saudis exaggerated this point, in fact the fear of Saudi Arabia was not unfounded considering the attacks of Egyptian troops to Najran and Jazan, southern cities of Saudi Arabia, and the 1966 Syria-Egypt defence agreement are considered. In one of the secret appended clauses, the parties explicitly noted that: **"**Syria and Egypt will support any movement or popular organization in Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Lebanon that attempts to overthrow their country's regime and establish a revolutionary regime in its stead."[154]

Aside from directly threatening the Saudis, Nasser also threatened Saudi Arabia's dominant position in the Arabian Peninsula. They were competing over the leadership of the Arab world. However, the Arabian Peninsula and the Gulf[155] have been considered backyard of Saudi Arabia by the Saudis; hence the

[153] Gerges, "The Kennedy Administration and the Egyptian-Saudi Conflict in Yemen : Co-Opting Arab Nationalism," 299.

[154] Mann, "King Faisal and the Challenge of Nasser's Revolutionary Ideology," 751–52.

[155] The term of Gulf in this thesis is used to refer territories of today's GCC states.

Kingdom could not let any force to take the leadership in her backyard. Therefore, supporting the imam against republicans gave an advantage to the Saudis. The northern highlands of Yemen were like a buffer zone between Egyptian troops and Saudi territory and Saudis were protecting the gate of the Arabian Peninsula, Yemen, by supporting royalists.

Conservative Saudi monarchy was sensitive about communism as a threat against its regime. That was also a threat the stability of the region and so did Saudi regime's security. According to the Saudi regime the presence of Egyptian forces in Yemen meant the extension of Egyptian power and influence to the Arabian Peninsula and so, the Soviet and communist influence.[156] From Saudi perspective, all of them meant spreading of revolutionary ideas and a chaos; therefore, the status quo of the region would be threatened. This was an uneasy situation for Saudi Arabia. In order to understand Saudi Arabia's these four motivations for the involvement, the main pillars of Saudi foreign policy must be briefly examined, because Saudi role in Yemeni civil war was strongly linked to traditional Saudi foreign policy behaviour.

Regime and state survival, two main elements of Saudi foreign policy, have always affected decision makers since the creation of the kingdom. As it is in today, Saudi foreign policy has largely been determined by domestic concerns in the past.[157] Domestic politics is an integral part of foreign policies of all states; however, the claim in here is that in Saudi example there is stronger nexus between domestic concerns and foreign policy are than any other, because of her exceptional situation. Monarchies were unpopular in the 1960s and were seen as running against the currents of the time. Saudi Arabia was a strong monarchy

[156] Gerges, "The Kennedy Administration and the Egyptian-Saudi Conflict in Yemen : Co-Opting Arab Nationalism," 299.

[157] Crystal A Ennis and Bessma Momani, "Shaping the Middle East in the Midst of the Arab Uprisings: Turkish and Saudi Foreign Policy Strategies," *Third World Quarterly* 34, no. 6 (2013): 1130–31, https://doi.org/DOI:10.1080/01436597.2013.802503.

through the Sa'ud family's virtual monopoly on power.[158] Moreover, Saudi monarchy was quite conservative and oppressive; therefore, they have been concerned about the domestic opposition that would consider to be ignored by the Saudi government. Any disorder in the region could spill over into the Kingdom and mobilize the opposition. The second dimension of Saudi foreign policy was connected with regional politics. The Saudi regime believes that the security of their own regime would be threatened unless there is no stability in the region. Thus, Saudi Arabia has undertaken the mission of the preservation of the stability and status quo of the region.[159] In this context, the replacement of the ancient regime in Yemen and its replacement with a republican government, modeled on Egypt's, was perceived as a threat to the security and stability of the Arabian Peninsula since Pan-Arabist and revolutionary ideas of the republicans were attractive for oppositions in the Kingdom. Thus, in order to keep the stability and status quo, Saudi Arabia engaged on the side of the royalist forces in Yemen. It would be the same even without the Egyptian intervention. Moreover, the Saudi regime understood that the Egyptian presence in Yemen was accompanied by an anti-Western, anti-imperialist, and revolutionary spirit. It could threaten the stability of monarchies and engendered popular unrest against regimes because Saudi Arabia had strong relations with Western countries.

The Asir and the South provinces problems, even in less degree, were other Saudi motivations in intervening in the Yemeni civil war. The south border of Saudi Arabia with Yemen was drawn by the 1934 Treaty of Ta'if. Yemen lost its self-ruled provinces Asir, Jazan and Najran. The YAR administration announced its intention to regain Asir on contrary to al-Badr who had no intentions over Asir, standing by the 1934 Ta'if agreement and he was trying to avoid any domestic tensions in the border regions of Asir, Jizan and Najran where there

[158] Gerges, "The Kennedy Administration and the Egyptian-Saudi Conflict in Yemen : Co-Opting Arab Nationalism," 299.

[159] Ennis and Momani, "Shaping the Middle East in the Midst of the Arab Uprisings: Turkish and Saudi Foreign Policy Strategies," 1128–33.

were a sizable minority of Zaydi tribes. Hence, avoiding internal tribal conflict and preventing the border triggered Saudi regime for involvement.[160]

The 1934 Treaty of Ta'if has another important point beyond border drawing. The article 18 guaranteed that both parties would not support or recognize any armed opposition to either monarchy. Relations between Saudis and Yemenis improved through a mutual defense pact, further solidifying the relations established by Ta'if Agreement, signed in 1937 between Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Yemen. Saudis did not help opposition of the Imam during the 1948 and 1955 coup and during the 1950s two countries forged a close relationship. Like Egypt's official explanation, the Saudis they were adhering to the military alliances stipulated in both agreements.[161]

The Saudis knew that they were not able to get the Egyptians out of Yemen except by widening the scope of the conflict and by relying on external assistance. They, therefore, adopted a two-pronged strategy based on searching for regional allies, and reviving the Western connection. Regionally, Saudi Arabia allied Jordan, actually it was the only country to stand allied with the Saudis, from 1962 to 1964. The alliance was the result of similar consideration over regime security.[162] In the international dimension, the Saudis firstly tried to collaborate with their close ally, the US. Saudi Arabia tried to have the United States formally declare its support of Saudi integrity;[163] however, the Kennedy administration did not give what the Saudis had expected. In order to balance

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[160] Orkbay, *Beyond the Arab Cold War: The International History of the Yemen Civil War, 1962-68*, 38–40.

[161] Orkbay, 37–40.

[162] Gerges, "The Kennedy Administration and the Egyptian-Saudi Conflict in Yemen : Co-Opting Arab Nationalism," 300–301.

[163] Alex Thorn Craig, "'Egypt's Vietnam' A Case Study of Egypt's War in Yemen 1962-67," 13, accessed December 16, 2019, http://www.alexthorn.com/writings/Thorn-EgyptsVietnam.pdf.

this situation they collaborated with the British. The Johnson administration, unlike Kennedy made the Saudis more satisfied by giving more support them in the war.

The Saudis never actually sent their troops to Yemen although they were one of the main regional actors intervening in the war. It was to prevent a direct defeat in the battlefield, because the Saudis knew that they were militarily weaker than the Egyptians, and any possible direct confrontation with them would be against them. Thus, the extent of Saudi involvement included military aid,[164] money and warfare supply.[165]

3.5.3. Israeli Role

Israel was another regional actor in the Yemeni civil war by supporting the royalists. Like Nasser, Israel was another regional actor that saw the outbreak of the war as an opportunity. Israel was convinced to establish supply lines for the royalist army against Egypt, the principal enemy of Israel by the British. It was considered as an opportunity to divert Egyptians' attention from the Sinai border. Therefore, Israel accepted to intervene in the war by supplying aid. Israel's International Squadron was charged with responsibility for the Yemen mission. The first mission took place on March 31, 1964 and the last one was on May 5, 1966. The International Squadron's clandestine airlifts were military and medical supplies which were primarily British munitions that had been left behind in Mandate Palestine, to the royalists in the battlefield. Egyptians managed to find the Israelis on the radar only once time throughout two years.

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[164] Simon Schorno, "The ICRC In Yemen, Part I: 1962-1963," Intercross, 2013, https://intercrossblog.icrc.org/blog/the-icrc-in-yemen-part-i-1962-1963.

[165] والـ تدخل الـ شمالـ ي الـ يمن ثـ ورة اجهةلـ مو الـ سعودي - الأردنـ ي الـ تـ نـ سـ يق" ,رديـ ف عماد محمد طالـ ب، 1962- 1965,"الـ مـ صري الـ عـ سكري *مجلة الدراسات التاريخية والحضارية* 8, no. 25 (2016): 235, https://www.iasj.net/iasj?func=fulltext&aId=121081.

As one of the British mercenaries said, though the Egyptians knew that supply drops were being made, they were in the dark about when, how and by whom. In exchange for its airlifts, Israeli officials asked the British mercenaries for detailed reports on Egyptian military capabilities.[166] Gaining intelligence in exchange of airlifting weapons and supplies was important for Israel since it had found out that Egypt had used chemical weapons in North Yemen and was concerned that this might pose a future threat for them.[167]

3.5.4. Soviet Role

International dimension was also significant influencing the war. Soviet Union was the foremost international actor in Yemen war. International actors were in the war as a result of a mixed combination of their own interest and their relations with regional actors. The Soviet role in the war and Soviet support for the Egyptian military power projection into Yemen were the result of political strategic consideration and a long-standing foreign policy, which stood firmly beyond a temporary ambition.

On September 30, 1962 the Soviet Union recognized the YAR following the Egyptian recognition on September 29 and became the first non-Arab state to recognize the new republican regime. The Soviet leaders pronounced that they would support the republicans and offer them aid, because the structure of republican regime that was considered to be more progressive by them. The Soviet participation to Yemen civil war should not be thought without the collaboration with Egypt; yet, the Yemen had other Soviets had other motivations. Considering the structure of Yemen, Soviet role is remarkable as it

[166] Orkbay, *Beyond the Arab Cold War: The International History of the Yemen Civil War, 1962-68*, 169–73.

[167] Serr, "Understanding the War in Yemen," 9–10. See also: Asher Orkbay, "Syria's Chemical Weapons Might Start a New Six Day War," *The Wall Street Journal*, 2017, https://www.wsj.com/articles/syrias-chemical-weapons-might-start-a-new-six-day-war-1496605055.

had only few resources of value for the Soviet Union. Its ancient tribal system held little promise for mobilization on the basis class solidarity and it hosted few Communists for the party ideologues.[168] Yemen did not pledge anything on the behalf of communism or socialism. Therefore, it was not attractive for the Soviet Union at first glance. In order to understand the underlying motivations for the Soviet involvement and support for Egyptian intervention, the Soviet foreign policy toward the Third World since 1953 must be examined briefly. The Soviet Union's grand strategy for the Red Sea and the Middle East in general, the triangular relationship between Egypt, Soviet Union and Yemen, and the binary relations between the Soviets and Egypt must be examined.

Bruce D. Porter has examined the Soviet Union's involvement in Third World conflicts from 1945 to 1980 in four stages. The first stage was the period between 1945 and 1953, the second was 1953-1964, the third was 1965-1972, and the last was 1973-1980. In the context of the Yemeni civil war the stage two and three matter. The stage two reflects the shift after 1953; the Soviet Union involved many wars in the third world in that stage and one of them was the Yemeni civil war. Porter divides the Soviet involvement between two periods (1962-1964 and 1965-1969) according to type of the involvement: indirect (via Egypt) and direct.[169] The Soviet presence in the Middle East, worrying the US, emerged in second stage. It was the Stalin's death in 1953 paving the way for a changing the course of Soviet foreign policy. Especially Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1956 was a landmark. Supporting national liberation movement disregarding whether they were socialist or not, anti imperialism, and increasing collaboration with the third world were the

[168] Ferris, *Nasser's Gamble : How Intervention in Yemen Caused the Six-Day War and the Decline of Egyptian Power*., 71–77.

[169] Bruce D. Porter, *The USSR in Third World Conflicts: Soviet Arms and Diplomacy in Local Wars: 1945-1980* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 5–6, https://books.google.com.tr/books?id=S9NKCCXbzbQC&pg=PA18&lpg=PA18&dq=1956+yemen+and+ussr+weapons+agreement&source=bl&ots=Sq-YojT1-O&sig=BcBQ0ZFH_TnSx4y3z0Pxg4dqL8Y&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwil98jS2YTfAhVRDOwKHcoDA-YQ6AEwEHoECAAQAQ#v=onepage&q=1956 yemen.

Soviet themes[170] since 1956. In 1961 when Khrushchev, the symbol of new foreign policy of the Soviet Union, made his famous speech he said that it was duty of the socialist camp to aid people struggling for their freedom, even if they were not socialist.[171] The Soviet arms supplies to the third world countries were the indicator of these themes. Therefore, providing arms to Yemen and moreover, supporting Egypt's military intervention in Yemen so readily cannot examined without this context.

Yemen's location was good to fit with the Soviet interest giving a chance to reach Red Sea, Arabian Peninsula, Horn of Africa and in large extend to Indian Ocean. For the Soviet Union's grand strategy in the Red Sea and the Middle East, the Soviet presence in Yemen was inevitable. The Hodeidah port became a symbol of the Soviets' vision through a naval presence in the Red Sea Region and near the Horn of Africa.[172] The Soviet expansion to Yemen would provide a deterrent perception against the US Sixth fleet in the Middle East.

The triangular relations between Yemen, Egypt and the Soviet Union were another important reason both for the Soviet support to Egypt and for the Soviet role in the war. In the Middle East Egypt was the hub for Soviet interest, on account of its anti-imperialist bearing, its strategic value and its influence in the region. This case was told the best in the statement of Muammer Qaddafi: "during Nasser's time, we all left the development of Soviet-Arab relations to

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[170] Baskın Oran, ed., *Türk Dış Politikası: Kurtuluş Savaşından Bugüne Olgular, Belgeler, Yorumlar* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2002), 509–10.

[171] Ferris, *Nasser's Gamble : How Intervention in Yemen Caused the Six-Day War and the Decline of Egyptian Power.*, 89.

[172] Orkbay, *Beyond the Arab Cold War: The International History of the Yemen Civil War, 1962-68*, 114.

him."[173] Soviet-Yemeni relations was quite old, its roots went back the 1928 Soviet-Yemeni Friendship and Trade Treaty. In October 1956, Yemen receives Soviet weapons and a Soviet military mission travelled to Yemen to assist in weapons maintenance and pilot training.[174] After Nasser had become the hero of the Arab world, he led the relations between Yemen and the Soviet Union. Relations revolved around the supply of weapons. The main anticipated benefit of arming and befriending with the Yemenis was their resistance to Britain's colony in Aden. Excluding the British presence in South Yemen could create an opportunity for the Soviets to establish a friendly government on behalf of the Soviet interests. In this point Egypt shared same hostility against the British with the Soviet Union. Nasser supported the arm supplying to Yemen. The British presence in South Yemen was a threat for Nasser and his revolutionary ideas on the Arabian Peninsula. Imperialist British was also a threat to North Yemen. Thus, these three met in a common foe.

There had been a strong relationship between the Soviet Union and Egypt since the Czech-Egyptian arms deal of 1955. The Soviet Union made a further step and financed the Aswan Dam project as well and provided Egypt with increased military and technical assistance. The relations were sometimes deteriorated because of differences over Syria, Iraq and Arab communists (1958-61), but they ameliorated relations in short time. The Soviets believed that a strong Egypt under Nasser's magnetic leadership was the best option to counterbalance the US and the British. So, the Soviet Union did not leave Egypt in the war. Egypt became more reliant on Soviet military assistance; nevertheless, Nasser had never cut open his country's ties to the United States.[175] The relations of Egypt

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[173] Ferris, *Nasser's Gamble : How Intervention in Yemen Caused the Six-Day War and the Decline of Egyptian Power.*, 72.

[174] Porter, *The USSR in Third World Conflicts: Soviet Arms and Diplomacy in Local Wars: 1945-1980*, 18.

[175] Cleveland and Martin, *A History of the Modern Middle East*, 315.

with the opposite leadership of two blocs, indeed, were a controversy. Egypt pursued a pragmatic policy with the Soviet Union and the US against the ideological atmosphere of the international politics. Egypt keeping close relation with Soviets did never cut relations with the US.

Soviet involvement was in a wide scale. Soviet pilots participated in bombing mission over Royalists with their Egyptian counterparts. A training program for Egyptian pilots and the grant for war materials were provided by the Soviet Union to Egypt. Under Sallal; however, any direct Soviet military presence in Yemen receded to an advisory role after the Egyptian army intervened. Although weaponry continued to be supplied from Soviet sources, Egypt acted as a middle man supplier and trainer of Yemeni troops. Apart from weaponry support, the Soviet Union sent its specialist in higher education, infrastructure, hydrology and agriculture in 1963. Trade relations were another important element of Soviet-Yemeni relations in the 1960s. The post-coup saw significant expansion of Soviet-Yemeni relations. In March 1964, a treaty for friendship between the YAR and the Soviet Union was signed as a reaffirmation of the original treaties of 1928 and 1955. Throughout the civil war, republican officers were sent to be trained to Moscow.[176]

3.5.5. United States' Role

The United States was a latecomer to the emerging international arena in Yemen. Yemen was barely on the radar of US foreign relations in the beginning of the 1960s. The US began to consider about Yemen it was due to both conservative monarchies of the region, especially Saudi Arabia, and a continuing effort to court Nasser's friendship. The US emerged as the mediator intending on pleasing all parties involved in the Yemeni war, it was due to Saudi and Jordanian alarm at Nasser's intentions and their own domestic instability. In order to understand

[176] Orkbay, *Beyond the Arab Cold War: The International History of the Yemen Civil War, 1962-68*, 46–47; Gerges, "The Kennedy Administration and the Egyptian-Saudi Conflict in Yemen : Co-Opting Arab Nationalism," 306.

the US involvement in the Yemeni civil war, first of all the US foreign policy towards the Middle East during the Cold War and relations with Saudi Kingdom and Egypt must be examined. Bearing this in mind, the US involvement will be examined following presidents.

In the Middle East US foreign policy had some major goals during the Cold War. These are the containment of the Soviet Union which was linked with security and stability of the region, preserving access to Middle Eastern oil for the West, supporting Israel, expanding of export markets in the region and maintenance of regional stability by supporting conservative pro-Western nations. Saudi Arabia willingly fitted the all American goals except supporting Israel and became the indispensable partner for the US in the Middle East, especially after lose of close ally, Iran, with the 1979 Iran Islamic Revolution.

Under the Kennedy administration during the first months of the war the US had an uncommitted position in Yemen for a few reasons.[177] Kennedy considered the coup as an internal issue as it was not a communist inspired revolution which could edge on the US to do anything to stop any communist movement all over the world in the context of containment policy. On account of Kennedy's approach, the US adopted a non-intervention policy in Yemen-distancing itself and strongly discouraging Saudis from getting involved in a Yemeni power struggle[178] and balanced diplomatic approach by supporting all sides. Doing so, he believed to stabilize the region. Although the 1962 coup was not a communist inspired coup, it was inspired by Nasser's revolutionary ideas and thus a threat to the stability of the region. At the end it was against the US interests in the region. Therefore, official American aims were to keep the Yemeni conflict and its repercussions from spreading and endangering vital U.S. and Western interests

[177] Orkbay, *Beyond the Arab Cold War: The International History of the Yemen Civil War, 1962-68*, 47–48.

[178] Gerges, "The Kennedy Administration and the Egyptian-Saudi Conflict in Yemen : Co-Opting Arab Nationalism," 294.

in the region, outside of Yemen, particularly the US' conservative allies. Oil as main dynamic of the US policy in the region led her take stance as uncommitted in the war. Possible repercussions of the war for US' oil interest in Saudi Arabia gave this local conflict an inflated sense of importance for the Kennedy administration. The US could not let anything which would affect their access to the oil. Therefore, Kennedy who intended to not to antagonize the Egyptians tried to appease all sides through mediation at the first year of the war.

Egyptian support for the revolution was perceived as a threat by conservative monarchies, especially by Saudi Arabia and Jordan. They managed to garner the attention of the US and their alarm at Nasser's intentions and their own domestic stabilities drew the US into the conflict as the mediator with the intent to please the parties involved.[179] However; accordingly, far from confronting Egypt over Yemen, Kennedy developed close relations with Nasser**.** Moreover, they signed an economic agreement in October 1962 and their Saudi counterparts to focus their attention and energy on domestic issues.[180] Both were aware of their common interests. Egypt's economic stability depended on the continuing flow of US economic aid and for Kennedy, Egypt was the most important state in the Arab East. Thus, despite the mutual irritation and suspicion, the two leaders endeavoured to set aside points of basic disagreements.

After the new republican government of Yemen began to gain recognition of many states throughout the world, the US faced a recognition problem. If the Kennedy administration recognized the YAR government, it would disappoint her conservative allies, Saudi Arabia and Jordan. However, the YAR government was pushed to the Soviets by the US itself unless it was not recognized. In this

[179] Orkbay, *Beyond the Arab Cold War: The International History of the Yemen Civil War, 1962-68*, 49–56.

[180] Gerges, "The Kennedy Administration and the Egyptian-Saudi Conflict in Yemen : Co-Opting Arab Nationalism," 294.

dilemma the Kennedy administration wanted to preserve their interest and tried neither to antagonize Egypt nor Saudi Arabia. Therefore, the US tried to mediate between Egypt and Saudi Arabia, hoping for a compromise that would in November 1963.[181] On December 19, 1962 the US recognized the YAR, with some motivations, while her close allies in London and Riyadh withheld their recognition. First of all, the American presence in Yemen would not terminate and considerable increase of Soviet influence would be stopped through the recognition of YAR. Secondly, the US believed that by recognizing the YAR they could prevent the escalation of the war. After recognition a diplomatic agreement for the withdrawal of Egyptian forces and cessation of Saudi aid would be instrumental in securing the Saudi regime. The US was planning not to antagonize her close ally, the Saudis.[182] Consequently, neither preventing the Soviet influence in Yemen nor stabilizing the conflict was achieved by the US recognition. Furthermore, Nasser believed that Kennedy's recognition of the YAR was a green light to defeat the royalists. The Saudis, in turn, stepped up their support for the royalists and re-established closer relations with Britain, and Iran in order to counterbalance the US attempt.[183] The result was the escalation of the Yemeni conflict.

The relationship of Saudi Arabia with the US remained tense between 1962 and1963, because of Kennedy’s effort to be close with Egypt and relations with the Kingdom. During his visit to Washington in October 1962, Prince Faisal expressed his concern over US-Egyptian cooperation, but the US administration did not change her stance. Nasser sent air force to bomb Saudi border towns

[181] Gerges, “The Kennedy Administration and the Egyptian-Saudi Conflict in Yemen : Co-Opting Arab Nationalism,” 306.

[182] Orkbay, *Beyond the Arab Cold War: The International History of the Yemen Civil War, 1962-68*, 50–51.

[183] Gerges, “The Kennedy Administration and the Egyptian-Saudi Conflict in Yemen : Co-Opting Arab Nationalism,” 306.

when the Saudis increased their aid to the royalists. In this case, Kennedy understood the limits of his policy, a close US-UAR relationship. He was forced to take a firm stand to show his resolve to defend the territorial integrity of Saudi Arabia and ordered for the Operation Handsurface.[184] The operation aimed to deter Nasser from conducting cross border operations, to conduct training exercises and operations with Saudi Air Forces and to provide a limited air defence capability to the Kingdom and indicated the renewed relations between them. The Operation included a deployment of US Air Force mission and lasted from July 1963 to January 1964. [185] It referred that the US did not totally leave her ally in a turbulent period, stand by her to limit Nasser's influences in the Arabian Peninsula. This case became the evident of continuing "special relationship"[186] between the US and Saudi Arabia even though it has been sometimes challenged by temporary problems.

When President Johnson came to power in November 1963, he followed a different policy. He put more emphasis on US rivalry with the Soviet Union. As a result, the United States became more committed and active in its containment policy as it was seen in Vietnam. Unlike Kennedy, Johnson did not believe that providing economic aid and accommodating the Third World nationalist

[184] Gerges, "The Kennedy Administration and the Egyptian-Saudi Conflict in Yemen : Co-Opting Arab Nationalism," 302-7.

[185] John S Hancock, "The Eagle in The Desert: The Origins of the US-Saudi Arabian Security Partnership" (Naval Postgraduate School, 2015), 64–65, https://apps.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/1008952.pdf.

[186] The special relationship between Saudi Arabia the US refers the relations established in early 1940s and based on three elements: oil, military relations and stability and security of the region. These are three permanent elements of the special relationship although there are different temporary elements from time to time. I the context of the special relationship the US and Saudi Arabia pursue their relations without totally breaking their relations despite some controversies.

movement could appease them not to join the communist bloc; he argued to put pressure to modify their behaviors.[187]

Johnson's stance against Nasser and his ideology was quite harsh. Johnson reversed the friendly policy of his predecessor out of gratuitous animosity for Nasser; however, this statement did not ignore that before the end of the Kennedy administration relations began to deteriorate over Egypt's failure to disengage on Yemen. Johnson portrayed the Yemen Civil War as a cage for Nasser and Arab Nationalism. He was right, because day by day Egyptian army was being bogged down in Yemen. When the costs of Yemen war combined with the US suspension of food aid in 1964 and in 1966 the discontent rose more.[188] Johnson administration was interested in Yemen, not only because of Saudi Arabia, but also because of the Cold War rivalry between the US and the Soviet Union. Yemen war might become yet another area for the super powers confront over hegemony in the region. Like his predecessor, Johnson tried the dialogue way with Egypt; however, following the Egyptian attacks, Johnson considered the Egyptian regime as a destabilizing factor, preventing both sides from reaching an agreement over Yemen. Thus, Johnson turned to Saudi Arabia and increased military aid.[189] The main reason was the war in Yemen, this triggered off Saudi Arabia to increase its military spending and military relations with the US and the development of the Saudi Air Force in the need of new weapons. Consequently, the Saudis acquired more and better-quality American

[187] Gerges, "The Kennedy Administration and the Egyptian-Saudi Conflict in Yemen : Co-Opting Arab Nationalism," 308–9.

[188] Abdul Karim Bangura, "Presidential Doctrines and United States Foreign Aid Policy Towards Egypt from Eisenhower to Clinton," *Indian Journal of Asian Affairs* 12, no. 1 (1999): 41–42, https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/41950419.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3A1a1981f9455a0e21130d425ee81340ea.

[189] Mann, "Yemeni Threat to Saudi Arabia's Internal Security, 1962-70," 57.

armaments. In addition to arm purchase, during the 1960s American advisors had a vital role in the development of Saudi military.[190]

These events demonstrate that the extent of involvement of the US changed from the peace agreement initiatives to direct military aid to Saudis. The US policy in the Yemeni civil war could be described as neither ignore nor became parting directly as one of the main sides.

3.5.6. The British Role

The British had a longer history in Yemen than the other international actors. When the British made their expeditionary trips to Aden in 1835 and 1837, the Khedive of Egypt, Muhammed Ali, had already been consolidating their position in Yemen since 1832 and were poised to capture port of Aden. Ali's army was sent to Yemen at the behest of the Ottoman Empire to crush the Wahhabi tribal revolt in the Hijaz.[191] The British captured Aden in 1839 and Ali's army was defeated two years later by the combined efforts of the British, French, and Ottomans. It was the first round of the Egyptian-British imperial struggle. It was clear that the real purpose of the British conquest of Aden was primarily to counter Egyptian imperialism. A similar story would repeat in the 1960s one more time. In the aftermath of the 1956 Suez War, when Nasser began looking at the Arabian Peninsula as the next venue for the spread of his brand of Arab nationalism, Aden again rose to a level of great military and strategic importance.[192] Since the first Egyptian troops arrived in Yemen in October

[190] John P. Miglietta, *American Alliance Policy in the Middle East, 1945-1992: Iran, Israel and Saudi Arabia* (Maryland: Lexington Books, 2002), 209.

[191] Orkbay, *Beyond the Arab Cold War: The International History of the Yemen Civil War, 1962-68*, 153.

[192] Asher Orkbay, "The Yemeni Civil War: The Final British–Egyptian Imperial Battleground," *Middle Eastern Studies* 51, no. 2 (2014): 1, https://doi.org/10.1080/00263206.2014.942647.

1962, the British perceived this a direct threat to their colonial interest in Aden and the British were upset with the overthrowing of the Imam, because Aden was sheltered from pan-Arab nationalism by the curtain of the Imam in Yemen. The final Anglo-Egyptian confrontation lasted between 1962 and 1967.

The covert war in Yemen was a way to confront Nasser without publicly declaring war on the YAR. The British gave a clandestine support to the royalists "to undermine YAR, to protect its interests, and military base, in the region."[193] Against the British support to the royalist, Nasser formed his own clandestine organization in South Yemen. Moreover, Egypt supported the NLF, an anti-British Arab nationalist militant organization and main actor of the insurgency. The situation, however, changed when the Labour Party won the election in 1966. The new government decided the withdrawal of British forces 'East of Suez' and calling for a complete withdrawal.[194] By the end of 1967, both Egypt and the British evacuated their troops from Yemen; this moment was the end of 140 years of British and Egyptian competition on the Arabian Peninsula, and South Yemen turned towards the Soviets.[195]

The extent of British involvement in the war, despite covert, was mainly based on British mercenaries. The British aid to royalists included money, arms

[193] Kenan Malik, "Britain and the Covert War in Yemen 1962-70," Pandaemonium, 2018, https://kenanmalik.com/2018/01/11/britain-and-the-covert-war-in-yemen-1962-70/.

[194] Orkbay, *Beyond the Arab Cold War: The International History of the Yemen Civil War, 1962-68*, 152–67.

[195] Orkbay, "The Yemeni Civil War: The Final British–Egyptian Imperial Battleground," 10–11.

supplies,[196] weapons training, establishing radio communications, developing guerrilla strategy, and mining vital roads.[197]

3.6. Conclusion

The September coup demolishing hundred years old Imamate rule and paving the way for the first Yemeni civil war was pivotal milestone both in the Yemeni history and in the regional history. The war guaranteed the continuity of the newly founded YAR, triggered the South Yemen to struggle for independence, caused the end of the British dominance, led to creation of the first Marxist state of the Arab world in the South and created a great opportunity for Soviet Union to reach to Arabian Peninsula.

Furthermore, the war turned the Yemen into a battleground where rival regional powers confronted with each other for their own interests. Egypt involved the war with thousands of soldiers with a great hope, but logged in Yemen and it was the 1967 Arab-Israeli war being a chance for Egypt to leave Yemen. Making a more sensible decision, Saudi Arabia did not directly involve into the war. Even if this strategy saved the Saudi Arabia from possible shameful defeat, it did not save Yemenis from the death. The war was also the point where the Arab Cold War turned a hot war; thus Yemen became a testing ground for regional power competition.

The analysis of the motivations of the external actors gives a brief overview for their foreign and domestic policies and the general structure of the regional and international politics. The division of the region's political structure and ideological Egypt-Saudi rivalry as main features of the regional politics of the term were clearly visible in the war. So, the chapter has shown that examining

[196] Malik, "Britain and the Covert War in Yemen 1962-70."

[197] Orkbay, *Beyond the Arab Cold War: The International History of the Yemen Civil War, 1962-68*, 163.

the war is one of the best-case studies to understand regional politics of the Arab Cold War period. As well as regional dimension the war is connected with the international politics, the Cold War and it was also generally reflected the international politics.

The involvement of external actors led to two circumstances. Firstly, it prolonged the war and secondly when they tried to find solution ignoring Yemenis themselves, their efforts became naught.

CHAPTER 4

THE MIDDLE EASTERN POLITICS AFTER THE 2003 IRAQI WAR

4.1. Introduction

The 9/11 attacks and following Iraq war of 2003 have deeply changed the Middle Eastern politics. The removal of Iraqi buffer increased Iranian influence throughout the region through developing relations with non-state actors and pioneering anti-status quo block. Conservative Sunni states of the region under Iranian threat constituted the pro-status quo bloc led by Saudi Arabia. This picture of the regional politics is completed by sectarianism and multipolarity. It was the 2006 Lebanon war which clearly reflected all these features of the regional politics of the post 2003 war.

The peaceful protest starting in Tunisia at the end of 2010 swept through the region and led to conflicts in many countries. Weakening of the states in this period let many non-state actors act freely in these countries. The influence of sectarianism has increased in these countries. They have become more open external actors' interventions. Hence, the overlapping of domestic and regional politics has increased.

This chapter aims to analyse two things: the regional politics from the 2003 Iraq war to 2011 Arab Uprisings and the regional politics in the aftermath of the Arab Uprisings. To this respect, this chapter aims to respond to the following questions: How was the regional politics from the 2003 Iraq war to 2011 Arab Uprisings? What is the importance of the 2006 Lebanon war? What is the framework of this thesis to examine the regional politics since 2003? What are

the alternative frameworks? How is the regional politics since the Arab Uprisings?

4.2. The Middle Eastern Politics From 2003 to the Arab Uprisings

On March 20, 2003 the US launched the invasion of Iraq under the name of the Operation Iraqi Freedom with limited international support. When the Iraq war ended on December 18, 2011 with the official withdrawal of all US combat troops, the invasion except for accomplishing to topple the Saddam's regime was a debacle and had already created an irrevocable disaster in post 2003 Iraq.

The 2003 US invasion of Iraq was not only a turning point for Iraq, but it also was turning point for all Middle East. The Middle East politics has fundamentally become different from the pre-2003 period. Consequences of the 2003 war were the fragmentation, the rise of non-Arab countries such as Iran and Turkey, Saudi-Iranian rivalry, sectarianism and the rise of non-state actors in the regional politics.

The new structure of the Middle East politics is studied by many scholars. They have both similarities and differences. However, almost all agree about the presence of a cold war in Middle Eastern politics. Gause has argued that the best framework for understanding regional politics in the post 2003 is a cold war among a number of regional players. He has called that as a "new" Middle East cold war. It is a cold war because these two main actors of the region do not and most probably will not confront each other militarily. This is a "new" Middle East cold war because it shares important structural similarities with the Arab cold war. The new Middle East cold war goes beyond the Arab world by including Iran and Turkey. The line-ups are less ideological and more identity-

based.[198] In line with Gregory Gause's explanations, this thesis shares similar ideas. However, defining as "new" for the cold war emerged in post 2003 is not right. This would imply that the Arab Cold War of 1950s and 60s was the first one. However, in the Arab Cold War the non-Arab states of the region were not too much influential in the regional politics as they are today. Hence defining the new situation as "the Middle East Cold War" instead of "New Middle East Cold War" would be more appropriate.

Valbjørn and Bank have used the concept of "New Arab Cold War" in order to explain regional politics in the post 2003. They argue it is different from the Arab Cold War in three points. These are change of the main actors and relations between regional states, change in the nature of the political actors, and emergence of non-state actors. The last is change in the basic challenge to the present inter-state order, unlike republicanism or Pan Arabism it is sectarianism. So, "new" reflects the differences from the old Arab Cold War of 1950s and 1960s. They insist about labelling regional politics as a New Arab Cold War. Iran's dominant position in the existing regional politics does not change the new Arab Cold War's Arab character, because they argue that Iran has pursued an Arab option to gain influence in the Arab world through its pro-Arab and pro-Palestinian oriented foreign policy.[199]

In terms of the novel aspects of the regional politics, their assumptions are correct; yet, the role of non-Arab regional powers in regional affairs prohibits the use the word of 'Arab.' Efforts of Iran to be Arab more than Arabs and to pursue an Arab option do not change that Iran's efforts are linked with its own interests in the region It does not provide an Arab option on the behalf of Arab publics per

[198] Gause, "Beyond Sectarianism: The New Middle East Cold War," 3. See also: Raymond A. Hinnebusch, "The Sectarian Revolution in the Middle East," *R/Evolutions: Global Trends & Regional Issues* 4, no. 1 (2016): 127.

[199] Valbjørn and Bank, "Signs of a New Arab Cold War: The 2006 Lebanon War and the Sunni-Shii Divide," 10–11.

se. Moreover, Turkey and Israel are also another two regional actors playing a role in the regional politics of post 2003.

Unlike Valbjørn, Bank, and Gause this thesis prefers the concept of "the Middle East Cold War" to describe the regional politics in the post 2003. The Middle East Cold War is the phenomenon describing the regional politics from the post 2003 until today. The post 2003 Middle East politics called the Middle East Cold War can be described by five basic features; fragmentation, Saudi-Iranian rivalry, sectarianism, the rise of non-Arab states, and the rise of non-state actors.

The first characteristic of the regional politics is division. On the one hand, there are Iran, Syria, Hezbollah, and Hamas; they have formed "anti-status quo block" led by Iran. They are known with their anti-Israel and anti-US rhetoric; and the new Iran-Syria-Hezbollah-Hamas axis pursues changing of the existing status quo. It also seeks regional hegemony, the destruction of Israel, and the expulsion of Western influence. From the anti-status quo block's perspective, the objective is to increase its influence throughout the region and strengthen its power in regional politics through using anti-Israel and anti-US discourse. On the other hand, there is "pro-status quo bloc" led by Saudi Arabia that includes Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, Jordan and Egypt. They have an anti-Iran and anti-Shia rhetoric and are close allies of the US in the region and purse the maintaining of the status quo. However, the US policies implementing after the 9/11 did not let these states to rely totally on the US, because they considered the 2003 invasion as Iraq's handing over Iran by the US. These two parties are in a geopolitical confrontation. Both are concerned about each other and try to limit other's influence both in their countries and in their allies through both soft and hard power. However, two blocs of the Middle East Cold War just imply the general framework. Multipolarity more evident in post-Arab Uprisings era has been one of the main characteristics of the Middle East Cold War. Axes of

conflict in cold wars are never simply bilateral, and the same is true of the Middle East Cold War.[200]

Anti-status quo block and pro-status quo bloc are also labelled with the US designated terms of "radicals" and "moderate."[201] The differences depend on their attitudes towards the US and the status quo. Whereas, the moderate states are pro-US and pro status quo-oriented, the radicals are not.[202]

Secondly, there is a Saudi-Iranian rivalry characterizing the Middle East Cold War. It has three main pillars: balance of power contest, struggle over the dominance of the Middle East, and sectarianism. They maintain their rivalry in weak states of the region without confronting directly each other through using the groups and actors which they support. Thus, wars in Yemen, Syria, and Iraq are somehow fuelled by the geopolitical rivalry between Iran and Saudi Arabia.[203] Their behaviours are shaped by the aim of balancing each other and gaining the regional hegemony. Identity and especially sectarianism have become the driving element of their rivalry. Unlike the Arab Cold War of the 1950s and the 60s ideology is not the driving element. Reducing the Middle Eastern politics merely to a bi-polar struggle between Saudi Arabia and Iran would have been too simplistic. Other actors such as Israel, Turkey, Qatar, and UAE have important contributions to the regional politics.

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[200] Gause, "Beyond Sectarianism: The New Middle East Cold War," 1.

[201] This thesis uses concepts of moderate and radical to describe countries' position against the existing order and their position towards the international actors. Moderate states try to maintain the status quo of the region in order to save their regime; and they are mostly pro-Western. Radical states challenge existing status quo in the region, are mostly anti-Western, could confront with the American hegemony, and have quite strong anti-Israel rhetoric.

[202] Salloukh, "The Arab Uprisings and the Geopolitics of the Middle East," 35.

[203] Uzi Rabi and Chelsi Mueller, "The Geopolitics of Sectarianism in the Persian Gulf," *Asian Journal of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies* 12, no. 1 (2018): 46, https://doi.org/10.1080/25765949.2018.1436129.

Third feature of the Middle Eastern Cold War is sectarianism. Ideology has replaced identity, rising as sectarianism, as an analytical category in the Middle East since the end of the Cold War.[204] After the 2003 war, the old sectarian balance in the eastern Arab world, with Sunni rulers and Shiite ruled, has unraveled as Shiite masses are mobilized into new forms of sectarian politics.[205] The rise of the Shiism became the new main discourse of the post 2003 regional order. Pro-status quo bloc states were deeply concerned about it. Their fear was expressed by King Abdullah of Jordan in 2004 through the discourse of the "Shiite crescent" referring to Iran, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and Palestine.[206] Jordan as a conservative and moderate monarchy has worried about the rise of a "Shiite crescent." Countries composing the Shiite Crescent are radical and their populations became more conscious about their sectarian identities in the post 2003. Therefore, Jordan felt threatened from its neighbours for its regime. It was interesting, because unlike Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states Shiites in Jordan constitute very small community. It was King Abdullah's strategic game and he used the sectarian discourse of Shiite Crescent as a political tool, because he had a concern for maintaining the traditional balance of power, domination of the Sunni Muslims over the Shiites, and he believed that he can pursue the stability of his regime through this way like other monarchies. With the King Abdullah's promulgation of Shiite Crescent in 2004, one of the main concepts, sectarianism shaping the Middle East politics since 2003, was distinctly put forward. However, he was not the only one who was concerned about the rise of Iranian influence and use sectarianism to balance that. Saudi Arabia was also concerned about the continuity of the regime and its Shiite population consisting 10-15

[204] Ewan Stein, "Ideological Codependency and Regional Order: Iran, Syria, and the Axis of Refusal," *PS: Political Science & Politics* 50, no. 3 (2017): 676, https://doi.org/10.1017/s1049096517000385.

[205] Juan Cole, "A 'Shiite Crescent' The Regional Impact of the Iraq War," *Current History* 105, no. 687 (2006): 26.

[206] Hinnebusch, "The Sectarian Revolution in the Middle East," 217; Rannie Amiri, "The Shia Crescent Revisited," CounterPunch.org, 2010, https://www.counterpunch.org/2010/02/19/the-shia-crescent-revisited/.

percent of the total population. Saudi Arabia has embedded discrimination in her domestic policy, has imposed multiple constraints on the Shiite community,[207] and has oppressed any opposition against the regime mostly by force and by make-up reforms. The Kingdom has believed that Shiite population demanding equal rights and affirmation of their culture for long years will be less loyal to the House of Saud while Iranian influence is spreading throughout the region. So Saudi Arabia along with other Pro-status quo bloc states launched sort of identity counter offensive and used the sectarianism as a tool to limit the rise of Iranian influence and the rise of Shiites in the region. Moreover, Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states responded the Iranian threat by increasing their military expenditures and depending even more on the US for their security. Iran unlike Saudi Kingdom did not emphasize its Shiite identity after the war, it was mainly recharged to sort of resistance block, but Saudi Arabia and others tried to emphasize this identity.

Sectarianism is not artificial and it stems from regional identity dynamics and is "a major issue in large parts of the Middle East, and at a popular level."[208] It is the fact that can appeal to grassroots even though its' usage as an instrument is an important point.[209] In many region where there are radical Islamist non-state actors such as Syria, Iraq, and Yemen sectarianism is a mobilizing force and for many people it is a motivation to join the clashes.

There are alternative frameworks examining regional politics of the post 2003 as well as the Middle East Cold War framework. The most common one is merely sectarian based framework. That argues that the struggle for power in the Middle

[207] Samia Constain, "Shia in Saudi Arabia: A History of Discrimination, Oppression," *Alternatives International Journal*, August 2016, https://www.alterinter.org/?Shia-in-Saudi-Arabia-A-History-of-Discrimination-Oppression.

[208] Valbjørn and Bank, "Signs of a New Arab Cold War: The 2006 Lebanon War and the Sunni-Shii Divide," 11.

[209] Hinnebusch, "The Sectarian Revolution in the Middle East," 123–29.

East today is basically a Sunni versus Shia contest. However, that reductive approach fails to exactly explain the complex geopolitical dynamics at play.[210] The second confrontation cannot be simplified as a "Sunni versus Shia" fight. Although sectarianism is a part of conflicts and civil wars in the region, it is not the whole thing itself. Reading Middle East only from one aspect can be misleading. Kurds in Syria, Iraq, Iran and Turkey and Alawis in Syria cannot be categorized through the lens of sectarianism. This reductive view also fails to explain the great hostility of Saudi Arabia to its sectarian counterpart Muslim Brotherhood, a Sunni movement. Sectarianism is employed as an instrument by Sunni monarchies to rally support.[211] Iran and Saudi Arabia are strictly sectarian regimes at home, but their religious affiliations are not the primary element to determine their policies in the region. In regional politics they play a balance of power game. Sectarian perspective assumes that the Sunnis would flock together, but this has not happened. It does not mean that sectarianism has no role in alignment. It is clear that sectarianism has become a salient part of political identity; however, it must be emphasized that sectarianism's importance comes from the weakening or breakdown of state authority in many places.[212]

The other alternative framework argues that the Middle Eastern politics is examined through balance of power. Iran, Saudi Arabia and their counterparts view each other through the lens of balance of power politics[213] and their priority

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[210] Edward Wastnidge, "Religion and Geopolitics in Iranian Foreign Policy," in *Saudi Arabia and Iran: The Struggle to Shape the Middle East*, ed. Simon Mabon (The Foreign Policy Center, 2018), 9, https://fpc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Saudi-Arabia-and-Iran-The-Struggle-to-Shape-the-Middle-East-Report.pdf.

[211] Salloukh, "The Arab Uprisings and the Geopolitics of the Middle East," 35.

[212] F. Gregory Gause, "Ideologies, Alignments, and Underbalancing in the New Middle East Cold War," *PS: Political Science & Politics* 50, no. 3 (2017): 674–75, https://doi.org/10.1017/S1049096517000373.

[213] F. Gregory Gause, "Saudi Arabia: Iraq, Iran, the Regional Power Balance, and the Sectarian Question," *Strategic Insights* VI, no. 2 (2007): 4, https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/36704532.pdf.

is to prevent their rivals' influence in the region. Although balance of power is one of the characteristics of the regional politics, it cannot be a general framework describing the regional politics without sectarianism. Sectarianism is an integral part of regional politics as well other parts such as balance of power contest and struggle over regional dominance. These are all to be considered together when the regional politics is examined. The need to combine of a mixture of regime security, sectarian, geopolitical contest, and balance of power aspects is the best way to understand the Middle East politics in the post 2003.

Fourthly, the Iraq war shifted balance of power in the region from Arab to non-Arab state and so, Iran has emerged indisputably as the most important actor in the Middle East, because of its influence on the non-state actors. Iraq's existence in the region was like a buffer zone against Iran. The removal of Iraq from the scene enabled Iran to maneuver as she pleases. The rise of close allies, especially Hezbollah, Hamas, and pro-Iran groups in post-Saddam Iraq; the drop in U.S. regional legitimacy; the increasing appeal of Iran's policies; and the rise in oil prices[214] also served Iran to increase its power in the region. There was another issue in favour of Iranian. Arab populations have developed a positive view about Iran subsequent to the 2003 Iraq war, as they have perceived Iran as a power that challenges the West, opposes Israel, and criticizes corrupt Arab regime. In this context Iran began to maneuver more easily in the Middle East and became a major actor in the reshaping of Iraq and indirectly influenced Lebanese and Palestinian politics through its links to Hezbollah and Hamas respectively. It is the Shiite Crescent what Sunni Arab states scare of it. The second non-Arab power, Turkey, has also played an increasingly active role in regional affairs, militarily and diplomatically in the post 2003. Turkey has generally tried to have good relations with all sides in the region and has not followed a sectarian policy in the region. Moreover, it has played mediator role

[214] Juneau, "Iran's Failed Foreign Policy: Dealing from a Position of Weakness," 3.

between Israel and Syria and in the conflicts of the region.[215] All these have made Turkey an integral part of Middle Eastern politics. Israel, the third non-Arab power, can, for the first time in its existence, freely boast that it no longer faces a serious threat from the Arab order with the removal of Saddam, even though its one remaining Arab adversary, Syria, is still in there. However, Israel is less active than other non-Arab powers especially after 2006 Lebanon war and generally approaches the Sunni Arab states against Iran. The trend toward non-Arab dominance is strengthened by the lack of an effective Arab balancer to Iran**.** Iraq is gone, and other potential bulwarks, such as Jordan, Egypt and Saudi Arabia, were not able to challenge Iran in the early following years 2003. In time, Saudi Arabia took it upon itself to play this leadership role in the Arab world by emphasizing Sunni Islam. Saudi Arabia has framed itself as leader of Sunni world with its weight in the Islamic world because of Mecca and Madina and has tried to increase its power in regional politics against Iran. Consequently, the regional politics shifted from an Arab state system to a Middle Eastern one in the post 2003. [216]

Finally, the growing importance of non-state actors in post 2003 has been one of the main characteristics of regional politics. Sunni Hamas and Shiite Hezbollah played a leading role[217] in the period between the Iraq war and the Arab Uprisings. In the Lebanon war of 2006 and the 2008-09 Gaza war reflected this situation in the best way. In these wars Hezbollah and Hamas were the main sides of the wars against a state, Israel. In post Arab Uprisings era that case would be still obvious feature of the region. Countries where Arab uprising turned into bloody civil wars such as Syrian and Yemeni civil wars; one of the

[215] Meliha Altunisik and Esra Cuhadar, "Turkey's Search for a Third Party Role in Arab-Israeli Conflicts: A Neutral Facilitator or a Principal Power Mediator?," *Mediterranean Politics* 15, no. 3 (2010): 372, https://doi.org/10.1080/13629395.2010.517101.

[216] Salloukh, "The Arab Uprisings and the Geopolitics of the Middle East," 40.

[217] Valbjørn and Bank, "The New Arab Cold War: Rediscovering the Arab Dimension of Middle East Regional Politics," 23.

parties involve are non-state actors supported by two main rivals. Especially the increased relevance of the non-state actors supported by Iran is a clear feature of the post 2003. While Iranian links to non-state actors such as Hezbollah, Hamas and after 2011 Houthis and Muslim Brotherhood are not new, what new is that "Iran has become bolder and more open in its support of such activity" since 2003.[218] They have common discourses such as anti-Zionism, anti-imperialism, and solidarity with the downtrodden Muslim masses.[219] Iranian relations with non-state actors are as "instruments." From the perspective of Iranian security concerns Iran considers itself engaged in a defensive realist confrontation with Israel, Saudi Arabia, and the United States. Thus, Iran tries to escape its regional isolation pursued by Pro-status quo bloc and deter potential American or Israeli attacks through developing relations with non-state actors of the region.[220]

The event which reflected all these characteristics of the Middle East Cold War clearly was Hezbollah's 34 days of war with Israel, 2006 Lebanon War. Therefore, 2006 Lebanon war was a major event for regional politics with a number of reasons. First of all, it was not the traditional war between two states; it was rather an asymmetrical war between a state and a non-state actor. Thus, it revealed the new prototype of Middle East conflicts.[221] Secondly, the 2006 Lebanon War demonstrated the sectarian division in the region. The war was not

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[218] Fredic Wehrey et al., *The Iraq Effect: The Middle East After the Iraq War* (California: RAND, 2010), 22, https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monographs/2010/RAND_MG892.pdf.

[219] Stein, "Ideological Codependency and Regional Order: Iran, Syria, and the Axis of Refusal," 677.

[220] Bassel F. Salloukh, "Sectarianized Geopolitical Contests and the Rise of Armed Sectarian Nonstate Actors," in *Saudi Arabia and Iran: The Struggle to Shape the Middle East*, ed. Simon Mabon (The Foreign Policy Center, 2018), 11–12, https://fpc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Saudi-Arabia-and-Iran-The-Struggle-to-Shape-the-Middle-East-Report.pdf.

[221] Marvin Kalb and Carol Saivetz, "The Israeli-Hezbollah War of 2006: The Media as a Weapon in Asymmetrical Conflict," *Press/Politics* 12, no. 3 (2007): 43, https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/2007islamforum_israel-hezb-war.pdf.

welcomed by the pro-status quo bloc and was labelled as irresponsible adventurism of Hezbollah by Saudis. Moreover, Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak and Jordanian King Abdallah accused Hezbollah of dragging the region in a redundant adventure labelled as a pawn of Shiite Iran and quasi-Shiite Syrian ally by these three moderate Arab states. However, the criticism of pro-status quo block revealed the regional competition between two blocs as tangible and clear. The Lebanon war marked a spill over of sectarian tensions manifest in Iraq. As Valbjørn and Bank have argued the regional reactions to the Lebanon war might well reflect the Middle East Cold War.[222] The regional balance of power, already shaken by the 2003 war, was now more threatened through the Hezbollah's war against Israel. The war was able to raise not only Hezbollah's legitimacy in Lebanon and in the eyes of Arab publics, but also Iranian influence through its strong support for Hezbollah; and, it has been what Sunni states made felt threatened. Thirdly, the first output of multipolarity of the Middle East Cold War became evident in the war. While Sunni Arab states were criticizing Hezbollah, Sunni Islamist movements such as the Muslim Brotherhood wings of Egypt and Jordan, supported Hezbollah. Fourthly, one taboo of classic regional politics was broken as Egypt, Jordan and Saudi Arabia's criticism of an Arab movement's decision to confront Israel and it was presented as a proof of how Arab politics has ceased to be distinctly Arab. Because an Arab-Israel confrontation, the meeting point of all Arab actors, failed to bring all Arabs together; moreover, it demonstrated the rift between them. Consequently, the war was significant; because it was the first time the structural shifts in the regional politics were distinctly seen and it became the first clear example of the Middle Eastern Cold War. Condoleezza Rice called the Lebanon war the "birth pangs of a new Middle East."[223] The birth pangs of the new Middle East had; actually, begun with the 2003 Iraq War. That's why, it is better to consider 2006 Lebanon

[222] Valbjørn and Bank, "Signs of a New Arab Cold War: The 2006 Lebanon War and the Sunni-Shii Divide," 6–7.

[223] Valbjørn and Bank, "The New Arab Cold War: Rediscovering the Arab Dimension of Middle East Regional Politics," 5–8.

war as an event which demonstrated the new regional politics emerging the in aftermath of the 2003 war.

4.3. The Middle Eastern Politics in the Aftermath of the Arab Uprisings

The Arab Uprisings which started in Tunisia and swept through all region with similar demands, freedom, fighting corruption, oppression, injustice, unemployment, and other grievances, at the end of 2010 have been another turning point for the Middle East. The Arab Uprisings caused a domino-like collapse of autocratic regimes across the Arab region. The uprisings starting with great hopes mostly failed even though repressive governments in many countries were brought down. In Libya there was an international intervention subsequently a conflict; the Morsi government which was elected by people was overthrown through the July 2013 coup in Egypt; uprisings in Bahrain were bloodily suppressed by Saudi led coalition; and in Syria and Yemen where the process began with peaceful democratic protests turned into conflicts, and then civil wars. Tunisia is the only successful example of the Arab Uprisings with a democratic transition. The Arab Uprisings, beyond the domestic outcomes, are important for their regional consequences. The region, witnessing great changes in its politics since 2003, has become a theatre for new regional developments with the Arab Uprisings. The Arab Uprisings deepening domestic and regional instabilities caused the intensification of these features; intensification of Saudi Iran rivalry, increasing roles of non-state actors,[224] turning weak states into battlefields between the main rival powers of the regions, the rise of sectarianism and its usage as a political instrument, intensification the overlapping at the domestic and regional levels in the making of Middle East International Relations (IR), and multipolarity.

[224] Anoushiravan Ehteshami, "Iran's Role in the Gulf: Beyond Politics," *Orient*, 2018, 55, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/325112150_Iran's_role_in_the_Gulf_Beyond_politics/citation/download; Raymond A. Hinnebusch, "Structure over Agency: The Arab Uprising and the Regional Struggle for Power," in *The Eastern Mediterranean in Transition*, ed. N. Litsas Spyridon and Aristotle Tziampiris (Surrey: Ashgate, 2015), 122–23.

These developments are not new in the Middle East politics, because the 2003 US invasion of Iraq has already unleashed them, their intensification is witnessed in the region with the Arab Uprisings. The withdrawal of US from Iraq overlapped with all these developments and demonstrated that it was an end to the US effort to establish a hegemonic position in the region. It also signalled that the regional great powers, particularly Iran and Saudi Arabia, become the main players as the drivers of the regional politics.

The Iran-Saudi rivalry which has deepened since the 2003 Iraq war has become more intense and more sectarian, and it has extended to new places with the Arab Uprisings. There are several elements which have made the rivalry more intense after the uprisings. First of all, the Arab Uprisings have created regional disorder and crisis in the Arab region; they have aggravated present regional fragmentation. The regional instability has increased the Saudi-Iranian rivalry and Sunni state's perception about Iran's intention of establishing hegemony in their neighbourhood[225] and regime-society fragmentation has opened new fronts in Saudi-Iranian competition either directly or through proxies. They began to follow more active policies in order to balance each other and make realise their interests through that fragmentation. Second element is about the US policies in the region. In the second term of his power Barack Obama began to follow the strategy of "leading from behind" in his second term in office; the US would have no boots on the ground and would call for lowered profile in regional affairs. As a result of Obama's that strategy Saudi Arabia had to take care of its own affairs itself. Solving the Iran nuclear program problem through the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)[226] and relative rapprochement between

[225] Ehteshami, "Iran's Role in the Gulf: Beyond Politics," 57; Mehran Kamrava, "Multipolarity and Instability in the Middle East," *Orbis* 62, no. 4 (2018): 612, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.orbis.2018.08.003.

[226] The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) is an agreement reached by Iran and the P5+1 (China France, Germany, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States) on July 14, 2015. The JCPOA imposes restrictions on Iran's civilian nuclear enrichment program. The deal lifted crippling international sanctions in place on Iran in return for curbs on the country's

Iran and the US caused more consternation in Saudi Arabia, prompting a more pro-active foreign policy in the region. However, Donald Trump has appeased the Kingdom's concern about Iran through his strong anti-Iranian rhetoric, the belligerent stance taken against Iran and withdrawing the US from the nuclear deal. Thirdly domestic concerns are effective to increase and perpetuate the rivalry, especially from Saudi side which fuels the rivalry and confrontation more than Iran. Domestic concerns have been quite significant to shape foreign policy of the Kingdom since its establishment; the Saudis are concerned because the world as they know it is threatened with change.[227] During the Arab uprising the Shiite people of the Kingdom with some support of Kingdom's Sunnis took street and protested against the regime. Although protests were suppressed with brute force and mostly economic means, the regime has become more cautious in the context where Iran has supported any opponent that challenges the prevailing regime throughout the region. With the Mohammed bin Salman's (MBS) elimination of his opponents from the family and business world MBS has increased his anti-Iran attitude to deflect the focus over his domestic policy. The fourth is the Saudi need to be the only US client in the region. Perpetuating enmity with Iran, Saudi Arabia makes it possible.[228] The Saudi regime expresses the main battle lines in terms of Sunni-Shiite competition for regional dominance and balancing Iran in the age of identity rivalries mapped onto state competition, because sectarianism has been thought as a powerful tool to counter Iran's

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nuclear programme. It ensured that Tehran would abandon any attempts at creating a nuclear arsenal and ended 12 years of deadlock over the issue. However, the US under the Trump administration has withdrawn from the deal on May 8, 2018. (McKernan Bethan, "Iran Nuclear Deal: Why Has Trump Withdrawn US from It and Why Does It Matter?," *The Independent*, 2018, https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/iran-nuclear-deal-why-trump-us-withdraw-effect-europe-rouhani-latest-a8343496.html.)

[227] Rami Khouri, "The Saudi-Iranian Cold War," *Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs*, 2011, https://www.belfercenter.org/publication/saudi-iranian-cold-war.

[228] Madawi Al-Rasheed, "The View from Riyadh," in *Saudi Arabia and Iran: The Struggle to Shape the Middle East*, ed. Simon Mabon (The Foreign Policy Center, 2018), 6–7, https://fpc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Saudi-Arabia-and-Iran-The-Struggle-to-Shape-the-Middle-East-Report.pdf.

influence across the region.[229] That is not unique feature of the Saudi regime. Authoritarian regimes of multi-sectarian societies have a strong incentive to instrumentalize sectarianism as Hinnebusch and Valbjørn argue.[230]

One of the clear features of the post Arab uprising is the struggle for the changing the status quo of the region by pursuing anti US and anti-Israel policies or keeping the status quo by pursuing more pro-Western policies. Saudi discontent against Arab Uprisings and its interventions in Bahrain and Yemen are results of the Kingdom's concern to keep the status quo and stability in the region. Iranian support to Hezbollah, Hamas, Popular Mobilization Units (PMU), and the Houthis is result for the attempt to change the status quo under its anti-status quo block.

The weakening of Arab states refers to "the erosion and corrosion of state power,"[231] the rise of economic and political problems and more security challenges. Today, weakening of Arab states is the foremost significant characteristic of the region, as it is connected with several issues in regional politics. The weakening of Arab states is not only domestic problem; it matters for the region, because it has tilted the regional balance of power in the favour of non-Arab states,[232] and created the battlefields for the great powers of the region to confront each other indirectly. Regional rivalry began to increasingly experience in weak states since the Arab Uprisings. This led to the rise of the

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[229] Anoushiravan Ehteshami, "Saudi Arabia as a Resurgent Regional Power," *The International Spectator* 53, no. 4 (2018): 86.

[230] Morten Valbjørn and Raymond A. Hinnebusch, "Exploring the Nexus between Sectarianism and Regime Formation in a New Middle East: Theoretical Points of Departure," *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism* 19, no. 1 (2019): 11, https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/sena.12293.

[231] Ehteshami, "Iran's Role in the Gulf: Beyond Politics," 55.

[232] Raymond A. Hinnebusch, "The Arab Uprisings and The MENA Regional States System," *Uluslararası İlişkiler* 11, no. 42 (2014): 11.

influence of non-state actors and sectarianism. It has; actually, been characteristics of the Middle East politics since 2003, the examples have been Iraq and Lebanon; however, the Arab Uprisings have increased the number of weak states and fostered the influences of non-state actors and sectarianism. The disorders along with the Arab Uprisings opened up new fronts such as Syria and Yemen in the Saudi-Iranian rivalry. Their actions throughout the Arab Uprisings feed regional insecurity and ignited competition between states and their co-opted state and their non-state allies;[233] and the proliferation of weakened states has created new opportunities for interventions. Their objective is to promote the fortunes of their own clients in weak states benefiting from domestic struggles and thus balance each other and build up regional influence.[234]

The existence of armed non-state actors (NSA) has already been one of the main characteristics of the Middle East Cold War. As states were weakened, NSAs become more important players in the regional power struggle.[235] The rise of their numbers, influence and role in domestic and regional politics overlapped the rise of the Saudi-Iranian contest over regional dominance and the rise of the weakening of Arab states. The observation of the Middle Eastern politics easily demonstrates that state weakness in power is in direct proportion to the increase of non-state actors. That has certainly been the case in the Middle East cold war. This thesis following Salloukh groups non state actors in two categories:

> Two kinds of NSAs emerged as a consequence of this sectarianization of geopolitical contests: 1) armed, local or transnational, NSAs operating in a proxy capacity to advance the geopolitical interests of their regional patrons; and 2) others that pursue strictly local objectives but are nevertheless supported by regional states in a bid to accumulate more geopolitical capital. Hizballah,

[233] Ehteshami, "Saudi Arabia as a Resurgent Regional Power," 78.

[234] Salloukh, "Overlapping Contests and Middle East International Relations: The Return of the Weak Arab State," 661.

[235] Hinnebusch, "Structure over Agency: The Arab Uprising and the Regional Struggle for Power," 122.

> the plethora of groups organized in Iraq's Popular Mobilization Units (PMU), and other NSAs in Syria and Libya are examples of the former type. The relationship between Iran and the Houthis in Yemen exemplifies the latter, however. [236]

The sectarianism has intensified with the Arab Uprisings and is increasingly used to frame the main cleavage and regional competition.[237] Gause has argued that "when Syria eventually descended into civil conflict during the Arab Uprisings of 2011, the sectarian element of the new Middle East cold war intensified."[238] Contrary to his claim, this thesis suggests that intensified sectarianization of the Middle East Cold War had already began to experience in the very early months of the Arab Uprisings not with the Syrian war. The uprisings in Bahrain were labelled as Shiite demonstrations even though many Sunnis gave important support to demonstrations at the beginning and it was far away from being a sectarian revolt; yet, Shiites in Bahrain were accused as fifth column of Iran. The label of Bahraini uprising clearly demonstrated that sectarianism has been used as "a vehicle of counter-revolution."[239] Moreover, Saudi Arabia had a leading role to suppress uprisings in Bahrain in order to avoid its spillover effects on its Shiite population in the East of the Kingdom**.** Not only in Bahrain, Saudi Arabia has been the main opponent of the uprisings throughout the region. The sectarianization of the region's geopolitical battles, and the instrumental use of some of the uprisings for geopolitical ends, has hardened sectarian sentiments across the region and made conflicts and civil wars are insoluble in the short run. Sectarianism's importance comes from the weakening or breakdown of state authority in many places where, for various reasons, sectarianism has been a

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[236] Salloukh, "Sectarianized Geopolitical Contests and the Rise of Armed Sectarian Nonstate Actors," 11.

[237] Hinnebusch, "The Arab Uprisings and The MENA Regional States System," 13.

[238] Gause, "Beyond Sectarianism: The New Middle East Cold War," 10.

[239] Raymond A. Hinnebusch, "The Sectarian Revolution in the Middle East," *R/Evolutions: Global Trends & Regional Issues* 4, no. 1 (2016): 121.

salient part of political identity. The causality is that as state authority breaks down, the importance of the elective affinity between co-sectarian state and non-state actors and sectarianization increase.[240] That made it possible for Iran, Saudi Arabia, and other regional states to play an increasing role in the civil conflicts and wars in the region. This is the core, bottom-up dynamic driving the Middle East Cold War. However, this is only one side of the medallion. The other side is that regional actors use sectarianism as a tool for justifying their policies and interventions throughout the region**.** Especially Saudi Arabia's use of sectarianism is a well-known fact. Although Saudi Arabia and Iran did not create the state weakness and sectarian identities in these countries, they certainly make advantage of those, advancing their own interests in these states.

As Salloukh has argued, the Arab Uprisings and the sectarianization of the region's geopolitical battles intensified the overlapping domestic and geopolitical battles and the interplay, between the domestic and regional levels. It; indeed, is also about the weakening of the state. A weak state is more vulnerable to external interventions, exploits the permeability of rival states, non-state actors apply regional actors for support and balance its opponents, and conflicts and wars in weak states turned these countries into battlefields for regional powers. Thus, the interplay between the domestic and regional levels has risen.[241]

The division of the region between anti-status quo and pro-status quo blocks, does not simply put countries and non-state actors of the region within these two. Considering the region fragmented under mere two blocs is the result of sectarian or balance of power framework used to explain regional politics. Examining the regional politics through only sectarian or balance of power lenses is misleading and would oversimplify many dynamics. The region has

[240] Salloukh, "Overlapping Contests and Middle East International Relations: The Return of the Weak Arab State," 661.

[241] Salloukh, 660.

been in a situation of both power and ideological multipolarity. Thus, instead of taking only pure balance-of-power or sectarian logic, ideological differences and regime security considerations are also taken in order to understand the regional politics and alliance choices.[242] The close allies of the pro-status quo bloc, Egypt and Saudi Arabia have different policies in Syria war and the GCC members- Qatar and Saudi Arabia- have totally different attitudes against Muslim Brotherhood. Iran and Saudi Arabia's relations with non-states actors are also significant in that point. Iranians have developed relations with Sunni Hamas and Muslim Brotherhood. All these situations can be explained by the term of "ideological multipolarity."

In the power dimension of multipolarity there is a third pole against the pro status quo and anti-status quo forces. The third pole has emerged after the Arab Uprisings. It has consisted of Qatar and the MB and is represented by Turkey.[243] The rivalry of pro status quo and anti-status quo block has let a regional power vacuum; neither Saudi Arabia nor Iran can achieve to fill that per se. This situation has opened up room for new actors to take more role in regional politics.[244] In this point, the third block creating an intra-Sunni division has led to a new competition dimension. As a regional power, Turkey aspires to become an influential international actor. As a small state, Qatar seeks to become an indispensable regional middle power. In this context, the third block having their own regional aims have become a challenge for the other two blocks and pursued similar policies from Gaza to Libya. The year of 2013 was the clearest sign of

[242] Gause, "Ideologies, Alignments, and Underbalancing in the New Middle East Cold War," 672–75.

[243] Hinnebusch, "The Arab Uprisings and The MENA Regional States System," 15.

[244] Özgür Pala and Bülent Aras, "Practical Geopolitical Reasoning in the Turkish and Qatari Foreign Policy on the Arab Spring," *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies* 17, no. 3 (2015): 286–87, https://doi.org/10.1080/19448953.2015.1063274. See also: Aykan Erdemir and Varsha Koduvayur, "Brothers in Arms: The Consolidation of the Turkey-Qatar Axis" (Washington, 2019), https://www.fdd.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/fdd-report-brothers-in-arms-the-consolidation-of-the-turkey-qatar-axis.pdf.

the third bloc. When Mohammed Morsi, a senior member of MB, was elected in 2013 in Egypt it was welcomed and supported by Turkey and Qatar and was perceived as a triumph of third bloc. However, Morsi's election and support of Turkey and Qatar severely concerned Saudi led bloc and found voice in King Abdullah of Jordan referring the third bloc as "a Muslim Brotherhood crescent."[245]

The two blocs approach inside the Middle East Cold War is a general framework. These two kinds of multipolarity demonstrate that the regional politics is never simply bilateral.

4.4. Conclusion

The regional politics of the post 2003 is examined through the framework of the "Middle East Cold War" in this thesis. It is a mixed approach unlike other reductive frameworks –which focus merely sectarianism or balance of power. Sectarianism and balance of power are two main features of the regional politics; however, considering these two alone would hinder to understand the big picture. The rivalry between Saudi Arabia and Iran has shaped the regional politics. Thus, understanding it matters for comprehending the uncertainty and instability across the contemporary Middle East. The rivalry has many forms, from the direct military intervention of Saudi Arabia in Yemen and Iran in Syria to economic investment in Lebanon.

The analysis of the regional politics demonstrates that today what happens in Yemen, Syria, Libya, Iraq, and Lebanon are parts of a puzzle. Even though conflicts mainly arise from domestic problems, they easily became the part of regional rivalry led by Saudi Arabia and Iran. Moreover, weakening of these

[245] Pala and Aras, "Practical Geopolitical Reasoning in the Turkish and Qatari Foreign Policy on the Arab Spring," 217.

states turned these countries into a battleground where rival regional powers clash.

CHAPTER 5

THE YEMENI CIVIL WAR (2014-)

5.1. Introduction

The domestic crisis in Yemen starting with the Yemeni uprising turned to a day-to-day fight following the Houthi capturing of Sana'a in September 2014 and evolved into a regional crisis following Saudi led coalition's intervention in March 2015. The roots of the crisis are based on unsolved problems of the country for decades; although the fertile ground where the war erupted has been created by the Yemeni uprising of 2011.

External actors' role into Yemeni politics has started in 2011 with Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) brokered agreement to change the Saleh rule. Saudi led coalition's direct involvement in the war made the destiny of the war and along with it the destiny of the country to be shaped by external as well as internal actors. In order to analyse the war, regional and international dimensions which have based on two main pillars -the structure of regional and international politics and the role of regional and international actors- are to be taken into consideration.

The chapter aims to analyse five issues: the brief Yemeni politics from mid-1960s to early 2000s, the Yemeni politics in the first decade of the 2000s, the Yemeni uprising and evolution of the war, the war itself, and the role of regional and international actors –including their motivations and the extent of their involvements. To this respect this chapter aims to respond following questions: How was the Yemen politics from mid-1960s to early 2000s? How was the Yemeni politics from early 2000s to the Yemen uprising of 2011? What are the roots of the war? How has the war developed and continued? Who are the main

actors and what are their objectives in the war? How did the Yemeni uprising let to the war in the long term? How do the domestic, regional and international actors act and what are the important events of the war? How is Yemen used by regional actors for their purposes and interests? What are the motivations of regional and international actors to intervene in the war? What is their extent of involvement?

5.2. Yemeni Politics in the 2000s

Yemen has two de facto headquarters; because of the second Yemeni civil war. Sana'a is controlled by the Houthis and Aden by the internationally recognized government of Yemen. On September 21, 2014, the Houthis took control of the capital Sana'a and began to proceed to the South aligning with their former foe Ali Abdallah Saleh. On March 22, 2015, the Houthis marched to Aden, a strategically important port city, and took the key parts of Aden. Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi, the president after ousting of former president Ali Abdullah Saleh, called for help and Saudi-led Arab coalition launched an air operation to Yemen on March 26.

The chaotic atmosphere of Yemen did not happen overnight. Although many actors were in action to take advantage of disorder existing since 2011 uprising in the country, the roots of the crisis are deeper and lies on the historical background of the country. North Yemen's politics after the first civil war and the South's politics since 1967, after they had gained independence from the British, will be briefly examined. The Yemeni politics of the 2000s will also be examined more deeply in order to have a better insight to the roots of the second Yemeni civil war.

While there was a civil war in the YAR, the South Yemen was struggling to end the British colony. In 1967 the South ousted the British. The South declared independence on November 30, 1967 and so the People's Republic of South

Yemen (PRSY) was born. However, in 1970, she was renamed as the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY) (See Appendices: Map-2) and became the first and last Marxist state of the Arab world. The YAR ended its eight years' war in 1970. However, there was a conflict until 1982 between government forces and the National Democratic Front (NDF).[246] Ali Abdullah Saleh came to power through a coup in 1978. The North put NLF rebellion down by force in 1982.

Two Yemens had a hostile relationship during most of their existence and had two brief border wars in 1972 and 1979.[247] In the South there was a brutal civil war, resulting from rivalry between opponent socialist fractions of the South Yemen, in 1986. The war costed the life of thousands of people and weakened the South. It occurred during the time of Soviet support loss as the Soviet Union was dealing with its own problems and could not help. Under these conditions, the South had to accede a unification with North. The ruling party of the North, General People's Congress (GPC) and the ruling party of the South, Yemeni Socialist Party (YSP), compromised on a unified Yemen on November 30, 1989. There would be a transition period and elections in 1992. GPC pledged to share power relatively equally during the transition period.[248] Yemeni unification took place on May 22, 1990 and it was named the Republic of Yemen. (See Appendices: Map-3) The unification had been welcomed by people at the

[246] The National Democratic Front (NDF) was an umbrella organization created in 1976 by six leftist opposition groups in YAR, which sought to move the YAR in a more radical direction and away from the republican-royalist reconciliation. NDF rebellion was largely put down by force in 1982. "National Democratic Front (NDF)," in *Encyclopedia.Com*, accessed January 11, 2019, https://www.encyclopedia.com/humanities/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/national-democratic-front-ndf.

[247] Stefan Ellender, "North-South Divide: An Alternative Perspective on Conflict in Yemen," Future Foreign Policy, 2015, http://www.futureforeignpolicy.com/north-south-divide-alternative-perspective-conflict-yemen/.

[248] "Fragility and Extremism in Yemen," 2010, 19, https://bipartisanpolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Yemen-Fragility-and-Extremism.pdf.

beginning,[249] but it began to create a disappointment in the South in time, as the South was subordinated by the North.[250] It directed Southerners to think about secessionism and revival of their former PDRY. In that atmosphere, the civil war broke out in May 1994 when Southern secessionists declared independence from the North. The civil war was ended short time by the Northern army. However, it indicated that a real unification would almost never occur in the country either at a political level or societal level. It would be one of the main reasons why Yemen has been a weak state.

Saleh managed to rule the country for 34 years by maintaining a precarious balance among a range of competing forces. Saleh instituted a divide and rule strategy during his rule to prevent the development of a strong opposition. In the 1980s and early 1990s he encouraged Islamic factions such as the Muslim Brotherhood and Salafism to counter the Marxists. In the 1990s when these became too powerful, he began to support the Believing Youth which was the root of the Houthis against them. Same strategy was seen in the 2000s. The brunt of the Saada War of 2004-10 was taken by General Ali Mohsen, it led to speculation that Saleh wanted to undermine a potential rival. Whilst Saleh and his cronies were accumulating the wealth in their hands, ordinary people's living standards were getting worse.[251] People in North, especially in Saada, and in the South were most affected by political and economic marginalization. Saleh's these policies created a fertile ground where the opposition such as the Houthis and the Southern Movement known as al-Hiraak have emerged against his rule.

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[249]About how people consider the unification: Saeed Al-Batati, "25 Years after Unification, Yemen's Separatists Gaining Ground," *Middle East Eye*, May 2015, https://www.middleeasteye.net/fr/news/25-years-after-unification-yemens-separatists-gaining-ground-1644670919.

[250] Noel Brehony, "From Chaos to Chaos: South Yemen 50 Years after the British Departure," *Asian Affairs* 48, no. 3 (2017): 436, https://doi.org/10.1080/03068374.2017.1361249.

[251] Noel Brehony, "Yemen and the Huthis: Genesis of the 2015 Crisis," *Asian Affairs* 46, no. 2 (2015): 234–35, https://doi.org/10.1080/03068374.2015.1037162; Brehony, "From Chaos to Chaos: South Yemen 50 Years after the British Departure," 439.

Yemen entered the 2000s with a terrorist attack by al-Qaida on the destroyer *USS Cole* in the harbor of Aden in October 2000. It would be one of the main characteristics of the country in time. Attacks on oil installations, killing of foreign tourists, and bombing against Western targets continued throughout the first decade of the 2000s. In this context, counterterrorism became the basic point of US-Yemen relations since 2000, especially following the 9/11. In 2009 when al-Qaeda's presence was hampered by Saudi Arabia, it moved to Yemen. Saudi branch of al-Qaida merged with the Yemen branch, active since the late 1990s but was re-organised in 2006 and thus, Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) was formed.[252] It is today one of sides of the multilateral war in Yemen.

The Yemeni government's challenge was not limited with AQAP only. The Houthis were one of the major oppositions and challenge of Saleh government in the first decade of the 2000s. The Houthis who became politically active in 2003 aftermath of opposing Saleh for backing the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq are one of the main actors in the second Yemeni civil war.[253]

The Houthi movement, officially called Ansar Allah (Partisans of God), was formed in the mid-1990s by Husein Badr al Din al Huthi.[254] Houthis belong to the Zaydi sect, a branch of Shiism.[255] Zaydism is distinct from the Twelver Shiism of Iran and is close to Sunni Islam with an ancient history in Yemen. The

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[252] Brehony, "Yemen and the Huthis: Genesis of the 2015 Crisis," 242–48.

[253] Zachary Laub, "Yemen in Crisis," Council on Foreign Relations, 2016, https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/yemen-crisis.

[254] "Ansarallah," Uppsala Conflict Data Program, accessed April 2, 2019, https://ucdp.uu.se/actor/1091.

[255] Total Muslim percentage in population of Yemen is 99.1. An estimated 65% are Sunni (Shafii) and 35% are Shia. Other 0.9% includes Jewish, Baha'i, Hindu, and Christian. Zaidis are the main community of Shia sect; however, there is also a small minority, Ismaili, within Shiites. ("The World Factbook- Middle East :: Yemen," Central Intelligence Agency, accessed January 29, 2020, https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ym.html; "Mapping the Yemen Conflict.") (See Appendices: Map-4)

Houthi Movement emerged as a youth-orientated movement that wanted to defend their religious traditions against growing activities of Saudi-backed Wahhabis and local Salafis trying to win recognition for Zaydis. Their main demands are originally local: more autonomy not independence, more development aid, and more respect for their religion. Prior to the outbreak of war starting in 2004, the Houthis had already become increasingly alienated from the Yemeni government due to limited basic infrastructure and public service, economic discrimination, and government's tolerance of Saudi-inspired proselytizing by the Salafists and Wahhabis. [256]

These triggered the Houthis to rebel against the government. The armed conflict began in 2004 following anti-government demonstrations. The conflict escalated and turned into a six-year war. There were six rounds of war between 2004 and 2010. Within the six rounds, the last round, between August 2009 and February 2010, was remarkable for two reasons. Firstly, the government might have used the war to discourage the southern secessionists. The last round started with the Operation Scorched Earth by the government in August 2009. [257] Second was the Saudi intervention which was as after some of the rebels crossed into Saudi territory and apparently took control of a few Saudi border villages into the Houthi War in November 2009. In response, Saudi Arabia intervened militarily for the first time**.** So, the war gained a new dimension. Saudis ceased their military involvement in February 2010 and the war ended with a cease-fire.[258] Throughout six rounds of the war, the Houthis have grown and expanded their

[256] Terrill, "Iranian Involvement in Yemen," 432, 439.

[257] Christopher Boucek, "War in Saada From Local Insurrection to National Challenge" (Washington, 2010), 5, 9, https://carnegieendowment.org/files/war_in_saada.pdf.

[258] Terrill, "Iranian Involvement in Yemen," 432–33.

support and become well-armed, both through access to a large black market for weapons and by capturing equipment from the military.[259]

The Saudi perception of an Iran-backed movement taking root in northern Yemen has been considered as one of the other reasons for Saudi intervention in 2009.[260] At that time, Saleh claimed that the Houthis were linked to Iran; he was implying that they are an Iranian proxy. Although the year of 2009 was too early to claim that an Iran-backed movement was taking root in northern Yemen, Saleh's claim was a good fit with the region's political atmosphere. Saleh observed and interpreted well the regional politics and indented to take the support of the Saudis and the US by asserting Iranian links with the Houthis through using one of the elements of the Middle East Cold War, Saudi-Iranian rivalry. However, there was no certain evidence about Saleh's claim. Even Saleh's ally Saudi Arabia was skeptical about his claim saying that "Saleh is lying about Iran, but there's nothing we can do about it now."[261] There are many scholars who agree about that issue. E. Kendall has argued during the six rounds of war from 2004 to 2010, there was little evidence to back up the Saleh's claim that the Houthis were being assisted by Iran.[262] C. Boucek's statement is significant;

> There is no evidence that Operation Scorched Earth is a proxy conflict between Sunni Saudi Arabia and Shi'i Iran […] No Iranians have been killed or captured in Saada, and proof of Iranian weapons transfers never has been produced. The Iranian government and state media have been supportive of the Houthis, and it

[259] Juneau, "Iran's Policy towards the Houthis in Yemen: A Limited Return on a Modest Investment," 652; "Fragility and Extremism in Yemen," 28.

[260] Juneau, "Iran's Policy towards the Houthis in Yemen: A Limited Return on a Modest Investment," 652.

[261] Gregory D. Johsen, "No Clean Hands: Reaction and Counter-Reaction in the Iranian-Saudi Proxy War in Yemen," *Just Security*, 2018, https://www.justsecurity.org/61576/setting-record-straight-iran-saudi-arabias-proxy-war-yemen/.

[262] Kendall, "Iran's Fingerprints in Yemen: Real or Imagined?," 2.

> is likely that some private Iranians have informally funded the insurgency. However, this is far from official Iranian government support for Hizbollah, Hamas, and Iraqi insurgents.[263]

Despite these arguments, the UNSC's Iran Sanctions Committee's report in 2015 said the opposite, by stating the year of 2009 as the beginning of the shipping of weapons.[264] It is the fact that the Houthis have a political affinity for Iran. However, it does not imply that the Houthis and Iran have collaborated since 2009.

Another challenge to Saleh's rule in the 2000s, at the same time a challenge for the unity of the country stems from Southern separatists. They are the product of historical process like the Houthis. They came together under an umbrella movement called Southern Movement, al-Hiraak emphasizing the marginalization of the South by the regime. At the beginning their demands were moderate: equality with citizens in the nation's North, jobs, greater local decision-making power, more control over the South's economic resources, and ending Northern patronage over politics, military and economy.[265] In 2007 Southern Yemenis started peaceful demonstrations for these demands. Regime's heavy-handed response escalated protests and by 2008 many southern Yemenis began to demand secession and the restoration of an independent southern Yemeni state.[266] In time, the protest turned into clashes between government and Southern opposition and sporadic clashes have continued till Yemeni uprising.

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[263] Boucek, "War in Saada From Local Insurrection to National Challenge," 10–11.

[264] Juneau, "Iran's Policy towards the Houthis in Yemen: A Limited Return on a Modest Investment," 656.

[265] Stephen Day, "The Political Challenges of Yemen's Southern Movement" (Washington DC, 2010), 2, www.CarnegieEndowment.org/.

[266] "In the Name of Unity The Yemeni Government's Brutal Response to Southern Movement Protests," *Human Rights Watch*, 2009, https://www.hrw.org/report/2009/12/15/name-unity/yemeni-governments-brutal-response-southern-movement-protests.

As in the analysis of the Yemeni politics between the early 1940s and the 1960s the analysis of history of the Yemeni politics since the 1970s till the late 2000s demonstrates two points. Firstly, Yemen has inherently been a week state. Secondly, the roots of the second Yemeni civil war go back to decades; particularly the Houthis and Southerners were been the main challenges of the Saleh regime because of their marginalization in the system which was dominated by Saleh and pro-Saleh forces; thus, it is not surprising that they have been in the centre of the war.

5.3. The Yemeni Uprising and the Civil War (2014-)

Arab Uprisings have led to more instability in the whole region and in some countries even to civil wars. Civil wars and fighting in Syria, Iraq, Libya and Yemen are rooted in unsolved problems of the past.

The process which has created a suitable environment to erupt the war in Yemen began with the Yemeni uprising. The Yemeni uprising starting with peaceful demonstrations created a fertile ground where a civil war broke out in time. Demonstrations began in January 2011 in Yemen with similar reasons, economic and political reforms, like in other Arab countries. People from many different groups supported the wide spread demonstrations in many cities. In the face of the insistent resistance of the people, in February Ali Abdullah Saleh announced that he and his son would not be a candidate in the 2013 elections. This did not calm down the masses and they continued with protests. The protests turned into a conflict in March when security forces responded to protests with force and killed many people. As a consequence of all these under intense domestic and international pressure, on November 23, 2011 Saleh had to sign a deal to hand over his power to a transitional government under an agreement brokered by the

GCC. [267] There would be a transition period pursued by Hadi, vice president of Saleh at that time, and elections in February 2012. Hadi was elected president in a one-man election in accordance with the agreement on February 21, 2012. On March 18, 2013, the National Dialogue Conference (NDC), the critical part of the transition period, started with great hopes with the participation of local political actors from different backgrounds including Southern Hiraak, Houthis, women, the youth and civil society. The aims of the NDC were to lead transition process, restructuring of the country, and finding peaceful solutions for the main problems of the country such as the marginalization of the Houthis and Southern people through a new constitution. The NDC including many different groups for the peaceful future of the country was pointed as a model for other Middle Eastern countries. On 25 January 2014, the NDC was concluded. However, key actors such as the Southerners and the Houthis did not recognize the NDC's decisions and therefore, these could not be implemented. Thus, the hope-filled NDC collapsed and country toppled down into a chaos as the Southerners demanded secession and the Houthis rejected federation considering that this would weaken them. [268]

When the Yemeni uprisings broke out, the Houthis took the streets like many other groups. As the violence increased and the government weakened more, the Houthis began to expand their influence across northern Yemen. By March 2011, the Houthis had expelled the Yemeni military from Saada.[269] The Houthis and their former foe Saleh set up an alliance against common enemies; Saudi Arabia,

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[267] Veysel Kurt, "'Devrim'den Askeri Müdahaleye Yemen" (Ankara, 2015), 9, http://file.setav.org/Files/Pdf/20151215112938_devrimden-askeri-mudahaleye-yemen-pdf.pdf.

[268] Juneau, "Iran's Policy towards the Houthis in Yemen: A Limited Return on a Modest Investment," 653.

[269] Michael Knights, "The Houthi War Machine: From Guerrilla War to State Capture," *Combating Terrorism Center* 11, no. 18 (2018), https://ctc.usma.edu/houthi-war-machine-guerrilla-war-state-capture/.

Islah Party,[270] Ali Mohsen,[271] and Hadi all are dominant actors in post-Saleh process.[272] Even though Saleh was officially driven out power, he maintained a vast network over tribes, military, and bureaucracy. The Houthis-Saleh alliance would be influential to take the control of many areas including Sana'a more easily through his networks.[273] During the transition period, the Houthi forces have had important military gains against Salafis, Ali Mohsen, Islah and tribal opponents in the country's north; first in January 2014 in Saada, second in July 2014 in Amran and then in other northern governorates prior entering Sana'a in September.[274]

Not only the Houthis, many actors have begun to be more politically and militarily active during the Yemeni uprising and afterwards. The turmoil gave a suitable backdrop for the Southern Movement, AQAP and Islamic State in Yemen (ISY). The Southern Movement renewed its call for the secession of the South in 2011 when security services responded peaceful demonstrations

[270]The Islah party is a Sunni Islamist a political party. It is a branch of the Muslim Brotherhood, was founded after the unification of two Yemens. It was a part of Saleh's divide-and-rule tactic which aimed to balance any potential opposition of Saleh's rule. In specific Islah was to balance Marxism.

[271] Ali Mohsen al-Ahmar is the Vice President of Yemen. He played a leading role in the creation of the General People's Congress. He also led a war against the Houthis in 2004-2010.Mohsen is an influential player in the network of tribal and Sunni Islamist groups whose center of gravity is Islah. He also stands accused of helping to cultivate the groups that ultimately became Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, the local franchise of the global extremist movement. Mohsen has been able to position himself as Saudi Arabia's best hope of winning a military victory against the Houthis. (Peter Salisbury, "Yemen's Ali Mohsen Al-Ahmar: Last Sanhan Standing," *The Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington*, 2017, https://agsiw.org/yemens-ali-mohsen-al-ahmar-last-sanhan-standing/.)

[272] April Longley Alley, "Collapse of the Houthi-Saleh Alliance and the Future of Yemen's War," International Crisis Group, 2018, 10, https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/gulf-and-arabian-peninsula/yemen/collapse-houthi-saleh-alliance-and-future-yemens-war.

[273] Juneau, "Iran's Policy towards the Houthis in Yemen: A Limited Return on a Modest Investment," 654.

[274] Alley, "Collapse of the Houthi-Saleh Alliance and the Future of Yemen's War."

through force.[275] Between 2011 and 2016, AQAP benefiting from the turmoil in the country took some parts and the control in Abyan, Shabwah, Mukalla and proceeded to Al Jawf, east of Marib and some parts of Hadramut.[276] It; however, began to lose these areas when government forces backed by the UAE and Saudi Arabia, retook Mukalla in April 2016.[277] ISY is also one of the actors who benefited from security void in post 2011. ISY was formally established in November 2014.[278] It has been mostly active in Yemen's southern and central governorates. ISY has been targeted by US air strike since October 2017.[279] Even though ISY is small and not strong today, as Kendall has argued it might be more risk if a peace deal is brokered. This is because any probable peace deal might result with disillusioned population.[280]

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[275] Brehony, "From Chaos to Chaos: South Yemen 50 Years after the British Departure," 438.

[276] Cheyenne l'Auclair, "Al-Qaeda Is Rising in the Wake of the Yemen Crisis," Middle East Studies Center, 2018, https://mesc.osu.edu/blog/al-qaeda-rising-wake-yemen-crisis; Michael Horton, "Capitalizing on Chaos: AQAP Advances in Yemen," *Terrorism Monitor* 14, no. 4 (2016), https://jamestown.org/program/capitalizing-on-chaos-aqap-advances-in-yemen/; "The Yemeni Civil War: Every Day (Feb 2014 - Mar 2019)," Koopinator- YouTube, 2019, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x-cqsBplROU&t=308s.

[277] Saleh Al-Batati, "Yemeni Troops Retake Al Qaeda-Controlled City," *Wall Street Journal*, April 25, 2016, https://www.wsj.com/articles/yemeni-troops-advance-into-al-mukalla-1461568822.

[278] Maria-Louise Clausen, "Islamic State in Yemen-A Rival to Al-Qaeda?," *Connections* 16, no. 1 (2017): 51, https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/26326470.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3A8d5c0623cb577df7a3bd5e1b1e227169.

[279] Ahmed Himmiche, Dakshinie Ruwanthika Gunaratne, et al., "Final Report of the Panel of Experts on Yemen," 2018, 24, https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/N1800513.pdf.

[280] Elisabeth Kendall, "The Failing Islamic State Within The Failed State of Yemen," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 13, no. 1 (2019): 84, https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/26590510.pdf.

Yemen turned into a disappointment for those who considered it as a "model" [281] on September 21, 2014 when the Houthis took the military control of Sana'a, Yemen. Following that, the sporadic conflict turned into daily fighting and spread to larger areas. Houthis and Saleh loyalists after taking of Sana'a quickly spread to the south, east and west. They seized the strategically important Red Sea city of Hodeidah on October 14, 2014. The Houthis entered many governorates in central Yemen using the pretext of AQAP terrorists and other enemies.

In early 2015, the Houthis forced the Hadi from power and placed him under house arrest. He fled on 21 February to Aden, which he declared as the temporary capital subsequent to escaping from Houthi-imposed house arrest and then fled to Riyadh after Saleh loyalists began bombing Aden in March 2015.[282] The Houthis continued their advance, and marched southward of Aden. They took rapidly control of the city of Taiz, Yemen's third-largest city, on March 22, 2015. After Houthi fighters had taken control of Taiz, they marched at the same day to Aden, seized the international airport and several outer neighbourhoods. Hadi had called on the United Nations to authorize a military intervention by willing countries against the Houthi advance on March 24.[283] He also asked to the Arab League and the GCC to provide support by all necessary means,

[281] Yemen was considered as a model for peace and successful transition example during NDC process for other Arab countries which have had conflicts or civil wars since Arab Uprisings. The following article could be read to understand how Yemen was considered as a model: Thomas L. Friedman, "The Yemeni Way," *The New York Times*, May 11, 2013, https://www.nytimes.com/2013/05/12/opinion/sunday/friedman-the-yemeni-way.html.

[282] Juneau, "Iran's Policy towards the Houthis in Yemen: A Limited Return on a Modest Investment," 653.

[283] Adam Chandler, "Saudi Arabia Makes Its Move in Yemen," *The Atlantic*, March 2015, https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2015/03/where-is-yemen-president-hadi/388685/.

including military intervention to protect Yemen against the Houthis.[284] On March 26, Saudi led coalition launched an attack on Yemen under the name "Operation Decisive Storm," based on Hadi's call for help**.** Saudis; indeed, unilaterally attacked Yemen on March 25, then other nine countries have joined the Kingdom. Following the Saudi attack Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Egypt, Jordan, Sudan, and Morocco joined the Saudi intervention**.**

The Saudi led coalition's intervention worked and after fierce fighting Aden was recaptured on July 17, by anti-Houthi forces including al-Hiraak backed by new military hardware, airpower, and an influx of Yemeni troops trained in Saudi Arabia.[285] Four weeks later after the beginning of the Operation Decisive Storm, it has ended on April 22. Saudis expressed that the stated objectives of the operation have been achieved its goals and a new operation has been put into action under the name of the new operation called "Operation Restoring Hope." Actually, except the changing the name of the operation, all were the same. A reduction in the use of force and a movement to a proposed political solution are stressed unlike in the Operation Decisive Storm**.**[286] Whether the goals of the operation have been achieved or not is a controversial issue. The declared objectives were the restoration of legitimacy for Hadi; no role for former president Ali Abdullah Saleh in the future of Yemen; the withdrawal of all Houthi fighters from the streets; and the demilitarization of the Houthis.[287] The

[284] "GCC Issues Statement on Yemen," The Embassy of The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 2015, https://www.saudiembassy.net/statements/gcc-issues-statement-yemen.

[285] April Longley Alley, "The Battle for Aden Is a Tipping Point in Yemen's War," International Crisis, Group, 2015, https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/gulf-and-arabian-peninsula/yemen/battle-aden-tipping-point-yemens-war.

[286] Michael Stephens, "Mixed Success for Saudi Military Operation in Yemen," *BBC News*, May 12, 2015, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-32593749.

[287] Ghassan Shabaneh, "Operation Decisive Storm: Objectives and Hurdles," 2015, http://studies.aljazeera.net/en/reports/2015/04/2015412115549719521.html.

broader intentions of the war; actually, were to recapture the entirety of Yemen and destroy the Houthi movement, thus preventing Iranian presence on the Arabian Peninsula. At the end of the April 2015, none of the declared objectives or broader intentions were achieved. The legitimacy of Hadi who is recognized as the country's president by UNSC Resolution 2216 of April 2015 was not recognized by many groups. Saleh would be effective through alignment of Houthis and his old nexus in the country for two more years. Houthis were holding the biggest part of Aden, Lahij, Taiz, Hodeidah and many other cities in the North. So; "alleged" Iranian presence in Yemen has been through the Houthis according to the Saudi perspective. Therefore, the Operation Restoring Hope was just a change in the name of the Operation Decisive Storm.

A significant development for the negotiation of peace took place in March 2016. Houthi representatives and Saudi officials met in Saudi Arabia. The Houthis have preferred direct communication with Saudi Arabia rather than Hadi government, because of undeniable Saudi influence. Negotiations created a hope for peace.[288] A prisoner exchange was realised. However, the relatively warm steps to negotiate did not last long and both sides did not agree in the next UN led talks.

The UN has acted as lead mediator in Yemen since the 2011 uprising. Ould Cheikh Ahmed, who was UN Special Envoy for Yemen, had served between 2015 and 2018 and attempted to negotiate to end the civil war with peace talks in Kuwait. However; the sides of the talks, the Houthis and the Hadi government, did not compromise and talks collapsed in August 2016. The Houthis did not engage in any mediation effort until 2018. After the collapse of the Kuwait talks John Kerry, US Secretary of State from 2013 to 2017, began to promote his own

[288] Katherine Zimmerman, "2016 Yemen Crisis Situation Report," Critical Threats, 2016, https://www.criticalthreats.org/briefs/yemen-situation-report/2016-yemen-crisis-situation-report-march-8.

plan. However, the Kerry plan of November 2016 did not make any real progress too.[289]

The South problem which was shelved by the Houthi expansion was revived in early 2017. In February tensions boiled over when Hadi loyalists attempted to seize control of Aden airport from local UAE-backed militias. It was the first fight between these two [290] and demonstrated the fragmentation between Hadi forces and the Southern Transitional Council (STC) forces which had collaborated against Houthi-Saleh alliance. Their fighting became another part of the second Yemeni civil war. It demonstrates the war is beyond binary contest and there is a war inside the war. On May 11, 2017, Aidrous al-Zubaydi[291] announced the creation of STC[292] demanding secession for Southern Yemen and was backed by UAE. By the second half of 2017, UAE-backed militias were spreading to west and south of the country pushing Houthi–Saleh forces.

In November 2017, Saudi led coalition deployed military forces in Al Mahra, which is historically unique running their own affairs, after UAE departed its forces which had been there since 2015.[293] The Kingdom used the pretext to curb arms smuggling for the Houthis through its sea border and Omani border. This

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[289] Salisbury, "Yemen : National Chaos, Local Order," 35–36.

[290] Salisbury, 16.

[291]Aidrous al-Zubaydi is the leader of STC. He was Aden's former governor. He had been appointed as governor by Hadi because of UAE pressure in 2016 and was sacked by Hadi in April 2017.

[292] Robert Forster, "The Southern Transitional Councill: Implications for Yemen's Peace Process'," *Middle East Policy* 24, no. 3 (2017): 134, https://doi.org/10.1111/mepo.12295.

[293] Sigurd Neubauer, "Oman's Balancing Act in Regional Politics May Not Last," *The National Interest*, 2019, https://nationalinterest.org/feature/omans-balancing-act-regional-politics-may-not-last-55737.

has brought about the tension between Saudi Arabia and local Mahri forces who do not accept Saudi intervention in their province. However, the local authority permitted the deployment of Saudi forces under some conditions including that Al Ghaydah Airport will not be turned into a military base.[294] In the mid of 2018 Saudi presence was protested and demanded to leave the province when the Kingdom has increased its military expansion and has turned the Al Ghaydah Airpot into a military base. Neither Saudis pulled back its presence nor did the protests receive substantial attention at that time. However, the opposition against Saudi presence did not end and still continues and it is backed by Oman which considers the area "as a natural extension of its national security sphere."[295]

One of the most critical events of the civil war came true on December 4, 2017 when the Houthi forces killed former president Saleh. Shortly before being killed, he had changed the strategy quitting his antagonistic discourse against Saudi Arabia, and began to seek peace with it. The Houthis criticized his stance towards the Kingdom. Actually, the rift between the Houthis and Saleh did not start with that. From the beginning on, the Houthi–Saleh alliance was not that much strong. First, the roots of Houthi-Saleh alliance were based on common enemies; so, the alliance collapsed when Saleh's enemy perception changed. Second, their contribution to both war and governance was uneven. The Houthis have believed that the war was undertaken by them and Saleh and his forces took advantage of that situation. Finally, the issue of resource allocation also undermined the alliance.[296] These alienated the Houthis from the alliance with Saleh. The collapse of the Houthi-Saleh alliance and the death of Saleh have

[294] Yahya Al-Sewari, "Yemen's Al-Mahra: From Isolation to the Eye of a Geopolitical Storm," *Sana'a Center For Strategic Studies*, 2019, 18–19, https://sanaacenter.org/publications/analysis/7606.

[295] Al-Sewari, 35.

[296] Salisbury, "Yemen : National Chaos, Local Order," 13–14.

escalated the war. Saudi Arabia has increased its attacks and the Houthis have become more oppressive after Saleh's death.[297]

On January 28, 2018, clashes restarted in Aden when Hadi forces did not let pro-STC demonstrators for entering the city. By January 30, the STC took the control of Aden's most parts. That was perceived as a challenge against legitimacy and the country's unity by Hadi government. The event of January 28 was beyond a coup attempt, because it was an important gain for separatists and as Crisis Group argued "[…] the STC won, they might well have declared independence in southern Yemen, 28 years after the Arab nationalist north and socialist south merged."[298]

The event on April 2018 proved that the Yemen civil war is beyond a simple civil war between domestic groups that are supported by their external allies. The involvement of external actors in the Yemen war demonstrates many things; their interests inside Yemen, their regional ambitions, and potential situations for post-war. On April 30, UAE has deployed troops to the Yemeni island Socotra without seeking neither an approval from Yemen nor Saudi Arabia, and moreover it established a military base on there[299] as a part of its wide policy considering the Arabian Sea and Horn Africa. The Hadi government accused the UAE of seizing the island. The crisis was resolved by Saudi Arabia that brokered a deal on 14 May and UAE withdrew its forces. The short-term annexation was important since it implied the potential for a rift to grow in the UAE-Saudi Arabia relationship.

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[297] Alley, "Collapse of the Houthi-Saleh Alliance and the Future of Yemen's War."

[298] "Crisis Group Yemen Update #5," International Crisis Group, 2019, https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/gulf-and-arabian-peninsula/yemen/crisis-group-yemen-update-5.

[299] Youssef Igrouane, "Is the UAE Gearing Up to Annex Yemen's Socotra Island?," *Inside Arabia*, April 26, 2019, https://insidearabia.com/uae-gearing-up-annex-yemens-socotra-island/.

Yemeni forces backed by Saudi led coalition launched the offensive for Hodeidah, Operation Golden Victory, on June 13, 2018. The main role was undertaken by UAE. UAE has already been preparing Yemeni troops for future Hodeidah battle since 2016[300] and coalition's progress along the Red Sea coast has increased since the beginning of 2018. UAE-backed Yemeni forces have largely encircled Hodeidah city since November 2018.[301] However, there has been a stalemate despite the coalition's in arms. Their role was significant as Kirill Semenov explained very well:

> Basically, the militant groups affiliated with the STC, together with the Emirati troops, were the factions that determined the outcome of the battle for Hodeidah, forcing the Houthis to negotiate and make concessions in Stockholm for the first time since the beginning of the conflict.[302]

Before the offensive, the UN had engaged in intense shuttle diplomacy with the Houthis and Saudi Arabia and the UAE to prevent a new battle.[303] However, the Gulf states insisted on an offensive through which they could force the Houthis to the negotiation and prevent Iranian arms being smuggled to the Houthis.[304] It was clear that the battle in Hodeidah would be one of the toughest.

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[300] Peter Salisbury, "What's at Stake in the Battle for Hodeidah?," *Foreign Affairs*, June 2018, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/middle-east/2018-06-27/new-front-yemen.

[301] "Crisis Group Yemen Update #11," International Crisis Group, 2019, https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/gulf-and-arabian-peninsula/yemen/crisis-group-yemen-update-11.

[302] Krill Semenov, "Does Russia Seek Return of Independent South Yemen?," *Al-Monitor*, April 11, 2019, https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2019/04/russia-south-yemen-uae-prospects.html.

[303] Michelle Nichols and Yara Bayoumy, "U.N. Shuttle Diplomacy Aims to Avert Assault on Vital Yemen Port," *Reuters*, June 11, 2018, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-yemen-security-usa/un-shuttle-diplomacy-aims-to-avert-assault-on-vital-yemen-port-idUSKBN1J71K7.

[304] Nasser Al-Sakkaf and Andrew England, "Saudi-Led Coalition Launches Offensive on Prized Yemen Port," *Financial Times*, June 13, 2018, https://www.ft.com/content/133f7618-6eda-11e8-92d3-6c13e5c92914.

The battle for Hodeidah has been very critical for several reasons. First, the city is important to reach Sana'a for the coalition. Second, it is important for the Houthis too, because it has been the only way to reach out of the country. Third, from UAE side, the battle over Hodeidah has been important, because the victory will give UAE a much stronger hand in future political negotiations. Finally, it is the largest port of the country at the Red Sea and is on major international shipping lanes between Europe, Asia and Africa via the Suez Canal. Hence, it is one of the most significant points for the Houthis and for the humanitarian aid of the impoverished country, because it is a lifeline for two thirds of Yemen's population.[305] The humanitarian crisis could more deepen if this lifeline is damaged. Thus, UN-led talks to cease the fighting in Hodeidah have been very significant on account of humanitarian situation. However, the importance of talks is beyond that as the process concluding with the Stockholm Agreement between warring parties has been the first significant breakthrough for peace efforts of the war.

A peace deal, the Stockholm Agreement, brokered by UN was signed by the government and the Houthis on December 13, 2018. It announced a ceasefire around the key port of Hodeidah and parties also agreed a prisoner swap, to withdraw their troops, and Houthis would "relinquish control of three of its ports - Hodeidah, Saleef and Ras Isa - which serve as a major lifeline for more than 18 million Yemenis."[306] As stated very well by Salisbury "the Stockholm Agreement is imperfect and imprecise, but it was hard-won. If it is allowed to

[305] "Yemen: Averting a Destructive Battle for Hodeida," *International Crisis Group* (Brussels, 2018), https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/gulf-and-arabian-peninsula/yemen/b59-yemen-averting-destructive-battle-hodeida.

[306] Faisal Edroos, "Yemen's Warring Parties Agree to Ceasefire in Hodeidah," *Al Jazeera*, December 13, 2018, https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/12/yemen-warring-sides-agree-ceasefire-hodeidah-governorate-181213123500512.html.

break down, there will be no opportunity for a similar deal for a long time."[307] Yemeni government and the Houthis have accused each other of violating of the ceasefire many times, because the agreement does not include technical details and it brings about different interpretations of the Agreement[308] and creates controversies.

In the Sweden talks, the biggest challenge was considered the Yemeni government to agree to a deal on Hodeidah, with the endorsement of Saudi Arabia, the government's main foreign sponsor, and the UAE. However, the event which happned in October 2018 gave greater leverage to Western powers, which provide arms and intelligence to the coalition, against the Kingdom's demand for action in Yemen. It was the murder of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi in Riyadh's consulate in Istanbul on October 2. The deteriorating humanitarian situation has been another major reason that has forced Saudis to peace talks, because as Kendall expressed "neither side wishes to be blamed for the dire consequences of the looming famine".[309]

The agreement did not rapidly bring cease fire and withdrawal of Houthis. Sporadic clashes have lasted for long time. The Houthis withdrew their forces from the ports of Saleef, Ras Isa and Hodeidah in May 2019 and at the end of the June 2019 UAE partially withdrew its forces by pursuing the counterterrorism against AQAP along with the US.

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[307] Peter Salisbury, "Five Steps to Save Yemen's Stockholm Agreement," *Crisis Group*, 2019, https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/gulf-and-arabian-peninsula/yemen/five-steps-save-yemens-stockholm-agreement.

[308] "Crisis Group Yemen Update #8," International Crisis Group, 2019, https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/gulf-and-arabian-peninsula/yemen/crisis-group-yemen-update-8.

[309] Mohammed Ghobari and El Yaakoubi Aziz, "Yemen Peace Talks Set to Start on Thursday in Sweden," *Reuters*, December 5, 2018, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-yemen-security/yemen-peace-talks-set-to-start-on-thursday-in-sweden-idUSKBN1O40K4.

Kendall has argued that:

> […] This is a positive step […] But it is very long way to go […] Ultimately, we have to remember this conflict was domestically generated and actually even if the withdrawal from Hodeidah goes head none of the underlying issues which led to the conflict in the first place will be resolved. That really needs to be done by Yemenis themselves or they need pressure from international partners, backers and supporters.[310]

Her argument is significant with several sides. Firstly, the Stockholm agreement is one of the major steps towards the peace. Secondly, the roots of the wars go to the country's long decades problems and the agreement does not solve these problems as Kendall aptly puts. For a real and permanent peace, the underlying problems letting the war must be solved. Finally, as it was seen in the first civil war, it has been rather significant that the permanent solution can be possible when it is done by Yemenis themselves and not external actors. External actors' role in this point should not decide the agreement and dictate that, but should be encouragement and pressure for local actors which they support.

5.4. Role of External Powers

The history of the second Yemeni civil war demonstrates once again that both international and regional actors have carried their interest competitions, policies and rivalries inside the country. The following section is going to look at each one of these actors and argues that Yemen became a battleground for rivalling regional actors.

5.4.1. Iranian Role

Iran is a powerful state with the ability to influence events throughout the Middle East. However; the extent of influence and involvement in regional states' domestic affairs would change depending upon its' interests and abilities in any

[310] *Elisabeth Kendall on France 24 (11 May 2019) - YouTube, Elisabeth Kendall- Youtube*, 2019, 2:25-2:28, 2:52-3:13, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kt0-pm0C_fw&feature=youtu.be.

specific country, group, and event. The extent of relations between Houthis and Iran, proxy and sectarian dimensions of their relations and the transfer of Iranian weapons to the Houthis are the main topics of debates. All these can be understood by examining main motivations of Iran to support the Houthis and what her extent of involvement in the second civil war.

Iranian involvement in the war is through the support given to the Houthis. Iran's support for non-state actors stems from two elements; instability and dissatisfaction. In Yemen, the former has been present since 2011 and the latter since the first decade of 2000s from the Houthi perspective. Dissatisfied groups oppose the dominant domestic political order in their country or the US-dominated regional order, or both. The roots of Houthis are based on dissatisfaction, opposition to domestic order, and their developments includes opposition to the US since 2003 Iraq war. These make the Houthis an attractive partner for Iran.[311]

Iran could incorporate the Houthis into anti-status quo block to contain the US influence in the region and its regional allies. It does fit with the Houthis' anti-US discourses and opposition against the US led status quo. Their famous slogan "God is great, death to America, death to Israel, curse on the Jews, victory to Islam" includes the main themes of the anti-status quo block. Even the slogan could make them easily labelled as radicals, terrorists or Iranian proxy by the Yemeni government. However, it does not imply that the Houthis are puppet of Iran. As we mentioned earlier the objectives of the Houthis are limited within the domestic context; they do not have either regional aims such as Hezbollah or international aims like AQAP. Far from being aligned with extremists, the

[311] Juneau, "Iran's Failed Foreign Policy: Dealing from a Position of Weakness," 6.

Houthi movement has clashed with the ISY and AQAP. [312] Thus, Iran-Houthi relations under the anti-status quo block do not give a strong upper hand to Iran in the region. Despite all, the role of Iranian backed Houthis the post-civil war could give Iran the chance to gain influence in the Arabian Peninsula and Gulf of Aden and a bargaining power on the behalf of other parts of the region.

Iranian-Saudi rivalry drives not only Saudi Arabia, but also Iran for taking role in the Yemeni war. Iran seeks to entrench and consolidate new trends that have led to a decrease in the influence of its Saudi rival throughout the region. Although Iran is aware of the fact that Yemen is Saudi Arabia's backyard and cannot be like Syria or Iraq for Iran, the Islamic Republic through its involvement to the Yemeni civil war wants to demonstrate that it can balance the Kingdom and can spread its influence in anywhere, even in the Kingdom's backyard.

Another motivation triggering Iran to play role in the war through the Houthis is about its broader regional strategy. Its broader strategy has two dimensions in the second civil war. First, Iran benefits from emphasizing its role in the war via mostly rhetoric and limited materials and financial resources to the Houthis. Even limited support creates alarm in the Kingdom, because Saudi perception is seriously concerned about the rise of Iranian influence. It makes the Kingdom more bellicose in Yemen. The Kingdom perceives that it is preoccupied to its south and this perception creates a leverage to deal primarily with Yemen. Thus, that case precludes the Kingdom's deeper involvement in the Syrian war which is what Yemen is for Saudi Arabia to Iran. Moreover, it makes Iran be able to

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[312] Asher Orkbay, "Yemen's Humanitarian Nightmare: The Real Roots of the Conflict," *Foreign Affairs*, 2017, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/yemen/2017-10-16/yemens-humanitarian-nightmare.

provide its resources to Lebanon, Syria, and Iraq[313] where Iran has much influence. Second relates to strategic positioning. Kendall has clearly explained that with the following;

> Iran now has the Yemen card to play as a token of conciliation and compromise, if required. Iran can potentially claim to be pulling back from Yemen when in reality this may not be a significant concession […] Yemen, rather than Syria, is now "the easiest compromise" if Iran needs to decrease tension with Saudi Arabia.[314]

The humanitarian disaster in Yemen is largely associated with Saudi air strikes and blockade. It has damaged Saudi Arabia's international credibility and has given Iran the opportunity to cast itself in the role of the humanitarian and the Kingdom in the role of an aggressor. Thus, "engagement with the Houthis in Yemen has the added benefits of offering a diplomatic and public relations tool to offset accusations of Iranian backed atrocities in the Syria conflict and elsewhere."[315]

Another view is that Iran appears to be interested in establishing a strong presence in the Houthi areas of northern Yemen. It will provide a chance to Iran for covert weapons distribution network to support its interests in the Middle East and the Horn of Africa.[316] That view is radical despite its rationality since neither Horn of Africa nor Yemen are in the high rank in the Iranian foreign policy.

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[313] Kendall, "Iran's Fingerprints in Yemen: Real or Imagined?," 4–5.

[314] Kendall, 5.

[315] Salisbury, "Yemen : National Chaos, Local Order," 33.

[316] Terrill, "Iranian Involvement in Yemen," 431.

The hardline elements in the Iranian government pursue a more aggressive strategy in Yemen. What they envision is that the Lebanization of the conflict. If political landscape in Yemen becomes totally fractured, the Houthis could become the dominant milita, like Hezbollah, leaning towards Iran.[317] Thus Iranian influence will be manifested in the Arabian Peninsula. This view does not reflect opinions of the majority of decision makers in Iran.

The extent of the Iranian involvement in the second Yemen war is a foremost questionable issue. Iran has backed the Houthis since when, how much weapons exactly Iran has transferred, and the exact extent of Iranian financial support for the Houthis have never been clear. There is only one thing which is a clear evident and that is the extent of Iranian involvement in the war pales in comparison to Saudi Arabia's. There is some evidence to support claims of back up from Tehran. However, tangible evidence for Iranian military assistance that could decisively change the course of the war is scant. The cooperation with Saleh was far more pivotal to Houthi successes than Iranian assistance.[318]

There have been many different interpretations about the exact date when Iran began to support the Houthis; however, Iran started shipping small amounts of weapons to the Houthis in 2009 according to UN. Its support for the Houthis, including with military assistance, capacity-building, and advice began to grow in 2011.[319] Iran can be linked to a more sophisticated military assistance from late 2014 on. Since 2015, Iran's support has considerably increased. A cadre of highly skilled Iranian or Hezbollah operatives are allegedly advising the Houthis

[317] Kendall, "Iran's Fingerprints in Yemen: Real or Imagined?," 10–11.

[318] Kendall, 10–11.

[319] Salisbury, "Yemen : National Chaos, Local Order," 32.

directly on the ground.[320] Nevertheless, it is important not to exaggerate Iran's military reach in Yemen.

Coalition and partner forces have seized and interdicted many Iranian arms shipments to Yemen since 2015 in the Gulf of Oman, off the coasts of Oman, in Arabian Sea, and in the Gulf of Aden. The Panel of Expert on Yemen of January 2017 has put

> The evidence that the vessels originated from the Islamic Republic of Iran is irrefutable, but that seen by the Panel for the onward shipment of their cargo of weapons to Yemen from Somalia, or transfer at sea en route to divert from a Somali destination to a Yemeni destination is much less firm.[321]

It is certain that vessels are Iran originated though their destination is not clear. Considering short of weapons in the region, the UN Panel's explanation seems possible.[322] According to UN Panel of Experts on Yemen of January 2017, there is not sufficient evidence to confirm any direct large-scale supply of arms from Iran. It is unlikely that the Houthis have manufactured them. They may have come from Russia, from the black or grey arms markets, or from entities inside Iran acting independently from the Iranian government.[323]

Some researchers have argued that Iran continues to bolster the capacity of Houthis through the transfer of new technology.[324] After the Houthi ballistic

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[320] Salisbury, "Yemen : National Chaos, Local Order," 32-33.

[321] Ahmed Himmiche, Fernando Rosenfeld Carvajal, et al., "Final Report of the Panel of Experts on Yemen," 2017, 31, https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/N1700601_0.pdf.

[322] Kendall, "Iran's Fingerprints in Yemen: Real or Imagined?," 7.

[323] Kendall, 7–8.

[324] Salisbury, "Yemen : National Chaos, Local Order," 32.

missile attack to Saudi Arabia in November 2017, the independent panel of UN made a search to find the broker or supplier. They did not accused Iran stating that "no evidence as to the identity of the broker or supplier."[325] The UN Resolution 2216 on April 14, 2015 established an arms embargo on the Houthis. Resolution 2231, July 20, 2015, which endorsed the JCPOA, bans ballistic-missiles or related technology transfers to and from Iran. So, it would violate both the Resolution 2216 and 2231 if Iran supplied weapons to the Houthis. In 2018 the UN Panel of Experts have put that

> […] the Islamic Republic of Iran is in non-compliance with paragraph 14 of resolution 2216 (2015) in that it failed to take the necessary measures to prevent the direct or indirect supply, sale or transfer of military related equipment to the Houthi-Saleh forces, an entity acting at the direction of listed individuals.[326]

The question of how the weapons reach the Houthis despite the naval blockade must be answered. It was unlikely that missiles were smuggled into Yemen through any of its key Red Sea ports. It was more likely the missiles were broken down into smaller pieces and shipped through a smuggling route from Oman and Ghaydah, Haswayn, Qishn, and Nishtun in al-Mahrah governorate.[327]

However, Oman denies any weapons smuggling across her border, and it is right that the security of Oman-Yemen border has been stepped up. In this point the relationship between regional security forces and leaders and the smuggling networks matters. It is known that Hadi's incentive to end the war is little as his

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[325] Colum Lynch, "U.N. Panel Finds Evidence of Iranian Hardware in Yemeni Rebels' Missile. And American.," *Foreign Policy*, 2017, https://foreignpolicy.com/2017/12/08/u-n-panel-finds-evidence-of-iranian-hardware-in-yemeni-rebels-missile-and-american-middle-east-iran-saudi-arabia-human-rights-blockade-white-house/.

[326] Himmiche, Gunaratne, et al., "Final Report of the Panel of Experts on Yemen," 2.

[327] Himmiche, Carvajal, et al., "Final Report of the Panel of Experts on Yemen," 27, 83; Lynch, "U.N. Panel Finds Evidence of Iranian Hardware in Yemeni Rebels' Missile. And American."

chance of political future decreases. Meanwhile, many of those aligned with Hadi government are profiting from the booming war economy. Although these are important, there is a claim which is more important and remarkable claim. According to US military correspondence suggestions, the Hadi government may have been passing weapons intentionally to the Houthis as late as October 2014, allegedly to fight al-Qaeda.[328]

Financial support and mediation efforts are another dimensions of the Iranian involvement to the second Yemen civil war. The UN Panel of Experts of 2019 said that fuel has been shipped illegally from Iran to the Houthis to finance them.[329] According to the UN expert panel of 2018 "Iran might now be willing to play a constructive role in finding a peaceful solution for Yemen."[330] Iran; indeed, has offered to take a role in mediation in Yemen. Iran's mediation offers draw an image "as peace-seeking in contradistinction to a war-mongering Saudi Arabia."[331] That might undermine the Kingdom's image in international arena. However, its offers have been rejected since 2015 by Hadi government. Iran has been considered as a part of the war because of its support for the Houthis, it is believed that Iran cannot be a mediator.

No matter how much the Iranians back the Houthis, this will never be the same as the Hezbollah or PMU support and will not change the destiny of the war, because the Iranian military and financial assistance are quite limited in Yemen;

[328] Kendall, "Iran's Fingerprints in Yemen: Real or Imagined?," 9.

[329] Edith M. Lederer, "UN Experts: Fuel From Iran Is Financing Yemen Rebels' War," *The Associated Press*, January 19, 2019, https://apnews.com/b406265e1c6642fd9a614416270263b6.

[330] Edith M. Lederer, "UN Experts Say Iran Might Want to Help End War in Yemen," *AP News*, August 1, 2018, https://apnews.com/78d320a712da402ca2387ec7b626c4f6.

[331] Kendall, "Iran's Fingerprints in Yemen: Real or Imagined?," 10–11.

so does its influence and the Houthis are less dependent on Iran than Hadi's government depending on Saudi support.

5.4.2. Saudi Role

Saudi Arabia is the leading and the most active external actor in the war. Yemen has always been an important country for the Kingdom. Saudis have many motivations to intervene in the war. These are the Kingdom's foreign and domestic policies, strategic importance of Yemen, status struggle, rivalry with Iran, and Saudi perception on the Houthis.

Saudi foreign policy has undergone changes post Arab Uprisings. Saudi foreign policy in the pre-Arab Uprisings period was described by the term of "quiet diplomacy." It meant reliance on diplomatic means, diplomatic efforts, and the absence of military means. In practice, Saudi Arabia has implemented this policy through using generous financial means. Saudis have pursed an active interventionist foreign policy in some Arab countries since the Arab Uprisings. Interventionist Saudi foreign policy is not only based only financial means but also military means. Post-Arab Uprisings, Saudi foreign policy can be defined with the term "militarisation." Militarisation of Saudi foreign policy has two dimensions. The first is the military interventionist policies towards other Arab countries. Saudi Arabia sent its national army to Bahrain in 2011, to Libya in 2011 under NATO Operation, to Iraq and Syria against ISIS, and to Yemen. Second is formation of military coalitions; the Arab Coalition in March 2015 for Yemen and the Islamic Military Alliance to Fight Terrorism (IMAFT) in December 2015.[332] Changes in the foreign policy towards militarization was considered as necessary in the face of increasing Saudi-Iranian rivalry post Arab Uprisings period.

[332] Eman Ragab, "Beyond Money and Diplomacy: Regional Policies of Saudi Arabia and UAE after the Arab Spring," *The International Spectator* 52, no. 2 (2017): 37–40, https://doi.org/10.1080/03932729.2017.1309101.

Permanent elements have always been there and implied the continuity of Saudi foreign policy despite many changes witnessed in time. Regime and state survival, balance of power in the region, and preserving the stability and security of the region are the permanent elements in the Saudi foreign policy. Any changes in the regional balance of power and status quo of the region could affect the stability of the region, and thus affect the regime and state survival of the Kingdom. In this context, Yemeni civil war is perceived as a security threat which could affect these three elements of the Saudi foreign policy. To balance Iran, to preserve the stability of the region in general and its southern borders, in specifics, and thus for regime and state survival, Saudi Arabia intervened in the second Yemeni civil war as she did back in the first Yemeni civil war. Saudi Arabia has fought the Houthis, considering them as collaborators with a hostile power that is threatening the regional balance of power. At the same time, Saudi Arabia supports Islah and Ali Mohsen- not because they are Sunni, but because they are status quo forces against the common enemies: the Houthis and Iran.[333] Thus, Saudi intervention to restore the balance of power in Yemen in favor of the status quo forces has deeper meanings far beyond Yemen itself, it is also linked the regional balance of power, because the Houthi dominance in Yemen means Iranian influence in the Arabian Peninsula, and so the changing in regional balance of power on behalf of Iran.

Yemen, located on the Bab al-Mandab Strait at the southern entrance of the Red Sea, is the gateway of Arabian Peninsula. Saudi Arabia's policy towards her neighbour Yemen has been shaped under the discourse of "not too strong and not too week Yemen." The former is clear. The latter is based on that too week Yemen cannot deal with its unrest and this could have spillover effects into Saudi Arabia. It motivates the Kingdom to get involved the war in Yemen. Yemen, today, is shattered as well as being weak. Saudis are concerned about

[333] Juneau, "Iran's Policy towards the Houthis in Yemen: A Limited Return on a Modest Investment," 660.

this situation; their concern has three main pillars. Too weak Yemen means that the neighbouring country is open to be affected by Iran. Secondly, it is easy to be used by Islamist militants. The last is refugees crossing the border into Saudi Arabia. [334]

May Darwich argues that Saudi intervention is driven by a non-material need; "Saudi leadership aims to assert the Kingdom's status as a regional power in the Middle East."[335] This need has increased especially in the post Arab Uprisings with both regional and international events. There were several regional events; firstly, Oman and Kuwait's reluctance for the Kingdom's proposal for greater political integration in the Gulf in 2013. Secondly, Qatar's foreign policy which has been a challenge to the Saudis to acquire preeminent regional status and approval of the interim nuclear agreement between the US and Iran in November 2013 by the GCC states excluding Bahrain.[336] The last and the most important one was Oman's good office, which was that the secret informal discussion between Washington and Iran hosted by Oman, to reach a nuclear détente with Iran. Ehteshami has argued that Oman's secret initiative has ended Saudi Arabia's foreign policy reticence.[337] Whether Saudi foreign policy was reticence or not can be discussed. Saudi intervention to Bahrain and Libya in 2011 and the generous financial support for Sisi regime against a Muslim Brotherhood led regime in Egypt have demonstrated that Saudi foreign policy has not already been reticence. At the international level the Saudis perceived Obama's policies

[334] Stig Stenslie, "Not Too Strong, Not Too Weak: Saudi Arabia's Policy towards Yemen," 2013, https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/162439/87736bc4da8b0e482f9492e6e8baacaf.pdf.

[335] Darwich, "The Saudi Intervention in Yemen: Struggling for Status," 134.

[336] Darwich, 134.

[337] Ehteshami, "Saudi Arabia as a Resurgent Regional Power," 88.

in the region as disrespect to the Kingdom's interests.[338] First, the US withdrawal from Iraq was not wanted by Saudi Arabia; it would increase Iranian influence more in the region. Second, the rapprochement between the US and Iran was not acceptable for the Kingdom. As M. Darwich has argued

> In this context, the Kingdom urgently required a strong message to assert its status in the region, and Yemen seemed to be the perfect target for its status as a regional power… Ultimately, the Saudi-led intervention in Yemen is an example of pursuing a risky military intervention to attain status in the region.[339]

With the crown prince MBS, Kingdom's anti Iranian rhetoric has increased severely. MBS has promised to roll back influence of Iran not only in Yemen, but also in Lebanon, Syria and Iraq. The rise of anti-Iranian discourse of MBS is related to his domestic policy. In November 2017, MBS has eliminated many princes and businessmen who were considered by him as a problem by accusing them of corruption and abuse of public funds. "This act not only alienated many, but has also undone the consensus-based Saudi approach to decision-making."[340] So the most important challenge facing the Crown Prince is consolidating his own rule and centralizing major policy decisions under his umbrella. Under this domestic context MBS feels restless. In this domestic context he uses the discourse of Iranian threat to deflect from his own domestic uncertainties. Under the Iranian threat discourse, his domestic policies have become sacrosanct and internal dissent is silenced.[341] In this point, the war in Yemen provides proper ground for MBS to be able to demonstrate the Iranian threat is not imaginary, Iran is next to Saudis in Yemen through the Houthis, but MBS has been exaggerating that and demonizing Iran. Contrary to exaggerated Saudi

[338] Darwich, "The Saudi Intervention in Yemen: Struggling for Status," 135.

[339] Darwich, 135–38.

[340] Ehteshami, "Saudi Arabia as a Resurgent Regional Power," 80–81.

[341] Al-Rasheed, "The View from Riyadh," 6–7.

considerations, Iran has limited interests in Yemen and has not engaged in the country that much. MBS's discourses demonstrate that the Iranian threat discourse is often used as a justification tool in both domestic and international politics for Saudi intervention in Yemen.

Saudi intervention in Yemen has also been connected with regional politics. The Iran-Saudi rivalry and their confrontation in the weak states of the region are important two main elements of the Middle East Cold War. The Saudis have been concerned with an Iranian encirclement. They have tried to control the spread of Iranian influence in weak states of the region, Lebanon, Syria, Palestine, Yemen and Iraq and they wanted to demonstrate the Kingdom is the dominant power in the region and especially, in the Arabian Peninsula. Saudi Arabia tries to prevent Iran to gain a foothold in Yemen. However, as J. Hilterman and A. L. Alley aptly put, Saudi attacks have indeed pushed the Houthis to seek more Iranian support,[342] and Iranian influence could grow instead of being limited unlike what Saudis desire. Consequently, Saudi Arabia has created a fertile ground for her own challenge with its own hands.

Saudi Arabia cannot accept a Hezbollah-like entity on her border.[343] The Houthis have challenged the stability of the country. Internal instability of Yemen can spill over and so it can affect the regional stability. Thus, the aim of destroying the Houthis has become one of the motivations which motivate Saudi Arabia. She has accused Iran to support the Houthis to intervene in the war. However, the Houthis is neither like Hezbollah in Lebanon nor the PMU in Iraq. The background of the Houthis' rise to power shows that they are motivated

[342] Hiltermann and Alley, "The Houthis Are Not Hezbollah."

[343] Juneau, "Iran's Policy towards the Houthis in Yemen: A Limited Return on a Modest Investment," 660.

primarily by domestic motivations and do not have any regional goals. They are not either pawn or proxy of Iran and do not act according to instructions of Iran.

Saudi involvement in the war is wider than any other actors. Through developing close ties with different parties; funding, training, and equipping groups, soldiers, and militiamen; providing funds for governance and services, providing diplomatic support and direct military intervention such as airstrikes and sending ground troops Saudi Arabia has intervened conflicts and civil wars in the region in many forms with many means. Saudis follow these ways in the Yemeni civil war too; moreover, it is claimed that Saudi Arabia used chemical weapons in Yemen.[344] Actually, Saudi Arabia has played significant roles in Yemen since Yemeni uprising. However, direct involvement of it in Yemen started in March 2015. The Kingdom conducts the majority of the air strikes, and leads blockade on sea, land and air routes, ostensibly not to allow weapon transfer to the Houthis, and the coalition began sending regular ground troops since May 2015.[345] Saudi Arabia does not have a significant presence of ground troops in Yemen even though the kingdom's troops have been deployed along the borders and in some Yemeni provinces. It has mostly relied on air strikes.

External funding and support of Saudi Arabia are pretty significant to continue the presence of its allies in the war. Salisbury explains the extent of Saudi involvement with the following;

> External funding and support have played a key role in many groups' rise and sustained success during the conflict. From the beginning of the war, Saudi Arabia underwrote the day-to-day running of the Hadi government and, reportedly, provided the funds to arm, equip and pay tens of thousands of

[344] "Saudi Regime's Use of Chemical Weapons against Yemen," Alwaght, 2018, http://alwaght.com/en/News/65492/Saudi-Regime's-Use-of-Chemical-Weapons-against-Yemen.

[345] "Saudi Arabia Sends Ground Forces into Yemen," The Times of Israel, May 3, 2015, https://www.timesofisrael.com/saudi-arabia-send-ground-forces-into-yemen/.

> soldiers and militiamen in the northeast of the country […] Saudi Arabia has also funded Islah-affiliated armed groups in Taiz, as well as some Salafist militias. It is unclear whether the kingdom has also provided funds for governance and services.[346]

Initially, Saudi support for forces in Yemen was for President Hadi, but later it has included Ali Mohsen and Islah. Saudi support to Islah is quite interesting as Islah in Yemen is widely known as Yemeni Muslim Brotherhood. The concern of the Kingdom about the Muslim Brotherhood in the Middle East, even this issue has caused a crisis with Qatar in 2017, is a well-known fact. However, Islah has traditionally been close to Saudi Arabia. In the war Saudi Arabia has allied Islah as an actor that should be collaborated with for the purpose of shoring up Sunni forces against the Houthis.[347] This point although to be considered as insignificant has revealed several important facts in the regional politics. Although sectarianism is indispensable element of the regional politics to some extent, not everything is based on that. Relations between Saudi Arabia and Muslim Brotherhood in general and with Islah in Yemen in specific are good examples. Islah-Saudi relations have also reflected one of the general characteristics of regional politics: multi polarity.

Another dimension of Saudi involvement is about humanitarian aids. In order to deal with the humanitarian aspect of the conflict, Saudi Arabia established humanitarian aid centers and provide assistance to the Yemeni people.

5.4.3. United Arab Emirates' Role

Since the Saudi-led coalition launched its aggression in Yemen in March 2015, the UAE which initially emerged as just one of the participants of the coalition has become a key player both in the coalition and in the war. There are today two

[346] Salisbury, "Yemen : National Chaos, Local Order," 31.

[347] Matthew Hedges, "Saudi Distances Itself from Yemeni Muslim Brotherhood," *Fair Observer*, 2017, https://www.fairobserver.com/region/middle_east_north_africa/saudi-arabia-yemen-muslim-brotherhood-latest-middle-east-news-16661/.

axes which are supported by the Saudi led coalition's two major members. On the one hand Ali Mohsen–Islah–Saudi Arabia axis and a UAE–the Southern secessionist–Salafi network on the other. While the former has played a leading role in the war in the North, the latter has been is active in the South and has tried to win control of the coastal plains along Yemen's Red Sea coast since 2016. UAE's role has not been only limited as a member in the coalition, it also matters in fighting with AQAP. In late June and early July 2019, the UAE has partially withdrawn its forces from Yemen allegedly to hold ceasefire under the Stockholm agreement. However, it does not mean they are evacuating the country. Its counterterrorism mission focused on hunting AQAP remains untouched and will continue to support militias. [348]

In the South, the UAE has a rather significant influence through its support for secessionist groups. However, UAE's support for Southern secessionist groups put her inside a dilemma. On the one hand UAE is the member of the Saudi led coalition; so, it supports the unity of Yemen and its recognized president Hadi. On the other hand UAE is the main supporter of secessionist groups aiming an independent South Yemen.

UAE's intervention to the war has mainly based on five motivations. Firstly, UAE is concerned about its national security due to the significant number of Yemeni workers in the country. UAE has "considered that the Yemeni workers' interaction with their country could be shaped by the dynamics of the conflict in Yemen in a way that would affect the Emirates' national security." [349]

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[348] Declan Walsh and David D. Kirkpatrick, "U.A.E Pulls Most Forces From Yemen in Blow Saudi War Effort," *The New York Times*, 2019, https://www.nytimes.com/2019/07/11/world/middleeast/yemen-emirates-saudi-war.html.

[349] Ragab, "Beyond Money and Diplomacy: Regional Policies of Saudi Arabia and UAE after the Arab Spring," 44–45.

The second motivation is about Islah. UAE has been concerned about MB both in the region and in its country. Fighting the MB locally, regionally and globally is a top priority[350] in its domestic and foreign policy agendas. That's why, Islah is the primary source of concern for the Emirates in Yemen because it has been perceived as an existential threat to its own sovereignty on contrary to Saudi Arabia considering the Houthis in the same vein. In accordance with these perceptions the UAE participated in the coalition. Thus, the UAE's main objective in the war is about Islah and to reduce its influence on Yemen.

Third**,** UAE intervention to the Yemeni war and the rise of its influence in the South of Yemen is a part of the broader objective. The Gulf of Aden in the South of Yemen is a vital point for the international trade. As the gate to Horn of Africa, the Bab Al-Mandab Strait is an important transit point for global trade. UAE has aimed to control the Gulf of Aden to ensure it reaps the benefits of the free flow of trade through the Gulf. UAE has increased its activities not only in Yemen, but also in Horn of Africa for that aim. The war has given a chance to UAE to secure its access to the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden.[351]

Fourth, the UAE's one of the main drivers in its foreign policy is to be a regional power; so, it is necessary to be influential in the region. In this point Yemen appears as a suitable place to demonstrate and extend its power. The political and military influence in Yemen will go beyond this country and will give superiority in Red Sea, Gulf of Aden and Horn of Africa against its rivals such as

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[350] "UAE and the Muslim Brotherhood: A Story of Rivalry and Hatred," *Middle East Monitor*, 2017, https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20170615-uae-and-the-muslim-brotherhood-a-story-of-rivalry-and-hatred/.

[351] Will McEniry, "The UAE's Geostrategic Plans in Yemen and the Gulf of Aden," *Australian Institute of International Affairs*, 2018, http://www.internationalaffairs.org.au/australianoutlook/the-uaes-geostrategic-plans-in-yemen-and-the-gulf-of-aden/.

Turkey, Iran, and Qatar. This makes UAE a significant actor at both regional and international levels.[352]

Finally, UAE is concerned about the Iranian influence in Yemen and so in Gulf of Aden and Horn of Africa even if its concern is in a less degree than the Saudi concern. Thus, UAE tries to counter Iran[353] through its participation in the coalition against the Houthis and expanding its influence in the South and west cost of the county through STC.

Before the examining the extent of involvement of UAE, it must be remembered that UAE has always been wary of being pulled into a full-fledged war central Yemen. Instead, it has focused on cooperating with local actors developing close relationships with local tribal elements mostly in southern Yemen.[354]

The extent of involvement of the UAE taking has many dimensions, providing weapons, money and thousands of ground troops. UAE troops entered Aden in mid-2015 and helped secure the city against the Houthis. It initially trained and supported the pro-Hadi groups. UAE had ground troops and moreover, it has dispatched hundreds of mercenaries.[355] In time it began to supported many versatile groups such as the Giants Brigade, Republican Guard, The Tihama

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[352] "UAE Influence in Yemen...Pillars and Harvest," *Abaad Studies& Research Center*, 2018, 15–17, https://abaadstudies.org/pdf-22.pdf.

[353] Neil Partrick, "The UAE's War Aims in Yemen," *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, 2017, https://carnegieendowment.org/sada/73524.

[354] "Yemen, United Arab Emirates: The UAE Trades Its Involvement in the Yemen Conflict for a Stronger Regional Posture," Stratfor, 2019, https://worldview.stratfor.com/article/yemen-united-arab-emirates-uae-trades-involvement-yemen-conflict-stronger-regional-role.

[355] Emily B. Hager and Mark Mazzetti, "Emirates Secretly Sends Colombian Mercenaries to Yemen Fight," *The New York Times*, November 25, 2015, https://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/26/world/middleeast/emirates-secretly-sends-colombian-mercenaries-to-fight-in-yemen.html.

Resistance, Presidental Forces, Security Belt and especially STC and Salafi groups etc. UAE pays wages of fighters and provides arms, food, supplies vehicles and trains them.[356] UAE has also provided cash for governance and basic services in the south of Yemen.[357]

Southern secessionist groups play a prominent role in the UAE's activities in Yemen. The rise of development in UAE-STC relations is primarily considered as an alignment against Islah. However, this alliance is going beyond that. UAE may be planning to raise its influence in Southern secessionist groups for the post-war in order to secure its interest in Gulf Aden. UAE's support for STC matters for the future of the country and its relations with Saudi Arabia post-war. STC calls for secession from the North. The Emirates support for STC and other secessionists might create a rift between Saudi Arabia and the UAE in the long term. However, Saudi Arabia cannot venture to cut relations with UAE neither in the short nor mid-term. Saudi Arabia cannot pursue the war without UAE, because it is the most influential external actor in the war after the Kingdom and because of disputes with Iran and Qatar.

"Accessing to the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden is taking a more long-term, bottom-up approach by investing in the social politics and economic development of the southern provinces of Yemen."[358] Therefore, UAE does not only deal with Yemen only militarily, UAE has also used both its soft power by considering its long term goals. UAE has invested in Socotra and southern

[356] "How to Halt Yemen's Slide into Famine," *International Crisis Group* (Belgium, 2018), 9, https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/gulf-and-arabian-peninsula/yemen/193-how-halt-yemens-slide-famine.

[357] Salisbury, "Yemen : National Chaos, Local Order," 31–32.

[358] McEniry, "The UAE's Geostrategic Plans in Yemen and the Gulf of Aden."

Yemen as well as Horn of Africa countries[359] by carrying out social and economic development in there and supplying humanitarian aids.

5.4.4. Israeli Role

As it is the case in the first civil war, Israel is concerned with the second Yemeni civil war as well due to the threat perceived from regional actors. In the first war, she was concerned about Egypt and today about Iran. Israeli perceive over the war is explained by Marcer Serr:

> […] assisting the Houthis provides Iran with the opportunity to test new weapons and tactics that may well end up in the hands of Hizbullah or Hamas, and could pose a real threat to Israel. Particularly worth mentioning are the use of aerial and maritime drones as "kill vehicles," which could endanger Israel's gas rigs in the Mediterranean.[360]

That overlaps with pro-status quo bloc's concerns; so it lets Israel improve the relations with pro-status quo bloc countries against a common enemy, anti-status quo block. The rapprochement has been encouraged by the US.[361] This seems quite reasonable when it is considered that the US policy in the region under Trump rule- neo-twin pillar policy- based on the Saudi Kingdom and Israel. Israel's another concern is about the Bab al-Mandeb strait. Firstly, a large portion of the Israeli trade is conducted through the Red Sea and Bab el Mandeb.

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[359] Ethan McKernan and Lucy Towers, "As Saudi Arabia and the UAE Struggle for Control of Socotra, Yemen's Island Paradise May Just Swap One Occupation for Another," *The Independent*, 2018, https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/socotra-yemen-civil-war-uae-saudi-arabia-occupation-military-emirates-a8360441.html.

[360] Serr, "Understanding the War in Yemen," 366.

[361] Serr, 366.

Second, one of the main pillars of Israel's military and security strategy is that the opponents will not dominate the significant waterway. [362]

Israeli involvement in the war is mainly shaped on the basis of mercenaries. Israel Defense Forces (IDF) trained the hundreds of mercenaries financed by UAE in secret training camps in the Negev desert. They have participated in the battle of Hodeidah against the Houthis in 2018.[363]

5.4.5. Russian Role

Not only regional actors, but international actors are also involved the second Yemeni civil war. However, their involvement pales in comparison with regional actors. Even though Yemen is not the primary issue of the Russia's foreign policy in the Middle East, Russia's historical relations with South of Yemen and interests in Yemen and in the Aden Gulf and Horn of Africa necessitate the Russian involvement in the war. The relations are pursued with Hadi government and STC. Economy is the main pillars of the relations between Yemen and Russia. Yemen is the 10th largest importer of Russian grain and products. But relations also have other dimensions; include military-technical cooperation, oil production and railway construction. However, Russia's interests are not limited with these and goes beyond. Russia may benefit from carry out the plan to construct a military base which has been a desire inherited from the Soviets but never implemented on Socotra. UAE-Russia relation in the region can be explained in this context. UAE is gradually becoming Russia's major partner, not only in Yemen but also in the whole Middle East. The STC has controlled

[362] "How Israel Takes Advantage of Yemen Crisis?," NTH News, October 10, 2017, https://nthnews.net/en/yemennews/how-israel-takes-advantage-of-yemen-crisis/.

[363] "Yemen: Mercenaries Trained in Israel Lead Battles of Al-Hudaydah," *Middle East Monitor*, 2018, https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20180920-yemen-mercenaries-trained-in-israel-lead-battles-of-al-hudaydah/; Whitney Webb, "Mercenaries Leading Assault on Yemen Port City Were Trained by IDF in Israel," *MPN News*, September 21, 2018, https://www.mintpressnews.com/israel-training-yemen-mercenaries/249637/.

territories where military bases could be established, such as the Bab el Mandeb and Aden straits. Therefore, it is crucial for Russia to maintain good contacts with the UAE and the STC.[364]

Russia purses a mediation role in Yemen, because all these are possible in a stable Yemen. Russia's mediation role is also about increasing its own prestige within the GCC, and gain access to fresh investments and arms contracts from the Gulf monarchies. [365]

5.4.6. United States' Role

The US role in the war is relatively low. The US involvement in the war has two dimensions mainly: supporting Saudi led coalition and fighting with AQAP.

The continuity of the war for Saudi side is heavily dependent on U.S. weapons and support. The US dependency of the Saudis is too crucial to be underestimated. The US is the largest provider of arms to Saudi Arabia and the Kingdom is main client of the US arms and the first largest importer of major arms in the world between 2014 and 2018.[366] W. Hartung argues that "cutting off U.S. arms and support is the best way to press for an end to the Yemen

[364] Semenov, "Does Russia Seek Return of Independent South Yemen?"

[365] Samuel Ramani, "Yemen Conflict and Russia," *Valdai Discussion Club*, 2019, https://valdaiclub.com/a/highlights/yemen-conflict-and-russia/.

[366] Pieter D. Wezeman et al., "Trends in International Arms Transfers, 2018," 2019, 2–6, https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/2019-03/fs_1903_at_2018.pdf.

war."[367] Even only this sentence alone reflects the importance of the US support for the Kingdom.

The U.S. interests in Yemen include maintaining stability in the country and security for Saudi borders; free passage in the Bab al-Mandeb; and a government in Sana'a that will cooperate with U.S. counterterrorism programs.[368] The US involvement in the war is linked with its foreign policy in the Middle East. Under Obama administration Yemen was submitted as a "signal to the Iranians that relief from sanctions is contingent on ending their support for violent proxies from Yemen to Iraq and beyond."[369] Under Trump administration there are two main foreign policy priorities which affect the Yemen war; bolstering Saudi Arabia and Israel and isolating Iran. The US does not want to leave its close ally Saudi Arabia which is "now an instrumental partner in the birth of a new American-crafted 'neo-twin pillar' regional security order."[370] Even Jamal Khashoggi's death has not affected Trump even though opposition to end US support for the Saudi-led coalition war in Yemen in the US has grown following the murder of Saudi journalist Khashoggi. Trump declared that the US would not stop arms sales to the kingdom even if it is responsible for Khashoggi's death.[371] Another point is related with Iran. Yemen is one of arenas where the Trump administration confronts Iran. Stabilizing Yemen by supporting

[367] William Hartung, "U.S. Military Support for Saudi Arabia and the War in Yemen," *LobeLog*, November 23, 2018, https://lobelog.com/u-s-military-support-for-saudi-arabia-and-the-war-in-yemen/.

[368] Laub, "Yemen in Crisis."

[369] Jesse Ferris, "Nasser's Ghost Hovers Over Yemen," *The New York Times*, April 2, 2015.

[370] Ehteshami, "Saudi Arabia as a Resurgent Regional Power," 92.

[371] Hartung, "U.S. Military Support for Saudi Arabia and the War in Yemen."

the coalition against Iranian expansionism is significant for the US.[372] The Trump administration's Houthi perception is as effective as its foreign policy. It considers the Houthis like Hezbollah to delight their Gulf allies; as a part of anti-status quo block. The Houthis; however, are not Hezbollah and, have not developed close relations with Iran.[373] It demonstrates the civil war of Yemen does not matter alone itself; however, matters for the US in the context of its Middle Eastern policy.

Operation led by the US against AQAP is not a new phenomenon. In October 2000 when al-Qaida attacked on *USS Cole* in Aden, Saleh started to cooperate with the U.S. on counterterrorism intelligence and operations. Today the U.S. is working with its Arab allies — particularly UAE — with the aim of eliminating AQAP. In mid-2016, US began working with UAE and it has since increased the volume of its drone strikes and airstrikes in cooperation with the UAE and partner forces against AQAP.[374]

The US does not directly involve in the war. Its involvement is based on support for the Saudi led coalition "including intelligence gathering and advice on how to carry out airstrikes,"[375] selling the coalition members weapons and ammunition, and, until late last year, fuelled warplanes, military training of Saudi forces,[376] counterterrorism, negotiation attempt between the Hadi

[372] Maggie Michael, Trish Wilson, and Lee Keath, "Yemen: Us Allies Spin Deals with Al-Qaida in War on Rebels," Pulitzer Center, 2018, https://pulitzercenter.org/reporting/yemen-us-allies-spin-deals-al-qaida-war-rebels.

[373] Hiltermann and Alley, "The Houthis Are Not Hezbollah."

[374] Salisbury, "Yemen : National Chaos, Local Order," 34.

[375] Dion Nissenbaum, "U.A.E. Moves to Extricate Itself From Saudi-Led War in Yemen," *The Wall Street Journal*, July 2, 2019, https://www.wsj.com/articles/u-a-e-moves-to-extricate-itself-from-saudi-led-war-in-yemen-11562094272.

[376] Orkbay, "Yemen's Humanitarian Nightmare: The Real Roots of the Conflict."

government and the Houthis and resolutions to end the US support to the coalition. The resolutions for an end of US support for the Saudi-led coalition war in Yemen are another dimension of the US involvement. In December 2018 and March 2019 resolutions have been approved by the Senate, but they have not been taken up by the House or vetoed by Trump.

5.5. Conclusion

The Yemeni uprising creating a disorder let many actors take action to have a hand in the rule of the country and to gain the power to rule some specific territories for them; and thus, paved the way for the war. However, it must be remembered that the roots of the war go back for decades and it demonstrated that the war is first and foremost the outcome of domestic problems. The major point of the war leading for hopes of peace to bloom has been the Stockholm agreement. Despite its shortages, it has been the first real hope for peace.

In post-Stockholm, the country has experienced both the escalation and de-escalation of the war. The war escalated in the second half of 2019 because of both the conflicts between STC versus the government and the tension between the Houthis versus Saudi Arabia. Today Yemeni war is in a stalemate. In September 2019, Saudi Arabia and the Houthis have started to hold indirect, behind-the-scenes talks to end the war in Oman. In early November of 2019, the government and STC signed a power sharing deal, Riyad Agreement.

Yemen has become a theatre where regional powers have confronted either direct involvement or supporting some groups and thus, carried their regional competition inside the country. Saudi Arabia, launching an operation with great hopes and expectations to end the intervention as soon as possible, is stuck in a quagmire in Yemen and is far from achieving her purposes today. Furthermore, a certain Saudi victory does not seem possible. Iran is not directly involved in the war; however, it is not possible to claim that Iran has not had any roles in Yemen

at all. UAE, the most remarkable actor, has played an important role against the Houthis especially in Hodeidah battle and has gained an upper hand in the South through supporting the Southern secessionist groups which have controlled many areas in the South of Yemen and fought with government forces.

Analyzing the motivations of the external actors also gives a brief overview of their foreign and domestic policies and the general structure of regional and international politics. The history of the war shows that Yemeni politics is easily associated with Middle Eastern politics. The fragmented regional politics including sectarianism, multipolarity, and Iranian-Saudi rivalry are clearly visible in the war. The phenomenon of the Middle East Cold War examined in the previous chapter is a good fit for the second Yemeni civil war in order to grip that in regional contexts. Consequently, the chapter has shown that examining the civil war can be one of the best-case studies to understand regional politics.

The involvement of external actors brings about two things. Firstly, it prolongs and deepens the war. Secondly, their peace efforts become naught when they try to find solution ignoring Yemenis themselves.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

This thesis has analysed the Yemeni civil wars by contextualizing them in regional politics by using weak state literature. Both of the wars have fairly been linked with regional politics and have opened the country to regional rivalries. Moreover, these wars have reflected both general characteristics of Yemeni politics before the wars and regional politics of the 1960s and the 2010s. The study aimed to fulfill two main objectives. The first was to explore that Yemen has become subject to the regional competitions of the 1960s and the 2010s since it has been a weak state. The second was to show Yemen has reflected the features of regional politics of these two terms and become a battlefield for regional rivalry when the crisis in Yemen has overlapped harsh regional rivalry. Exploring these objectives will be completed with the comparison of regional politics of the 1960s and the 2010s, Yemeni politics in both pre-war period and the role of intervening external actors in both wars. In this chapter, the comparison will be made and findings will be highlighted regarding both general and comparative discussions.

Looking at the comparative findings, it is possible to analyse the regional context of the 1960s and the 2010s, the Yemeni politics, the Yemeni civil wars and the roles of external actors. Through the comparison, thesis underlines important similarities and differences regarding these four dimensions.

The regional politics of the 1960s is analysed through the Arab Cold War and the regional politics of the 2010s through the Middle East Cold War. The comparison of these two regional politics can be made two dimensions: the

structure of regional politics and the importance of both Yemeni civil wars for regional politics.

The general characteristics of the Arab Cold War and the Middle East Cold War are similar. However, the specific characteristic of these two are different. The general frameworks of these regional politics are based on the division of the region between two blocs, the rivalry between two great regional powers, a discursive element of both division and rivalry (ideology in the 1960s and sectarianism in the 2010s), keeping/changing regional status quo, and interplay between regional and domestic politics. The driver of both division and rivalry are given as ideology and sectarianism; however, it must be considered that the main basis of the division and rivalry is mainly geopolitical. Another similarity is that in both periods, the regional great powers' rivalry was based on similar elements such as struggle over the regional dominance and balance of power. One of the most important common features of both the 1960s and the 2010s is also that the rivalry of regional powers has been experienced in weak states of the region. It is more obvious in the 2010s, because the Arab Uprisings created an environment where regimes have been challenged, weakened more and witnessed civil wars in several countries and it has become the general characteristic of the many Arab states. Yemen in both these periods has been one of them. Regional powers have avoided confronting each other directly; however, they have fought each other indirectly in weak states of the region by supporting rival domestic groups since the regional competition made them to take action to counterbalance each other and in order to gain an upper hand in regional politics.

Despite a similar general framework, there are several differences in details. First is the changing of leading regional actors (Egypt and Saudi Arabia in the 1960s and Saudi Arabia and Iran). Second is the emergence of violent non-state actors in the 2010s (Hezbollah, al-Qaida, ISIS, etc.). Third is the characteristic of domestic challenges against the regimes (coups in the 1960s and rebellions in the

2010s). Fourth is the divided structure of regional politics of both the 1960s and 2010s. Fifth is the strength of non-Arab countries in regional politics of the 2010s. The first point is discussed above. For the second point, we see that the non-state actors are one of the differences as a main feature of the post-2003 regional order. Regarding the third point, we see that in the 1960s the regimes were challenged by young Pan Arabist army officers through coups while the regimes in the 2010s have been challenged by non-state actors through rebellions and in some countries through civil wars. Fourthly, there was a general division between two ideological groups in the Arab Cold War while the Middle East Cold War has been characterized by multipolarity, affecting alliance choice, despite the existence of two main blocs. Multipolarity is clearly seen in the Saudi animosity Sunni Muslim Brotherhood and the relative affinity between Shiite Iran and Sunni Hamas. Indeed, it does not imply that the relations and alliance choices throughout the Arab Cold War were merely based on ideology; the triple relations between Egypt, Iraq, and Syria from mid the 1950s to 1961 demonstrates that ideology was not the only driver of the structure of two groups and alliance choice. Finally, the Arab character of regional politics differs in the 1960s and 2010s. In the 2010s there are many non-Arab state actors playing significant roles in regional politics while in the 1960s regional politics was mainly led by Arab states of the region. This does not mean that the Arab Cold War years had a mere Arab character; Israel, Turkey and Iran had playing roles in regional politics but less than Arabs.

The importance of the wars regarding regional politics of two period is important. Both of the wars have regionalized in short time, reflected the general characteristic of regional politics, and turned the country into a battlefield for Egyptian-Saudi and Saudi-Iranian rivalries. However, differences in details are remarkable. Firstly, the first Yemeni civil war was a unique case in regional politics. It was the only hot war of the Arab Cold War despite the indirect Saudi involvement. However, following the Arab Uprisings, some weak states of the region which slide into crisis became theatre of Saudi-Iranian rivalry; so, Yemen

is not a unique case in the Middle East Cold War. Secondly, the first civil war caused more novel issues in regional politics than the second Yemeni civil war; it paved the way for the Six Day War, let a Soviet upper hand in the South of the Arabian Peninsula through Marxist South Yemen and triggered a war in Dhofar, Oman. However, it is still too early to discuss the effects of the second Yemeni civil war in the region as it is still ongoing.

The comparison of the first Yemeni civil war and the second Yemeni civil war can be made in two dimensions: Yemeni politics before the wars and the history of the wars. In this context, firstly the similarities and then differences are covered. North Yemen since its establishment until 1962 was characterised by weakness in economic and political dimensions. Yemen since 1970s until the early 2010s was characterised by weakness in economic, political and particularly security dimensions. Looking at similarities, the weakness of Yemen as a given characteristic has also been an important continuity in the two civil wars. It was the main reason why Yemen has become subject to regional competition and a battlefield in the regional rivalry. Secondly, these wars are results of the old decades' problems and challenges of the country itself. Finally, Yemeni politics before the both wars have experienced the practises of the discontent against the existed regime. Practises of the 1962 coup had been already carried out through 1948 and 1955 coup which were the main signals of the discontent against the regime. The 1994 civil war, 2008-2009 demonstrations in the South and 2004-2010 Saada war have been the main indicators of these groups' discontent against the regime.

Details of the Yemeni politics before the wars put several differences. Firstly, the Yemen Arab Republic has more internal challenges than North Yemen. The second is the extent of the challenge and the third is reasons for the challenges. Internal challenges of North Yemen were students educated in revolutionary Arab countries. However, the challenges of Yemen Arab Republic have been marginalized Northerners and Southerners and several non-state actors.

Regarding the second point, the Imamate regime of North Yemen was challenged by coups. Yemeni regime has been challenged more severe by civil wars, conflicts, terrorist attacks, and popular protests. Thirdly, the main reasons for the challenge in North Yemen were originated from a general political, social and economic discontent against the isolation. The reasons for the challenge of Yemen are originated from the marginalization of two specific groups by the regime and economic and politic discontent against the regime.

The comparison of histories of the wars includes three dimensions: reasons of the wars, actors and their demands, and evolutions of the wars. The results cannot be compared since the Yemeni civil war of 2014 is still going on. The comparison underlines important similarities and differences. There are several similarities for reasons and evolutions of the wars. Firstly, they are resulted from long decades' unrest against the regime thus, both of the wars did not happen overnight. Secondly, they started as a Yemeni affair. Thirdly, they were rapidly regionalized by pulling regional actors inside the wars. Fourth similarity has been the failed peace talks attempts in both wars. Many peace attempts have been underlined by Yemeni sides because they have not agreed or they have not been included. The last similarity of both wars is related to the Southern problem of the country. The first civil war encouraged the South Yemen to struggle for independence from the British and following that an independent Marxist state was established. The second Yemeni civil war and UAE support for the Southerners have given an upper hand for them to demand secessionism strongly. The Riyadh Agreement of November 5, 2019 which is a power sharing deal between Hadi government and secessionist STC has been the main success of the Southern secessionists. However, it is too early to predict on how the Southern problem will develop.

Despite the general similarities a closer inspection of histories of the wars reveals many differences in three dimensions mentioned above. Actors including numbers, characteristics and demands of them and evolutions including the date

of beginning of the wars, the timing of the call for help from external actors, the discourses of the wars (ideology in the first civil war and sectarianism in the second civil war) and the strategic cities are main differences. Firstly, numbers, characteristics and demands of domestic actors are different in the two wars. There were two main sides in the first civil war: Egyptian backed republicans and Saudi backed royalists. The republicans affiliated by Nasser demanded a republic regime as it was Egypt and Iraq and the latter demanded the revival of the Imamate. There are many different groups in the second civil war: Hadi government supported by Saudi led coalition, the Houthis supported by Iran, the Southern secessionists supported by UAE, AQAP, and ISY. However, the more important point is the second civil war is beyond a bilateral war. The Houthi-government war, the government-Southern secessionists war and fighting between various groups demonstrate that. The main actors are Iranian backed Houthis, Hadi government supported by Saudi led coalition and the secessionists; so, the war; indeed, is a multilateral war between all aforementioned groups. The Houthis and Southern secessionist have basically demanded equality and development; however, the Southerners with the support of the UAE have aimed an independent South. Secondly, the first Yemeni civil war began aftermath of the coup removing the Imamate regime. The second civil war is normally dated to begin in September 2014 when the Houthis took over the capital Sana'a. However, it is better to consider it within a historical evolution process rather than as a result of certain event, because it was the Yemeni uprising of 2011 created a backdrop for turmoil and the war. Thirdly, YAR applied for Egyptian help within one month after the coup and called for help on October 3, and Egyptian intervention began within three days. Hadi government was not as much as fast YAR government to apply for external help. Six months after the Houthi takeover Sanaa, Saudi-led coalition's intervention began within the one day following Hadi's call. Fourthly, the main discourses of the wars (ideology, Pan Arabism, and sectarianism) are different. Republicanism and Pan Arabism was sweeping the Middle East since the early 1950s. The 1962 coup was affiliated by them. Pan Arabism and Pan Islamism were generally used

as the discourse by the regional external actors. Contrary of the first civil war, there is not ideological struggle in the second Yemeni civil war. However, religious identity, sectarianism, has been the main discourse of the latter. This point takes us to the fifth difference. Nasserist and nationalist characteristics of army officers who carried out the 1962 coup were characterized both by the coup and subsequent war. Especially, when they applied Egypt for help, they were implying the same ideological affiliations. So, the ideological character was present right from the beginning. However, neither Yemeni uprising of 2011 nor the second Yemeni civil war have been characterized by sectarianism. When the Houthis took to the streets during the 2011 uprising, it was not because they did not share same sectarian affiliation with the government and when Houthis took the Sana'a in 2014 it was not to establish a Zaydi government. Iranian support to Houthis and the Saudi support for the Hadi government do not arise from a mere sectarian consideration. However, the more war prolongs the more sectarianism becomes one of the main characteristics of the war. To sum up, ideology was one of the drivers of the first civil war while sectarianism does merely not drive the second civil war. Finally, the strategic cities which are critical for the sides of the wars are different. Sana'a, Taiz and Hodeidah were the strategic triangle of the first civil war while Sana'a, Hodeidah and Aden have been the most significant cities in the second Yemeni civil war.

Table 1. 1. Histories of the 1962-70 Yemeni Civil War and Yemeni Civil War (2014-)

	THE 1962-70 YEMENI CIVIL WAR	**THE YEMENI CIVIL WAR (2014-)**
REASONS	• Started as a Yemeni affair • Roots went back long years political, social and economic unrests (autocratic rule of the Hamid al-Din family, backwardness of Yemen and isolation from the rest of the world) • Started following the 1962 coup which was the third coup since 1940s • The coup was one of the coup chains affiliated by pan Arabism in the Middle East (1952 Egypt, 1958 Iraq) and aimed republic government in the country	• Started as a Yemeni affair • Roots went back long years political, social and economic discontent (marginalization of the Houthis and the Southerners, terrorism, social, economic and political grievances) • Started following the Houthi takeover Sanaa (however, it is better to think the war within a process following Yemeni uprising) • Yemeni uprising creating fertile ground for the fighting in the country was one of the uprising chains started in the late 2010 in Tunisia
ACTORS & DEMANDS	• The republicans (YAR) supported by Egypt. • Demands of the republicans: removal of the Imamate regime and keeping the newly founded republican regime • The royalists supported by Saudi Arabia • Demands of the royalists: revival of the Imamate regime	• The Houthis supported by Iran • Demands of the Houthis: more autonomy, more development aid, and more respect for their religion • The internationally recognized Hadi government supported by Saudi led coalition • Demands of the government: keeping the country united, taking the control of the whole country • The Southern secessionists supported by UAE • Demands of the secessionists: an independent South Yemen (Southern groups did not demand secessionism until 2017. Their demand had been similar to the Houthis; equality, greater local decision-making power, more control over the South's economic resources, and ending Northern patronage over politics, military and economy.) • AQAP, ISY, Islah, the Salafists and many Southern groups etc. (in a less extent)

Table 1. 1. Continued

EVOLUTION OF **THE WARS**	• The timing of the call for help from external actors and their answer: YAR called for help on October 3, 1962 two weeks after the coup and Egyptian intervention began within three days. • Strategic cities: Sana'a, Taiz and Hodeidah • Several failed peace talks • Mattered for the South Yemen encouraging the Southerners to struggle for independence from the British	• The timing of the call for help from external actors and their answer: Hadi government called for help on March 24, 2015 six months after beginning of the war. Saudi Arabia unilaterally answered it on March 25 and the coalition operation began on March 26. • Strategic cities: Sana'a, Aden and Hodeidah • Several failed peace talks • Matters for the Southern secessionists giving an upper hand for them to demand secessionism strongly
DISCOURSE	• Pan-Arabism (used by especially the Republicans)	• Sectarianism (used by especially the Hadi government)
RESULTS	• Stalemate between the republicans and the royalists • Paved the way the Six Day War • Guaranteed the continuity of the newly founded YAR • Triggered the South Yemen to struggle for independence from the British • Let a Soviet upper hand in the South of the Arabian Peninsula through Marxist South Yemen • Triggered a war in Dhofar, Oman	• (still ongoing)

The role of external actors will be compared in three dimensions: motivations of external actors, their extent of involvements, and the impact of their roles to the wars. Firstly, regional actors, and then international actors will be covered. It is unlikely to examine the exact influence of the external actors' involvements in the second civil war. However, one fact is clear that is the involvement of the external actors, both regional and international has prolonged, escalated and deepened both of two wars.

The main external regional actors of the first civil war were Egypt and Saudi Arabia while the main actors of the second Yemeni civil war are Saudi Arabia, Iran and UAE. There are other many actors in two wars; however, their roles are rather marginal. The Egyptian intervention in the first civil war was the result of a combination of domestic, foreign policy considerations, Nasser's personal goals, rivalry with Saudi Arabia and in a less extent the ideological concerns. The extent of Egyptian role was based on direct military intervention in favour of the republicans. Yemen turned into a quagmire for Egypt which could not leave. Saudi role in the first Yemeni civil war was based on a combination of domestic and foreign policy considerations and rivalry with Egypt. Saudi role was indirect intervention providing money, weapons, and training to the royalists. Israeli indirect involvement in the first Yemeni civil war was motivated by foreign policy consideration and by the perceived threat from Egypt. Israeli role was based on supplying aid to the royalists. In the second Yemeni civil war Saudi Arabia is the foremost regional actor. Saudi motivations for intervention are a combination of domestic and foreign policy considerations and rivalry with Iran. Extent of Saudi involvement is based on direct intervention. Iranian role within the war has originated from foreign policy considerations and regional rivalry with Saudi Arabia. Its extent of role is indirectly by supplying weapons, money, in a less extent training to the Houthis and several peace attempts which are rejected by Hadi government. Iranian role in the war should not be exaggerated; otherwise it causes to interpret the war as a mere proxy or sectarian war. UAE is the main different actors who did not exist during the first civil war. UAE is

motivated by a combination of domestic and foreign policy considerations. It has begun its intervention inside the coalition and extended its intervention by supporting the Southern secessionist groups. Its extent of role has been direct intervention; however, since summer 2019, it has partially withdrawn from Yemen. Israel is less active in the second Yemeni civil war compared to the first civil war and motivated by foreign policy considerations and mainly Iranian threat perception. Its role is based on training of mercenaries with financial support of the UAE against the Houthis.

The discussion above demonstrates several similarities and differences. Firstly, in the second civil war Saudi Arabia, the common actor of both wars, has undertaken the Egyptian role in the first Yemeni war by intervening directly. Moreover, it seems that the Saudis are sharing the same fate that Egyptian experienced during the first civil war have already bogged down in Yemen quagmire. However, it is too early to predict how Saudi Arabia will leave Yemen and how it will affect MBS's hands in domestic and foreign policy decision making process. Secondly, all regional actors' common motivation to intervene in both wars has been a result of regional politics. For rival great powers of the region, Egypt-Saudi Arabia and Saudi Arabia-Iran, involvements were result of their rivalry, balance of power, and struggle over the regional dominance. Both Saudi-Egyptian rivalry and Saudi-Iranian rivalry have triggered these actors to take role in the wars. Perceived threat from a regional power has also mattered for other regional actors. All these demonstrate that regional politics matters for Yemen because regional actors moved their rivalry, competition and struggle inside the country. Thirdly, there has been struggle of keeping or changing the status quo of the region between pro-status quo forces and anti-status quo forces. Regional actors' position could change in that struggle in time as it is seen with the Egyptian example which was the main challenge against existed status quo during the Arab Cold War and is one of the pro-status quo forces during the Middle East Cold War. However, in depth focus on the Saudi intervention in both of the wars demonstrates that Saudi monarchy has been the pro-status quo

actor of the region and takes action against whatever she perceives as a threat to regional stability and status quo. In this regard, as two wars have shown pro-status quo forces support the Yemeni actors which have not challenged the existed status quo. It was the royalists in the first civil war and it is the Hadi government, Islah and Ali Mohsen in the second civil war. So, pro-status quo regional actors have supported these groups while anti-status quo regional actors have supported other Yemeni sides which was the Republicans in the first civil war and is the Houthis in the second civil war. Finally, extent of involvements of regional actors from direct intervention to aid are similar in both wars.

Along with these general similarities, several differences emerge when focusing on the details. Firstly, motivations of regional actors can be changed according to the needs of the time even though there are some permanent motivations as Saudi case shows that. The foreign policy considerations of the Saudi regime-state and regime survival-, strategic position of Yemen, the concern over the rise of internal opposition, and the regional rivalry have been the common motivators in both of the wars. However, containing communism and containing rival ideology-Pan Arabism- in Saudi backyard are main differences of the first civil war from the second one. Status struggle, changing in Saudi foreign policy from quiet diplomacy to militarisation and Saudi perception over the Houthis are main different motivations for the intervention in the Yemeni civil war unlike the first civil war. Secondly, the discourse dimension the sectarian dimension of the second civil war used mainly as a tool by local and external actors to gain support and legitimatize the interventions is another difference. However, it does not downplay the sectarian dimension of the war, but it warns us to analyse it carefully not to draw the conclusion that the war is a mere sectarian conflict. Ideology; however, was one of the main motivations of external actors in the first civil war. In this point the third difference is revealed. Ideology was a more real basis than sectarianism. Saudi Arabia does not support the Hadi government because it is Sunni. Its main motivation is to keep a pro-status quo and pro-Saudi actor in Yemen whereas Egypt was intervening in the first civil war, it hoped to

keep a nationalist republican regime in the North Yemen along many other reasons. Fourthly, extent of Saudi involvement involvements is different in both wars. Saudi Arabia was indirectly involved in the first civil war while it is directly intervened the second civil war. The last difference is about peace attempts. During the first civil war Egypt and Saudi Arabia pioneered negotiations and Yemenis were involved negotiations in a less degree. This fact alienated the Yemenis to the negotiations and thus made the solution more difficult. However, in the second Yemeni civil war the Houthis, Hadi government, the Southern secessionists (since the late 2019), and Saudi Arabia are the main actors pioneering negotiations. Iranian attempts to be a peace broker have been rejected by the Hadi government. Thus, negotiations of the second civil war are mainly between Yemeni sides with each other and between Saudi Arabia and the Houthis. The examples of the formers are Stockholm and Riyadh agreements and the examples of the latter are indirect negotiations and prisoners change between the Houthis and the Saudis.

Table 1. 2. Roles of Regional Actors in the 1962-70 Yemeni Civil War and the Yemeni Civil War (2014-)

	THE 1962-70 YEMENI CIVIL WAR		**THE YEMENI CIVIL WAR (2014-)**	
ACTORS	• Egypt: main actor, direct intervention • Saudi Arabia: main actor, indirect role • Israel: secondary actor, indirect role		• Iran: main actor, indirect role • Saudi Arabia: main actor, direct intervention • UAE: main actor, direct intervention • Israel: secondary actor, indirect role	
MOTIVATIONS	**EGYPT**	• Domestic politics • Foreign policy considerations • Nasser's personal goals • Rivalry with Saudi Arabia • Ideological concerns (in a less extent)	**IRAN**	• Foreign policy considerations • Regional rivalry with Saudi Arabia
	SAUDI ARABIA	• Domestic politics • Foreign policy considerations • Rivalry with Egypt	**SAUDI ARABIA**	• Domestic politics • Foreign policy considerations • Rivalry with Iran
			UAE	• Domestic politics • Foreign policy considerations
	ISRAEL	• Foreign policy consideration • The perceived threat from Egypt	**ISRAEL**	• Foreign policy considerations • The perceived threat from Iran

Table 1. 2. Continued

THE EXTENT OF ROLE	**EGYPT**	• Deploying thousands of ground troops	**IRAN**	• Supplying weapons, money • In a less extent training the Houthis • Several peace attempts
	SAUDI ARABIA	• Providing money, weapons	**SAUDI ARABIA**	• Providing weapons, money, diplomatic support, and training • Deploying ground troops
			UAE	• Providing weapons, money, and training • Thousands of ground troops (UAE withdrew them in late June 2019) • Basic services in the South of Yemen
	ISRAEL	• Providing military and medical supply to the royalists	**ISRAEL**	• Training of mercenaries with financial support of the UAE against the Houthis
IMPACTS OF THE ROLE OF THE EXTERNAL ACTORS	• The role of the external actors prolonged, escalated and deepened the war.		• The roles of the external actors has prolonged, escalated and deepened the war.	

The international dimension cannot be isolated in the analyses of the Yemeni civil wars. The comparison of the international actors' roles in the wars will be based on two dimensions; firstly, the motivations and then the extent of involvements. US and Soviet Union/Russia have been the main common actors of the both wars. The Soviet involvement in the first Yemeni civil war was on the behalf of the republicans and motivated by the combination of foreign policy considerations and the relations with Egypt. It directly involved in the war along with Egyptians. Its extent of role was based on training for Egyptian pilots, military aid for Egyptians and YAR, training for the republicans, and support in the fields of infrastructure, agriculture, and hydrology to YAR. The US involvement in the first Yemeni civil war was linked with the general US foreign policy in the Middle East foreign policy and the special relationship with Saudi Arabia. The US involvement was less compared with the Soviet Union, so did its extent of involvement. Its extent of involvement changed from peace negotiation attempts to military aid to the Saudis. The British was also one of the international actors taking role in the first civil war. Its indirect involvement was first and foremost result of its colonial interests in the South of Yemen since Egyptian led anti colonial wave which was spreading in the South threatened British existence in there. The other motivation of British involvement was Egyptian-British imperial struggle lasted since nineteenth century over the South Yemen. British extent of involvement was based on arm and money supplies, weapons training to the royalists. In the second Yemeni civil war, Russia and the US are two main international actors. Russia's involvement is motivated by its historical relations with the South of Yemen and strategic location of the country and it pursues a mediator role. The US involvement is result of combination of counterterrorism policy against AQAP and relations with Saudi Arabia. Its extent of role is based on providing intelligence and advice for the Saudis, military training and selling weapons to the coalition members.

The comparison of international actors' role has revealed several similarities and differences. The first similarity is that same international actors (the US and

Soviet Union/Russia) have roles in both wars. Indeed, the British as an international actor is another similarity. However, it is not covered for the second civil war since Britain's role is rather marginal in that. Secondly, the importance of the South of Yemen has motivated Soviet Union/Russia to take role in both wars. Thirdly, relations with Saudi Arabia are the main motivation for her involvement in the second Yemeni civil war like it was in the first civil war for the US. Finally, both the US and Russia take an indirect role in the second civil war.

General differences of the international dimension are more remarkable. First of all, it is clearly fact that the first civil war was more linked with international politics than the second civil war. It reveals the second difference; the extent of international actors' goals was deeper and broader in the first war; thus, their extent of involvements was broader in the former. Thirdly, relations of the US and Soviet Union with regional states whether good or bad with regional actors affected their decisions to intervene in the first civil war because of the strict Cold War political atmosphere. However, Russia's involvement in the second civil war is free from any relations with regional states. Fourthly, the Soviet Union was more active than the others in the first civil war while the US has a more active role than Russia in the second civil war. Fifthly, Soviet Union and Russia's role in both of the wars puts that the latter's role pales in comparison with the former's role. Sixthly, from the US side; counterterrorism against AQAP in the second civil war is the main different driver for the US to take role in the second civil war. Finally, the extent of US involvement in both of the wars has included negotiation attempts; however, the US was more active in this area in the first civil war than the second civil war.

Table 1. 3. The Roles of International Actors in the 1962-70 Yemeni Civil War and the Yemeni Civil War (2014-)

	THE 1962-70 YEMENI CIVIL WAR		**THE YEMENI CIVIL WAR (2014-)**	
ACTORS	• Soviet Union: main actor, indirect role • The US: secondary actor, indirect role • Britain: secondary actor, indirect role		• Russia: secondary actor, almost no role • The US: secondary actor, indirect role	
MOTIVATIONS	**SOVIET UNION**	• Foreign policy considerations • Relations with Egypt	**RUSSIA**	• Historical relations with the south of Yemen • Strategic location of the country
	THE US	• The general US foreign policy in the Middle East • The special relationship with Saudi Arabia	**THE US**	• Counterterrorism operations against AQAP • Relations with Saudi Arabia
	BRITAIN	• Colonial interests in the South of Yemen • Egyptian-British imperial struggle lasted since nineteenth century over the South Yemen		
EXTENT OF ROLE	**SOVIET UNION**	• Training for Egyptian pilots and the republicans • Military aid for Egyptians and YAR training for the republicans • Support in the fields of infrastructure, agriculture, and hydrology to YAR	**RUSSIA**	• A mediator role
	THE US	• Military aid to Saudis • Peace negotiation attempts	**THE US**	• Providing intelligence and advice for the Saudis • Military training and selling weapons to the coalition members
	BRITAIN	• arm and money supplies and training for the royalists		

The comparison included four dimensions: the regional contexts of the Arab Cold war and the Middle East Cold war, the first and the second civil wars, Yemeni politics in pre-war periods, and the role of the external actors in both wars. The comparison in all these levels reveals important similarities and differences and so, continuities and changes about both the Yemeni politics, the civil wars, two different regional politics and the roles of external actors. The comparison underlines that the general frameworks of these three dimensions are similar; however, there are many differences considering in detail.

Thesis reached several general conclusions regarding general and comparative discussions. As underlined in the Introduction of this thesis, the analysis is based on Yemen being a weak state and being a battleground for regional actors because of its weakness. This thesis through the comparison made above and discussion made throughout thesis confirmed these two assumptions and moreover, it demonstrated that the Yemeni civil wars are mainly result of domestic affairs and they have become regionalized in time. However, the most important point is that thesis reaches the conclusion that Yemen will be a battlefield in the time of harsh regional competition overlaps with the Yemeni crisis as long as it remains a weak state as the analyses of Yemeni politics before wars and regional politics of the 1960s and 2010s show. First of all, the analyses of Yemeni domestic politics of the 1940s-60s and the 1970s-2010s show that Yemen has inherently been a weak state. Economic, political problems and both internal and external challenges have creating an enduring weakness. Secondly, these analyses demonstrated that the roots of the wars have gone back for decades. It means that both wars are first and foremost about Yemeni affairs; so, their analyses facilitate to comprehend the domestic politics of the country. Thirdly, these wars are fairly connected with regional politics and reflect general characteristics of the regional politics. Thus, the examination of them will help to understand the regional politics of the 1960s and the 2010s. Finally, this thesis reveals that weak states of the region can quickly become a battlefield between

the regional great powers which avoid confronting directly in the harsh regional competition times.

While writing this thesis, significant developments took place. Following the Stockholm agreement of December 2018, the clashes in Hodeidah have not ended rapidly; the Houthis have withdrawn from Hodeidah and other two ports in May 2019. The UAE has partially withdrawn her forces in the late June 2019 from the country. These were positive steps but it has not been fully implemented yet and do not deescalate the war that much. Especially, the rise of the clashes in August 2019 between UAE supported STC and Hadi government and STC's taking over Aden escalated the war in the South. This case created the discussion of whether there is a rift between Saudi Arabia and the UAE because of the war between STC and the government. The Houthi attack over two major Saudi oil installations in September 2019 escalated the tension between Iran and the US in the Persian Gulf because of allegedly Iranian support for the Houthis. Whether the US would intervene directly or not was discussed by many at that time. However, the autumn 2019 was characterised by de-escalation of the war in the South between STC and the Houthis and the war between the Houthis and Saudi Arabia through the Riyadh Agreement of November and the indirect talks began in September 2019 between the Houthis and Saudi Arabia. Both the Riyadh agreement and indirect talks between the Houthis and the Saudis are hopeful steps towards the peace. Today, the war in Yemen is at a stalemate, clashes continue between many different groups and Riyadh agreement is not implemented yet. It is too early to predict how the Houthis and the Hadi government will agree on the peace, and whether the Houthis will leave their gains or not, and even if they do so it is not clear in exchange of what they will do that. The Southern problem which has been temporarily appeased through Riyadh agreement could be revived the post-war period. Peace agreements cannot fully cover the demands of all sides at the time same time. That could create a danger for peace in the post-war in Yemen where radical Islamists could create an appeal to the people.

There is still a long way towards peace. Direct talks between sides are rather significant to reach a permanent peace as the first civil war has shown. The first civil war showed three significant items to reach a peace. Firstly, when the external actors negotiated with each other without asking Yemenis, Yemenis have become the first who undercut that as it was seen in the Jeddah Agreement of 1965. Secondly, the warring Yemeni sides could become more radical and re-start the attacks if one of them would not be included in the negotiations. It was seen in the process aftermath of the Bunker agreement; the royalists were ignored in negotiations and deal; they re-started their attacks. Finally, the war prolongs more as long as the external interventions and involvements continue. The role of external actors in the way of the peace should be first and foremost to end their involvement in the war and then bring the sides together for negotiations. Both of the wars are fairly Yemeni affairs, and is needed to be solved by Yemenis in the first hand. On contrary to the first civil war, two main rival external actors of the second war, Iran and Saudi Arabia, do not talk because Iran indirectly involves in the second civil war. This is significant but there is still the need for direct talks between the Houthis, the Hadi government and the STC as well as between the Houthis and Saudi Arabia. The mistake made in Bunker Agreement was repeated in the Stockholm Agreement. The experience of the Stockholm agreement did not include the STC; the group has become more radical and escalated the war in order to be taken into consideration and so, managed thus to be involved in the peace talks in 2019. Therefore, all sides of the war must be included in talks as both of examples have shown. Finally, and the most importantly, for the permanent peace and for the protection of the country in order not to become a battlefield, the decades of problems should be solved and Yemen should be got rid of being a weak state.

While concluding this thesis, it is important to mention that thesis takes the Yemeni civil wars from the weak state perspective; however, these wars can be studied from many different perspectives. It is possible to take them from a purely Saudi, Egyptian, UAE or Iranian perspective and determining their motivations or examine these wars in the context of Saudi foreign policy or take

them merely focusing on local dynamics. I believe that this thesis is a beginning that will inspire further studies.

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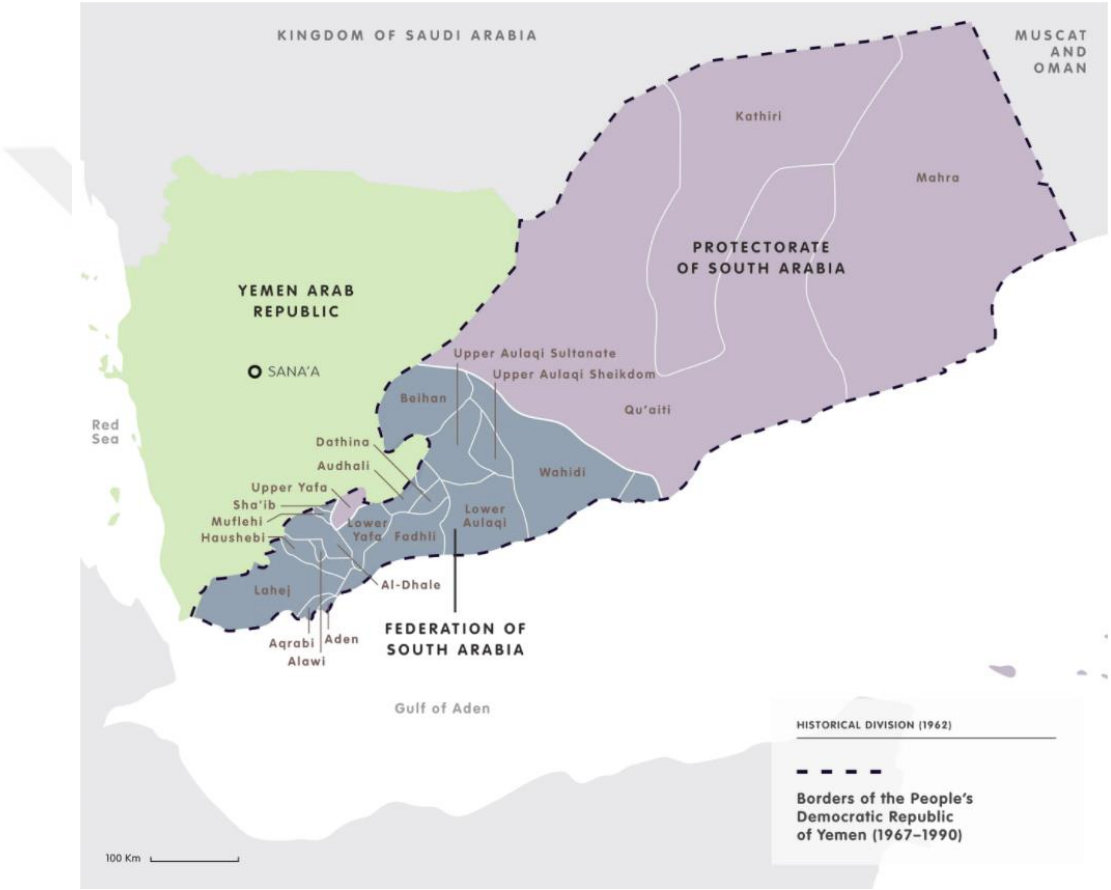
APPENDICES

A. MAPS/ HARİTALAR

Map - 1: Yemen Arab Republic and Federation of South Arabia



Source: (Mapping the Yemen Conflict, European Council on Foreign Relations, 2019, https://www.ecfr.eu/mena/yemen.)

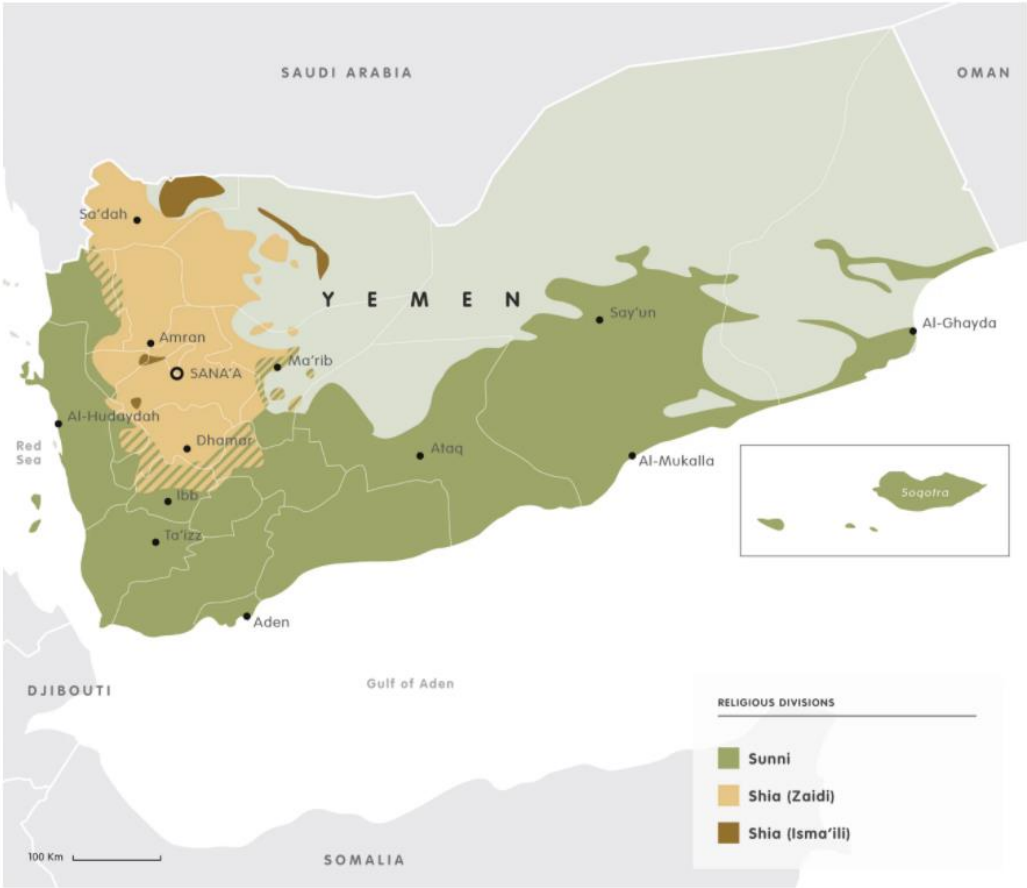
Map- 2:Yemen Prior to 1990 Unification

Source: Rua'a Alameri, "Power-Sharing Agreement: A New Page in the History of Yemen," Arab News, 2019, https://www.arabnews.com/node/1579871/middle-east.

Map- 3:Republic of Yemen

Source: "Yemen," Central Intelligence Agency, 2012, https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/resources/cia-maps-publications/Yemen.html.

Map- 4: Religious Divisions in Yemen



Source: (Mapping the Yemen Conflict, European Council on Foreign Relations, 2019, https://www.ecfr.eu/mena/yemen.)

B. TURKISH SUMMARY/TÜRKÇE ÖZET

BİR ZAYIF DEVLET OLARAK YEMEN: 1962 VE 2014 YEMEN İÇ SAVAŞLARININ BÖLGESEL SİYASETTE BAĞLAMSALLAŞTIRILMASI

Bu tez, 1962 ve 2014 Yemen iç savaşlarını zayıf devlet (weak state) literatürünü kullanarak analiz etmeyi ve bunları bölgesel siyaset bağlamına yerleştirmeyi amaçlamıştır. Bu savaşların her ikisi de ülkeyi bölgesel yarışa açarak, Yemen'i bölgenin doğrudan çatışmaktan kaçınan rakip güçlerinin dolaylı olarak birbirleri ile savaşacakları bir savaş alanına çevirmiştir. Hem 1962-70 savaşı hem 2014 savaşı bölgesel politika ile yakından ilgili olup dönemin bölge siyasetinin temel özelliklerini yansıtmaktadırlar. Bu sebeple, tez savaşları ele almadan önce 1960'ların ve 2010'ların Ortadoğu siyasetini analiz ederek, bu savaşların nasıl bölgesel bağlam içinde kolayca ele alınabileceğini göstermektedir.

Bu tez Gregory Gause ve Bassel Salloukh'u takip ederek, bölgesel mücadelenin Suriye, Lübnan, Irak ve Yemen gibi bölgenin zayıf devletlerinde yaşanmakta olduğunu iddia eder. Yemen'in hem 1960'lardaki Mısır Suudi Arabistan rekabeti için hem de 2010'ların Suudi Arabistan İran rekabeti için bir savaş haline gelmesinin nedenin Yemen'in zayıf bir devlet olmasından kaynaklandığını iddia eder.

Tezin giriş kısmında ve 1962-70 iç savaşı ile 2014 iç savaşının bölgesel politika içinde nasıl bir bağlama yerleştirilebileceği üzerine ve zayıf devlet konsepti üzerine literatür taraması yapılarak tezin bunları nasıl ele aldığı gösterilmiştir.
Tez, yukarıda adı geçen Yemen iç savaşlarının hangi çerçevede ele alınacağını analiz etmenin bunları bölgesel politika bağlamında ele almak için önemli olduğunu iddia eder. Bu iki şeyi ortaya çıkarır. İlki, Yemen'in bölgesel gerilimle

nasıl ve niçin kolayca ilişkili hale gelebildiği; ikincisi ise, bölgesel dinamiklerin Yemen üzerindeki etkileridir.

1962-70 savaşının bölgesel bağlamda nasıl ele alınacağı üzerinde literatürde bir uzlaşma vardır. Bu savaş Arap Soğuk Savaşı'nın sıcak savaşa dönüştüğü nokta olarak kabul edilir. Bu bölgesel rekabetin Yemen'e nasıl taşındığını göstermesi bakımından önemlidir. Malcolm Kerr'in çok iyi bir şekilde ifade ettiği gibi Yemen 1962-70 savaşı sebebi ile, Mısır liderliği altındaki devrimci güçler ile Suudi Arabistan liderliği altındaki muhafazakârlar arasında etki mücadelesinde bir test zemini konumuna dönüşmüştü.

2014 Yemen iç savaşı literatürü, bu savaşın 1962-7 savaşında olduğu gibi esas olarak bölgesel politika bağlamında ele almak gerektiği konusunda uzlaşmıştır. Ancak bu genel uzlaşının altında, savaşın mezhep savaşı mı, vekalet savaş mı, iç dinamiklerin ürünü olan bir iç savaş mı yoksa jeopolitik rekabet savaşı mı olduğu konusunda farklı görüşler vardır. Bu tez literatürdeki genel uzlaşıyı takip ederek 2014 Yemen iç Savaşının 1962-70 iç savaşının da olduğu gibi bölgesel politika bağlamında ele alınması gerektiğini belirtir. Yukarıdaki farklı görüşler aslında bir puzzleın farklı parçalarıdır. Yani hepsi teker tek başına Yemen iç savaşını açıklamakta yetersiz kalır ancak beraber düşünüldüklerinde resmi tam olarak ortaya koyarlar. Bu tez, savaşın her şeyden önce Yemen'in tarihsel sürecinin bir ürünü olarak ortaya çıkmış ve kökleri uzun yılların sorunlarına dayanan bir iç savaş olduğunu belirtir. Yemen zayıf bir devlet olduğu için bölgesel yarışın sert yaşandığı dönem ile ülkenin savaş dönemleri çakıştığında kolayca rakip bölgesel güçlerin birbirleri ile dolaylı olarak çatışacakları bir savaş alanına dönüşmektedir. Yemen iç savaşı ne saf bir mezhep savaşı ne de saf bir vekalet savaşıdır. Bu iki radikal yorum savaşı ortaya çıkaran tarihsel sorunları, yerel aktörleri ve onların taleplerini yanlış yorumlamaya yol açabilir. Ancak bu argümanlar Yemen savaşının vekalet ve mezhep boyutundan da tamamen yalıtılmış olduğunu ima etmez. Bu iki daha çok dış aktörlerin savaşa olan müdahalelerini ve yerel aktörlere olan desteklerini meşrulaştırmak için kullanılan

bir araç durumundadır. Ayrıca Arap Yarımadası El Kaidesi ve Yemen İslam Devleti gibi radikal gruplarının mezhepçilik boyutunun ciddi ve derin bir gerçeklik olduğu kabul edilmektedir. Husiler'in İran'ın vekilleri olduğu söylemi de grubun tarihsel süreç içinde ortaya çıkışı ve evrimi incelendiğinde öyle olmadığı kolayca görülebilmektedir. Ancak bu durum, Husiler'in İran'dan destek aldığı gerçeğini inkâr etmez. Pek çok isim tarafından dile getirildiği savaşa yabancı aktörlerin müdahalesi ve savaşın uzaması ile savaşın hem mezhepsel boyutu hem de vekalet boyutunun artması kaçınılmaz gözükmektedir.

Zayıf devlet literatüründe zayıf devletin tanımı üzerinde bir anlaşma yoktur. Literatürde zayıf devlet kavramını çalışan isimler birçok kriter üzerinden bunu açıklamaya çalışmaktadır. Bu tez zayıf devlet literatürünün önde gelen isimlerinden Robert I. Rotberg takip ederek Yemen'in zayıf bir devlet olduğunu göstermeyi amaçlamaktadır. Rotberg'e göre devletin en önemli görevinin kamu malı (public goods) sağlamak olduğunu söyler. Kamu malları birçok farklı türe sahiptir ancak en önemlisi güvenliktir. Etkili bir yargı sistemi, hukukun üstünlüğü, vatandaşların siyasete özgürce katılmaları gibi daha birçok kamu malı vardır. Rotberg devletleri kategorize ederken kamu mallarını sağlamadaki etkinliklerini dikkate alır ve devletler, güçlü (strong), zayıf (weak), başarısız (failed) ve çökmüş (collapsed) devletler olarak ayrıştırır. Rotberg güçlü devletlerin yukarıda sayılan kriterleri sağlama konusunda oldukça etkili, zayıf devletlerin bunların bir kısmında etkili bazılarında ise olmadığını belirtir. Başarısız devletler bu kriterlerin pek çoğunda başarısız olurlar. Bunun yanı sıra, şiddet başarısızlığın en önemli faktörlerindendir ancak tek başına başarısızlığı koşullamamaktadır. Rotberg başarısız devlet kategorisini ayrıca odaklanarak ekonomi, siyaset ve güvenlik kriterleri ile bu kategoriyi derinlemesine inceler.

Tez bunlardan faydalanarak Yemen'in nasıl kalıtsal zayıflıklara sahip olduğunu göstermeye çalışır; ayrıca yine Rotberg'in kriterlerinden faydalanarak Yemen'in başarısız ve çökmüş bir devlet olmadığını ortaya koyar ve Suudi Arabistan'ın Yemen'i başarısız devlet olarak kodlayarak müdahale etmesinin durumu

meşrulaştırma çabasından ibaret olduğunu iddia eder. Pınar Bilgin ve Adam Morton'un da ifade ettiği gibi zayıf ve çöküş devlet kavramsallaştırmaları dış aktörlerin müdahalelerini meşrulaştırma çabası için kullanılabilmektedir.
Bu tez 1962-70 Yemen iç savaşı ile 2014'ten beri devam etmekte olan Yemen iç savaşlarını zayıf devlet literatürü altında incelerken makaleler, raporlar, düşünce kuruluşlarının raporları ve Birleşmiş Milletler Güvenlik Konseyi'ne Yemen Uzman Panellerinin çıktısı olarak gönderilen raporlar gibi ikincil kaynaklara başvurmuştur.

Tez yazılırken halen devam etmekte olan, günden güne değişip evrilmekte olan bir savaşı ele almanın zorlukları ile karşılaşılmıştır. Günlük olayları takip ederken genel resimden çıkma riski en büyük zorluklardan biridir. Ayrıca ülkeden bilgi akışının da her zaman mümkün olmaması da bir başka zorluk olmuştur.

Bu tez literatürde Yemen'in zayıf bir devlet olması sebebi ile bu iki savaşa ve dış aktörlerin müdahalesine maruz kalması üzerine ciddi bir eksiklik olduğunu ortaya koyarak alandaki bu eksikliği gidermeyi hedeflemektedir.

Tezde 1960'ların bölgesel politikası Arap Soğuk Savaşı ve 2010'ların bölgesel politikası Orta Doğu Soğuk Savaşı kavramsallaştırmaları altında incelenmiştir. İkinci dünya savaşının bitmesinden 1960'lı yılların sonuna kadar olan dönem burada ele alınmıştır. 1945-52 arasındaki dönem ve 1952-70 arasındaki dönem iki farklı başlıkta incelenmiştir. 1952 Mısır Devrimi'ne 1970 ise Nasır'ın ölümüne işaret etmektedir. Bu iki tarih bölgesel politikada ideolojik yılların açılıp kapanmasına işaret etmesi sebebi ile seçilmiştir. 1945-52 arasındaki dönemde bölgenin "sözde" bağımsız devletlerinin aslında eski kolonyal güçlerle sıkı ilişkiler sürdürerek ve bu güçlerin ekonomiden siyasete bölge devletlerine müdahale etmelerinin bunları tam bağımsız olmaktan alıkoyduğu görülmektedir. Döneme damga vuran gelişmelerden en önemlisi 1948 Arap İsrail savaşıdır. Savaş sadece Filistin sorunu bakımından önemli değildir. Bir diğer önemli

özelliği, savaşın mağlubu olan Arap devletlerindeki genç ordu mensuplarının, savaşın mağlubiyetinin sebebinin kolonyal devletlerle sıkı ilişkiler kuran otokratik rejimler olduğunu düşünmeleri ve bunlara karşı harekete geçmeleridir. Dolayısıyla 1950'li yıllar yozlaşmış Arap rejimleri, ordularından gelen muhalefet ve darbe tehditleri altında tam bir felakete döndü.

Darbelerin uluslararası dallanması iç etkileri kadar derindir. İşte 1952'de monarşiyi yıkıp Cumhuriyet rejimi kuran devrim de bölgesel bir darbeler silsilesinin ilham verici ilk uygulaması olması sebebi ile oldukça kritiktir. 1954'de siyasi alanda ilk cumhurbaşkanı Muhammed Necib'i elimine ederek sahneye çıkan Nasır, 1956'da Süveyş Kanalı'nın millileştirilmesi olayı ile tüm Arap dünyasına damga vuran isim oldu. Kanalın millileştirilmesi sonucu İngiltere, Fransa ve İsrail işgaline uğramış ve savaştan mağlup olarak ayrılmış olsa da anti-emperyalizmle mücadelesinden dolayı Arap halkları tarafından coşku içinde alkışlanıyordu. Ancak bu durum bölgenin Batı devletleri ile sıkı ilişkileri olan rejimleri ve özellikle muhafazakâr monarşileri ürkütmüştü. Çünkü bunlar, Mısırı kasıp kavuran Pan-Arapçı ve cumhuriyetçi dalganın kendi ülkelerine de sıçrayabilecek olduğunun farkındaydılar.

1950'li yılların ikinci yarısı ve 1960'lı yılları tanımlamak için Malcolm Kerr'in Arap Soğuk Savaşı adlandırması ile bilinir. Bu dönemin temel özellikleri; Pan Arapçı ve cumhuriyetçi blok ile muhafazakar monarşiler arasında bölge siyasetinin bölünmesi, Mısır-Suudi Arabistan rekabeti, uluslararası sistemdeki Soğuk Savaşın bölgedeki bölünme üzerindeki etkisi, ideoloji ve bölge siyasetindeki etkisi ve iç ve bölgesel politikalar arasındaki etkileşimin artması. Mısır, cumhuriyetçi ve Pan Arapçı bloğa liderlik ederken Suudi Arabistan diğer kutba liderlik ediyordu. İlk grupta Mısır'ın yanı sıra Suriye ve 1958 sonrasında Irak varken ikinci grupta Suudi Arabistan'ın yanı sıra Ürdün, Lübnan ve 1958'e kadar Irak vardı. Yani küresel Soğuk Savaş'ın ikili yapısı gibi Arap Soğuk Savaşı'da ikili bir yapıdaydı. Ancak burada dikkat edilmesi gereken bir nokta vardır. Arap Soğuk Savaşı bölgenin kendi dinamikleri üzerinden bölünerek iki

kutuplu bir yapıya kavuşmuştur, Soğuk Savaş tarafından ikiye bölünmüş olduğunu düşünmek bölgesel dinamikleri görmeden indirgemeci bir bakışla analizin sonucudur. Bölgedeki ideolojik bölünme Pan Arapçılık ve muhafazakarlık üzerindendi. 1956'yı takip eden süreçte muhafazakâr rejimleri haklı çıkarır olaylar yaşanmaya başladı. 1957'de Ürdün'de Nasır yanlısı ordu yetkililerinin ve Filistinlilerin Kral Hüseyin rejimine meydan okumasına şahit olundu ve ancak ABD yardımı ile tehlike uzaklaştırılabildi. 1958'de Suriye ve Mısır Arasında Birleşik Arap Cumhuriyeti kuruldu; bundan tehdit algılayan Ürdün ve Irak ise buna alternatif ve Arap Birliği olarak adlandırılan oluşuma gittiler. Cumhuriyetçi devrim dalgası 1958'de Irak'a da sıçradı ve aynı yıl monarşi yıkılarak cumhuriyet rejimi kuruldu. Ancak beklenenin aksine Abdül Kerim Kasım liderliğindeki yeni Irak Mısır'la hareket etmek yerine ona meydan okuyordu. Bu ikisinin rekabeti ise o dönem bölgenin zayıf devletlerinden olan Suriye üzerinde yaşanıyordu.

Nasır ve Pan-Arapçılık 1961 yılında ilk büyük darbeyi aldılar. Suriye Birleşik Arap Cumhuriyetinden ayrıldı. Aslında bu birleşme sadece ideolojik kaygılarla gerçekleşmemiş de olsa Arapların tek bir çatı altında birleşmesi yolunda ciddi bir adımdı. Ancak Suriye'nin ayrılması ile alınan darbe Nasır'ın prestijini sarsmış olsa da o Arap birliği fikrinde hala kararlıydı, dahası devrimci idealler hala canlıydı. 1962'de Yemen'de ve 1963'de Irak ve Suriye'deki rejim karşıtı darbeler bunun en net göstergesiydi.

Nasır liderliğindeki Pan-Arapçı bloğun karşısında Faysal liderliğindeki muhafazakâr kutup yer alıyordu. Grup Arapların birliği fikrine şiddetle karşı çıkıyordu. Bunun zaten zorla elde etmiş oldukları bağımsızlıklarını kaybetmelerine neden olacağını düşünüyorlardı. Faysal'ın Pan-Arapçı ideolojik tehdide karşı ilk fiili hareketi, 1962 yılında velihat prensken hem Arap olan hem de olmayan Müslüman devletlerin temsilcilerini ülkesinde toplayarak Mısır'ın etkisini azaltmasını umduğu konferanstı. Konferans Dünya Müslüman Ligi'nin kuruluşu ile sonuçlanmıştı ancak konferansın radikal ideolojileri karşı-

dengeleyici bir araç haline geldiği kolayca görülmekteydi. Faysal Nasır'ı ve Pan-Arapçı ve cumhuriyetçi her tür radikal fikirle mücadele etmeye kral olduğunda da devam etti. 1965-66 yıllarında dokuz Müslüman ülkeyi ziyaret ederek İslamcı bir pakt kurma fikrini gündeme getirdi. Hatta Faysal, bu fikre Nasır'ı da davet etti ancak Nasır'ın haklı bir şekilde düşündüğü gibi bu aslında ona ve liderlik ettiği ideolojilere bir meydan okumaydı.

Dönemin bir diğer özelliği olan iç ve bölgesel politikalar arasındaki iletişimin artması durumunu, Valbjørn ve Bank organizma alegorisi ile açıklar. Bölgesel politika ve bunun içinde yer alan devletler birbirlerinden geçirgen zarlarla ayrılmış ancak birbiri ile bağlantılı bir organizmalar setidir. Bu dönemde bu ikisi arasındaki iletişim hem yumuşak hem de sert güç ile tecrübe edilmiştir. Yemen'deki iç bir mesel olan darbe ve devamında patlak veren iç savaşa doğrudan veya dolaylı şekilde bölge devletlerinin müdahale etmesi bölgesel ve iç politikanın etkileşiminde sert güç kullanımının örneği olmuştur. Yumuşak gücün kullanımı ise Nasır'ın ve Suudi Arabistan'ın ideoloji pompalayan ve rejimleri aşıp doğrudan halka ulaştıkları radyo yayınları aracılığı ile olmuştur.

Bölgesel iki kutupluluğun ve rekabetin sona ermesi 1967 Altı Gün Savaşından sonra olmuştur. Bunu takiben Mısır muhafazakâr monarşilerden yardım almaya başlayarak onların altını baltalayacak eylemlere girişmekten uzak duracağını ima etmiştir. Ancak Faysal 190'de Nasır'ın ölümüne kadar her zaman diken üstünde olarak Mısır'dan şüphe etmiş, bu ancak 1970'de son bulmuştur.

1962-70 Yemen iç Savaşı'nın başından beri belirtildiği gibi bölgesel politikayı yansıtması ve bölgesel rekabeti ülkeye çekmesi ve 1967 savaşına giden yolda önemli bir kilometre taşı olması sebebi ile Orta Doğu için kritik bir olay olduğu belirtilmiştir. Ancak savaşın bunların yanı sıra çok önemli bir özelliği daha vardır. Bu tez, Pan-Arapçılığın 1961 Suriye olayı ile ya da 1967 savaşı gibi net bir zamanda ve ani bir şekilde bittiğini değil bunun bir süreç içinde olduğunu ve bunun 1962-67 zaman dilimindeki Yemen iç savaşı ile olduğunu iddia eder. Bu

1961 ve 1967 olaylarının önemini hafife almak değildir. Ancak 1962-70 savaşına müdahale eden ve Arapların kardeşliği fikrini savunan Nasır başka bir Arap ülkede Arapların kanını döküyordu. Yemen iç savaşına Mısır müdahalesi ile başlayan pan-Arapçılığın çöküşü 1967'de doruğa ulaştı. Ancak muhafazakâr monarşilerdeki Pan-Arapçılık endişesi ancak Nasır'ın ölümü ile son buldu.

2003 yılı Ortadoğu bölgesel siyaseti için kritik bir kırılma noktasıydı. 2003'de ABD'nin Irak'a müdahale etmesi ile Ortadoğu siyasetinde önemli değişiklikler olmuştur; İran'ın yükselişi, bölgenin Arap olmayan devletlerinin bölgesel politikada artan rolü, devlet dışı aktörler ve mezhepçilik. Tüm bunların ilk ve en net olarak görüldüğü nokta 2006 Lübnan savaşıydı. Bölge 1960'lı yılları andırır biçimde ikiye bölünmüştü. Bölünmede iki rakip büyük bölgesel güç ve iki temel blok bulunsa da 1960'lardan bazı farklılıklar içeriyordu. Her şeyden önce bölünme statüko karşıtı blok ve statüko yanlısı blok olarak ayrılmıştı. İlkine İran diğerine ise Suudi Arabistan liderlik ediyordu. Bunlar görünüşte mezhep temelli bölünmeye işaret ediyordu ancak jeopolitik rekabet, bölgede statükonun değişmesi veya korunması gibi aslında Arap Soğuk Savaşı'nın da temel kırılma konuları olan benzer noktalardı. İlkinde İran, Suriye, Hamas, Hizbullah varken ikincisinde muhafazakâr Arap monarşileri, Lübnan, Mısır ve İsrail vardı. Bu temel özellikleri taşıyan dönem bu tezde Ortadoğu Soğuk Savaşı olarak isimlendirildi. Bunun nedeni Arap Soğuk Savaşı'nın aksine bölgenin Arap olmayan devletlerin bölgesel siyasetteki rolünün 1960'lı yıllara kıyasla artmış olması ve İran'ın bölgesel rekabetin iki kutbundan biri olarak ortaya çıkmasıdır.

2003 sonrası bölgesel politikada ikinci kırılma 2010'un sonlarında başlayan Arap Ayaklanmalarıdır. Tüm Ortadoğu'yu etkisi altına alan bu ayaklanmalar zinciri yukarıda anlatılan özelliklerinin hepsini daha da artırıp derinleştirdi. Bunun yanı sıra çok kutupluluk (multipolarity) ve iç ve bölgesel politikadaki etkileşimin artmasına da şahit olundu. Yine 1960'lı yılları andırır biçimde İran-Suudi Arabistan rekabeti bölgenin zayıf devletlerine taşınarak buradaki karışıklıkları daha da derinleştiriyordu. Bu ülkelerden biri de Yemen'di.

Arap Soğuk Savaşı'nın ve Ortadoğu Soğuk savaşının karşılaştırması göstermiştir ki; iki dönemde de bölgesel siyaset genel anlamda benzerlikler taşımaktadır; ancak derinlemesine bir analiz birçok farklılığı ortaya çıkarmaktadır.

1962'de patlak verip sekiz yıl devam eden birinci Yemen iç savaşı cumhuriyetçi bir rejim kuran Eylül 1962 darbesini takiben patlak vermiştir. Birinci Yemen iç savaşı incelenirken sadece savaşın gelişimini ele almak yeterli değildir. 1940'lardan 1960'lara kadar Kuzey Yemen iç siyasetinin incelenmesi, savaş tarihinin incelenmesi ve dış aktörlerin müdahalesinin incelenmesi gerekmektedir. 1940'lar Yemende Özgür Yemen Hareketi olarak adlandırılan ve Bağdat, Kahire gibi yerlerde eğitim alan öğrencilerin İmam rejimine karşı oluşturdukları harekettir. Hareket 1948, 1955 ve 1962 darbelerinde rol oynamıştır. Temel şikayetler ülkenin geri kalmışlık, dünyadan yalıtılmışlık ve otokratik ve babadan oğula süre giden İmam rejimine karşı bıkkınlıktı. Bu kısa Yemen siyaseti analizi bile ülkenin eskiden beri zayıf olduğunu göstermeye yetmektedir.

Tüm bu çerçevede 1962 darbesi gerçekleşti. Yukarıdaki kısa analizinde gösterdiği gibi darbenin ve dolayısıyla bunun yol açtığı savaşın kökenleri Kuzey Yemen'in on yıllara dayanan sorunlarında yatıyordu. Darbe sonrası Yemen Arap Cumhuriyeti kuruldu ancak kaçmayı başaran İmam el-Bedr kuzeydeki aşiretlerin ve Suudi Arabistan'ın desteği ile yeni yönetimle mücadeleye girişti. Yeni rejimde cumhuriyet ve milliyetçi ülküleri paylaştığı Mısır rejimine başvurdu. Böylece dış müdahalelerin beş yıl toplamda ise sekiz yıl sürecek olan bir savaş başlamış oldu. Savaş uzun bir dönem boyunca iki tarafında birbirini yenemeden mücadele etmesi ile geçti. Birçok kez barışa yönelik girişimde bulunuldu ancak olmadı. 1965'te Nasır Yemen'den çekiliyor gibi gözükürken Suudi Arabistan'ın yukarıda anlatılan girişimi, ABD'nin ve Sovyetler Birliği'nin Mısır'ı Yemen'de tutma ortak kaygısı ve İngiltere'nin Güney Yemen'den çekileceğini açıklaması gibi sebeplerle Nasır kralcılara karşı saldırısını yeniledi nihai çekilmesi 1967 İsrail karşısındaki yenilgisi sonrası oldu. Mısır'ın çekilmesinden bir süre sonra da Suudi Arabistan kralcılara yardımı kesti. Savaş üç yıl daha cumhuriyetçiler ve

kralcılar arasında devam etti ve 1970'de Yemen Arap Cumhuriyeti'nin varlığının garantiye alınması ve iki grubundan temsilcilerinden oluşan bir hükümetin kurulması ile son bulmuştur.

Savaşın esas kazananı Suudi Arabistan ve Sovyetler birliği olmuştur. Savaş Güney'de İngilizlere kaşı başkaldırıyı teşvik ederek yüzlerce yıllık İngiliz egemenliğine son verilmesine yol açmıştır. Güney'de bölgenin ilk Marksist devleti kuruldu. Bu Sovyetler Birliğinin Aden Körfezi ve Arap Yarımadası'nda önemli bir avantaj elde etmesi demekti. Kuzeydeki cumhuriyetçi rejim ise Nasır'ın radikalliğini kaybetmesi gibi radikalliğini kaybederek Suudi Arabistan'la ilişkilerini artırdı ayrıca Marksist Yemen karşısında Suudi Arabistan'a bir set olması bakımından da oldukça önemli bir görev yüklendi.

Savaşa müdahale eden bölgesel ve uluslararası aktörlerin hem müdahale etme motivasyonları hem de katılımlarının kapsamı ayrıntılı olarak incelenmiştir. Savaşın en önemli iki dışsal aktörü Mısır ve Suudi Arabistan'dır. Mısır'ın müdahalesi iç ve dış politikadaki endişeler, Nasır'ın kişisel hedefleri ve Suudi Arabistan ile rekabetten oluşan bir motivasyonlar setine dayanıyordu. Mısır 1962-70 savaşına doğrudan müdahale etmiş öyleki zaman içinde gönderdiği asker sayısı neredeyse yetmiş bine ulaşmıştı. Dolayısıyla bu savaşa en geniş katılı yapan oydu. Ancak Yemen, Mısır için içinden bir türlü çıkamadığı ve ancak bir savaş bahanesiyle, 1967 savaşı, ayrılabildiği bir bataklığa dönüşmüştü. Suudi Arabistan'ın müdahalesi doğrudan değil, kralcılara yardım sebebi ile dolaylı idi. Mısır'ın askeri üstünlüğü karşısında Suudi Krallığı risk almak istememişti. Müdahalesi iç ve dış politika kaygıları ve Mısır'la rekabetten kaynaklanıyordu en temelde. Katılımın kapsamı ise para, eğitim ve silah yardımına dayanıyordu. İsrail bu tez kapsamında ele alınan son bölgesel aktördür. İsrail'in savaşa müdahil olma sebepleri dış politikasındaki kaygılar ve Mısır'dan kaynaklanan tehdit algısıydı. Müdahalesinin kapsamı ise kralcılara yardıma dayanıyordu.

1962-70 savaşına müdahil olan uluslararası aktörler Sovyetler Birliği, ABD ve İngiltere'ydi. Sovyetler Birliği'nin savaşa katılım kapsamı diğer ikisine kıyasla daha genişti ve motivasyonu temel olarak dış politikası ve Mısır'la ilişkilerle ilgiliydi. 1953 sonrasında Sovyetler Birliği dış politikasında değişikliğe gitmiş ve sosyalist olsun olmasın Üçüncü Dünya devletlerindeki savaşlarda rol alma gayreti içine girmişti. Sovyetler'in Yemen savaşına cumhuriyetçiler lehine müdahalesi Mısır'la olan ilişkilerden ayrı düşünülemezdi. Mısır Sovyetler Birliği ile ilişki kuran en temel bölgesel aktördü. 1950'lerin ikinci yarısından itibaren Yemen ve Sovyetler Birliği ilişkilerine öncülük etmişti. Sovyetler Birliğinin savaşa katılımı Mısırlı meslektaşları ile beraber çalışan Sovyet pilotları, silah desteği ve ülkenin alt yapısına yönelik birçok desteği içeriyordu. ABD'nin savaşa müdahalesi ise Soğuk Savaş'taki Ortadoğu politikası ve Suudi Arabistan'la ilişkileri tarafından şekillenmişti. Katılımın kapsamı ise barış görüşmelerine öncülük etme çabasından Suudi Arabistan'a askeri yardıma kadar uzanıyordu. Burada akılda tutulması gereken önemli bir nokta vardır. ABD savaş başlar başlamaz Suudi Arabistan lehine bir tavır takınarak kralcıları desteklememiştir. Mısır'la olan ilişkileri de gözeterek Mısır'ı marjinalize etmeden bir orta yol bulma çabasında olmuştur. Mısır her ne kadar Sovyetler Birliği ile sıkı ilişkiler içinde olsa da ABD ile ilişkileri kopartacak kadar radikalleşmemiştir. Aslında iki kutbun süper gücü ile ilişkilerini koparmamak bir ne Soğuk Savaş'ın çelişkisini simgelemektedir. Bu savaşta ele alınan son uluslararsı aktör İngiltere'dir. İngiltere'nin Yemen'de, ABD ve Sovyetler Birliğinin aksine Yemen'de 19.yüzyılın ilk yarısına dayanan oldukça eski bir tarihi vardı. 1830'ların sonlarında Mısırlı Mehmet Ali Paşa'yı mağlup ederek Güney Yemen'i ele geçiren İngilizler için 1962-70 savaşı Mısırla karşılaşmanın ikinci raunduydu. Bunun yanı sıra İngiltere'nin bölgedeki ve Yemen'in Güney'indeki çıkarları da bir diğer motivasyondu. Savaşa katılımı ise kralcılara para, silah ve eğitim desteği ile oldu.

Yemen iç savaşı (2014-) analiz edilirken yukarıda olduğu gibi bir analiz çerçevesi izlenecek ve ilk savaşla karşılaştırması yapılarak ilerlenecektir.

1970'lerden 1990'a kadar iki farklı Yemen vardı. Güneylilerin ayrımcılığa uğramaları ve tekrar bağımsızlık istemeleri ile 1994'te bir iç savaş çıktı, ancak 1978'den beri Kuzey yönetimini elinde tutan Ali Abdullah Salih'in güçleri bunu kısa sürede bastırdı. Salih böl ve yönet politikası ile yönetime alternatif oluşturabilecek tarafları birbirlerine arşı dengeleme siyaseti izledi. 2000'lere gelindiğinde ülke, el-Kaide terörü, altı yıl süren Husiler ile merkezi yönetimin savaşı ve 2008'de yeniden canlanan bağımsız güney isteğinde bulunan Güney ayrılıkçıların gösterilerine şahit oldu. 2011'de Yemen ayaklanmaları başladığında ülkede tarihin de gösterdiği gibi kökleri Yemen'in kendi sorunlarına dayanan ve başta Husiler ve Güneylilerin rahatsız olduğu bir ortam vardı. 2011'deki protesto gösterileri kısa sürede silahlı çatışmaya döndü ve ülke tam bir kargaşa ve kriz dönemine girdi. Bu ortamdan faydalanan pek çok kendi bölgelerinde hükümet görevlilerini yerlerinden etti ve kontrolü ellerine aldılar. Tüm bu kargaşa Ulusal Diyalog Konferansı'nda durmuş gözüküyordu. Yemen'in hemen hemen tüm farklı gruplarının katılımı ile oluşturulan Ulusal Diyalog Konferansı ülkenin kritik pek çok sorununu çözmeyi hedefliyordu. Öyle ki, bu diğer Ortadoğu ülkelerinde barışa ulaşmada bir model olarak görülmeye başlanmıştı. Ancak Güney ayrılıkçılarının ve Husilerin alınan kararları tanımaması üzerine bu çöktü. Husiler Kuzey'de pek çok bölgeyi ele geçirdi ve Eylül 2014'te Salih destekli güçlerinde yardımıyla Sana'nın kontrolünü aldılar. Bu tarihe kadar yer yer ve aralıklarla devam eden çatışmalar daha da ağırlaşarak günlük bir hale dönüştü. Husiler Kuzey'den güneye gelerek Mart 2015'te Aden'i ele geçirmeye kalkıştıklarında başkan Hadi Suudi Arabistan'dan yardım çağrısında bulundu. Suudi Arabistan ve bazı Arap ülkelerinden oluşan bir koalisyon ertesi gün müdahaleye başladı. Koalisyonun müdahalesi Husileri Aden'den uzaklaştırmaya yetti ancak ülkenin tamamı için bu söz konusu değildi. Savaşta odak noktası bu Hadi hükümeti ve Husiler üzerine odaklansa da hızla yükselmekte olan bir başka grup vardı; Birleşik Arap Emirlikleri destekli Güney ayrılıkçılar. Bu gruplar 2018'de Hudeyde savaşında oldukça etkili rol oynadılar. Hudeyde savaşı hem Husiler, hem Hadi hükümeti hem de Emirlik için oldukça kritikti. Koalisyonun çabalarına rağmen bir zafer kazanılamadı ancak Aralık

2018'de barışa yönelik ilk umut olarak Stockholm anlaşmasının imzalanması pek çok eksikliğine rağmen, oldukça kritikti. Bu tez de savaş, Stockholm anlaşmasına kadar olan dönemi ele almıştır. Stockholm sonrası dönem ise sonuç kısmında kısaca ele alınmış ve son durum verilmiştir. Bu tez yazılırken en son gelinen nokta da barışa yönelik olumlu çabalar görülse de ülkenin kısa sürede barışa girmesi beklenmemektedir.

Savaş öncesi ülkenin politik yapısının incelenmesi pek çok mücadele içerisinde Yemen'in zayıf devlet olarak varlığını sürdürdüğünü ortaya koymaktadır. Bu savaş da bir önceki gibi iç dinamiklerin ve uzun yıllara dayanan sorunların sonucu tarihsel süreçten çıka gelmiştir. Bu tarihselliği göz önüne almadan savaş 2014'de Husilerin Sana'yı ele geçirmesi ya da 2015 de koalisyon mücadelesi ile başladı gibi tabirler kabul edilemez.

Savaşa bölgesel aktörlerin rolü aynı bir öncekinde olduğu oldukça önemli ve büyük çaptadır. Ancak diğerinin aksine aktörler farklılaşmıştır. Bu savaşta en etkili üç bölgesel güç; Suudi Arabistan, Birleşik Arap Emirlikleri ve Husileri destekleyen İran'dır. Suudi Arabistan ilk savaştakine benzer şekilde iç ve dış politika kaygıları ve İran'la olan bölgesel rekabeti sebebi ile savaşa katılmıştır. Suudi Arabistan doğrudan savaşa müdahale olarak, 1962-67'de Mısır'ın paylaştığı kaderi paylaşıyor görünmektedir. Aynı Mısır gibi, Suudi Arabistan'da büyük umutlarla girdiği savaştan bir türlü çıkamamak da dahası elle tutulur bir başarı da sağlayamamaktadır. Yemen savaşı denildiğinde en çok gündeme gelen ikinci aktör İran'dır. Savaşa müdahil olma motivasyonları dış politik kaygılar ve Suudi Arabistan ile rekabet üzerine kuruludur temelde. İran'ın savaşa müdahalesi doğrudan değildir, Husilere mali ve silah yardımı ve iddialara göre askeri eğitim sağlamaktadır. Ancak İran'ın savaşa katılımı Suudi Arabistan'ınkine kıyasla oldukça düşük olduğu unutulmamalıdır. Savaşın bir diğer bölgesel aktörü Birleşik Arap Emirliği savaşa iç ve dış politik kaygılar ve Aden Körfezi ve Afrika Boynuzundaki uzun vadeli politikalarının sonucu olarak müdahale etmiştir. Savaşa Suudi Arabistan liderliğindeki koalisyonun bir üyesi

olarak katıldı ancak zaman içinde Güney ayrılıkçıları ile özel ilişkiler kurarak oldukça kuvvetli bir taban oluşturdu. Askeri eğitim, silah sağlama ve mali ve insani yardımlarla savaşa oldukça geniş bir katılım düzeyi ile müdahil olan Emirlik askerlerini 2019 yazında çekse de Yemen politikasını bırakmamıştır, ayrıca ABD ile Arap Yarımadası el-Kaidesi'ne yönelik operasyonları devam etmektedir. İsrail'de dış politik nedenler, Kızıldeniz Yolu'nun güvenliği ile ilgili endişeler ve İran'dan tehdit algısı ile müdahil olmuştur. İsrail aynı diğer savaşta olduğu bölgesel güçten tehdit algılayarak müdahalesi bölgesel ve iç politikaların kriz dönemlerinde nasıl oldukça geçirgen olduğunu göstermesi bakımından önemlidir. İsrail'in katılım düzeyi paralı askerlerin eğitimi ile olmuştur.

Bölgesel aktörlerin rollerinin incelenmesi göstermiştir ki, aynı 1962-70 savaşında da olduğu gibi bölgesel rekabetler ve tehdit algıları en temel motivasyonlardır. Yine benzer şekilde ülke, diğer bölgesel zayıf devletlerle beraber Suudi Arabistan ve İran rekabeti için bir savaş alnına dönüşmüştür. Ancak İran'ın etkisinin az olması ve çok da fazla müdahil olmaya meyilli olmaması Suriye'deki varlığı ile yakından alakalıdır. Yani genel çerçeve olarak iki savaşta da bölgesel aktörlerin müdahalesi benzerlik taşımakla beraber detaylarda pek çok farklılıklar ortaya çıkmaktadır.

Uluslararası aktörlerin rolleri ele alınmadan önce ilk olarak şu söylenmelidir ki 1962-70 savaşının aksine bu savaşta uluslararası boyut oldukça zayıftır. ABD ve Rusya iki en temel aktördür. Birçok başka aktörde savaşa bir şekilde müdahil olsa da bunların etkileri oldukça kısıtlı olduğu için bu tezde ele alınmamıştır. ABD bölgeye yönelik genel dış politikası ve Trump döneminin İsrail ve Suudi Arabistan'a dayanan politikası sebebi ile Suudi Arabistan lehine savaşa müdahil olmuştur. Katılımın boyutları ise Suudiler silah ve eğitim desteği şeklindedir. Rusya Yemen'in güneyindeki tarihsel idealleri ve ülkenin stratejik konumu sebebi ile savaşa müdahil olmuştur. Katılı ise arabuluculuk rolü oynamakla sınırlıdır.

ABD ilk savaşta olduğu gibi buna da bölgeye yönelik politikası ve Suudi Arabistan sebebi ile müdahil olmuş katılım seviyesi ise öncekine göre görece düşük olmuştur. Görüldüğü gibi Rusya Sovyetler Birliğinin motivasyonlarına benzer motivasyonlarla savaşa müdahil olsa da katılımı Sovyetlerinkine kıyasla oldukça zayıftır.

Bölgesel politikaların, savaşların, Yemen iç siyasetinin ve dış aktörlerin rollerinin karşılaştırılması önemli birçok noktayı ortaya çıkarır. 1940'lardan 1960'lara ve 1970'lerden 2000'li yılların sonuna kadar Yemen iç siyasetlerinin analizi iki önemli nokta bakımından oldukça önemlidir. İlki, bu karşılaştırma Yemen'in kalıtsal olarak bir zayıf devlet olduğunu ortaya koyar. İkincisi ise, hem 1962-70 savaşının hem de Yemen iç savaşının (2014-) ülkenin kökleri on yıllara dayanan sorunların tetiklemesiyle ortaya çıktığını gösterir. Bu nokta oldukça önemlidir, çünkü Yemen savaşını bölgesel siyasetin bir sadece parçası olarak ele almanın ya da savaşı vekalet savaşı ya da mezhep savaşı olarak yorumlanın doğru olmadığını unun Yemen'in kendi tarihsel süreç ve dinamiklerini görmezden gelmek olduğunu gösterir. Bölgesel aktörlerin rollerinin karşılaştırılması da yine iki şey bakımından kritiktir. İlki, bölgesel politikanın etkisinin bölgesel aktörleri nasıl Yemen'e yönelttiğidir. İkincisi, Yemen'in bölgenin diğer zayıf devletleri gibi doğrudan karşı karşıya gelmekten imtina eden rakip bölgesel güçler için nasıl savaş alanına dönüştüğünün gösterilmesidir. Uluslararası aktörlerin rollerinin her iki savaşta karşılaştırılması 1962-70 savaşının diğerine kıyasla uluslararası siyasetle daha ilintili olduğunu ortaya çıkarması bakımından önemlidir.

Buraya kadar yapılan tüm karşılaştırmalar ışığında bu tez ortaya koymuştur ki Yemen zayıf bir devlet olduğu sürece iç ve bölgesel krizlerin çakıştığı dönemlerde bölgesel rakip güçler için her zaman bir savaş alanına dönüşme potansiyeline sahiptir. Nihai barış ve Yemen'in onlarca yıldır sahip olduğu bu dezavantajlı durumun sona erdirilebilmesi için Yemen'in zayıf devlet olmaktan kurtulması gerektir.

Tezi değerli kılan noktalardan biri de iki savaşı karşılaştırmanın 2014 Yemen savaşına yönelik çözüm önerilerini ortaya çıkarmış olmasıdır. 1962 savaşından alınan derslerle barışa giden yolda neler yapılmalı ve neler yapılmamalı sorusuna da sonuç kısmında yer veren bu tezin Yemen ve iç savaşlar konusunu farklı perspektiflerden ele alacak başka çalışmaları ilham edecek öncü bir çalışma olması umut edilmektedir.

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