DECONSTRUCTING SYRIAN AND YEMENI CIVIL WARS THROUGH A POST-COLONIAL LENSE

GÖKÇE PİŞKİN ÖNAL

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GÖKÇE PİŞKİN ÖNAL

THESIS ADVISOR: ASST. PROF. DR. UMUT CAN ADISÖNMEZ

Master's Exam Jury Members

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Müge AKNUR

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Serhun AL

Asst. Prof. Dr. Umut Can ADISÖNMEZ

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ETHICAL DECLARATION

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis and that I have conducted my work in accordance with academic rules and ethical behaviour at every stage from the planning of the thesis to its defence. I confirm that I have cited all ideas, information and findings that are not specific to my study, as required by the code of ethical behaviour, and that all statements not cited are my own.

Name, Surname: Gökçe Pişkin Önal

Date: 15.05.2024

Signature:

ABSTRACT

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Pişkin Önal, Gökçe

Master's Program in Political Science and International Relations

Advisor: Asst. Prof. Dr. Umut Can Adısönmez

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This thesis uses a postcolonial lens to deconstruct the Syrian (2011 – Present Time) and Yemeni (2014 – Present Time) civil wars, revealing how historical colonial legacies shape these conflicts. It examines the impact of colonialism on statehood, sectarianism, external intervention, regional power struggles, economic exploitation and neo-colonialism in Syria and Yemen. It highlights the need for inclusive approaches that address socio-economic disparities, political marginalisation and sectarian divisions. By challenging dominant narratives, the postcolonial perspective offers nuanced insights for sustainable conflict resolution. The research highlights the humanitarian and political implications for conflict resolution, highlighting the historical legacies of colonialism and ongoing imperialist influences. Despite certain limitations, the study calls for a comprehensive understanding of conflicts through a postcolonial lens and offers valuable insights for peacebuilding efforts. Future research opportunities lie in exploring historical roots, post-colonial identities, economic dimensions, humanitarian consequences, and regional power dynamics.

Ultimately, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of international relations and social studies in conflict regions.

ÖZET

SURİYE VE YEMEN İÇ SAVAŞLARININ POST-KOLONYAL BİR MERCEKTEN YAPISÖKÜME UĞRATILMASI

Pişkin Önal, Gökçe

Siyaset Bilimi ve Uluslararası İlişkiler Yüksek Lisans Programı

Tez Danışmanı: Yard. Doç. Dr. Umut Can Adısönmez

Mayıs, 2024

Bu tez, postkolonyal bir mercek kullanarak Suriye (2011 – Günümüz) ve Yemen (2014 – Günümüz) iç savaşlarını yeniden yapılandırmakta ve tarihsel kolonyal mirasların bu çatışmaları nasıl şekillendirdiğini ortaya koymaktadır. Sömürgeciliğin Suriye ve Yemen'de devletleşme, mezhepçilik, dış müdahale, bölgesel güç mücadeleleri, ekonomik sömürü ve yeni sömürgecilik üzerindeki etkisini incelemektedir. Sosyo-ekonomik eşitsizlikleri, siyasi marjinalleşmeyi ve mezhepsel bölünmeleri ele alan kapsayıcı yaklaşımlara duyulan ihtiyacı vurgulamaktadır. Postkolonyal perspektif, egemen anlatılara meydan okuyarak sürdürülebilir çatışma çözümü için incelikli içgörüler sunmaktadır. Araştırma, sömürgeciliğin tarihsel mirasını ve süregelen emperyalist etkileri vurgulayarak çatışma çözümünün insani ve siyasi sonuçlarını ortaya koymaktadır. Bazı kısıtlamalara rağmen bu çalışma, çatışmaların postkolonyal bir mercekten kapsamlı bir şekilde anlaşılması çağrısında bulunmakta ve barış inşası çabaları için değerli içgörüler sunmaktadır. Gelecekteki araştırma fırsatları, tarihsel kökleri, sömürge sonrası kimlikleri, ekonomik boyutları, insani sonuçları ve bölgesel güç dinamiklerini keşfetmekte yatmaktadır. Nihayetinde

bu araştırma, çatışma bölgelerindeki uluslararası ilişkiler ve sosyal çalışmaların daha iyi anlaşılmasına katkıda bulunmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Yemen iç savaşı, Suriye iç savaşı, post-kolonyalizm, kimlik politikaları, vekalet savaşları.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The Syrian (2011 – present time) and Yemeni (2014 – present time) civil wars are complex conflicts that require the application of diverse perspectives in order to better understand their multifaceted nature. One such approach is through a post-colonial lens, which analyses the lingering effects of colonialism on these nations. The thesis aims to explore how the post-colonial perspective can help deconstruct the Syrian and Yemeni civil wars, shedding light on the historical, socio–political, and economic aspects of the conflicts.

Studying the Syrian and Yemeni civil wars through a post-colonial lens is crucial for gaining a relevant and comprehensive understanding of the complexities and underlying causes of these conflicts. Studying these wars from a post-colonial perspective unravels the historical legacies of colonization and how they continue to shape the present realities in these regions. Both Syria and Yemen were colonized by European powers, with the Sykes–Picot agreement carving up the territories. By understanding the political, social, and economic consequences of colonization, we can analyse how these dynamics have contributed to the tensions and grievances that fuel the conflicts today. Furthermore, a post-colonial lens enables scholars and researchers to critically examine the role of external actors in these wars. Many global powers have intervened in the Syrian and Yemeni conflicts, exacerbating existing fault lines, and prolonging the violence. Understanding how colonial powers and their legacies continue to influence the behaviour and interests of these external actors is essential to comprehending the complexities of the conflicts.

Additionally, this framework highlights the importance of recognizing local agency and voices often marginalized in mainstream narratives. Examining the events through a post-colonial lens provides a platform to understand the aspirations, grievances, and resistance of the Syrian and Yemeni people against both domestic and external oppressions. It is imperative to analyse the political and socioeconomic power dynamics that perpetuate the conflicts and to give voice to those affected by them. Studying these wars from a post-colonial lens also draws attention to the global implications and responsibilities of the international community. It prompts us to critically examine the hypocrisy and contradictions of powerful nations, who claim to champion democratic values and human rights while supporting oppressive regimes or engaging in proxy wars. It compels us to question the unequal distribution

of power and wealth in the global order and to call for more ethical and just international policies.

To deconstruct the Syrian and Yemeni civil wars, it is crucial to examine the historical context of these nations under colonial rule. Both Syria and Yemen were once colonized territories, experiencing external domination by European powers, which left long–lasting consequences (Said, 2003). This perspective enables us to uncover the underlying grievances and tensions that have contributed to the current conflicts. By assessing the impacts of colonialism, we can identify the roots of resentment, identity crises, and power disparities that perpetuate instability in these nations. Post-colonial perspectives emphasize the legacy of political fragmentation in the aftermath of colonial rule, which has significantly affected the Syrian and Yemeni civil wars. The arbitrary drawing of borders by colonial powers disregarded ethnic, tribal, and sectarian affiliations, often leading to internal divisions (Said, 2003). In Syria, for example, the artificially created borders and the subsequent struggle for power resulted in the marginalization and suppression of certain groups, fuelling discontent and conflict. Similarly, in Yemen, the division of the country during and after colonization reignited historical grievances, provoking conflict between regional groups, factions, and tribal communities.

By adopting a post-colonial lens, we can also comprehend the economic exploitation and dependency that persist in these conflict–ridden regions. Colonial powers sought to extract resources and establish economic control, leaving a legacy of unequal economic systems. This economic disparity, coupled with the subsequent neo–colonial influences, has perpetuated poverty, social inequality, and economic grievances. These socio–economic factors often intersect with other drivers of conflict, such as unequal access to resources, land, and opportunities, further exacerbating the civil wars. A post-colonial analysis also assists in deconstructing the cultural identity clashes in Syria and Yemen. Colonial powers imposed their own cultural, political, and institutional frameworks, undermining the local heritage. This erasure of cultural identity has influenced contemporary conflicts, as groups seek to reclaim their distinctiveness and preserve their cultural traditions. In both Syria and Yemen, sectarianism and religious divisions have emerged as powerful fault lines, contributing to the escalation of violence and prolonged civil unrest.

A post-colonial lens challenges the dominant narrative shaped by former colonizers and often perpetuated in the global discourse surrounding these conflicts (Said, 2003).

By deconstructing this master narrative, we can unearth the voices and experiences of marginalized groups that have been overshadowed or suppressed. This inclusive perspective acknowledges the diversity of perspectives, experiences, and aspirations within Syria and Yemen, thereby offering a more comprehensive understanding of the causes, implications, and potential solutions to the civil wars. Therefore, applying a post-colonial lens to deconstruct the Syrian and Yemeni civil wars enables us to reveal the historical, socio–political, economic, and cultural dynamics that fuel these conflicts. By examining the legacy of colonialism in these nations, we acknowledge the deep–rooted grievances and tensions that underpin the conflicts. This understanding can potentially contribute to more holistic approaches in addressing the challenges faced by Syria and Yemen.

This master's thesis critically examines the Syrian and Yemeni civil wars through a post-colonial lens. By delving into the historical, political, and sociocultural contexts, the thesis aims to deconstruct the complex dynamics of these conflicts in light of their colonial legacies. Starting with Edward Said's book 'Orientalism', this thesis will look at colonialism and how the two countries were separately formed (Said, 2003). Further, the thesis will try to shed light on how these two countries got involved in a war situation. «Orientalism» is a seminal work in the field of postcolonial studies. In this book, Said critically examines the Western construction of the «Orient» and the way in which it has been represented and understood by the West. He argues that Orientalism is not just a scholarly discipline, but an ideological and political project that has served to justify colonial domination and perpetuate stereotypes about the East. Said's analysis is thorough and rigorous, drawing on a wide range of sources to support his arguments. «Orientalism» is a must–read for anyone interested in understanding the historical construction of the «Other» and its ongoing consequences.

The degree of scientific development on the theme of deconstructing Syrian and Yemeni civil wars through a post-colonial lens in the field of international relations, a sub–discipline of social studies, is quite significant. Scholars and researchers, such as Edward Said (Sais, 2003), Rashid Khalidi (1992; 2007), Ussama Makdisi (2000) etc, have, in recent years, increasingly turned their attention to applying a post-colonial perspective to understanding these complex conflicts. The use of a post-colonial lens in the analysis of these civil wars allows researchers to examine the lasting impacts of colonial legacies and the influence of external powers on the

political, economic, and social dynamics of these regions. By deconstructing the narrative through this framework, scholars aim to unveil and challenge the structural inequalities and power imbalances that may be perpetuated as a result of historical colonial experiences.

Multidisciplinary research drawing from multiple sources such as historical archives, testimonies, policy documents, and media coverage has provided valuable insights into the role of colonial powers and their lasting effects on the post–independence nation–building processes in both Syria and Yemen. This research has shed light on aspects such as proxy interventions, geopolitical interests, and the exploitation of natural resources, which are crucial for understanding the root causes and dynamics of the conflicts (Said, 2003). Furthermore, academic discussions have explored how post-colonial theories can help in understanding the construction and perpetuation of dominant narratives, including identity formations and the reproduction of power structures. This critical analysis has sought to challenge traditional perspectives and narratives that predominantly focus on geopolitical interests or religious divides, allowing for a more nuanced understanding of the complex realities on the ground.

The scientific development of this topic is evident through the growing body of literature, research papers, and conferences specifically dedicated to the post-colonial analysis of the Syrian and Yemeni civil wars. While there are several authors and scholars who have also examined the Syrian and Yemeni civil wars through a post-colonial lens, each researcher brings their own unique perspective and contribution to the field. Thus, Dr. M. Matar's article "Mapping the Revolt: Syrian Feminist Perspectives in Times of War" (Matar, 2018) specifically focuses on how gender dynamics have been influenced by post-colonial legacies in these conflicts. Meanwhile, M. Vaïsse's article "Decolonization in Europe and the World since 1945: Theories and Historical Comparisons" (Vaïsse, 2011) delves into the broader implications of decolonization throughout the world history, with the focus on the contemporary politics of Syria and Yemen.

In listing multiple authors and their works, we aimed to showcase the diversity of perspectives and approaches within the field of post-colonial analysis of these conflicts. While each researcher may have a similar focus on post-colonial theory, their individual research methodologies, theoretical frameworks, and empirical findings may vary. Scholars have made significant strides in applying post-colonial theories and methodologies to understand the historical, social, and political factors

shaping these conflicts. This research contributes to a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the conflicts, while also providing insights to inform policy and advocacy efforts. Overall, in this thesis we sought to provide a comprehensive overview of how post-colonial perspectives can enhance our understanding of the Syrian and Yemeni civil wars, drawing on a range of interdisciplinary sources and critically analysing the root causes and dynamics of the conflicts. The focus of this research is on synthesizing existing literature and research to offer a holistic analysis, while also identifying gaps in the current scholarship and suggesting areas for future exploration.

The next phase involved formulating research question that would guide the investigation and address the objectives of the study: «How do we deconstruct the Syrian and Yemeni civil wars through a post-colonial lens?» The question was designed to explore the historical and social factors that contributed to the outbreak and continuation of the civil wars, as well as the role of international actors and the impact of colonial legacies in these regions.

The comparative method allowed us to analyse and draw meaningful comparisons between the Syrian and Yemeni civil wars. By examining similarities and differences in causes, trajectories, and outcomes, scholars have been able to identify patterns and better understand the dynamics of these conflicts. One key aspect that was explored is the impact of colonial legacies on these civil wars. Through historical analysis, we've delved deep into the historical context of the region, tracing the roots of these conflicts back to the colonial period. By examining the political, social, and economic structures that were established during colonial rule, we've identified how colonialism has shaped power dynamics and the grievances that ultimately fuelled these civil wars. This historical perspective has provided a crucial foundation for understanding the post-colonial dimension of these conflicts.

Ultimately, the research culminated in a comprehensive report, incorporating the collected empirical evidence, theoretical analysis, and scholarly insights. This report aimed to deconstruct the Syrian and Yemeni civil wars through a post-colonial lens, offering nuanced explanations for the conflicts and contributing to a more profound understanding of their roots. By employing a scientific methodology, this research not only expanded the academic discourse in the field of international relations but also provided valuable insights for policymakers, organizations, and individuals seeking to address and resolve these ongoing conflicts.

The objective of this master's thesis is to decode and analyse the Syrian and Yemeni civil wars through a post-colonial lens, examining these conflicts in the context of historical legacies of colonialism and the ongoing effects of imperialism in the Middle East. The object of the master's thesis is the Syrian and Yemeni civil wars, while the subject is the deconstruction of these conflicts through a post-colonial lens. The main argument of the thesis postulates that the Syrian and Yemeni civil wars have been ongoing for years with devastating consequences for the people living in these countries. The lens of post-colonial theory provides a valuable framework for analysing the roots of these conflicts and the complexities of the current situation. By examining the historical colonial legacies, regional power struggles, and external interventions, this thesis aims to deconstruct and unpack the underlying factors contributing to the Syrian and Yemeni civil wars.

The empirical basis for analysing these civil wars from a post-colonial perspective can be found in historical accounts, ethnographic studies, and comprehensive analyses of the conflicts and their aftermath. Documenting the colonial histories of Syria and Yemen allows an examination of how colonial powers shaped boundaries, political systems, and societal structures, which can contribute to underlying grievances and tensions. Additionally, empirical evidence related to foreign interventions, such as military interventions, arms flows, and geopolitical interests, provides insights into the post-colonial dynamics at play in these conflicts.

The hypothesis posits that the utilization of a post-colonial framework in analysing the Syrian and Yemeni civil wars will provide a more nuanced understanding of the underlying factors and dynamics at play. It is expected that this examination will reveal the complexities of post-colonial power struggles, the emergence of ethno–sectarian divisions, and the manipulation of identity politics as catalysts for conflict. The scientific novelty of the research lies in its ability to explore the intricate interplay between historical, socio-political, and cultural factors, along with the enduring consequences of colonialism.

The study investigating the Syrian and Yemeni civil wars through a post-colonial lens holds practical significance in the field of international relations in the following aspects:

1. Policy implications. By examining the Syrian and Yemeni civil wars through a post-colonial lens, the study can offer policymakers a nuanced understanding of the root causes and structural factors contributing to these conflicts. This understanding

can inform more effective and contextually sensitive strategies for humanitarian interventions.

2.   Conflict prevention. Understanding how post-colonial dynamics shape the Syrian and Yemeni civil wars can contribute to efforts in preventing similar conflicts in the future. By addressing the underlying socio–political and economic grievances arising from historical inequalities, policymakers, diplomats, and international organizations can work towards preventing future conflicts fuelled by similar dynamics.

3.   Public awareness and education. The study can help raise public awareness about the complex realities of the Syrian and Yemeni civil wars, moving beyond simplistic explanations. By disseminating the findings and insights gained, the study can contribute to an informed public debate and educational efforts, fostering a more critical understanding of conflict dynamics among students, researchers, and the broader society.

The structure of the work is determined by its purpose and objectives and includes an introduction, literary review, six main chapters with various subsections in each and conclusions to the chapters, general conclusion and bibliographic reference list of sources used in conducting the research.

Chapter 2 of this research aims to provide a complex theoretical framework, a methodology that will be utilized throughout the main body of work.

Chapter 3 will aim to introduce an organized historical background of the events that are being further discussed and analysed, including the legacy of the colonial past of both states and the detailed historical background of both Syria and Yemen until the civil war.

Chapter 4 of this thesis will delve into the Syrian Civil War, exploring the colonial legacy and how it has shaped the statehood of Syria. The chapter will also examine the role of sectarianism and identity politics in perpetuating the conflict, as well as the impact of externally driven interventions in exacerbating the crisis. By the end of this chapter, we aim to present a comprehensive understanding of the historical context and complexities that have contributed to the Syrian Civil War.

Moving on to Chapter 5, the focus will shift to the Yemeni Civil War, analysing the post-colonial quagmire that has engulfed the country. The chapter will explore the colonial legacies that have contributed to Yemen's fragmented tribal structures, as well as the regional power struggles and proxy wars that have perpetuated the

conflict. Additionally, the chapter will address the economic exploitation and neo-colonialism that have further destabilized Yemen.

Chapter 6 will delve into post-colonial resistance and liberation movements in the region, examining the tensions between secularism and Islamism, as well as the influence of Pan-Arabism and nationalism. The chapter focuses on exploring the role of local forces and tribal structures in shaping the conflicts in the Middle East. Thus, this chapter focuses on giving a nuanced understanding of the various movements and ideologies that have shaped the region's political landscape.

Lastly, Chapter 7 will analyse the humanitarian implications and regional power dynamics of the conflicts in the Middle East. The chapter will explore the refugee crisis and displacement resulting from the wars, as well as the role of foreign aid and hegemonic interests in the region. Additionally, the chapter will examine the role of regional actors in fuelling the conflicts. Thus, the chapter aims to explain and give a comprehensive understanding of the humanitarian challenges and power dynamics at play in the Middle East conflicts.

1.1. Literature Review

The research of deconstructing Syrian and Yemeni Civil Wars through a Post-Colonial Lens draws on a wide variety of scholarly works that delve into the complexities of the conflicts in Syria and Yemen from different perspectives. The thesis seeks to build on these existing works by examining the Syrian and Yemeni civil wars through a post-colonial lens, interrogating the legacy of colonialism and imperialism in shaping the conflicts and exploring how local dynamics intersect with global power structures. By situating the conflicts within a post-colonial framework, the thesis aims to offer a fresh perspective on the root causes and complexities of the ongoing crises in Syria and Yemen, ultimately contributing to a deeper understanding of these regional conflicts. The researcher itself aims to build upon existing scholarship by applying a post-colonial lens to deconstruct the Syrian and Yemeni civil wars. The main body of literary sources includes:

Edward Said's seminal work «Orientalism» (2003) serves as a foundational text in post-colonial studies, providing a framework for understanding how Western perceptions of the Middle East have shaped policies and interventions in the region.

Haian Dukhan's research on state-tribe relations in Syria (2018; 2019) sheds light on the role of tribal alliances and conflict patterns in the Syrian uprising and civil war, offering a nuanced understanding of the dynamics driving the conflict.

Isa Blumi's «Destroying Yemen» (2018) focuses on the devastating impact of external interventions and regional power struggles on the Yemeni people, highlighting the broader implications of the conflict for the global order.

John Hobson's work on Eurocentric conceptions of world politics and the historiography of international relations (2012) invites critical reflection on how Western-centric perspectives shape our understanding of conflicts in the Middle East. By interrogating dominant narratives, Hobson's research prompts readers to consider alternative frameworks for analysing geopolitical dynamics and power relations.

Michael Lynch's analysis of the Arab uprisings (2010) underscores the unfinished nature of the revolutions in the region, pointing to the underlying structural issues that continue to fuel instability.

Noam Chomsky's work on imperialism and power dynamics (2013) adds a critical perspective to the discussion, urging readers to consider the broader global context within which conflicts in Syria and Yemen unfold. By illuminating the role of dominant powers in shaping the trajectory of conflict and resistance, Chomsky's

analyses contribute to a more holistic understanding of the complexities of post-colonial struggles in the Middle East.

Peter Harling's studies on the Muslim Brotherhood in Syria and the country's diverse social fabric (2012; 2016) provide valuable insights into the complexities of Syrian society and politics. By emphasizing the mosaic nature of Syrian identity and politics, Harling's research challenges simplistic narratives and encourages scholars to explore the region's rich diversity more comprehensively.

Rashid Khalidi's works, such as «Freedom Fading: The Failure of Traditional Rulers in the Modern Arab World» (1992) and «The Iron Cage: The Story of the Palestinian Struggle for Statehood» (2007) provide essential insights into the challenges facing Arab societies in the modern era, particularly in relation to state-building and resistance to colonialism. Khalidi's scholarship offers valuable historical context for understanding contemporary conflicts in Syria and Yemen.

Raymond Hinnebusch's works on Syria (2004; 2012; 2019) offer valuable insights into the political dynamics and historical context of the Syrian conflict, from the authoritarian rule of the Assad regime to the eruption of the revolution and subsequent civil war.

Steven Heydemann's articles on authoritarianism and the Syrian state (1999; 2013) offer nuanced analyses of governance structures and societal dynamics in the Arab world. By examining the complexities of Syrian society, Heydemann sheds light on the internal factors driving the Syrian civil war, contributing to a deeper understanding of the conflict's root causes and implications.

Ussama Makdisi's exploration of sectarianism in Ottoman Lebanon (2000) provides historical context for understanding the roots of communal divisions in the region, which have played a significant role in shaping the conflicts in both Syria and Yemen. By exploring how colonial legacies, power dynamics, and identity politics intersect in these conflicts, the study seeks to offer a fresh perspective that complements and extends the insights provided by the works reviewed. Through a comparative analysis of these two cases, the thesis aims to illuminate the intricacies of post-colonial struggles in the Middle East, unpacking the layers of historical, social, and political factors that shape contemporary conflicts in the region.

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this section, we will delve into the theoretical implications of post-colonialist forces in the context of the Syrian and Yemeni civil wars. We will explore how post-colonial theory provides a lens through which to analyse these conflicts, considering the historical legacies of colonialism and the ongoing impact of imperialism in the Middle East. By examining these conflicts from a post-colonial perspective, we aim to uncover the underlying factors and dynamics that have contributed to the violence and instability in these regions. This section will outline the key concepts and assumptions of post-colonial theory, as well as the significance of applying this framework to understand the complexities of the Syrian and Yemeni civil wars. We will also explore the role of external actors, historical legacies of colonialism, and the micro-foundations of these conflicts within a post-colonial framework.

Furthermore, we will discuss the selected methodology for this research, which combines qualitative research methods with an interdisciplinary approach. By conducting in-depth literature reviews, primary data collection, and critical analysis, we aim to provide a comprehensive understanding of the Syrian and Yemeni civil wars through a post-colonial lens. Our research questions will guide our exploration of how colonial histories have influenced these conflicts, the key post-colonial legacies shaping them, and the interplay of historical, political, and socio-cultural factors in escalating violence. Through this methodology, we seek to contribute to the existing literature on these conflicts, shedding light on the overlooked post-colonial dimensions and offering insights for sustainable solutions to promote peace and stability in the region.

2.1. Theoretical implications of post-colonialist forces in the context of Syrian and Yemeni civil wars

From a theoretical perspective, post-colonialism asserts that the enduring effects of colonialism continue to shape the political, economic, and social realities of post-colonial states. It argues that the impact of colonialism can be observed in the power structures, identities, and cultural dynamics within these states. Applying this theory to the Syrian and Yemeni civil wars implies considering how historical legacies of colonial rule, foreign interventions, and power imbalances have contributed to the conflicts (Anscombe, 2004).

The objective of this master's thesis is to decode and analyse the Syrian and Yemeni civil wars through a post-colonial lens, examining these conflicts in the context of historical legacies of colonialism and the ongoing effects of imperialism in the Middle East.

In line with the objective, a number of tasks are set before the study:

– Compose a presentation of the Syrian and Yemeni conflicts through the prism of colonialism;

– Define the post-colonial theoretical framework of the events in question;

– Examine the civil war in Syria, it's colonial pre-emptions and divisions;

– Explore the civil war in Yemen it's colonial pre-emptions and divisions;

– Conduct an analysis of the post-colonial resistance and liberation movements in countries in question;

– Conduct an analysis of the humanitarian impact and dynamics of regional governance;

– Examine the peculiarities of de–colonisation and peace building in modern Syria and Yemen.

The hypothesis posits that the utilization of a post-colonial framework in analysing the Syrian and Yemeni civil wars will provide a more nuanced understanding of the underlying factors and dynamics at play. By adopting this theoretical lens, the study seeks to shed light on how colonial experiences, including indirect rule, political structures, and socio–economic disparities, have contributed to these conflicts. By exploring the historical context of colonial influence in both Syria and Yemen, the analysis aims to uncover the lasting effects of colonialism that have shaped these countries' political and social landscapes. It is expected that this examination will reveal the complexities of post-colonial power struggles, the emergence of ethno–sectarian divisions, and the manipulation of identity politics as catalysts for conflict. Moreover, the hypothesis proposes that understanding the post-colonial dimensions of these conflicts will elucidate the external actors' involvement, such as regional power rivalries and global geopolitical interests. The examination of neocolonial dynamics, including resource exploitation and proxy warfare, may reveal hidden motivations and interests behind the prolonged nature of the Syrian and Yemeni civil wars. Ultimately, the study seeks to contribute to the field of international relations by demonstrating the significance of adopting a post-colonial lens when analysing

conflicts in the Middle East. By deconstructing the Syrian and Yemeni civil wars within this framework, it aims to advance our understanding of the historical, socio–political, and economic factors that underpin these conflicts, and potentially inform more effective policies to promote peace and stability in the region.

Theoretical significance of the conducted research refers to the potential contributions the research can make to the existing body of knowledge and theoretical frameworks, and lies in the following aspects:

1.   Expanding understanding. Examining the Syrian and Yemeni civil wars from a post-colonial perspective can provide a deeper understanding of the impact of historical colonialism and the post-colonial discourse on contemporary conflicts in these regions. The study can shed light on the ways in which colonial legacies, power dynamics, and uneven global economic relationships have influenced the conflicts.

2.   Challenging existing theories. The post-colonial lens enables scholars to challenge and interrogate traditional international relations theories. By deconstructing the Syrian and Yemeni civil wars through this lens, the study can reveal the limitations of conventional theories and potentially offer alternative explanations and frameworks that better capture the complexities of these conflicts.

3.   Encouraging interdisciplinary research. The study's interdisciplinary nature, combining international relations and post-colonial theory, can foster collaboration and dialogue between scholars from different disciplines. This cross–pollination of ideas and perspectives can enrich the overall understanding of conflict dynamics, fostering new analytical approaches and insights.

The Syrian and Yemeni civil wars have been marred by protracted conflicts and political turmoil since the post-colonial era. Former colonies sought independence from European powers, marking a significant shift in the political landscape worldwide. The movement towards self–determination was driven by the desire to overcome economic exploitation, cultural subjugation, and political oppression associated with colonial rule. This post-colonial era witnessed the formation of new nation–states and persistent challenges of nation–building and governance. Thus, the post-colonial theoretical framework is highly relevant to understanding the Middle Eastern conflicts, including the Syrian and Yemeni civil wars. These conflicts have deep–rooted historical and socio–political dimensions, influenced by the complexities of post-colonial legacies.

The framework's key concepts and assumptions include:

1. Colonialism – refers to the establishment and maintenance of domination over a region or people by an external power. It involves economic exploitation, cultural assimilation, and political control of the colonized territories (Said, 2003).

2. Post-colonialism – a theoretical framework that critically examines the legacy and impact of colonialism on formerly colonized societies. It emphasizes the historical, cultural, and political implications of colonization, as well as the ongoing power dynamics between colonizers and the colonized (Said, 2003).

3. Orientalism – a concept elaborated by Edward Said, refers to the Western representation and construction of the East. It underscores the power dynamics, cultural stereotypes, and discourses that perpetuate the inferiority and exoticization of the East, enabling the domination of the colonizers (Said, 2003).

4. Homogenization of Colonial Boundaries – colonial powers often imposed artificial borders that disregarded ethnic, religious, and tribal divisions, aiming to maintain control over territories. This homogenization of boundaries can be seen as a deliberate strategy that culminated in subsequent conflicts within newly established nation-states (Said, 2003).

The legacy of colonialism in the Middle East continues to shape political dynamics in the region today. As Rashid Khalidi argues in «Freedom Fading,» the strategy of «divide and rule» employed by colonial powers has left a lasting impact on the Arab world. The artificial creation of states and the exacerbation of existing tensions have contributed to internal divisions and ongoing conflicts in countries like Syria and Yemen. Moreover, the Orientalist representation of the Middle East by the West has influenced foreign intervention and policy decisions, perpetuating instability and hindering the self-determination of Arab societies (Khalidi, 2007).

In light of Maurice Vaïsse's examination of decolonization, it is clear that the process of liberation from colonial rule is complex and multifaceted. Decolonization involves not only the formal transfer of power but also the reshaping of identities, institutions, and ideologies. We can draw from the author's perspective, that the struggles for independence witnessed in various parts of the world highlight the agency and resilience of colonized peoples in challenging oppressive systems of domination (Vaïsse, 2011). Syria gained independence from France in 1946. However, French policies during colonization promoted divisions between religious and ethnic groups, which laid the foundation for future conflicts. The imposition of artificial borders alienated various ethnic and religious communities, contributing to struggles for

power, such as those witnessed in the ongoing Syrian civil war. Yemen achieved independence from Britain in 1967 after a protracted struggle. The artificially drawn borders between North and South Yemen, coupled with economic disparities, deep–rooted tribal divisions, and political power struggles, created fertile ground for the later civil war in the country (Vaïsse, 2011).

The micro-foundations of these conflicts include the grievances and inequalities that have fuelled the conflicts in Syria and Yemen that trace back to colonial and imperial legacies, including the imposition of oppressive political structures and the exploitation of resources (Said, 2003). These historical injustices have created fertile ground for conflict, as marginalized groups seek to challenge the status quo and assert their rights. It is also essential to consider the role of non-state armed groups and the micro-foundations of the conflicts – by examining the historical legacies of colonialism and imperialism we can gain a deeper understanding of the dynamics at play in these conflicts and work towards sustainable solutions.

The non-state armed groups have played a crucial role in both the Syrian and Yemeni civil wars, with some groups aligning themselves with the government forces and others with the various opposition factions. These groups often have their own agendas and motivations, which may not necessarily align with the broader goals of the conflict, and their involvement, can further complicate the dynamics of the conflict, leading to increased violence and instability (Fanon, 1963). From a post-colonial perspective, the presence of non-state armed groups in these conflicts perceives as a legacy of colonialism and imperialism. The arbitrary borders drawn by colonial powers in the Middle East have created a landscape of fragmented societies and marginalized groups, many of whom have turned to armed resistance as a means of asserting their identity and seeking autonomy. The involvement of these groups in the civil wars thus play as a continuation of a historical struggle for self-determination and empowerment (Fanon, 1963).

In particular, the ISIS, PYD (Democratic Union Party), and Al-Nusra have played significant roles in the civil war in Syria.

ISIS, also known as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, emerged as a powerful force in the conflict, controlling large swathes of territory in Syria and Iraq. The group gained international attention for its brutal tactics, including mass killings, beheadings, and the imposition of strict Islamic law. ISIS sought to establish a caliphate and attract foreign fighters to join its ranks (Hassan, 2015). The presence of

ISIS in Syria further complicated the conflict and exacerbated the humanitarian crisis in the region.

The PYD, a Kurdish political party, played a key role in the conflict by establishing autonomous regions in northern Syria known as Rojava. The PYD's armed wing, the People's Protection Units (YPG), fought against ISIS and other opposition groups in Syria. The PYD's goal was to establish a decentralized, democratic system in Rojava based on Kurdish autonomy (Bengio, 2018). The PYD's involvement in the conflict added another layer of complexity, as it sought to assert Kurdish rights and autonomy within the broader Syrian context.

Al-Nusra, also known as Jabhat al-Nusra, was a prominent Islamist militant group in Syria with ties to al-Qaeda. Al-Nusra played a significant role in the conflict, fighting against government forces and other opposition groups. The group sought to establish an Islamic state in Syria and was involved in numerous attacks and atrocities during the conflict (Ghattas, 2016). Al-Nusra's presence in Syria further fuelled violence and instability in the region.

Overall, those non-state armed groups have had a significant impact on the civil war in Syria, further complicating the conflict and contributing to the humanitarian crisis in the region. Their actions have led to widespread violence, displacement, and human rights abuses, underscoring the complex nature of the conflict in Syria.

It is also important to understand that the internationalized civil wars in Syria and Yemen are complex conflicts that have drawn in a multitude of external actors, including Russia, Iran, and China (Acharya, 2004). These external interventions have further complicated the already intricate dynamics of the conflicts in both countries. In order to deconstruct these civil wars through a post-colonial lens, it is essential to consider the historical context of Western colonialism in the region and how it has shaped the current power dynamics.

One key aspect to consider in this analysis is the role of Russia in both conflicts. Russia has been a key supporter of the Assad regime in Syria, providing military and diplomatic support in the conflict. This support has been crucial in allowing the Assad regime to maintain its grip on power and has also helped Russia to assert its influence in the region (Acharya, 2004). In Yemen, Russia has also played a role in the conflict, supporting the Houthi rebels in their fight against the internationally recognized government. By examining Russia's role in these conflicts through a post-colonial

lens, we can see how Russia's actions are influenced by its desire to maintain influence in the region and counter Western powers.

Iran's involvement in the Syrian and Yemeni civil wars is also significant. Iran has provided extensive support to the Assad regime in Syria, including military aid and training for pro-regime forces. In Yemen, Iran has supported the Houthi rebels, providing weapons and funding for their fight against the Saudi-led coalition (Acharya, 2004). Iran's involvement in these conflicts can be seen as a way to counter Western influence in the region and assert its own regional power. By deconstructing Iran's actions through a post-colonial lens, we can see how Iran's actions stem from its desire to challenge Western hegemony in the Middle East.

China's role in the Syrian and Yemeni civil wars is another important aspect to consider. While China has not been as directly involved in these conflicts as Russia and Iran, it has still played a role through its support for the Assad regime in Syria and its economic interests in the region. China has provided diplomatic support for the Assad regime and has also invested in infrastructure projects in Syria (Acharya, 2004). In Yemen, China has maintained a neutral stance on the conflict but has expressed support for a political solution to end the war. By examining China's actions through a post-colonial lens, we can see how China's involvement is driven by its economic interests in the region and its desire to maintain stability for its investments.

In addition to the given descriptive post-colonial theoretical framework, its application to the Syrian and Yemeni civil wars in the following case study will provide a deeper analysis of how colonial legacies have influenced the conflicts in these countries. By examining the specific historical contexts, power dynamics, and social structures within Syria and Yemen through a post-colonial lens, the study will be able to uncover the nuanced ways in which colonialism continues to shape these conflicts.

The following case study will demonstrate how the post-colonial theoretical framework can highlight the complexities of the conflicts, such as the role of external actors, the impact of neo-colonial dynamics, and the micro-foundations of the violence. Through this analysis, the study will illustrate how adopting a post-colonial perspective can offer more comprehensive insights into the root causes and drivers of the conflicts in Syria and Yemen. By exploring the post-colonial dimensions of the conflicts, the case study will contribute to the theoretical significance of the research

by demonstrating how the framework challenges existing theories and expands our understanding of conflict dynamics in the Middle East. By delving into the historical legacies of colonialism and imperialism in Syria and Yemen, the study will provide a more nuanced analysis of the power struggles, ethno-sectarian divisions, and identity politics that have fuelled the civil wars in these countries.

Thus, the application of the post-colonial theoretical framework to the Syrian and Yemeni civil wars in the case study will offer a comprehensive analysis of how historical colonial legacies continue to impact contemporary conflicts in the Middle East. By considering the specific contexts of Syria and Yemen within this theoretical framework, the study will provide valuable insights into the underlying factors and dynamics at play in these complex conflicts.

Overall, the post-colonial theoretical framework provides valuable insights into the Syrian and Yemeni civil wars. The legacies of colonialism, including the imposition of artificial borders, the strategy of divide and rule, and Orientalist discourses, have significantly shaped the political, social, and economic landscapes of both countries. It is vital to consider these historical factors when seeking a comprehensive understanding of the conflicts and to develop sustainable solutions for peace and stability in the Middle East.

2.2. Selected methodology of the research

The Syrian and Yemeni civil wars have had profound impacts not only on the countries involved but also on the broader Middle Eastern region and the international community. This thesis aims to examine these conflicts from a post-colonial lens, emphasizing the significance of historical, political, and socio-cultural factors in understanding the root causes and complexities associated with these devastating wars.

The research problem addressed in this thesis is the need for a comprehensive analysis of the Syrian and Yemeni civil wars that considers the impact of colonial histories and the lingering post-colonial legacies in shaping these conflicts. By adopting a post-colonial lens, this research aims to uncover the underlying dynamics and power structures that have fuelled and perpetuated violence in both countries.

To achieve the research goal, the following research questions will be addressed:

— How do we deconstruct the Syrian and Yemeni civil wars through a post-colonial lens?

— How have colonial histories influenced the Syrian and Yemeni civil wars?

— What are the key post-colonial legacies that have shaped the conflicts?

— How have historical, political, and socio-cultural factors interacted to escalate the level of violence and prolong the duration of the wars?

To explore these research questions, this study will employ a qualitative research methodology combining in-depth literature review, primary data collection, and critical analysis. The primary sources will include historical documents, political analyses, scholarly articles, official reports, and media sources. Furthermore, interviews with experts, scholars, and individuals directly affected by the conflicts will be conducted to gain insights from the lived experiences of those involved. The analysis will be guided by a conceptual framework incorporating post-colonial theory, conflict studies, and interdisciplinary perspectives. This framework will facilitate a comprehensive and nuanced examination of the conflicts, incorporating an understanding of power dynamics, identity politics, political economy, and social structures within the broader terrain of post-colonial theories.

This research will contribute to the existing literature on the Syrian and Yemeni civil wars by shedding light on the often-overlooked post-colonial dimensions of these conflicts. By unravelling the historical, political, and socio-cultural contexts through a post-colonial lens, this study will facilitate a deeper understanding of the interconnected complexities and dynamics of these conflicts. The expected outcomes of this study include a comprehensive analysis of the key historical events, power struggles, and structural inequalities that have perpetuated the Syrian and Yemeni civil wars.

By deconstructing the Syrian and Yemeni civil wars through a post-colonial lens, this thesis aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the underlying causes and consequences of these conflicts. The methodology described above promises to offer insights into the complex interplay between historical contexts, power dynamics, and socio-cultural factors, ultimately contributing to the advancement of knowledge in the field of conflict studies.

Thus, the methodological framework of the thesis is represented by various monographs, scientific articles and studies by domestic and foreign authors relevant to the topic of the research undertaken in this paper. The methodology in the selected works assumes a systematic and scientific approach to the study and analysis of a specific context and area of interest, and serves as a roadmap for the research process,

defining the steps and procedures that will be used to collect and analyse data in this study.

Methodology used on the topic of deconstructing the Syrian and Yemeni civil wars through a post-colonial lens employed various approaches. The study aimed to shed light on the underlying dynamics and complexities of these conflicts, while analysing them within the framework of post-colonial theory. In order to achieve the research goals, a comprehensive literature review was conducted, gathering scholarly works, academic articles, books, and reports related to international relations, post-colonialism, and the Syrian and Yemeni civil wars. This step allowed for a thorough understanding of the existing knowledge, theories, and perspectives on these conflicts, and how the post-colonial lens has been applied in similar studies.

In Khalidi's «The Iron Cage,» he explores the historical context of the Palestinian struggle for statehood, emphasizing the impact of colonialism on the region. The colonization of Syria and Yemen by European powers demonstrates the enduring legacy of imperialism in the Middle East. The Sykes-Picot agreement, which divided the region into spheres of influence for France and Britain, had far-reaching consequences for the people living in these areas. The partitioning of territories and the imposition of colonial rule disrupted social and political structures, laying the groundwork for future conflict and resistance movements. The struggle for Palestinian statehood cannot be divorced from this history of colonial intrusion and external interference. The iron cage of foreign domination continues to shape the political landscape of the region, limiting the agency and self-determination of the Palestinian people. As Khalidi argues, understanding this historical context is essential for comprehending the complexities of the Palestinian struggle and working towards a just and lasting resolution to the conflict (Khalidi, 1992).

The effects of colonialism on both countries were far–reaching and continue to shape their current conflicts. Colonial powers often reshaped borders and political structures to suit their own interests, disregarding the region's social and ethnic complexities. This arbitrary division set the stage for ethnic tensions and power struggles that persist to this day. Colonial powers also exploited the natural resources of Syria and Yemen, leaving the populations marginalized and impoverished. The extraction of resources served to enrich the colonial powers, exacerbating socio–economic inequality and creating grievances that fuelled current conflicts. Furthermore, colonial policies often exacerbated existing sectarian, ethnic, and tribal

divisions within both countries. By favouring certain groups or pitting them against each other, colonial powers sowed the seeds of long–standing conflicts. These divisions and rivalries have continued to shape the course of conflicts in both Syria and Yemen. Following the end of direct colonial rule, the legacy of colonialism persisted in the form of post-colonial governments whose rule was often characterized by corruption, authoritarianism, and repression. This further exacerbated grievances and led to the emergence of armed resistance against oppressive regimes. The interplay between colonial legacies and the internal dynamics within Syria and Yemen has contributed to the intractable nature of their conflicts.

By examining the Syrian and Yemeni conflicts through the lens of colonialism, we gain valuable insights into the historical background that underpins these conflicts. Colonialism's impact, from the arbitrary division of lands to the exploitation of resources and manipulation of social divisions, has had long–lasting consequences. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for finding sustainable solutions, as it highlights the need to address historical injustices and work towards inclusive governance that goes beyond the colonial legacy. Thus, in his seminal work «Orientalism», a Palestinian American professor of literature at Columbia University Edward Said explores the orientalist discourse employed by Western powers to dominate and control the East, including the regions that encompass modern–day Syria and Yemen (Said, 2003). According to Said, colonialism, explicitly characterized by political, economic, and cultural domination, played a crucial role in shaping the dynamics of the Syrian and Yemeni conflicts. Western powers, particularly during the 19th and early 20th centuries, controlled vast areas of the Middle East, including Syria and Yemen, through colonial rule or indirect influence (Said, 2003). The colonial powers imposed their political systems, exploited local resources, and established cultural hierarchies that perpetuated Western dominance. Under colonial rule, Syria and Yemen experienced fundamental changes in their socio–political and economic structures. The French colonized Syria after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, establishing a mandate that lasted until 1946 (Said, 2003). Similarly, Yemen was divided and controlled by various European powers, including the British and the Ottomans. These colonial powers imposed artificial borders, disregarding historical tribal affiliations and creating the conditions for future divisions and conflicts (Said, 2003).

Besides that, one key concept in understanding the post-colonial dynamics of these civil wars is Ottoman Orientalism, as also discussed by historian Ussama Makdisi in his book «The Culture of Sectarianism: Community, History, and Violence in Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Lebanon» (Makdisi, 2000). The researcher argues that Ottoman Orientalism, a form of cultural and political hegemony, "played a central role in shaping sectarian identities and conflicts in the Ottoman Empire" (Makdisi, 2000). Ottoman rulers, influenced by European colonial discourses, often used a divide-and-conquer strategy that exacerbated religious and ethnic divisions among their subjects. This approach created a legacy of sectarianism that continues to influence contemporary conflicts in the Middle East, including the Syrian and Yemeni civil wars.

In the context of the Syrian civil war, the legacy of Ottoman Orientalism is seen in the complex web of sectarian tensions between different religious and ethnic groups, including Sunni Muslims, Shia Muslims, Alawites, Christians, and Kurds (Makdisi, 2000). These divisions have been manipulated by various actors, both domestic and international, to further their own political agendas and perpetuate violence. The Assad regime, for example, has used sectarian narratives to solidify its grip on power, while extremist groups like ISIS have exploited sectarian grievances to recruit followers and spread terror (Matar, 2012). By examining the role of Ottoman Orientalism in shaping sectarian identities and conflicts in Syria, we can gain a deeper understanding of the underlying dynamics fuelling the civil war.

Similarly, in Yemen, the legacy of Ottoman Orientalism has contributed to the country's ongoing civil war, which has been characterized by regional and sectarian divisions. The Houthi rebels, who belong to the Zaidi branch of Shia Islam, have been fighting against the internationally recognized government backed by Sunni-majority Gulf states (Matar, 2012). These sectarian tensions have been exacerbated by external interventions, including the Saudi-led coalition's military intervention in support of the government. By analysing the impact of Ottoman Orientalism on Yemeni society and politics, we can uncover the historical roots of these sectarian conflicts and work towards more sustainable solutions for peace and reconciliation.

The employed post-colonial theory seeks to deconstruct the power structures and discourses that continue to perpetuate inequality and violence in former colonies, shedding light on the ways in which Western imperialism and intervention have influenced the current state of affairs in these countries.

Other than that, post-structuralism, as a neighbouring method to post-colonial analysis, offers a deeper exploration of how language, discourse, and power relations interact to shape our understanding of these conflicts. Drawing on the work of theorists such as Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida, post-structuralism challenges essentialist notions of identity and history, highlighting the ways in which knowledge is constructed, contested, and manipulated (Foucault, 1972; Derrida, 1978). By applying a post-structuralist lens to the study of the Syrian and Yemeni civil wars, researchers can uncover the hidden power dynamics at play, as well as the discourses that frame these conflicts in particular ways.

Post-structuralist approach consists of examining the role of language and representation in shaping our perceptions of these conflicts (Spivak, 1988). For example, the ways in which Western media frames these wars can influence public opinion and policy decisions, perpetuating certain narratives that may not fully capture the complexities of the situations on the ground. By critically analysing these discourses, scholars can challenge dominant narratives and uncover alternative perspectives that challenge the status quo. Moreover, a post-colonial and post-structuralist analysis of the Syrian and Yemeni civil wars can also reveal the ways in which power operates in these conflicts, from the local to the global level. By examining the intersections of politics, economics, and culture, researchers can uncover the underlying dynamics of power that perpetuate violence and inequality in these societies (Spivak, 1988). This critical perspective can shed light on the interconnectedness of these conflicts with broader global trends, such as imperialism, neoliberalism, and militarism. The proposed method offers a powerful framework for understanding the historical, political, and social forces that have shaped these conflicts. By challenging dominant narratives, exposing hidden power dynamics, and interrogating the discourses that frame these conflicts, researchers can contribute to a more nuanced and comprehensive understanding of these complex and devastating conflicts.

Overall, by delving deep into the colonial history of the Syrian and Yemeni conflicts, this methodology has uncovered significant insights into the underlying elements that have contributed to these crises. The influences of past political, economic, and cultural dominations carried out by colonial powers have left an indelible mark on the present divisions, disparities, and fragility evident in these nations. Recognizing the impact of this colonial context is vital not only for grasping the fundamental

origins of these conflicts but also for formulating comprehensive approaches towards achieving lasting peace and fostering genuine reconciliation. Through a nuanced comprehension of these historical factors, policymakers, academics, and humanitarian actors can navigate the complexities of these crises more effectively and implement strategies that address the root causes, thus paving the way for a more harmonious future.

Conclusions to Chapter 2

In conclusion, the second chapter of this master's thesis provides a theoretical framework for understanding the Syrian and Yemeni civil wars from a post-colonial perspective. By examining the historical legacies of colonialism, economic exploitation, and political manipulation, this chapter analysed the deep-rooted factors that have contributed to the conflicts in these countries. The utilization of post-colonial theory offers valuable insights into the power dynamics, identity politics, and external interventions that have shaped the Syrian and Yemeni civil wars. Through a critical analysis that integrates post-colonial, post-structuralist, and conflict studies perspectives, the chapter aimed to prepare the further research for a deeper exploration of the complexities of these conflicts.

The comparative method allowed us to analyse and draw meaningful comparisons between the Syrian and Yemeni civil wars. By examining similarities and differences in causes, trajectories, and outcomes, scholars have been able to identify patterns and better understand the dynamics of these conflicts. One key aspect that was explored is the impact of colonial legacies on these civil wars. Through historical analysis, we've delved deep into the historical context of the region, tracing the roots of these conflicts back to the colonial period. By examining the political, social, and economic structures that were established during colonial rule, we've identified how colonialism has shaped power dynamics and the grievances that ultimately fuelled these civil wars. This historical perspective has provided a crucial foundation for understanding the post-colonial dimension of these conflicts.

In the following chapter of this work, the focus is going to be shifted towards the Syrian civil war, specifically examining the colonial continuities and discontinuities that have shaped the conflict. The discussion will delve into the colonial legacy and its impact on Syrian statehood, exploring how colonial policies and divisions have influenced the current political landscape. Additionally, the following chapter

examines the role of sectarianism and identity politics in fuelling the conflict, as well as the impact of externally-driven interventions from regional and global actors. By exploring these aspects, the chapter aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the complexities underlying the Syrian civil war within a post-colonial framework.

CHAPTER 3: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

3.1. Legacy of the colonial past of both states

The historical background of the Syrian civil wars is intertwined with the legacy of colonialism, the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, and the aftermath of the First World War. The complex interplay of these factors has shaped the political dynamics of the region and contributed to the protracted conflicts that continue to ravage Syria today. Understanding the historical roots of the Syrian civil wars is essential for grasping the complexities of the current situation and charting a path towards a peaceful resolution. Thus, the Syrian civil wars have deep-rooted origins that can tracing back to the end of the Ottoman Empire and the aftermath of the First World War (Heydemann, 2013). The collapse of the Ottoman Empire in the early 20th century left behind a power vacuum in the Middle East, including the region that is now Syria. The agreements made at the end of World War I, particularly the Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916 and the Treaty of Sèvres in 1920, divided the former Ottoman territories into French and British spheres of influence (Heydemann, 2013).

Syria fell under French control as a mandate, leading to a period of colonial rule that lasted until the country gained independence in 1946. The French mandate played a significant role in exacerbating sectarian divisions within Syrian society, as French colonial authorities favoured certain religious and ethnic groups over others. This divide-and-rule policy sowed the seeds of future conflict, as different groups vied for power and resources in the newly independent country. The post-independence period in Syria was marked by political instability and military coups, as various factions jostled for control of the state (Heydemann, 2013). The rise of the Ba'ath Party in the 1960s and the establishment of the Assad regime in the 1970s brought a measure of stability to the country, but also entrenched authoritarian rule and repressed dissent (Lesch, 2012).

The Syrian civil war, which began in 2011 as part of the wider Arab Spring uprisings, is being seen as a culmination of these historical trends. The brutal response of the Assad regime to peaceful protests sparked a violent conflict that has since claimed hundreds of thousands of lives and displaced millions of Syrians. The involvement of regional and international actors, including Russia, Iran, Turkey, and the United States, has further complicated the conflict and prolonged the suffering of the Syrian people (Lesch, 2012).

The Yemeni civil wars as well have a long and complex history that dates back to the mid-20th century. The roots of the conflict traces back to the division of Yemen into two separate states in 1990, with South Yemen as the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen and North Yemen as the Yemen Arab Republic (Clark, 2010). The merger of these two states to form the Republic of Yemen got tainted by political and economic challenges, leading to a series of civil wars and ongoing conflict in the region. One of the major catalysts for the civil wars in Yemen was the struggle for power between different factions within the government and military. The political landscape in Yemen characterizes by a delicate balance of power between tribal leaders, regional factions, and political parties, which often led to power struggles and violent conflicts. The first Yemeni civil war broke out in 1994, just four years after the unification of North and South Yemen, when southern separatist forces attempted to secede from the union (Clark, 2010). The conflict lasted for several months and resulted in a victory for the northern forces, which solidified the central government's control over the entire country.

Since then, Yemen has been plagued by ongoing conflicts, with various factions vying for power and control over the country. The most recent civil war began in 2014 when Houthi rebels, a Shiite Muslim group from the north of Yemen, took control of the capital city of Sanaa and ousted the internationally recognized government of President Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi. The conflict escalated in 2015 when a coalition of Arab states led by Saudi Arabia launched a military intervention in support of the Hadi government. The war has since spiralled into a humanitarian crisis, with thousands of civilians killed and millions displaced. Widespread human rights abuses, including arbitrary detention, torture, and extrajudicial killings, are plaguing the country today (Clark, 2010). The ongoing conflict has also led to a severe humanitarian crisis, with millions of people facing food insecurity, lack of access to healthcare, and displacement. The United Nations has described the situation in Yemen as the world's worst humanitarian crisis, with millions of people in need of humanitarian assistance.

In order to resolve the conflict in Yemen, a political solution is necessary that addresses the underlying causes of the civil wars and ensures the inclusion of all stakeholders in the peace process. International efforts to broker a peace deal have so far been unsuccessful, with both sides unwilling to make concessions. The

involvement of regional powers, such as Saudi Arabia and Iran, has further complicated the conflict and made a resolution more challenging.

The colonial period also witnessed the implementation of extractive economic systems in both Syria and Yemen. Local resources were exploited to benefit the colonial powers, resulting in economic disparities and underdevelopment. The economies were transformed to serve the colonial interests, with focus on exporting agricultural goods and raw materials to the West (Said, 2003). This economic exploitation created lasting social and economic inequalities, which have contributed to the conflicts in both countries. The colonial powers further entrenched their dominance through the construction of orientalist discourses that portrayed the East as exotic, inferior, and in need of Western guidance and intervention (Said, 2003). These discourses not only justified colonial rule but also influenced the perceptions of both the colonizers and the colonized, perpetuating cultural and psychological forms of domination. The orientalist discourse affected the construction of national identities in Syria and Yemen, with consequent implications for their post-colonial trajectories. The colonial legacy in Syria and Yemen left a lasting impact on their politics and governance. Following the end of colonial rule, these countries experienced challenges in nation–building and state formation. The imposition of Western systems of governance, often characterized by authoritarian tendencies, has led to a legacy of weak institutions and political instability. This instability, in turn, has fuelled the conflicts in both countries (Said, 2003).

3.2. The detailed historical background of both Syria and Yemen until the civil war

Syria has a rich history that dates back to ancient times, with evidence of human habitation dating back to around 10,000 BC. The land that is now Syria has been the site of numerous empires and civilizations, including the Babylonians, Hittites, Egyptians, Assyrians, Greeks, and Romans (Abdulhamid, 2015). One of the most significant periods in Syrian history was the Islamic conquest of the region in the 7th century. The Muslim armies, led by the Caliphate, quickly conquered the region and established Islam as the dominant religion in the area. The Umayyad Caliphate, based in Damascus, played a key role in spreading Islam throughout the region and beyond. In later centuries, Syria was ruled by various dynasties, including the Abbasids, Seljuks, and Ayyubids (Abdulhamid, 2015). Syria's modern history can be traced back to the end of World War I, when the region came under French mandate

following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. Under French rule, Syria was divided into several states, including Lebanon, which eventually gained independence in 1943. Syria itself became an independent republic in 1946 after a period of political instability and unrest (Chai, 2018).

Throughout the mid-20th century, Syria experienced a series of military coups and changes in government. The Ba'ath Party, a secular Arab nationalist political party, rose to prominence in the 1960s and eventually seized power in a coup in 1970 (Ajami, 2011). Hafez al-Assad, a member of the Ba'ath Party, became the country's president and ruled with an iron fist until his death in 2000. Assad's son, Bashar al-Assad, succeeded him as president and has ruled Syria ever since. Following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, Syria came under French Mandate control in 1920. The mandate lasted until Syria gained independence in 1946 (Abdulhamid, 2015). However, the country faced political instability and was subject to several military coups and changes in leadership in the early years of its independence.

One of the most notable events in modern Syrian history was the rise of the Ba'ath Party in the 1960s (Phillips, 2016). The party, founded by Michel Aflaq and Salah al-Din al-Bitar, promoted pan-Arab nationalism and socialism. In 1970, Hafez al-Assad seized power in a bloodless coup and ruled Syria until his death in 2000. Assad's son, Bashar al-Assad, succeeded him as president and has been in power since (Alqatabry, Hameed and Butcher, 2020).

The Assad family's rule has been characterized by authoritarianism and a lack of political freedoms. The regime has also been accused of human rights abuses, including the suppression of dissent and crackdowns on political opposition (Matar, 2012). The Arab Spring, a wave of protests and uprisings that swept across the Middle East in 2011, also reached Syria. The Syrian government's violent response to the protests sparked a civil war that has been ongoing since then. The conflict has led to massive destruction, displacement of millions of people, and a humanitarian crisis in the region.

Despite its authoritarian government, Syria enjoyed relative stability and prosperity under the Assad regime (Roberts, 2006). However, tensions began to rise in the early 2010s as a result of growing discontent with the government, economic hardship, and demands for political reform. The Arab Spring uprisings in neighbouring countries also inspired a wave of protests in Syria, which eventually escalated into a full-blown civil war in 2011.

The Syrian civil war has been marked by violence, destruction, and humanitarian crisis. The conflict has pitted various rebel groups against the government forces of Bashar al-Assad, as well as foreign powers and extremist groups (Khalidi, 1992). The war has claimed hundreds of thousands of lives, displaced millions of people, and caused widespread devastation across the country.

The roots of the Syrian civil war can be traced back to a complex web of political, social, and economic factors. The Assad regime's brutal crackdown on peaceful protests in the early days of the uprising inflamed tensions and led to the escalation of violence. The involvement of regional and international powers, including Russia, Iran, and the United States, has also fuelled the conflict and complicated efforts to find a peaceful resolution (Khalidi, 1992). As the Syrian civil war enters its second decade, the future of the country remains uncertain. The war has left a devastating impact on Syria and its people, and the road to recovery and reconciliation will be long and arduous (Hale, 2019). International efforts to broker a political solution to the conflict have so far been unsuccessful, and the humanitarian situation in Syria continues to deteriorate.

Similarly to Syria, the history of Yemen is marked by a rich tapestry of civilizations, empires, and dynasties that have shaped the region's cultural, religious, and political landscape. The current civil war represents a tragic chapter in Yemen's history, underscoring the urgent need for a peaceful resolution to the conflict and the restoration of stability and prosperity in the country (Ansari, 2016).

Yemen, located in the southwestern part of the Arabian Peninsula, has a rich and complex history that dates back thousands of years. The region has been inhabited by various civilizations, including the Sabaean, Himyarite, and Aksumite kingdoms, which flourished during the ancient times (Stevenson, 2014).

One of the most significant periods in Yemen's history was the rise of the Kingdom of Saba, also known as Sheba, which was located in the southern part of the country around the 8th century BC (Sharp, 2015). The Sabaeans were known for their advanced irrigation systems, sophisticated architecture, and prosperous trade network, which included valuable commodities such as frankincense and myrrh. The Queen of Sheba, who is mentioned in the Bible and the Quran, is believed to have ruled over this kingdom. In the following centuries, Yemen was ruled by various empires, including the Persian, Roman, and Ethiopian empires, each leaving their mark on the region (Steinberg, 2014). However, it was the Islamic conquest in the

7th century AD that permanently changed the religious and cultural landscape of Yemen, as the majority of the population converted to Islam (Sharp, 2015).

During the medieval period, Yemen was ruled by various dynasties, such as the Ziyadid, Najahid, and Rasulid dynasties, which oversaw periods of relative stability and prosperity. The city of Zabid, located in western Yemen, became a centre of learning and commerce, attracting scholars and traders from across the Muslim world (Steinberg, 2014).

In the early modern period, Yemen was divided into several rival states, including the Qasimite and the Tahirid emirates, which constantly vied for control of the region. In the 19th century, Yemen came under the influence of the Ottoman Empire, which ruled over the region until the early 20th century (Phillips, 2016). After the fall of the Ottoman Empire in World War I, Yemen gained independence in 1918, but the country remained politically fragmented, with various tribal and regional factions vying for power. In 1962, a military coup led to the establishment of the Yemen Arab Republic (North Yemen) in the northern part of the country, while the southern part became the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (South Yemen) in 1967 (Salmoni, Loidolt and Wells, 2010).

The two states remained separate until they unified in 1990, forming the Republic of Yemen. However, tensions between the northern and southern factions persisted, leading to a brief civil war in 1994. Despite the unification, Yemen continued to face numerous challenges, including political instability, economic hardship, and sectarian conflicts (Salmoni, Loidolt and Wells, 2010). The Arab Spring in 2011 sparked mass protests in Yemen, leading to the resignation of President Ali Abdullah Saleh, who had ruled the country for over three decades. However, the transition to democracy was marred by violence and political gridlock, leading to the outbreak of a civil war in 2015 (Finer and Schmitt, 2015).

The ongoing civil war has devastated Yemen, causing widespread destruction, famine, and a humanitarian crisis of unprecedented proportions. The conflict is characterized by a complex web of domestic and international actors, including Houthi rebels, government forces, and a Saudi-led coalition that has intervened in support of the Yemeni government (Al-Eriani, 2020).

Conclusions to Chapter 3

Thus, the historical background of both Syria and Yemen is deeply intertwined with the legacy of colonialism, the collapse of empires, and complex political dynamics that have shaped the region. The colonial past of both states, marked by exploitation, division, and the imposition of Western systems of governance, has had lasting impacts on their politics, economies, and societies. The legacy of colonialism is evident in the sectarian divisions, authoritarian regimes, and economic disparities that continue to fuel conflicts in Syria and Yemen.

Colonial powers skilfully exploited pre–existing divisions within Syrian and Yemeni societies to maintain control and solidify their rule. In the case of Syria, it was part of the Ottoman Empire until the end of World War I – the empire's collapse and subsequent partition by European powers drastically altered the region's dynamics, laying the groundwork for the conflict we witness today. Similarly, Yemen's historical background shows the influence of colonialism. Yemen was divided into two separate entities, North and South Yemen, during the colonial era. These divisions were manipulated by external powers seeking to exploit the country's resources and engage in proxy conflicts during the Cold War period. The French here relied on sectarian divisions, particularly between the Alawites, Druze, and Sunni Arabs, to manipulate regional politics and maintain power. By granting preferential treatment to certain groups, the French effectively exacerbated social divisions, leading to heightened tensions and long–term instability. Similarly, in Yemen, the British capitalized on tribal divisions that characterized the region. By supporting specific tribal leaders or factions, they maintained their influence and employed a divide–and–rule strategy. That existing manipulation of local divisions in both Syria and Yemen reinforced colonial dominance by weakening the indigenous populations' unified resistance (Makdisi, 2000). The colonial powers exploited the rich resources of Syria and Yemen to serve their economic interests. In Syria, the French focused on extracting valuable agricultural produce, such as cotton and cereals, to bolster their own economy. They introduced new cultivation techniques, often at the expense of traditional subsistence farming, and imposed exploitative taxation systems, greatly benefiting the colonial authorities.

Similarly, in Yemen, the British–Ottoman influence aimed to secure control over strategic resources, particularly Mandate territories and ports. The British sought to control the region's lucrative trade routes, such as the Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea,

to protect their imperial interests and secure access to crucial resources, including coffee, spices, and minerals. Colonial powers imposed and manipulated governance structures to enhance their control and maintain hierarchical relationships. In Syria, the French enacted a highly centralized administration, marginalizing local elites and suppressing indigenous institutions. This approach disrupted previously established systems of governance, contributing to the erosion of social cohesion and the weakening of national identities. The British also integrated traditional tribal structures into their indirect rule system, known as the «Aden system» (Makdisi, 2000). This method of governance allowed for superficial local autonomy under British oversight, enabling the colonial power to retain control over key decision–making processes. By co–opting existing governance structures, the British facilitated the perpetuation of their influence while limiting direct interventions.

By deconstructing the historical background and contextualizing the conflicts within a post-colonial framework, the conducted research aimed to contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the Syrian and Yemeni civil wars. The detailed historical analysis provided in this chapter lays the groundwork for the subsequent research that will delve into the specific dynamics of the conflicts in Syria and Yemen, offering a nuanced perspective on the underlying factors and complexities of these protracted wars.

CHAPTER 4: SYRIAN CIVIL WAR: COLONIAL CONTINUITIES AND DISCONTINUITIES

4.1. Colonial Legacy and the Syrian Statehood

The Syrian Civil War, which has been ongoing since 2011, has often been analysed through the lens of colonial legacies and their impact on the formation and functioning of the Syrian state. In this chapter, we aim to explore the colonial continuities and discontinuities in relation to Syrian statehood, providing a scientific and comprehensive analysis of the topic.

The S. Heydemann's work «Syrian State and Society in the Time of Crisis» aligns with the thesis by highlighting the impact of colonial legacies on Syria's statehood, specifically the artificial borders drawn by colonial powers and the imposition of a centralized state structure that disregarded the country's cultural and ethnic diversity (Heydemann, 2013). The book strengthens the argument that the Syrian Civil War is rooted in the colonial legacy of imposed governance structures and the lack of inclusivity in state-building processes.

Syria, like many other countries in the Middle East, was a former colony of various world powers. After the collapse of the Ottoman Empire in the aftermath of World War I, the region came under the control of colonial powers such as France and Britain. These colonial occupiers played a significant role in shaping the political, social, and economic landscape of Syria, leaving lasting legacies that continue to impact the country to this day. One of the main colonial legacies that shaped Syrian statehood is the artificial borders drawn by the colonial powers. The Sykes–Picot Agreement of 1916, which divided the region into spheres of influence between France and Britain, ignored the existing ethnic, religious, and tribal dynamics within the region. Consequently, Syrian borders were drawn without considering the aspirations and desires of the diverse Syrian population, and such artificial division created the foundation for future conflicts, as different ethnic and religious groups found themselves within the same borders without sufficient representation or acknowledgment of their cultural identities (Heydemann, 2013).

Placing the Syrian crisis within the broader context of the Arab Spring, we draw from the M. Lynch's book «The Arab Uprising: The Unfinished Revolutions of the New Middle East» (Lynch, 2010). It connects the Syrian crisis to the broader context of the Arab Spring, emphasizing the interconnectedness of uprisings and shared

grievances across the Middle East. This perspective supports the thesis by showcasing the regional implications of colonial interventions and their role in shaping the socio-political landscape of countries like Syria. The book highlights the unfinished nature of the Arab uprisings, underscoring the complex challenges faced by protesters and the potential for further transformations in post-colonial societies. Lynch's analysis reinforces the argument that the Syrian Civil War is a part of the broader legacy of colonialism in the region (Lynch, 2010).

Furthermore, colonial powers also fostered a culture of clientelism and authoritarianism in Syria. French colonial rule, in particular, implemented a policy of co–opting local elites to maintain control, further eroding trust in the state apparatus. This legacy of clientelism and autocracy, combined with the lack of political and economic opportunities, bred resentment and frustration among the Syrian population. However, it is essential to note that the Syrian statehood also witnessed discontinuities with its colonial past. After gaining independence from France in 1946, the Syrian government embarked on a process of Arab nationalism, emphasizing the formation of a unified Arab state encompassing Syria and other Arab territories (Lynch, 2010). This departure from the colonial past aimed to dismantle the imposed state structure and foster a pan–Arab identity that transcended borders.

Delving into the role of religion, specifically the Sunni Ulama (religious scholars), in shaping Syrian society and politics, it is important to analyse the position of T. Pierret in his book «Religion and State in Syria: The Sunni Ulama from Coup to Revolution» (Pierret, 2013). Pierret's examination of the role of the Sunni Ulama in Syrian society and politics contributes to the thesis by delving into the religious dynamics that have influenced the Syrian crisis. The author's exploration of the evolution of the relationship between religious scholars and the state underscores the complexities of religious politics in post-colonial contexts (Pierret, 2013). Pierret's argument about the failure of Arab nationalism to address Syria's diverse religious identities aligns with the thesis by highlighting the challenges of building a cohesive national identity in the aftermath of colonial rule. Overall, Pierret's work supports our argument that colonial legacies continue to shape post-colonial conflicts in countries like Syria.

Thus, it is crucial to acknowledge the discontinuities with the colonial past, such as the pursuit of Arab nationalism, which attempted to transcend the imposed state structure. Understanding these colonial continuities and discontinuities provides a nuanced perspective on the Syrian Civil War and its underlying causes.

4.2. Sectarianism and Identity Politics

The prolonged Syrian conflict has had a significant impact on the country's statehood, causing a deep fragmentation and exacerbating existing fault lines. This subsection aims to analyse the current state of Syria in relation to sectarianism and identity politics (Alqatabry and Butcher, 2020). Sectarianism, defined as conflicts between religious or ethnic groups, and identity politics, which accentuates collective identities in political discourse, have played central roles in shaping Syria's current dynamics.

The sectarian dimension of political legitimacy in Syria is a critical factor fuelling the ongoing conflict in the country. Despite Syria's historically diverse population, the manipulation of religious identity by political elites has led to deep-seated sectarian divisions that have exacerbated violence and instability. Lakitsch (2017) argues that the Syrian conflict has transformed political grievances into violent sectarian divides, particularly between the Alawite minority and Sunni Muslim groups. While internal factors within Syria play a significant role in fomenting sectarian violence, external actors, such as Iran and Saudi Arabia, have also contributed to the escalation of sectarian tensions in the region. The involvement of external powers in supporting different sectarian factions has further deepened internal divisions and hindered prospects for a unified and stable Syrian state. The proxy support for sectarian interests by regional powers has not only exacerbated the conflict but also perpetuated the suffering of Syrian civilians caught in the midst of violence. It is crucial to recognize the complex interplay of internal and external factors shaping sectarian violence in Syria, and the urgent need for a comprehensive and inclusive approach to addressing the root causes of the conflict.

Thus, the sectarian dimension of political legitimacy in Syria is a key factor driving the ongoing conflict and must be addressed in any efforts towards achieving lasting peace and stability in the country (Alqatabry and Butcher, 2020). By acknowledging the historical and socio-political context of Syria and understanding how sectarian divisions have been manipulated and exploited for political gain, stakeholders can work towards fostering reconciliation, inclusivity, and coexistence among the diverse religious and ethnic communities in Syria.

Identity politics has further contributed to the fragmentary nature of Syrian society. Different religious, ethnic, and tribal identities, along with regional allegiances, have

played a significant role in framing political narratives and mobilizing communities (Pierret, 2013). This has made it increasingly challenging to foster a shared national identity and find a common ground for political dialogue and reconciliation.

The shift from national liberation to radical democracy in the Kurdish liberation movement in Turkey highlights the complexities of identity politics in the region. As Fadaee and Brancolini argue, the Kurdish struggle for autonomy and recognition has evolved beyond traditional notions of nationalism towards a more inclusive and democratic vision (Fadaee, 2019). This shift not only reflects the changing aspirations of the Kurdish people but also challenges the existing power structures in Turkey.

In the context of Syria, the Kurdish factor plays a significant role in shaping the country's statehood. The aspirations of the Kurdish population for autonomy and self-governance have created divisions within Syria and exacerbated existing sectarian tensions (Michael, 2016). The rise of jihadist groups like ISIS has further deepened these fault lines, highlighting the ways in which identity politics can be manipulated for political gain. The evolution of the Kurdish liberation movement in Turkey and its impact on Syria's statehood thus underscore the importance of understanding the intersection of identity politics, democracy, and conflict resolution in the region. By exploring the nuances of these dynamics, policymakers and scholars can work towards a more inclusive and sustainable peace process in the Middle East (Michael, 2016).

Overall, the Syrian conflict has profoundly affected the country's statehood, with sectarianism and identity politics playing critical roles in the current situation. Sectarian tensions and identity–based divisions have transformed political grievances into violent conflicts, shaping the fragmented nature of Syrian society. External actors have further fuelled sectarianism, exacerbating the internal discord. At the same time, identity politics has deepened existing divisions and hindered the prospects of a shared national identity. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for any efforts towards reaching a resolution and rebuilding a cohesive Syrian state. Initiatives addressing sectarian tensions, fostering interfaith dialogue, and promoting inclusive governance are essential in mitigating the impact of sectarianism. Concurrently, efforts should be made to establish political systems that recognize and accommodate diverse identities, including the Kurdish population, to promote a more inclusive and united Syria.

4.3. Externally Driven Interventions

Since 2011, the Syrian conflict has witnessed significant external interventions from various actors, including Western nations and regional powers. These interventions have had a profound impact on the conflict, further exacerbating the violence and hindering resolution efforts. This thesis subsection critically examines the role of external powers in perpetuating or exacerbating conflicts in Syria, focusing on Western nations and regional actors. It also explores their interests in maintaining influence in the region and the consequent impacts of their interventions.

Highlighting the significant impact of economic sanctions on Syria, particularly in exacerbating the suffering of the population and weakening the Syrian government, it is evident that external powers, such as Western nations and regional actors, have utilized economic means to assert control and influence over post-colonial Syria (Arslanian, 2019). These sanctions, imposed to shape the political landscape in Syria, have had detrimental effects on the economy and people of Syria. It is essential to consider the broader implications of economic sanctions in conflict-ridden countries like Syria. While the intentions behind implementing sanctions may be to pressure a government to change its policies or behaviour, the consequences often fall disproportionately on the civilian population. The humanitarian crisis in Syria has worsened due to economic sanctions, leading to increased poverty, lack of access to essential services, and overall deterioration of living conditions.

Furthermore, the use of military interventions alongside economic sanctions reflects the complex power dynamics and geopolitical interests at play in the Syrian conflict. It is crucial to consider the long-term effects of these interventions on the stability and security of the region, as well as the implications for international relations and human rights (Arslanian, 2019).

Western nations and regional actors have sought to exert political influence in post-colonial Syria through various means. The formation of alliances and support for opposition groups have aimed to undermine the Syrian government and establish a power shift in the country (Lynch, 2010). External powers, especially regional actors like Turkey and Saudi Arabia, have supported armed opposition groups, contributing to their military capabilities and shaping the direction of the conflict. The involvement of external powers in post-colonial Syria has also transformed the conflict into a proxy war.

Western nations, including the United States, Russia, and European allies, have played a significant role in prolonging the Syrian civil war through their support of various opposition factions. This support has led to increased violence, deepened regional polarization, and hindered diplomatic efforts towards a political settlement. The focus on regime change and supporting armed groups has diverted attention and resources away from addressing the urgent needs of the civilian population, resulting in massive displacement and a severe deterioration in living conditions for Syrians (Ebohwoke, and Raphael, 2021). Additionally, the involvement of regional powers like Iran, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia has further complicated the conflict, with motivations driven by strategic, religious, and sectarian interests (Isiksal, 2018).

The complex web of external interventions in Syria, driven by a combination of geopolitical calculations and regional ambitions, has exacerbated the suffering of the Syrian people and hindered the prospects of a peaceful resolution to the conflict. The various agendas at play have fuelled violence, prolonged the war, and undermined efforts towards sustainable peace in the region. As the conflict in Syria continues to ravage the country and its people, it is crucial for the international community to reassess their priorities and strategies in order to effectively address the root causes of the conflict and work towards a comprehensive political solution (Gülcan, 2016).

In addition to Western nations, regional powers, such as Iran, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia, have also played a significant role in perpetuating the Syrian conflict. Their motivations are driven by a combination of strategic, religious, and sectarian interests. Iran has supported the Assad regime as part of its efforts to maintain a strategic foothold in the region and protect its allies, including Hezbollah in Lebanon. Additionally, Iran seeks to counter the influence of its regional rival, Saudi Arabia, and prevent the spread of Sunni extremism.

Overall, the regional interventions have further complicated the conflict and hindered efforts towards peaceful resolution. The involvement of regional actors has transformed the conflict into a proxy war, exacerbating sectarian tensions and regional rivalries. Furthermore, the interventions by regional powers have contributed to the fragmentation of opposition groups, leading to infighting and diminishing prospects of a unified front against the Assad regime. This disunity has benefited the Syrian government and has hindered the prospects for a negotiated settlement. We can conclude that external interventions by Western nations and regional actors have had a detrimental impact on the Syrian conflict: the pursuit of

strategic interests (be it regional influence, counterbalancing rivals, or securing access to resources), has perpetuated the violence and created obstacles to reaching a peaceful resolution. As the conflict continues, it is vital for all stakeholders to prioritize diplomacy and humanitarian considerations over geopolitical calculations to achieve lasting stability and address the deep–rooted causes of the conflict.

Conclusions to Chapter 4

The Chapter 4 of this thesis has explored the Syrian civil war through a post-colonial lens, focusing on the colonial continuities and discontinuities that have shaped the dynamics of the conflict. The chapter began by examining the colonial legacy and its impact on the formation of the Syrian statehood. It highlighted how European powers, particularly France, played a significant role in dividing the region and creating artificial borders that disregarded ethnic and sectarian differences, setting the stage for future conflicts.

The conducted research delved into the role of sectarianism and identity politics in fuelling the Syrian civil war. It discussed how colonial powers exacerbated existing religious and ethnic fault lines, using divide and rule tactics to maintain control. The analysis revealed that deep–rooted sectarian divisions were further exacerbated by the policies of the Ba'athist regime and the Assad family, leading to a fragmentation of national identity and an entrenchment of sectarian affiliations. Furthermore, the chapter explored externally–driven interventions in the Syrian civil war, emphasizing the ways in which former colonial powers and regional actors played a role in shaping the conflict. It highlighted how these external actors pursued their own geopolitical interests, providing support to various factions and further fuelling the violence. The chapter argued that these interventions perpetuated a neo–colonial dynamic in which the sovereignty of the Syrian people was undermined.

In conclusion, the research within this chapter aimed to provide a comprehensive analysis of the Syrian civil war within the framework of post-colonial theory. It has shed light on the legacy of colonialism in the region, highlighting the continued impact of artificial borders, sectarian divisions, and external interference. By deconstructing the conflict through a post-colonial lens, this thesis aims to provide a deeper understanding of the complex dynamics at play in the Syrian civil war, ultimately contributing to the broader discourse on post-colonial studies. Serving as

an introduction to understanding the complexities of the Syrian Civil War, the chapter provided a foundation for further research.

Moving forward, it would be valuable to explore similar themes and dynamics in the context of the Yemeni Civil War. As such, the next chapter will focus on the colonial legacies and post-colonial dynamics in Yemen's statehood formation, sectarianism and identity politics within the country, and the role of external actors in the conflict. By applying a post-colonial lens to the Yemeni Civil War, it becomes possible to gain insights into the underlying factors that have contributed to the ongoing crisis, shedding light on the historical, social, and political dynamics that continue to shape the conflict.

CHAPTER 5: YEMENI CIVIL WAR: A POST-COLONIAL QUAGMIRE

5.1. Colonial Legacies and Yemen's Fragmented Tribes

The Yemeni civil war has been a protracted conflict that has engulfed the nation in a devastating humanitarian crisis. To understand the underlying causes of this conflict, it is crucial to examine the influence of colonial legacies and the role of Yemen's fragmented tribes. This chapter of the thesis aims to explore the historical context of colonialism in Yemen, shed light on the socio–political impact it had on the country's tribal structure, and analyse its implications on the current civil war.

«Routledge Handbook of the Future of Warfare» by Artur Gruszczak and Sebastian Kaempf, provides a broader perspective on the future of warfare, including the specific case of Syria (Gruszczak and Kaempf, 2023). This source allows the thesis to broaden its analysis and consider the impact of technological advancements and evolving warfare tactics on the civil war. Additionally, the authors discuss the role of international actors and power dynamics, which aligns with the post-colonial lens of the thesis. The source offers a comprehensive understanding of the conflicts, enabling the thesis to identify links between colonial legacies, contemporary warfare, and the Syrian civil war. Yemen's exposure to European colonialism left enduring legacies that significantly shaped the present–day reality of the country. The colonization of Aden by the British Empire in 1839 marked the beginning of a period in which foreign powers exerted influence over the region. The British establishment of the Aden Protectorate in the southern part of Yemen further fragmented the country, dividing it into multiple regions with different governing structures and levels of autonomy (Gruszczak and Kaempf, 2023). Yemen's tribal structure has long played a fundamental role in the country's socio–political dynamics. However, the colonial period disrupted the traditional tribal hierarchy and introduced new power dynamics, leading to further fragmentation. «Displaying the State: Visual Signs and Colonial Construction in Jordan» – Jonathan Endelman's article explores the use of visual symbols in the colonial construction of the state (Endelman, 2015).

Although not directly related to the Syrian and Yemeni civil wars, this source contributes to the post-colonial analysis of conflicts. By examining the visual signs and colonial practices in Jordan, the article sheds light on the mechanisms used to establish and maintain power in post-colonial contexts. The provided insight can be

applied to the Syrian and Yemeni civil wars, allowing the thesis to explore how power dynamics and colonial legacies continue to shape these conflicts. The British approach to governance in Aden imposed a central authority and undermined traditional tribal structures, replacing local chieftains with appointed officials who were loyal to colonial authorities (Endelman, 2015).

«A History of Modern Yemen» – a review by Ulrike Freitag of Peter Dresch's works, provides historical context to understand the roots of the Yemeni civil war (Freitag, 2002). The reviewer highlights the importance of considering Yemen's complex history and the role of foreign interventions in shaping its present state. This source is valuable for the thesis as it underscores the post-colonial lens through which the author aims to analyse the conflict. By examining colonial legacies and their impact on contemporary conflicts, the thesis can better understand the dynamics of the Yemeni civil war. The imprint of colonial rule on Yemen's tribes is evident in their differing responses to central authority, with some tribes embracing the new structures while others resisted. This divide laid the groundwork for the existing tribal tensions and rivalries that perpetuate the civil conflict today. Moreover, colonial borders created during this period ignored traditional tribal boundaries, exacerbating intertribal tensions that persist in modern Yemen (Freitag, 2002).

The post-colonial period in Yemen has been wrought with political instability and sporadic armed conflicts. The current civil war, which erupted in 2015, escalated due to a variety of factors, including military interventions by regional actors and the rise of non–state armed groups. However, it is essential to acknowledge that the underlying tribal dynamics worsened the situation. Competing factions within the civil war, driving further division, have often exploited tribal affiliations in Yemen violence (Freitag, 2002). Scholars argue that the manipulation of tribal loyalties and grievances has deep roots in the colonial legacy, as internal divisions have been exacerbated by foreign powers seeking to exploit tribal fault lines for their own interests (Endelman, 2015). The resulting fragmentation has made it difficult for Yemen to establish a unified government capable of effectively addressing its challenges and resolving the ongoing conflict.

This way, the Yemeni civil war is undoubtedly influenced by the colonial legacy and the country's fragmented tribes – the disruptive impact of colonial rule on traditional tribal structures widened existing divisions and created new fault lines, which have been exploited by internal and external actors. To find a sustainable solution to the

conflict, it is crucial to address these underlying issues, recognizing and reconciling the historical influence of colonialism on Yemen's socio–political landscape.

5.2. Regional Power Struggles and Proxy Wars

Modern–day Yemen has been mired in political instability and armed conflict for years, with regional power struggles and proxy wars exacerbating the situation. The tense environment has pitted various domestic factions against one another while drawing the involvement of international actors seeking to advance their own strategic interests. The prevailing dynamics perpetuate violence, displacement, and humanitarian crises. This article explores the origins, interests, and key actors involved in these regional power struggles and proxy wars.

The Yemeni civil war is a complex and multifaceted conflict that has been fuelled by a combination of internal divisions, tribal rivalries, and external interventions from regional and international actors. The historical context of Yemen's unification in 1990 brought together longstanding divisions between North and South Yemen, setting the stage for future conflicts (Al–Tamimin and Venkatesha, 2022). The geopolitical significance of Yemen, situated along key trade routes like the Bab–el–Mandeb Strait, has made it a target for regional and international powers seeking to exert influence in the region. Iran's involvement in Yemen, as highlighted by Zweiri (2016), adds another layer to the conflict, with the sectarian divide between Sunni-majority Saudi Arabia and Shia-majority Iran contributing to tensions and rivalries in the region. The struggle for resources, including water scarcity and control over oil-rich regions, further complicates the situation, as various factions vie for control and economic dominance (Zweiri, 2016). The historical power dynamics between families and tribes in Yemen, as well as the complexity of tribal allegiances, have also played a significant role in perpetuating conflicts and rivalries within the country. Blumi's exploration of Yemen's modern history underscores the systemic failures and international power dynamics that have contributed to the chaos in the country (Blumi, 2018). The involvement of external actors, such as the United States, Saudi Arabia, Iran, and the UAE, has further complicated the conflict, with each pursuing their own strategic interests in the region. The support provided by these countries to various factions in Yemen has exacerbated the violence and instability in the country, prolonging the suffering of the Yemeni people.

Sharp's analysis of U.S. relations with Yemen sheds light on the role of the United States as a key international actor in the conflict (Sharp, 2015). The U.S.'s support for the Saudi-led coalition, including arms sales and logistical support, has drawn criticism for contributing to the humanitarian crisis in Yemen. The involvement of international actors like the U.S., Saudi Arabia, Iran, and the UAE highlights the complex web of interests and rivalries that have shaped the Yemeni civil war (Sharp, 2015).

In conclusion, the Yemeni civil war is a product of internal divisions, tribal rivalries, and external interventions from regional and international actors. Understanding the historical context, as well as the impact of globalization and power dynamics in the region, is essential for deconstructing the complexities of the conflict through a post-colonial lens. By examining the roles and impacts of various actors involved in the conflict, we can gain a better understanding of the root causes of the crisis and work towards a sustainable resolution for the Yemeni people. Thus, the regional power struggles and proxy wars in modern–day Yemen are complex, driven by a myriad of historical, political, and socio–economic factors. The involvement of regional and international actors further complicates the conflict dynamics. Achieving lasting peace in Yemen will require inclusive dialogue, international cooperation, and addressing the underlying root causes that perpetuate conflict.

5.3. Economic Exploitation and Neocolonialism

Yemen, situated on the Arabian Peninsula in the Middle East, has long been subject to economic exploitation and neo-colonialism. The extraction and control of its natural resources, notably its significant oil reserves, have been influenced by colonial legacies and have played a pivotal role in shaping conflict dynamics within the country. This thesis' subsection aims to assess the interplay between economic exploitation, neo-colonialism, and conflicts in Yemen, emphasizing the role of resource extraction and control. The analysis will draw on relevant scholarly works to provide a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter.

The economic dimensions of the conflicts in Yemen and Syria cannot be understated, as they are deeply entwined with post-colonial legacies and neo-colonial relationships that have shaped these countries' political landscapes. Mundy and Pelat (2015) highlight how colonial powers, such as the British and Ottoman Empires, exploited Yemen's resources during the colonial era, establishing a framework of economic

dependence that continues to resonate today. Similarly, Ansari (2016) argues that Yemen's oil dependency has fuelled the conflict and exacerbated regional spillover effects, perpetuating a neo-colonial relationship that prioritizes external actors over local interests. In the case of Syria, Haruna (2021) demonstrates how neoliberal policies implemented by the Assad regime exacerbated socio-economic inequalities, contributing to the structural roots of the violence in the country. Additionally, Western corporations' dominance in Syria's oil industry, as noted by Nowell (2008), has concentrated wealth, deepened economic inequalities, and limited local benefits, echoing the economic disparities seen in Yemen.

Furthermore, the revenue generated from oil extraction has not been adequately distributed among the Yemeni population. Instead, it has largely been funnelled out of the country, benefitting external actors and elites aligned with them. This unequal distribution of wealth fosters grievances and inequality, fuelling social unrest and acts as a catalyst for conflict (Al–Tamimi and Venkatesha, 2021). Additionally, the control of resources can also provide a source of funding for armed groups involved in conflicts. These groups exploit the revenue generated from resource extraction to sustain their operations and consolidate power, further escalating conflicts within Yemen (Stevenson, 2014). This way, the history of economic exploitation by external powers has perpetuated a neo-colonial relationship, diminishing Yemen's economic self–sufficiency: the competition for resource control has led to violent conflicts, fostering political instability, and the unequal distribution of wealth derived from resource extraction has deepened societal grievances and acts as a catalyst for conflict. A comprehensive understanding of these dynamics is crucial to developing sustainable approaches to address Yemen's economic and conflict–related challenges. Thus, the economic exploitation of natural resources by external powers has perpetuated a neo-colonial relationship, diminishing the economic self-sufficiency of Yemen and Syria. The competition for resource control has exacerbated conflicts, while the unequal distribution of wealth has fuelled social unrest and violence. To address the economic and conflict-related challenges in these countries, a comprehensive understanding of these dynamics is essential, as well as sustainable approaches that prioritize local interests and equitable resource distribution. As colonial powers have historically played a crucial role in shaping the economies of Yemen and Syria. British influence in Yemen during the colonial era resulted in the extraction and control of Aden's oil, while France heavily influenced Syria's oil

industry (Nowell, 2008). Reliance on colonial powers for economic gains established a neo-colonial relationship, wherein the extraction and control of natural resources in Yemen and Syria continued even after gaining independence. Yemen's oil resources were exploited by multinational corporations, primarily facilitated through agreements signed by the Yemeni government, leading to economic imbalances and limited local benefits (Ansari, 2016).

Overall, the economic exploitation and neo-colonialism witnessed both in Yemen and Syria can be traced back to historical colonial legacies, particularly through the extraction and control of natural resources such as oil. These legacies have perpetuated economic imbalances, limited local benefits, and contributed to conflict dynamics in both nations. Understanding the role of colonial influence and resource control is vital for addressing underlying grievances and promoting sustainable development in Yemen and Syria.

Conclusions to Chapter 5

The Yemeni civil war perceived as a post-colonial quagmire, influenced by colonial legacies, regional power struggles, proxy wars, and economic exploitation. By deconstructing the conflict through a post-colonial lens, it becomes evident that historical factors and contemporary dynamics have played a significant role in shaping the current crisis.

The colonial legacies and Yemen's fragmented tribes have contributed to the deep–rooted divisions within the country. The imposition of artificial borders by European colonizers disregarded tribal affiliations and created a fragmented society. This has resulted in sustained conflicts among different tribal groups, undermining efforts for peace and stability. The inability to address these historical grievances has perpetuated a cycle of violence and instability. Regional power struggles and proxy wars have further exacerbated the Yemeni civil war. Various regional actors, such as Saudi Arabia and Iran, have been engaged in a geopolitical battle for influence in the region. These external powers have provided support to different factions within Yemen, prolonging the conflict, and the involvement of external actors has turned the conflict into a complex web of competing interests and agendas, making it difficult to find a resolution. Economic exploitation and neo-colonialism have also contributed to the Yemeni civil war. Foreign powers and multinational corporations have exploited Yemen's resources, particularly its oil reserves, for their own economic

interests. This economic exploitation has fuelled social and economic inequalities, exacerbating grievances among the population and providing a fertile ground for the outbreak of hostilities.

In conclusion, further research on post-colonial resistance and liberation movements in the Yemeni Civil War will contribute to a deeper understanding of the complex dynamics at play. By delving into the dimensions of secularism versus Islamism, pan–Arabism and nationalism, and the role of local forces and tribal structures, scholars can make significant contributions to bridging the gaps in knowledge in the area of interest.

Moving forward, Chapter 6 will focus on post-colonial resistance and liberation movements, exploring three key dimensions: secularism versus Islamism, pan–Arabism and nationalism, and the role of local forces and tribal structures. These dimensions are crucial in understanding the complex interplay of ideologies, identities, and power dynamics that have shaped the Yemeni Civil War. One area of further research is the examination of secularism versus Islamism within the Yemeni context. This entails understanding the ideologies, objectives, and challenges faced by secular and Islamist factions in their struggle for influence and authority. Another aspect worth exploring is the role of pan–Arabism and nationalism in the Yemeni Civil War. This involves examining the extent to which these ideologies have influenced the conflict and the responses of various actors. Furthermore, understanding the impact of local forces and tribal structures is essential in grasping the complexities of the Yemeni Civil War.

CHAPTER 6: POST-COLONIAL RESISTANCE AND LIBERATION MOVEMENTS

6.1. Secularism versus Islamism

The conflict between secularism and Islamism in both Syria and Yemen is deeply rooted in historical dynamics and power struggles. In this chapter, we aim to analyse how post-colonial power structures and governance systems have perpetuated inequalities and marginalization, often leading to grievances that contribute to civil conflict. By examining relevant literature and scholarly works, this analysis seeks to shed light on the complex interplay between secularism, Islamism, and the consequences of post-colonial power structures in both countries.

The path that led Syria from an authoritarian regime to a full-blown revolution can be attributed to a complex interplay of historical, political, and socio-economic factors. The French mandate period, characterized by power concentration within a minority ruling class, created deep-seated inequalities and marginalization within Syrian society (Hinnebusch, 2012). This power structure, established during the mandate era, continued to shape post-independence politics, with the Ba'ath Party further consolidating power among a small elitist group at the expense of the majority population (Harling, 2012). The secular ideology embraced by post-independence governments aimed to promote equal citizenship and national unity but also led to the exclusion and marginalization of Islamist groups advocating for a more prominent role for Islam in the political sphere (Khatib, 2015). The rise of Islamic revivalism in Syria, within the framework of Ba'thist secularism, underscored the erosion of secularism and the resurgence of religious identity as a potent force in the country's political landscape (Khatib, 2015).

The role of external actors in exacerbating the Syrian conflict cannot be overlooked. Regional and international powers have intervened in the conflict, fuelling violence and prolonging the war for their strategic interests (Hinnebusch, 2012). The fragmented nature of the opposition movement, as highlighted by Harling (2012), further complicated the conflict dynamics, leading to a protracted civil war with devastating humanitarian consequences.

The regime's secular policies were viewed by Islamist groups as oppressive and monopolistic over political power – the state's restrictive control over religious institutions and public space limited the free practice of Islam, leading to grievances

among Islamists who felt marginalized and voiceless (Cleveland and Bunton, 2019). This marginalization fuelled grievances within the Sunni majority population, leading to a rise in Islamist movements challenging the secular regime. Moreover, the perpetuation of marginalization and inequalities, combined with the tension between secularism and Islamism, has contributed to civil conflict in Syria. The violent repression of Islamist groups, such as the Muslim Brotherhood in the late 1970s and early 1980s, generated deep–rooted grievances that echoed in subsequent uprisings, including the ongoing Syrian civil war (Ajami, 2011). «The bitter struggle for Syria's religious and sectarian landscape» – A. Abdulhamid's contribution in offers a valuable analysis of the religious and sectarian dimensions of the Syrian conflict. By examining the power dynamics between different groups and assessing their historical roots, Abdulhamid presents a comprehensive understanding of the complexities underlying the war. The marginalized Islamist opposition, combined with broader structural factors such as socio–economic inequality, corruption, and lack of political representation, fuelled the eruption of the Syrian uprising in 2011 (Abdulhamid, 2015).

The civil wars in Syria and Yemen have been shaped by a complex interplay of historical, social, and political factors that have deepened sectarian divisions and perpetuated inequalities. Hoffmann (2018) highlights the post-colonial power structures and governance systems that have marginalized certain groups and fuelled grievances, ultimately leading to civil conflict. The exclusion of Islamist groups in Syria, coupled with the concentration of power within a minority ruling class, created a powder keg of tension that erupted in violence in 2011. This underscores the importance of understanding the historical context and power dynamics that have contributed to these conflicts. The rise of extremist factions like ISIS and Al-Qaeda in Syria and Yemen further complicates the conflict dynamics, as they capitalize on grievances stemming from marginalization and inequalities. In order to address the root causes of these conflicts and promote sustainable peace, it is crucial to consider the complexities of sectarian divisions, power imbalances, and historical injustices. This requires a nuanced approach that acknowledges the impact of post-colonial legacies and seeks to promote inclusivity, social justice, and respect for diverse ideologies.

By recognizing the influence of post-colonial power structures and governance systems in shaping the Syrian and Yemeni civil wars, we can better understand the

underlying causes of these conflicts and work towards finding solutions that address systemic inequalities and promote reconciliation. Only by addressing the root causes of conflict can we hope to achieve lasting peace and stability in these regions.

Similarly to Syria, the Yemeni context provides a complex landscape where the tensions between secularism and Islamism have impacted the socio–political environment. In order to understand the dynamics between secularism and Islamism in Yemen, it is crucial to analyse how post-colonial power structures and governance systems have perpetuated inequalities and marginalization, leading to grievances that contribute to civil conflict. This analysis aims to shed light on the historical, social, and political factors that have shaped the Yemeni society and set the stage for the contestation between secular and Islamist ideologies.

The complex political landscape in Yemen is deeply rooted in its colonial legacy, with the arbitrary division of North and South Yemen by the Ottoman and British Empires contributing to diverging socio-political trajectories (Jones, 2014). This division laid the foundation for the unequal power structures that perpetuated grievances and marginalized certain groups within the Yemeni society. The post-colonial authoritarian regimes in both North and South Yemen further exacerbated these inequalities, leading to the concentration of power in the hands of elites and the suppression of dissent (El-Fadl and Longley, 2007). The emergence of Islamist politics in Yemen, represented by groups like the Houthi movement and the Al-Islah Party, is a response to these inequalities and the exclusionary governance systems in place (El-Fadl and Longley, 2007). The Houthi movement, as analysed by Salmoni, Loidolt, and Wells (2010), is a manifestation of local grievances and aspirations that have been marginalized by the centralized power structures in Yemen. These groups have found support among disenfranchised communities seeking alternative models of governance rooted in Islamic principles.

The Arab Spring further highlighted the democratic aspirations of the Yemeni people and their struggles to overcome post-colonial barriers to democratic consolidation (Sadiki, 2013). The neglect of marginalized regions, such as the Houthi stronghold in the North, and the discrimination against minority groups fuelled grievances and resentment, contributing to the cycles of violence and political unrest in the country. In conclusion, the internal dynamics of the civil war in Yemen are deeply intertwined with its colonial legacy, post-colonial power structures, and the emergence of Islamist politics. Addressing these underlying causes of conflict is crucial for moving towards

a more inclusive and stable governance system in Yemen. The contestation between secularism and Islamism in Yemen is rooted in the historical legacy of colonization and the subsequent development of post-colonial power structures and governance systems – these structures perpetuated inequalities and marginalization, creating grievances that contributed to civil conflict. Addressing the root causes of these inequalities and marginalized groups' grievances is crucial for achieving lasting peace in Yemen. By implementing inclusive governance structures and enhancing socio–economic development, Yemen can work towards resolving the tensions between secular and Islamist forces, fostering stability, and promoting social justice.

6.2. Pan–Arabism and Nationalism

The impact of colonialism on the Middle East, particularly in Syria, has played a pivotal role in shaping the ethnic, religious, and tribal identities of the region. During the era of colonial rule, Syrian territories were partitioned and controlled by European powers, primarily France following World War I. These colonizers imposed their own administrative systems, which disrupted existing ethnic, religious, and tribal structures. Consequently, identity formation in Syria became subject to external influences and manipulation, ultimately affecting the country's on–going conflicts. The rise of Kurdish autonomy in Syria, as discussed by Federici (2015), is a direct response to the historical injustices faced by the Kurdish population due to colonial policies and arbitrary territorial divisions in the region. The conflict in Syria is not simply a struggle between the Assad regime and opposition forces, but also a reflection of the complex dynamics between different ethnic groups, including the Kurds. The Kurdish demand for autonomy challenges the traditional notion of statehood and highlights the need for a more inclusive and decentralized form of governance in the region (Federici, 2015).

The emergence of Rojava as a self-governing region in Syria is a significant development that not only empowers the Kurdish population but also sets a precedent for other marginalized groups in the region to assert their rights and demand greater autonomy. By redefining power structures and challenging the dominance of the central government, the Kurds in Rojava have shown that it is possible to create a more democratic and inclusive political system that respects the rights of all ethnic communities. The complexities of the Syrian conflict, as highlighted by Federici, cannot be fully understood without considering the grievances and aspirations of the

Kurdish population (Federici, 2015). The demand for autonomy is not just a quest for power, but a reflection of the long history of oppression and marginalization faced by the Kurds in Syria and beyond. In order to achieve lasting peace and stability in the region, it is crucial to address the legitimate concerns of all ethnic groups and strive towards a more equitable and inclusive political system. Federici's exploration of Kurdish autonomy in the Syrian conflict provides valuable insights into the complexities of the conflict and the importance of recognizing and respecting the rights of marginalized groups (Federici, 2015). By acknowledging the historical injustices faced by the Kurds and supporting their quest for autonomy, we can move towards a more just and inclusive society in Syria and beyond.

Syria has long been characterized by its diverse religious landscape, encompassing Sunni Muslims, Alawites, Christians, and other sects. Colonial rule exacerbated religious tensions due to policies that favoured some groups over others, contributing to an uneven distribution of power. Ethnic and political divisions related to religion continue to play a significant role in the country's conflicts (Heydemann 1999). The historical context of colonialism and post-colonial nation-building efforts in Syria and Yemen has significantly shaped the ethnic, religious, and tribal dynamics that fuel ongoing conflicts in the region. Van Dam (2014) and Alon (2021) both emphasize the importance of tribal affiliations in understanding power struggles and conflict dynamics in Syria. The marginalization of certain groups during nation-building efforts has led to deep-rooted divisions and identity-based conflicts within these countries (Alon, 2021). Vallely (2015) further explores the deliberate ethnic cleansing strategies employed in Syria, highlighting the atrocities committed in the pursuit of political dominance. These factors have exacerbated the conflicts in both countries, as different groups seek to protect their identities or assert control.

In Yemen, the influence of external powers, particularly the Ottoman and British Empires, played a significant role in shaping ethnic, religious, and tribal identities (O'Fahey and John, 2004). This external influence, combined with historical legacies, continues to impact the dynamics of the Yemeni civil war. Anscombe's work on the Ottoman Empire's role in shaping Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar further illustrates how historical factors have contributed to present-day power dynamics in the region. These insights provide a deeper understanding of the complexities of the conflicts in both Syria and Yemen, emphasizing the need to consider historical legacies and power structures in analysing the ongoing turmoil.

Overall, the intricate interplay of ethnic, religious, and tribal identities, shaped by colonial legacies and post-colonial nation-building efforts, has been a significant contributing factor to the conflicts in Syria and Yemen. By understanding the historical context and external influences that have shaped these identities, we can better comprehend the root causes of the conflicts and work towards sustainable solutions for peace and stability in the region.

Many scholars and historians have argued that the Ottoman rule in the Arab world is often taken as a form of colonialism as well (Cole, 1993). The Ottoman Empire's control over Arab lands and its imposition of centralized authority is in this way viewed as a means of exerting power and influence over the native populations. The legacy of colonialism and Ottoman rule in the Arab world has had profound implications on the region's political, social, and cultural dynamics (Anscombe, 2004). The imposition of external control by colonial powers disrupted traditional social structures and identities, leading to the formation of new ethnic, religious, and tribal identities as a means of resistance against foreign domination (Cole, 1993). In Yemen, for example, colonial rule influenced ethnic identity by categorizing the population into distinct groups based on language, race, and culture, contributing to the formation of identities such as the Hadhrami identity along the southern coast (Anscombe, 2004). This categorization affected the perception and interaction among different ethnic groups in Yemen.

Furthermore, the manipulation of religious identity by colonial powers, such as the Ottoman Empire promoting Sunni Islam to counterbalance local Zaydi Shiite powers in Yemen, has contributed to sectarian tensions that persist in the region (Dresch, 2014). These religious divisions have been exploited for political gain and have fuelled conflicts within Yemen.

The complex tribal dynamics in Yemen, highlighted by P. Dresch in "Tribes, Government, and History in Yemen," have also played a significant role in shaping the country's history. Colonialism had a profound impact on tribal structures and relationships, which continue to influence contemporary conflicts in Yemen (Dresch, 2014). Understanding these tribal allegiances and their historical development is crucial for analysing the ongoing civil war in Yemen. Incorporating insights from works such as A. Salāmah's "The Modern History of the Arabs and Yemenis" allows for a more comprehensive exploration of the socio-political transformations in the Arab world, shedding light on the complex interplay between local, regional, and

international factors (Salāmah, Year). By examining the historical roots of conflict in countries like Syria and Yemen, we can better grasp the enduring impact of colonialism and Ottoman rule on the region's current political landscape.

The British encouraged the fragmentation and division of tribes to maintain control over the region, leading to the consolidation of tribal identities over time (Salāmah, 1963). This fragmented tribal system has been prone to conflicts and competition both during colonial times and in the subsequent post-colonial era. Following the departure of colonial powers, Yemen underwent nation–building efforts that sought to forge a unified identity amidst diverse ethnic, religious, and tribal groups (Appendix A. Figure 2). However, these efforts have not been entirely successful in mitigating divisions and conflicts. Post-colonial Yemen witnessed the rise of Arab nationalism and pan–Arabism, ideologies that emphasized unity and solidarity among Arab peoples. The Yemeni Revolution of 1962 was influenced by Arab nationalist sentiments as young officers sought to establish a progressive Arab state (Salāmah, 1963). However, this ideology faced challenges due to tribal and regional affiliations and ultimately led to division and conflict within Yemen. There was also witnessed significant religious divisions, particularly between Zaydi Shiites, who predominantly inhabit the northern regions, and Sunnis, who are prominent in the south (Appendix A. Figure 3). These divisions have been instrumentalized by various political actors, leading to sectarian clashes and tensions (Dresch, 2014). Religious differences continue to shape political alliances and conflicts in Yemen. Despite efforts to build a unified nation, tribal divisions have remained a significant factor in post-colonial Yemen. Tribes have often aligned themselves with different political factions, fostering competition and conflict. The loyalties of tribes often clash with national interests, leading to disputes and further fragmenting Yemeni society (O'Fahey and John, 2004), (Appendix A. Figure 4).

Thus, the ethnic, religious, and tribal identities in Yemen have been shaped by colonialism and subsequent post-colonial nation–building efforts. Colonial categorizations, exploitation of religious differences, and tribal fragmentation have continued to fuel conflicts and exacerbate tensions. Understanding the historical influences on identity formation is crucial for addressing these conflicts and promoting reconciliation within Yemen. Efforts should be directed towards inclusivity, respect for diversity, and dialogue to overcome divisive narratives and build lasting peace in the country.

6.3. Role of Local Forces and Tribal Structures

The conflict which is present in both modern–day Syria and Yemen involves a complex web of local, regional, and international actors, making it crucial to understand the role of local forces and tribal structures. Various resistance movements and liberation struggles in Syria have emerged as a response to colonial legacies and the enduring influence of imperialism. This subsection aims to examine the role of local forces and tribal structures in Syria and Yemen in the context of post-colonialism, exploring how these movements frame their struggle concerning colonial legacies and imperialism.

Thus, the local forces and tribal structures in Syria play a significant role in shaping the country's political dynamics and security situation. The complex tribal landscape of Syria has historically influenced power dynamics, social norms, and local governance structures. «Tribes and the Syrian Revolution» by F. Abu Shakra presents a crucial aspect of the Syrian conflict by examining the role of tribes in the Syrian revolution. Abu Shakra provides valuable insights into the tribal dynamics and their impact on the revolutionary movement. The author effectively delves into the complex relationships between tribes and the national identity, offering a unique perspective on the Syrian Civil War. Tribes in Syria are often organized around extended family networks, which provide a sense of identity, governance, and security within their territories (Abu Shakra, 2019).

«The Alawis in Syria: Their Role in the State and the Civil War» by E. Zisser investigates the role of the Alawis in the Syrian state and their impact on the civil war. By offering historical context and analysing power dynamics, Zisser provides valuable insights into the underexplored aspects of the conflict. The article enhances our understanding of the complex sectarian dynamics in Syria. In contemporary Syria, local forces and tribal structures have become crucial players in the conflict, particularly within the context of the civil war. These forces can have affiliations with different factions, including the Syrian government, opposition groups, or extremist organizations. The alliances forged by local forces and tribal structures largely depend on various factors such as historical allegiances, existing power structures, and strategic calculations (Zisser, 2015). Resistance movements and liberation struggles have played a significant role in the Syrian conflict, challenging the colonial legacies and modern–day imperialist interventions. These movements represent

rejection of external interference and aim to establish self–determination and independence. For example, the Kurdish resistance movement, led predominantly by the People's Protection Units (YPG) and the Women's Protection Units (YPJ), has been at the forefront of the fight against the Islamic State (IS) in Syria (Gunter, 2018). «The Kurdish Ethno–Sectarian Paradigm in Modern–Day Syria: Assimilation and Discrimination» by O. Jamoul explores the assimilation and discrimination that the Kurdish population has encountered in Syria. The author effectively links historical context with contemporary dynamics, providing deep insights into the complexities of the Kurdish question. This contribution demonstrates the interplay between identity, power, and conflict in the region. The Kurdish struggle draws from historical grievances stemming from the colonial division of the Middle East by Western powers, the denial of Kurdish statehood, and the subsequent oppression of the Kurdish population (Jamoul, 2018).

Resistance movements in modern–day Syria frame their struggle within the context of colonial legacies and imperialist interventions. These movements argue that the ongoing unrest in Syria is a manifestation of centuries–old colonial exploitation and the perpetuation of imperialist power structures. They emphasize how European colonial powers, through the Sykes–Picot Agreement of 1916, shaped the political boundaries of the region without considering ethnic, religious, or tribal realities (Abu Shakra, 2019). The imposition of artificial borders and the division of the Arab world during the colonial era are seen as catalysts for contemporary conflicts and the erosion of national identities (Abu Shakra, 2019). «The Impact of Great Powers on the Civil War in Syria» by Z. Chai focuses on the role of great powers in the Syrian Civil War. Through a comprehensive analysis, Chai underscores how external actors have influenced and exacerbated the conflict. The article provides a critical examination of the involvement of global powers, enhancing our understanding of the international dimensions shaping the conflict. Resistance movements argue that the intervention of external powers, such as the United States, Russia, and Iran, in the Syrian conflict perpetuates neo–imperialist agendas. These movements contend that these interventions exploit the power vacuum in post-colonial states, perpetuating structural inequalities, and perpetuating conflicts (Chai, 2018).

We can draw a conclusion that local forces and tribal structures in modern–day Syria play a crucial role in shaping the country's political landscape. Resistance movements and liberation struggles in Syria continue to challenge colonial legacies and address

the enduring influence of imperialism, framing their struggle by highlighting how historical injustices stemming from colonial divisions and imperialist interventions continue to shape the conflict in Syria. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for any comprehensive analysis of the Syrian conflict and the prospects for stability and peace.

As discussed earlier, local forces and tribal structures play a significant role in modern–day Yemen. The decentralized nature of Yemeni society, characterized by the influence of local tribes, has shaped both the dynamics of power and the ongoing conflicts in the country. In addition, the role of resistance movements and liberation struggles has been crucial in challenging the post-colonial order, particularly in relation to the legacies of colonialism and imperialism. Yemen, like many other former colonies, experienced the process of decolonization in the mid–20th century – the withdrawal of British colonial rule in 1967 provided an opportunity for various local forces to assert their influence and challenge the established power structures. One of the major manifestations of this power struggle was the rise of tribal structures as key players in Yemeni politics. Tribes have long been an integral part of Yemeni society, and their role amplified during the post-colonial era.

Tribal structures in Yemen provide a sense of identity, security, and governance for local communities. Despite attempts by the central government to centralize power, tribal affiliations and loyalties have continued to play a significant role in determining social and political dynamics at the local level. Tribes often act as intermediary power brokers between central authorities, international actors, and local communities. They hold the potential to sway alliances, mobilize fighters, and provide legitimacy to various actors (Carapico, 2011). The formerly mentioned Houthi movement, formally known as Ansar Allah, has emerged as a significant resistance movement fighting against external intervention and local power imbalances (Appendix A. Figure 5). «The Modernization of Tribal Yemen» – Edward S. Michael's book delves into the transformation of traditional tribal structures in Yemen. This work examines the impacts of modernization efforts on tribal societies, exploring how socio–economic changes, urbanization, and political transformations affect tribal dynamics. Michael's research provides invaluable insights into the historical foundations and cultural complexities of Yemen, contributing to the deeper understanding of the country's civil war in the thesis. The Houthis, originating from the Zaidi Shiite community, have tapped into the grievances of marginalized tribes and communities in northern

Yemen to rally support against the central government, perceived as corrupt and lacking legitimacy. Their resistance has been framed in the context of colonial legacies and imperialism, particularly pointing out the historical marginalization of their community under colonial and post-colonial regimes (Michael, 1981). «Islamists and the State» – Stacey Philbrick Yadav's book explores the legitimacy and institutions of Islamist groups in Yemen and Lebanon. By analysing the intricate relationship between Islamism and the state, Yadav demonstrates how political institutions shape and respond to Islamist movements. This work plays a critical role in the thesis by investigating the nuanced dynamics of religious and political interactions in both Yemen and Lebanon, offering a comparative framework and aiding in the comprehension of the Yemeni civil war. The Houthi movement draws heavily on Yemen's history of resistance against oppressive regimes, including the British colonization and subsequent exploitation of its resources. By framing their struggle in relation to colonial legacies, the Houthis seek to mobilize support by appealing to a sense of national pride and anti–imperialism. They emphasize the need to reclaim Yemen's sovereignty and establish a just and inclusive political system that addresses historical injustices left by colonialism (Yadav, 2013).

Overall, local forces and tribal structures play a pivotal role in modern–day Yemen. They shape the power dynamics and ongoing conflicts in the country while resisting external interventions and local power imbalances. Resistance movements, such as the Houthi movement, frame their struggle in relation to colonial legacies and imperialism, aiming to mobilize support by appealing to national pride and anti–imperialist sentiments.

Conclusions to Chapter 6

Thus, Chapter 6 explored the post-colonial resistance and liberation movements in Syria and Yemen, focusing on the dynamics of secularism versus Islamism, Pan–Arabism and nationalism, as well as the role of local forces and tribal structures.

The discourse surrounding secularism versus Islamism in both Syria and Yemen is complex and multifaceted. The struggle for power between these two ideologies has shaped the political landscape of both countries. In Syria, the Ba'ath Party, which promotes secularism and Arab nationalism, has dominated the political scene for decades, albeit facing opposition from Islamist groups. On the other hand, Yemen has seen a rise in Islamist movements like the Muslim Brotherhood, challenging the

secular government and advocating for a more Islamic state. Further research is needed to understand the factors that contribute to the popularity of these ideologies and how they influence political dynamics in both countries. Pan–Arabism and nationalism have also played significant roles in shaping the post-colonial era in Syria and Yemen. The idea of a united Arab world and the desire to assert national identity have driven both countries' struggles for independence. The research should delve deeper into the impact of Pan–Arabism and nationalism on the formation of political systems, as well as their role in perpetuating conflicts and divisions within societies. The role of local forces and tribal structures in both Syria and Yemen cannot be underestimated. These elements have been influential in shaping power dynamics, influencing political alliances, and even impacting the outcomes of conflicts. Understanding the interests and motivations of local forces and tribal actors is crucial for assessing the broader political landscape and potential avenues for resolution and stability.

In conclusion, the post-colonial resistance and liberation movements in Syria and Yemen are complex and multifaceted. The ideologies of secularism and Islamism, the concepts of Pan–Arabism and nationalism, the role of local forces and tribal structures, as well as the humanitarian implications and regional power dynamics, all contribute to the intricate political landscapes of these nations. Future research in these areas is essential for both a comprehensive scientific understanding of the issues at hand, and taking practical efforts towards building a lasting peace, stability, and the well–being of the people in both Yemen and Syria.

Further research on this topic in Chapter 7 will explore the humanitarian implications of post-colonial resistance and liberation movements in Syria and Yemen. Both countries have faced significant humanitarian crises, including mass displacement, food insecurity, and the targeting of civilians. Investigating the impact of political dynamics on humanitarian situations can provide valuable insights and inform strategies for addressing the needs of affected populations. Moreover, it is essential to analyse the regional power dynamics in both countries. Syria and Yemen have been caught in regional rivalries, with various external actors providing support to different factions. Understanding the motivations and interests of regional powers, such as Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey, can provide a deeper understanding of the ongoing conflicts and potential avenues for regional cooperation and resolution.

CHAPTER 7: HUMANITARIAN IMPLICATIONS AND REGIONAL POWER DYNAMICS

7.1. Refugee Crisis and Displacement

Since its beginning in 2011, the Syrian conflict has resulted in one of the largest refugee crises in modern history (Appendix A. Figure 6). This crisis has forced millions of Syrians to flee their homes, seeking refuge in neighbouring countries and beyond. By examining the refugee crisis and displacement in Syria through a post-colonial lens, we can gain a deeper understanding of the complex historical and geopolitical factors that have had significant implications for displaced Syrians and their struggle for justice and socio–economic stability.

Neo-colonial influences and geopolitical interests have played a significant role in shaping the Syrian conflict and exacerbating the refugee crisis. International and regional powers have often pursued their own strategic interests in Syria, further complicating efforts to resolve the conflict and address its consequences. Powerful nations from the West and the Middle East have strategically intervened, providing support to various factions involved in the conflict, leading to extended violence and displacement. When analysing the refugee crisis in Syria, it is essential to critically examine how Syrian refugees are portrayed and represented in the media, academic literature, and political discourse. The article by Alakoc, Goksel, and Zarycht highlights the significant role of political discourse in shaping public attitudes toward Syrian refugees in Turkey (Alakoc, Goksel, and Zarychta, 2021). The authors emphasize how political actors use rhetoric and policies to influence public perception of refugees, ultimately impacting the socio-political landscape of the country. This observation is particularly crucial in a post-colonial context, where historical power dynamics and relationships play a role in shaping attitudes toward refugees. One key point that emerges from the article is the manipulation of fear and xenophobia by political actors to advance their agendas. By framing refugees as a threat to national security or cultural identity, these actors are able to sway public opinion and garner support for restrictive policies. This not only perpetuates negative stereotypes and discrimination against refugees but also perpetuates a cycle of exclusion and marginalization.

Moreover, the authors discuss how political discourse can reinforce existing power structures and inequalities within society. By portraying refugees as helpless victims

or burdens on the state, political actors can divert attention from underlying issues of poverty, unemployment, and social inequality. This serves to maintain the status quo and deflects attention from addressing the root causes of the refugee crisis. By understanding how rhetoric and policies shape public perception, we can work towards challenging negative stereotypes and promoting a more inclusive and compassionate approach to refugee integration. As Alakoc, Goksel, and Zarycht argue, it is essential for policymakers, civil society actors, and the general public to critically engage with the narratives surrounding refugees and strive for a more just and equitable society. (Alakoc, Goksel, and Zarychta, 2021). As such, post-colonial theory highlights the power dynamics between the West and the Middle East, often leading to the reductionist framing of refugees solely as victims or threats – this simplistic representation perpetuates stereotypes and denies the agency and resilience of displaced Syrians, failing to address their complex realities and aspirations (Alakoc, Goksel, and Zarychta, 2021).

Western intervention and aid policies aimed at managing the refugee crisis have also had unintended consequences. Often driven by national security concerns, the emphasis has been on containment, border controls, and securitization, rather than addressing the root causes of displacement and building sustainable solutions. These approaches, influenced by lingering colonial attitudes, overlook the deep–seated socioeconomic and political factors that have led to the crisis.

Examining the refugee crisis through a post-colonial lens necessitates analysing the challenges faced by Syrian refugees when seeking asylum in host countries. While international legal frameworks exist to protect the rights of refugees, in practice, they are often undermined or selectively applied. Border policies, discriminatory practices, and xenophobia further marginalize and endanger the rights of displaced Syrians, highlighting the ongoing power imbalances embedded in global politics (Tanrıkulu, 2020). The article "Syrian Asylum Seekers and The Question of Living in Turkey or Returning to Their Home Country: Mardin Case" by F. Tanrıkulu sheds light on the complex dilemma faced by Syrian asylum seekers in Turkey (Tanrıkulu, 2020). The author's exploration of the experiences and perceptions of Syrians in Mardin reveals the various factors that impact their decision-making process. Tanrıkulu's findings suggest that many Syrian asylum seekers grapple with the tension between the desire to return to their homeland and the challenges of living as refugees in Turkey.

One key insight from the article is the significance of the post-colonial implications of forced displacement on the decision-making of Syrian asylum seekers. The historical context of colonialism and imperialism in the region has contributed to the displacement of many Syrians, shaping their sense of identity and attachment to their homeland. This complicates the decision to either remain in Turkey or return to Syria, as asylum seekers may feel torn between their desire to preserve their cultural heritage and the hope for a better future in their home country. Furthermore, the challenges faced by refugees in their host countries, such as limited access to basic services and economic opportunities, also play a significant role in shaping their decisions (Tanrıkulu, 2020). The precarious living conditions in refugee camps or urban areas in Turkey may push asylum seekers to consider returning to Syria despite the risks involved. This highlights the complex interplay of political, economic, and social factors that influence the decision-making process of Syrian asylum seekers.

To address the refugee crisis and displacement in Syria, it is crucial to adopt a post-colonial perspective that acknowledges historical injustices and challenges prevailing power structures. «What makes the 'refugee crisis' a crisis? Displaced Syrians' reflections on dignity» – an article by Wendy Pearlman delves into the subjective experiences and reflections of displaced Syrians, focusing on the concept of dignity. By giving voice to the displaced Syrians themselves, Pearlman sheds light on the multifaceted dimensions of the so–called «refugee crisis» This source adds a humanistic perspective, highlighting the importance of dignity in understanding the lived experiences of individuals affected by the Syrian civil war. A rights–based approach that prioritizes sustainable development, community involvement, and local capacity–building is needed. Genuine international cooperation, acknowledging the agency of displaced Syrians, and addressing the root causes of the conflict are essential for achieving lasting solutions. Analysing the refugee crisis and displacement in Syria through a post-colonial lens highlights the historical, geopolitical, and socio–economic factors that contribute to the ongoing suffering of millions of Syrians (Pearlman, 2021). Thus, recognizing the lingering effects of colonialism and neo-colonial dynamics is crucial for understanding the structural challenges and power imbalances that perpetuate the crisis. Addressing the root causes and adopting an inclusive and emancipatory approach are necessary steps to create sustainable solutions for the displaced Syrians and promote social justice and stability in the region.

The escalating conflict in Yemen has also significantly contributed to a severe refugee crisis and displacement, exacerbating an already dire humanitarian situation in the country. In its current state, Yemen is currently experiencing one of the world's worst humanitarian crises due to the ongoing civil war and political instability (Appendix A. Figure 7). The conflict, which began in 2015, has resulted in an estimated 233,000 deaths and has displaced millions of people, both internally and externally (UNHCR, 2023). As of December 2023, Yemen had over 4,5 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) (UNHCR, 2023), while over 280,000 Yemenis sought refuge in neighbouring countries, such as Saudi Arabia, Oman, and Djibouti (UNHCR, 2021). Additionally, an estimated 71,000 refugees and asylum seekers from other countries are also present in Yemen, further aggravating the crisis (UNHCR, 2021).

The refugee crisis in Yemen is deeply rooted in the country's long–standing political instability, characterized by a fragile government system, weak state institutions, and tribal conflicts. These factors have created an environment conducive to armed conflict and have impeded the state's ability to protect its citizens and manage the influx of refugees (Ripoll, Burkle, Ragazzoni, Della Corte, 2016). The involvement of regional powers, such as Saudi Arabia and Iran, in Yemen's civil war has added fuel to the fire. This has intensified the conflict, leading to increased displacement and worsened the humanitarian crisis. The refugee crisis and displacement in Yemen have far–reaching implications for the affected populations, as well as the broader regional context. The displacement crisis has severely affected the availability and accessibility of essential resources, such as food, water, healthcare, and education. This has resulted in widespread malnutrition, disease outbreaks, and limited access to adequate medical services, particularly affecting vulnerable groups such as women, children, and the elderly (Tanrıkulu, 2020). The inability to meet the basic needs of displaced populations has created a dire humanitarian catastrophe (La Zinu, 2022). The prolonged displacement and refugee influx have strained the limited resources and infrastructure of host communities in Yemen, exacerbating existing economic fragility. The competition for resources has led to rising tensions between host communities and the displaced, giving rise to social and economic inequalities. The displacement crisis has also created a security vacuum, enabling various armed groups, including extremist factions, to exploit the situation. This has further

destabilized the region, increased the risk of radicalization, and posed a threat to the international community.

Similarly to Syria, we can draw a conclusion that the refugee crisis and displacement in modern–day Yemen are deeply rooted in political instability, regional conflicts, and the breakdown of basic state functions. The implications of this crisis are severe, encompassing a humanitarian catastrophe, socioeconomic consequences, and security concerns. Addressing the root causes of the conflict, supporting humanitarian efforts, and promoting diplomatic solutions are essential steps towards mitigating the consequences of the refugee crisis in Yemen and ensuring the protection and well-being of affected populations.

7.2. Foreign Aid and Hegemonic Interests

Currently, foreign aid plays a significant role in addressing humanitarian crises and facilitating development in countries affected by conflict. However, it is essential to recognize that foreign aid is not solely driven by altruism but often influenced by the strategic interests of hegemonic powers – more specifically, it is used as a means to exert influence and project power, can be seen in the context of the post-colonial Syrian crisis. «Masters of Mankind: Essays and Lectures, 1969–2013», a compilation of Noam Chomsky's influential writings and speeches, offers critical perspectives on various aspects of power, politics, and imperialism. While not directly focused on the Syrian and Yemeni civil wars, Chomsky's work provides a theoretical framework rooted in post-colonial thought. His analysis of the dynamics of power and control in global politics can enrich the understanding of the underlying structures that shaped and perpetuated these conflicts. According to Chomsky (2013), powerful countries have historically used foreign aid to advance their economic and political interests, maintaining control over weaker nations. The interests of hegemonic powers shape the decisions regarding the allocation, disbursement, and conditions attached to foreign aid.

Reintegrating armed groups after conflict is a complex and multifaceted process that requires a deep understanding of the political motivations and violence involved. Berdal and Ucko's edited volume on wars-related displacement highlights the challenges and strategies involved in demobilization, disarmament, and reintegration (DDR) processes, shedding light on the complexities of post-conflict transitions (Berdal, and Ucko, 2012). In the case of Syria and Yemen, where ongoing conflicts

have devastated societies and created deep divisions, the insights provided in this book are invaluable in understanding the dynamics at play.

In Syria, for example, the reintegration of armed groups involves navigating a deeply fragmented landscape of competing interests and power dynamics. The political motivations of various armed groups, including rebel forces and extremist factions, play a central role in shaping the post-conflict environment. Understanding these motivations is crucial in developing effective strategies for DDR and promoting stability in the region. Similarly, in Yemen, where multiple armed groups have been involved in the conflict, the complexities of reintegration are compounded by regional rivalries and external interventions (Berdal, and Ucko, 2012). By analysing the challenges and strategies involved in the reintegration of armed groups, Berdal and Ucko's work provides a nuanced understanding of post-conflict dynamics in Syria and Yemen (Berdal, and Ucko, 2012). Their insights underscore the importance of addressing the underlying political motivations and violence that drive armed conflict, and emphasize the need for comprehensive and inclusive DDR processes to promote sustainable peace and stability in conflict-affected societies.

Geopolitical factors significantly influence foreign aid distribution. In the Syrian crisis, major powers, such as the United States and Russia, utilize foreign aid to advance their broader geopolitical objectives (Appendix A. Figure 8). For instance, the United States has strategically provided aid to factions in line with its own interests, aiming to promote its influence and counter adversaries. Conversely, Russia has similarly employed foreign aid to bolster its geopolitical position by supporting the Syrian regime (Berdal and Ucko, 2018). Foreign aid in post-colonial crises often intersects with economic interests, as wealthy nations seek to secure access to resources and markets. «Political Ecology and the Epistemology of Social Justice» by Thomas Forsyth, examines the role of political ecology in understanding social and environmental justice issues. While not directly addressing the Syrian and Yemeni civil wars, this article offers a theoretical framework that can be applied to explore issues of power, inequality, and resource management in conflict–affected regions. By adopting a post-colonial lens, this source can contribute to a deeper understanding of the root causes and dynamics of these civil wars. In the Syrian crisis, the presence of valuable energy resources has attracted the attention of global powers – thus, Russia, China, and some Gulf states have provided aid while concurrently seeking economic opportunities and resource extraction within Syria (Forsyth, 2014).

This shows how foreign aid can be partially prioritized based on the search for economic gains. The Syrian crisis has witnessed a massive influx of humanitarian aid from various donors worldwide. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that alongside providing assistance to the affected population, foreign aid also serves as a tool to advance political objectives. «The Political Nature of Humanitarian Aid in the Syrian Civil War» by Danyel Romano provides a specific analysis of how humanitarian aid has been politicized in the context of the Syrian civil war. This article highlights the complex political dimensions that shape humanitarian interventions, which are often influenced by geopolitical interests, power dynamics, and the agendas of external actors. By examining the Syrian case, this source sheds light on the challenges and implications of providing aid in conflict settings, which can be applied to the Yemeni civil war as well. Donor countries selectively provide aid to certain groups based on political allegiances and strategic calculations (Romano, 2019). This highlights the dual nature of foreign aid, combining humanitarian relief efforts with political manoeuvring.

Overall, foreign aid's distribution in the post-colonial Syrian crisis is influenced by a complex interplay of humanitarian concerns, strategic interests, and geopolitical factors. Hegemonic powers often employ foreign aid to exert control, advance economic interests, and shape political outcomes. While aid aims to alleviate suffering, it should be critically examined to address potential biases and ensure it serves the best interests of affected populations. A more nuanced understanding of foreign aid in post-colonial crises is crucial for ethical and effective response strategies.

The current situation in Yemen has similarly attracted considerable attention from the international community, with various actors providing foreign aid to address the dire conditions. However, beneath the surface of altruistic motives, hegemonic interests often shape the dynamics of foreign aid provision and utilization. «Saudi Arabia's foreign aid: the singularity of Yemen as a case study» – Javier Bordón and Eyad Alrefai provide an insightful analysis of Saudi Arabia's foreign aid in the context of the Yemeni civil war. The authors adopt a post-colonial lens to deconstruct the dynamics and motivations behind Saudi Arabia's aid to Yemen. Bordón and Alrefai argue that Saudi Arabia's aid to Yemen cannot be viewed solely through a humanitarian lens but must be understood within the historical and geopolitical context of the region. Hegemonic powers, such as the United States, Saudi Arabia,

and Iran, play a central role in shaping foreign aid dynamics in Yemen (Bordón, and Alrefai, 2023). Their engagement in the Yemeni crisis is influenced by strategic calculations, regional rivalries, and resource acquisition objectives. The United States, for instance, has supported the Saudi–led coalition militarily, aligning their assistance with geopolitical interests to maintain influence in the region. Similarly, Iran has been accused of providing support to Houthi rebels to counter Saudi influence, thereby furthering its own political agenda (Appendix A. Figure 9). As such, the divergence of priorities between the donor and recipient countries leads to a misalignment of aid strategies and a diversion of resources away from the most vulnerable populations. Additionally, the politicization of aid can exacerbate existing conflicts, deepen divisions, and hinder efforts to achieve sustainable peace.

Hegemonic interests also impede the long–term sustainability of aid interventions in Yemen. Utilization of aid for political purposes can perpetuate dependency, hinder local capacity–building, and undermine the development of self–reliance. Moreover, the imposition of conditionalities by donor countries may prioritize short–term objectives over long–term stability, leading to inadequate investment in key sectors such as health, education, and infrastructure.

Alqatabry and Butcher raise critical questions about the nature of humanitarian aid in Yemen, pointing out the potential for aid efforts to be co–opted by external actors for their own agendas (Alqatabry and Butcher, 2020). This perspective sheds light on the complex dynamics at play in humanitarian interventions, where the needs of the local population may not always align with the priorities of external donors or organizations. The authors highlight the importance of considering the power dynamics and political interests that can influence humanitarian aid delivery, ultimately impacting the effectiveness and sustainability of these efforts. One key insight from Alqatabry and Butcher's analysis is the need for greater transparency and accountability in humanitarian aid operations in Yemen (Alqatabry and Butcher, 2020). By questioning the extent to which aid is truly collaborative or co–opted, the authors underscore the importance of ensuring that aid is driven by the needs and priorities of the affected population. This calls for a revaluation of the processes through which aid decisions are made, as well as a re-examination of the power dynamics that can shape aid delivery in complex contexts like Yemen.

Researchers also highlight the power imbalance between international donors and local actors, which often leads to the co–optation of local aid organizations and the

imposition of external agendas. This pattern risks perpetuating the cycle of poverty and political instability, constraining Yemen's path to recovery (Alqatabry and Butcher, 2020). For improvement in this field, donor countries should focus on coordinating their efforts to ensure the provided aid is strategically and effectively deployed, in order to address the most urgent needs. This approach reduces duplication of efforts and ensures a comprehensive response to the crisis. The establishment of transparent and accountable mechanisms for aid delivery and utilization is also crucial, as greater transparency and oversight will help mitigate opportunistic behaviour and ensure aid serves its intended purpose. Did interventions should also prioritize local ownership and empowerment to foster sustainable development, as investing in local institutions, human capital, and infrastructure can build resilience and enable Yemen to recover from the crisis independently.

7.3. Role of Regional Actors in Fuelling the Wars

The Syrian civil war, which began in 2011, has witnessed multiple regional actors contributing to its escalation. These actors, including neighbouring states and international players, have exerted their influence through various means, exacerbating the conflict and prolonging the suffering of the Syrian people.

The involvement of external actors, such as the CIA, in providing arms to the Syrian opposition adds a layer of complexity to the ongoing conflict in Syria. This support not only shapes the dynamics on the ground but also reflects broader geopolitical interests at play in the region (Finer and Schmitt, 2012). As Phillips (2016) highlights in his book, the international rivalries in the new Middle East have further complicated the Syrian conflict, with different actors pursuing their own agendas and competing for influence. This underscores the need for a nuanced understanding of the multiple layers of the conflict and the diverse interests at stake.

Turkey, as a neighbouring country to Syria, has been deeply involved in the conflict, both in supporting certain opposition groups and in managing its own security concerns along its border (Phillips, 2016). This involvement has added another dimension to the complex web of relationships and interests shaping the conflict in Syria. By examining the roles of various international actors, we can better grasp the interconnected nature of the conflict and the impact of external interventions on its trajectory. On one hand, Turkey has supported and provided refuge to Syrian opposition groups, aiming to weaken the Syrian government and its allies. This

assistance has included training and equipping armed opposition groups, potentially leading to increased violence (Finer and Schmitt, 2015). On the other hand, Turkey has also been criticized for indirectly supporting extremist elements within the opposition, potentially intensifying radicalization and further militarization of the conflict (Phillips, 2016). The Syrian conflict has been fuelled by a complex web of external actors who have supplied arms and support to various factions, shaping the dynamics of the war. Saudi Arabia and Qatar's backing of Sunni opposition groups aimed to counter Iran's influence but inadvertently fuelled the rise of extremist groups like ISIS and Al-Nusra Front (Lefèvre, 2015; Gause, 2014). Iran's extensive support for the Syrian government, driven by its strategic interests in maintaining regional influence, has prolonged the conflict and escalated violence with the help of Iranian-backed militias like Hezbollah (Nakhle, 2018). Russia's intervention in Syria in 2015 further altered the conflict by bolstering the Syrian government's military capabilities to counter Western influence and safeguard its interests in the region (Rosental, 2018).

These external interventions have not only prolonged the conflict in Syria but have also exacerbated the humanitarian crisis and posed security threats regionally and globally. The support provided to various factions has often ended up in the hands of extremist groups, leading to further instability in the region. Additionally, the geopolitical competition between major Middle Eastern powers has further complicated the conflict, turning it into a proxy war with far-reaching consequences. In conclusion, the Syrian conflict is a multi-dimensional and complex crisis that has been heavily influenced by external actors with their own strategic interests. The armament and support provided to different factions have not only prolonged the war but have also fuelled the rise of extremism and further destabilized the region. A comprehensive approach that addresses the root causes of the conflict and involves all relevant stakeholders is needed to reach a lasting solution to the crisis in Syria. While each actor pursues its own interests, these interventions have led to unintended consequences such as the rise of extremist groups, increasing violence, and regional instability. Resolving the Syrian conflict necessitates recognizing and addressing the diverse and complex engagements of these regional actors.

In Yemen, alongside internal factors contributing to the conflict, the involvement of various regional actors has played a crucial role in fuelling and prolonging the war. This way, Saudi Arabia has been a key regional actor deeply involved in the Yemeni

conflict (Appendix A. Figure 11). Its intervention in Yemen, named Operation Decisive Storm, began in March 2015 with the aim of restoring the internationally recognized government of President Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi. Saudi Arabia has provided military support, including air strikes, ground troops, and weapons, to counter the Houthi rebels' advances. This military intervention has fueled the conflict by increasing the scale of violence, exacerbating civilian casualties, and causing significant infrastructure damage (UN Panel of Experts, 2018).

Iran's increasing support for the Houthi rebels in Yemen's civil war has been a significant factor in prolonging the conflict and exacerbating the humanitarian crisis in the region. The article by Saul, Hafezi, and Georgy underscores the role of external influences in fuelling the violence and highlights the complex post-colonial power dynamics at play in the Middle East (Saul, Hafezi, and Georgy, 2017). Iran's support for the Houthis not only enables the rebels to continue their fight against the internationally recognized government in Yemen but also contributes to regional instability and geopolitical tensions. As a major regional power, Iran's backing of the Houthis reflects its strategic interests in the region and its rivalry with Saudi Arabia, which supports the Yemeni government. This proxy war between Iran and Saudi Arabia in Yemen has further complicated efforts to achieve a peaceful resolution to the conflict.

The implications of Iran's support for the Houthis go beyond Yemen's borders and have broader implications for the region. By backing a rebel group that has been responsible for numerous human rights violations and attacks on civilians, Iran is fuelling instability and undermining efforts to restore peace and stability in Yemen. Moreover, Iran's involvement in Yemen's civil war contributes to the broader sectarian tensions in the region, further complicating efforts to address the root causes of conflict and displacement.

The Houthi rebels, who control parts of Yemen, have received military and financial support from Iran. Iran's support to the Houthi rebels includes the provision of arms, training, and advisors, enabling them to sustain their insurgency. Additionally, Iran's involvement in Yemen can be interpreted as part of its broader regional proxy rivalry with Saudi Arabia (Saul, Hafezi, and Georgy, 2017). This has contributed to the protracted nature of the conflict and hindered prospects for a negotiated settlement. The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is another crucial regional actor involved in the Yemeni conflict. Initially, the UAE supported Saudi Arabia's intervention in Yemen

but later adopted an independent strategy by supporting secessionist movements in southern Yemen. This support has armed and trained various southern separatist groups, such as the Southern Transitional Council (STC), which has complicated efforts for a unified national government in Yemen (Saul, Hafezi, and Georgy, 2017). The UAE's actions have further fragmented Yemen's political landscape and hindered peace negotiations. The role of the United States in the Yemeni conflict has also been significant, albeit indirect. The US has been a major supplier of weapons, including airstrikes and logistical support, to the Saudi–led coalition. The US support to Saudi Arabia has come under scrutiny due to the high civilian casualty rates resulting from airstrikes (Appendix A. Figure 12). However, in recent years, the US has shown increased concern over the impact of the conflict, particularly due to the humanitarian crisis. Consequently, the US has suspended arms sales to Saudi Arabia and attempted to mediate diplomatic negotiations (Al–Salehi, 2021).

We can conclude that the war in Yemen has been prolonged and exacerbated by the involvement of various regional actors, each pursuing their own interests and objectives. Those countries have contributed to the escalation of violence, fragmentation of the country, and the perpetuation of suffering among the Yemeni population. In order to effectively address the conflict, it is crucial to consider and address the roles played by these regional actors, and work towards a comprehensive regional, as well as international, solution.

Conclusions to Chapter 7

Chapter 7 has explored the humanitarian implications and regional power dynamics in relation to three key subsections: the refugee crisis and displacement, foreign aid and hegemonic interests, and the role of regional actors in fuelling wars. This chapter aimed to shed light on the complex connections between these factors and their impact on both the affected populations and the regional power dynamics.

The first subsection delved into the immense challenges posed by the displacement of millions of people fleeing from conflict–ridden areas. It highlighted the strain it places on both the refugees and the host countries, emphasizing the need for effective humanitarian responses and international cooperation to address the root causes of such crises. Further research on this topic could explore the long–term effects on individuals and communities, including the psychological and social impacts, as well as potential solutions to facilitate the integration and empowerment of displaced

populations. The second subsection analysed the role of foreign aid in the context of humanitarian crises, focusing on its potential instrumentalization for hegemonic interests. This section examined how aid can sometimes be used by powerful actors as a means to exert influence and control over recipient countries. Future research in this area could delve deeper into specific case studies and examine the extent to which aid conditionality can perpetuate power imbalances and hinder progress towards long–term stability and self–sufficiency. Lastly, subsection 5.3 explored the intricate involvement of regional actors in exacerbating conflicts, often driven by their own strategic interests. The chapter discussed the complex web of alliances, proxy wars, and interventions carried out by these actors, highlighting their contribution to prolonged and intensified violence. Further research could delve into specific regional dynamics, analysing the motivations behind regional actors' involvement.

To further the understanding of humanitarian implications and regional power dynamics, future research should also explore the intersectionality of these issues with factors such as gender, ethnicity, and religion. Additionally, a comparative analysis of different regions and conflicts would provide valuable insights into the variations and commonalities in these dynamics.

In conclusion, the topics examined in this chapter underscore the critical need for comprehensive and informed approaches to addressing humanitarian crises and regional power dynamics. It is crucial to not only understand the immediate consequences but also the long–term effects and underlying causes to effectively respond to these complex challenges. By conducting further research, policymakers, academics, and humanitarian practitioners can gain a deeper understanding of the intricacies of these issues, ultimately guiding more effective policies and interventions.

CONCLUSION

Drawing a conclusion, it is worth mentioning that by deconstructing the Syrian and Yemeni civil wars through a post-colonial lens, we can gain a deeper understanding of how historical legacies of colonialism and ongoing imperialist influences have contributed to these complex and protracted conflicts. This perspective can help shed light on the underlying causes and dynamics of the conflicts and inform efforts towards peace and reconciliation as it exposes the continued exploitation and manipulation of these regions, not only by former colonial powers but also by current global actors, who exploit resources and geopolitical interests at the expense of local populations. The provided perspective also underscores the need for inclusive and equitable approaches to ending the conflicts, as well as addressing the root causes of socio-economic disparities, political marginalization, and sectarian divisions. By recognizing the historical context and the ongoing power imbalances, it becomes evident that a lasting solution requires not only a cessation of violence but also a comprehensive effort to address the deeper structural and historical factors that have fuelled these conflicts. The post-colonial lens helps to challenge dominant narratives and discourses that often simplify and misrepresent the complexity of these conflicts. It encourages a more nuanced understanding of the diverse actors involved, their motivations, and the intersecting factors that shape and perpetuate these conflicts. By confronting these biases and assumptions, we can foster more informed and inclusive discussions about the path towards peace and stability in Syria and Yemen. Ultimately, deconstructing the Syrian and Yemeni civil wars through a post-colonial lens invites us to confront uncomfortable truths about the legacy of colonialism and ongoing imperialist influences, and interrogate the global power dynamics that continue to shape and perpetuate conflict in the region. Only by challenging these historical and structural injustices can we hope to foster genuine peace, reconciliation, and justice in Syria, Yemen, and other conflict-affected regions.

Throughout this thesis, we have analysed the Syrian and Yemeni civil wars through a post-colonial lens, examining the colonial continuities and discontinuities that have shaped the trajectories of these conflicts. By delving into the colonial legacies, sectarianism, external interventions, fragmented tribes, regional power struggles, economic exploitation, and neo-colonialism, we have uncovered the multifaceted dimensions of these conflicts.

One of the key findings of this study is that the colonial legacy has played a significant role in shaping the statehood of both Syria and Yemen. The imposition of artificial borders, foreign political systems, and governance structures has resulted in political and social instability, exacerbating tensions between different ethnic and religious groups. Sectarianism and identity politics have also been crucial factors in these conflicts. The manipulation of sectarian fault lines by both domestic and external actors has further deepened divisions and fuelled violence. The struggle for control over resources and power has often been framed in sectarian terms, leading to further polarizations and escalating the conflicts. External interventions have further complicated the dynamics of these conflicts. Regional power struggles and proxy wars have turned these civil wars into quagmires where multiple actors with divergent interests are involved. These interventions have prolonged the conflicts and hindered prospects for peaceful resolutions.

Moreover, economic exploitation and neo-colonialism have played significant roles in perpetuating these conflicts. The extraction of resources and economic dominance by external powers have exacerbated inequalities and power imbalances, contributing to grievances and fuelling resistance. In examining post-colonial resistance and liberation movements, we have witnessed the complex interplay between secularism and Islamism, as well as pan–Arabism and nationalism. These ideologies have shaped the agendas and strategies of various factions, sometimes leading to unity, but often exacerbating divisions within societies. Local forces and tribal structures have also played a significant role in both conflicts. By understanding the complexities of tribal dynamics and their historical relations with the state, we gain insights into the power struggles and alliances that have shaped the conflicts.

The study has also highlighted the humanitarian implications and regional power dynamics inherent in these conflicts. The refugee crisis and displacement have had far–reaching consequences, placing immense strain on neighbouring countries and international aid agencies. Efforts towards peace and reconciliation must be mindful of the historical legacies of colonialism and the ongoing imperialist influences. Policies aiming at resolving these conflicts must address the underlying causes and dynamics, tackling issues such as sectarianism, identity politics, economic exploitation, and regional power struggles.

Overall, understanding the Syrian and Yemeni civil wars through a post-colonial lens offers valuable insights into the historical, political, economic, and social factors that

have fuelled these conflicts. It is imperative that policymakers, researchers, and practitioners apply this perspective in their work towards a more peaceful and just world. However, there are certain limitations that need to be acknowledged in order to provide a comprehensive understanding of the study's scope and findings.

One of the main limitations of this study is the issue of generalizability. The research focuses specifically on the Syrian and Yemeni civil wars and applies a post-colonial lens to analyse them. While this approach provides a unique and insightful perspective, it significantly narrows the scope of the study. Thus, the findings and conclusions may not be easily applicable to other conflicts or regions. Consequently, caution must be exercised when attempting to draw broader conclusions about international relationships and social studies based solely on this study's analysis. Another limitation is the potential bias inherent in the chosen methodology. By employing a post-colonial lens, the study may inadvertently overlook or downplay other significant factors that contribute to the conflicts in Syria and Yemen. While it is undoubtedly important to study the impact of historical colonial legacies, there are other crucial aspects such as local power struggles, sectarian divisions, geopolitical interests, and religious extremism that should not be overlooked. Ignoring these factors could lead to an incomplete understanding of the conflict dynamics.

Furthermore, the study's methodology itself may pose limitations. It is crucial to critically evaluate the selection of primary sources and data collection methods utilized in this research. Bias or limited availability of data may restrict the researchers' ability to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the civil wars. The study should have addressed these limitations explicitly and outlined the steps taken to mitigate potential biases during the data collection and analysis processes. Additionally, the study would benefit from incorporating various research methodologies to triangulate findings and enhance the credibility of the conclusions. The study might overlook the agency of local actors – by applying a post-colonial lens it could inadvertently perpetuate a perspective that portrays these regions solely as victims of oppressive external forces. While colonial legacies undoubtedly influence the dynamics of conflicts, it is important to consider the agency and decisions of key regional actors in shaping the outcomes of these wars. Neglecting this aspect may oversimplify the complexities of the conflicts and hinder a deeper understanding of the local dynamics. Lastly, it is crucial to consider temporal and contextual limitations. The study may have focused mainly on historical and

background analysis, potentially neglecting recent developments, shifts in power dynamics, and ongoing peace processes. Consequently, the findings may not fully capture the current state of affairs in Syria and Yemen. Future research should consider updating and expanding upon this study's findings to account for changing circumstances and implications.

By understanding and addressing these limitations, future researchers can build upon this study's findings and contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of international relationships and social studies in conflict–ridden regions. Addressing these conflicts requires a multidimensional analysis, integrating perspectives from international relations and social studies and employing a post-colonial lens. This approach allows for a comprehensive examination of how legacies of colonialism continue to shape contemporary conflicts.

The fruitful area of future research lies in the exploration of the historical roots of the Syrian and Yemeni civil wars, with an emphasis on the enduring legacies of colonialism. Researchers can investigate how the imposition of artificial borders and colonial policies shaped the ethnic, religious, and political dynamics of these regions. A thorough analysis could shed light onto how these dynamics have contributed to the outbreaks of violence and the exacerbation of societal divisions. Another area of study is the examination of post-colonial identities and nationalism in Syria and Yemen. Researchers can explore how the struggles for national sovereignty and the construction of national identities in the aftermath of colonial rule have influenced the course of these conflicts. Understanding the role of collective memory, historical grievances, and narratives of victimhood could provide valuable insights into the motivations and behaviours of different actors involved.

The economic dimensions of the civil wars in Syria and Yemen also merit further investigation. Researchers can analyse the role of resource politics and economic interests in shaping these conflicts. This could involve examining patterns of resource exploitation, the impact of economic inequalities, and the influence of external actors seeking to secure strategic resources or expand their regional influence. Such research would contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the economic drivers behind the conflicts and their implications for post–war reconstruction and stability. Examining the humanitarian consequences of the conflicts and the narratives surrounding them is another promising avenue for research. Scholars can delve into the ways in which external powers, media outlets, and local actors frame and narrate

the civil wars, impacting the international response and the provision of humanitarian aid. Additionally, understanding the experiences and perspectives of displaced populations, refugees, and internally displaced persons can shed light on the social impacts and long–term effects of these conflicts. Finally, the regional power dynamics and the proxy war element of the Syrian and Yemeni civil wars present a compelling field for further research. Investigating the motivations and strategies of external actors involved in these conflicts can enhance our understanding of how geopolitical interests and rivalries shape internal dynamics. This research could examine the role of regional powers, such as Iran, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and the United Arab Emirates, as well as the involvement of global powers such as the United States and Russia.

We can conclude that deconstruction of the Syrian and Yemeni civil wars through a post-colonial lens opens up a plethora of prospects and fields for future research in international relations and social studies. Understanding the historical roots, post-colonial identities, economic dimensions, narratives, and regional power dynamics of these conflicts contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of their complexities.

In a response to the main argument, over the course of the conducted research it became evident that the Syrian and Yemeni civil wars should not be overviewed in isolation from the historical legacies of colonialism and the ongoing interference of external actors. The post-colonial lens allows for a nuanced analysis of the complex dynamics at play in these conflicts, highlighting the role of identity politics, sectarianism, and regional power struggles. Moving forward it is essential to acknowledge the agency of local forces and tribal structures in shaping the future trajectory of these nations, as well as the need for a comprehensive humanitarian response to address the refugee crisis and displacement. Ultimately, a deeper understanding of the post-colonial forces at work in Syria and Yemen is crucial for developing sustainable solutions and promoting peace and stability in the region.

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APPENDICES
Appendix A. List of Figures

Appendix A. Figure 1. Territorial situation in Yemen, 1918–1937.
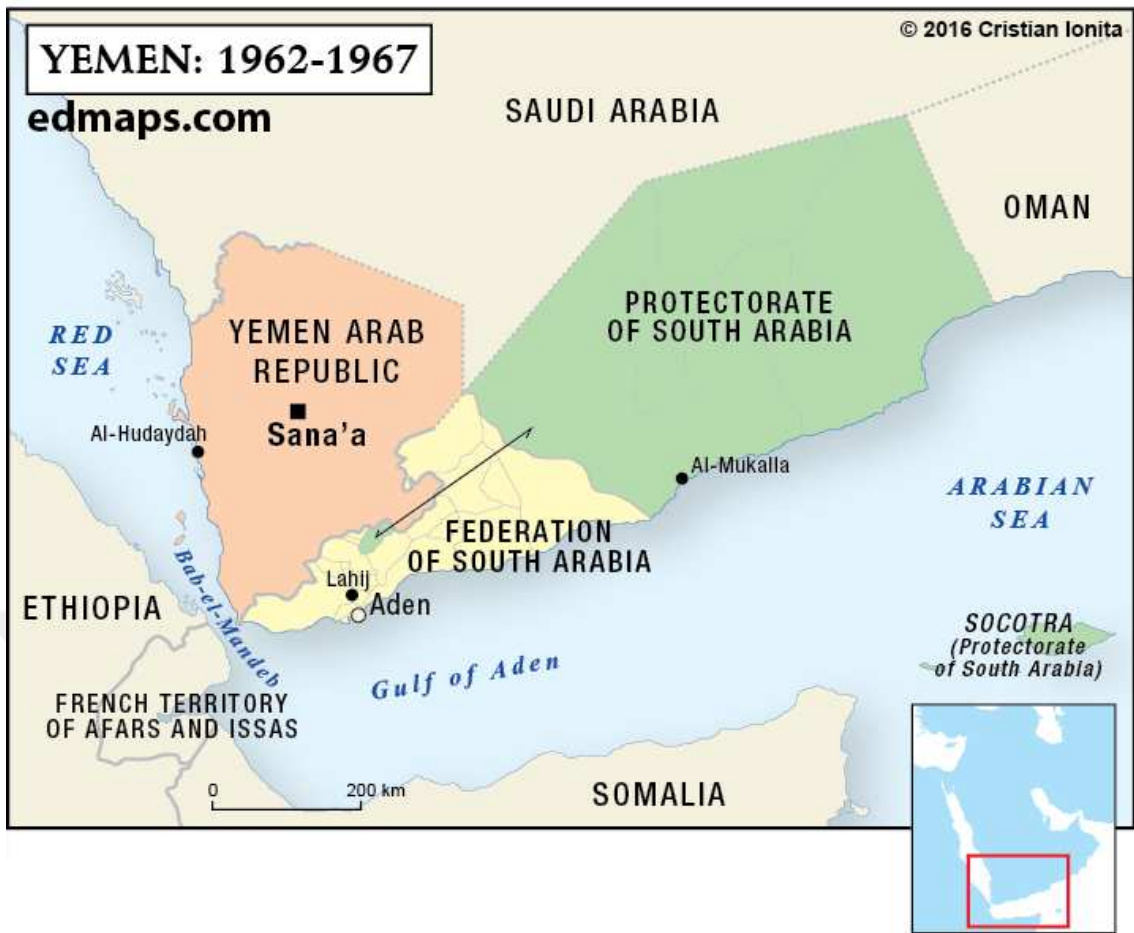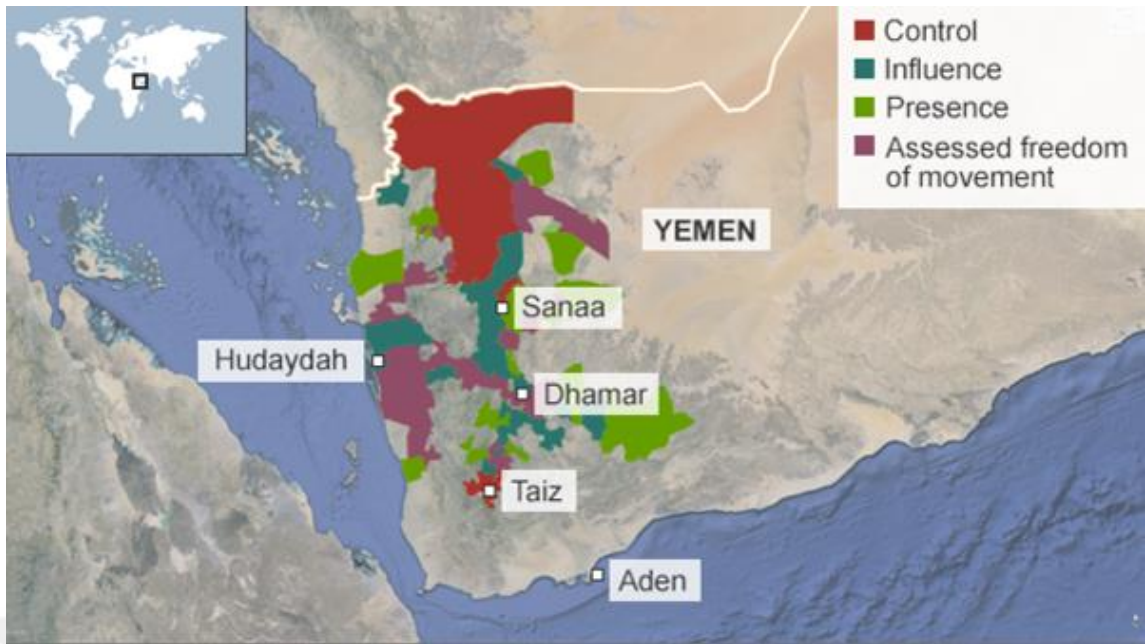
Appendix A. Figure 2. Territorial situation in Yemen, 1962–1967.
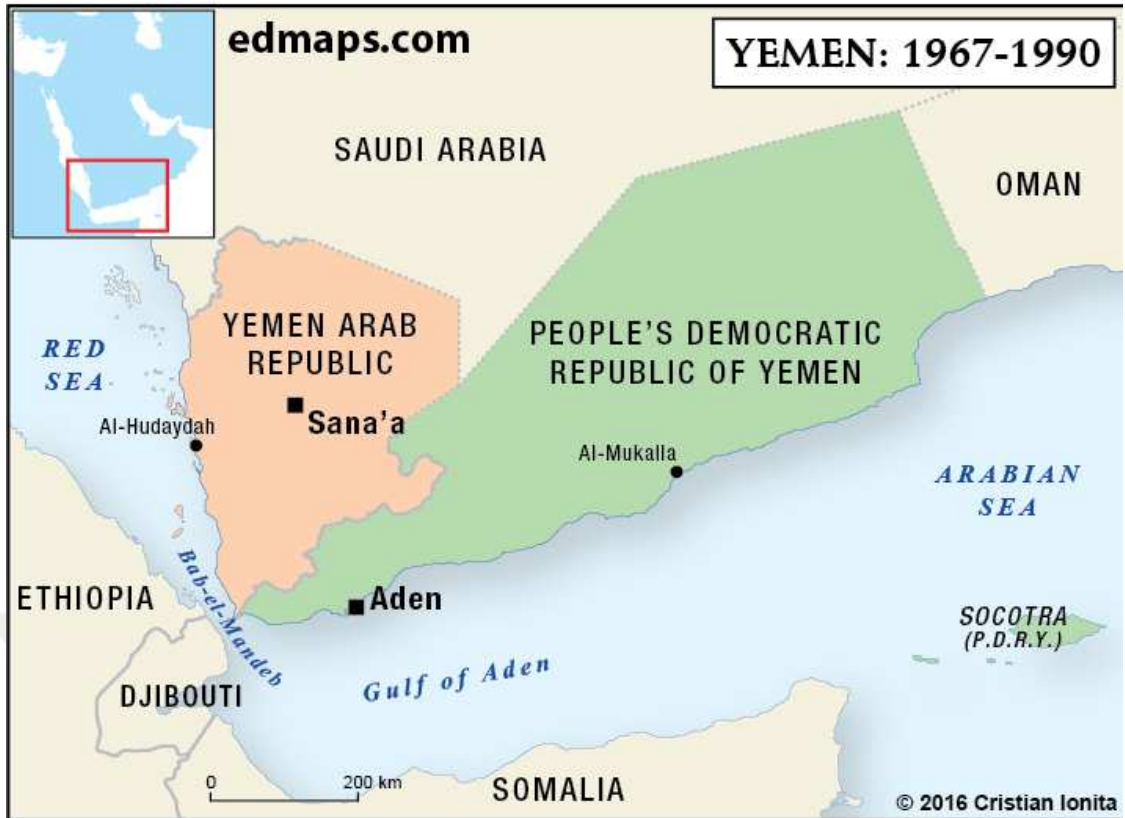
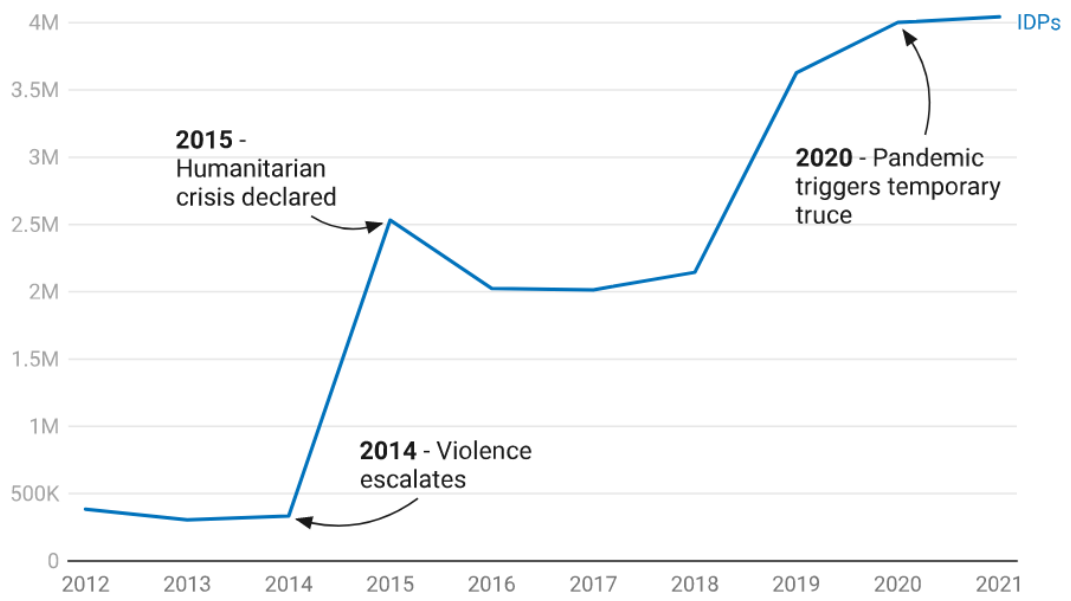Appendix A. Figure 3. Territorial situation in Yemen, 1967–1990.
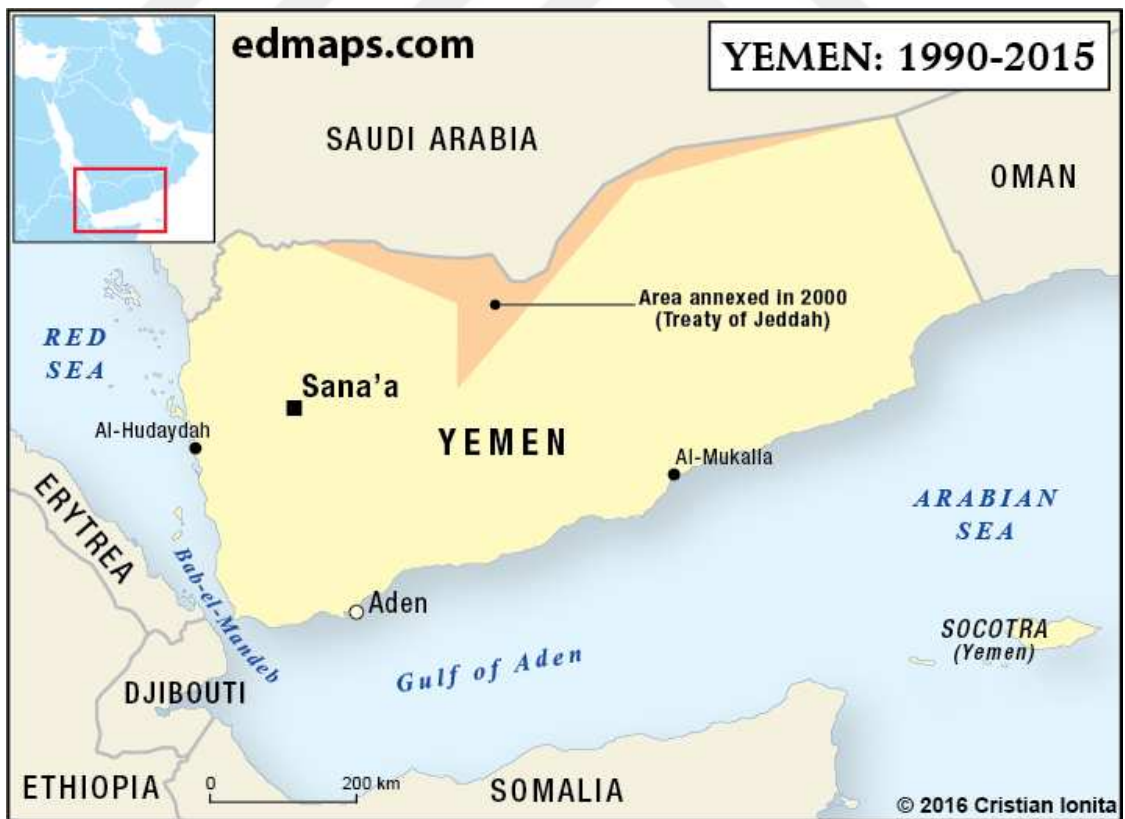
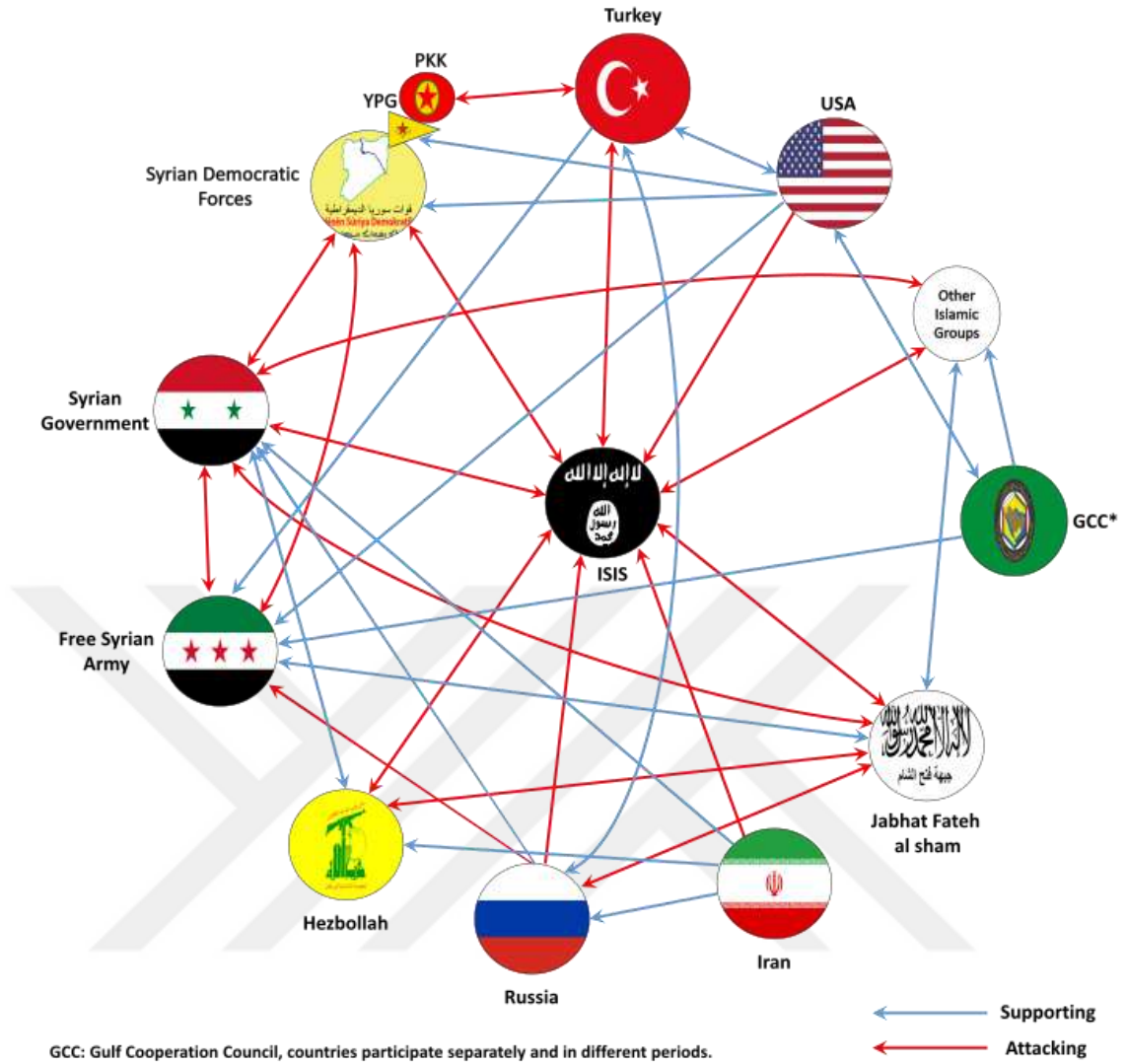Appendix A. Figure 4. Territorial situation in Yemen, 1990–2015.

Appendix A. Figure 5. Houthi areas of Influence, 2020.

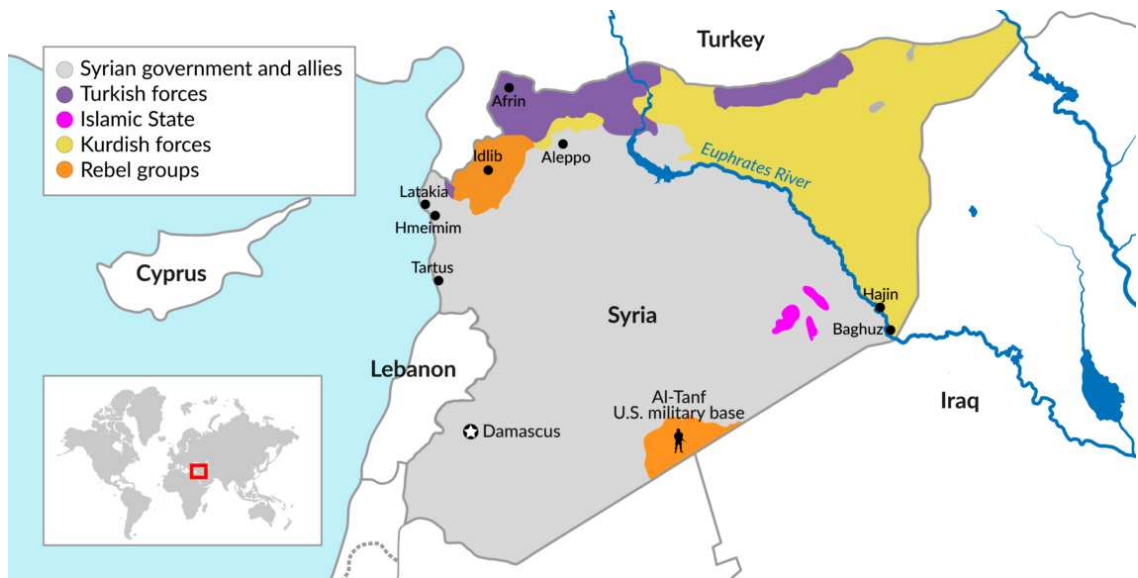Appendix A. Figure 6. Largest refugee crises in period from 1960 to 2022 (by peak number of refugees)

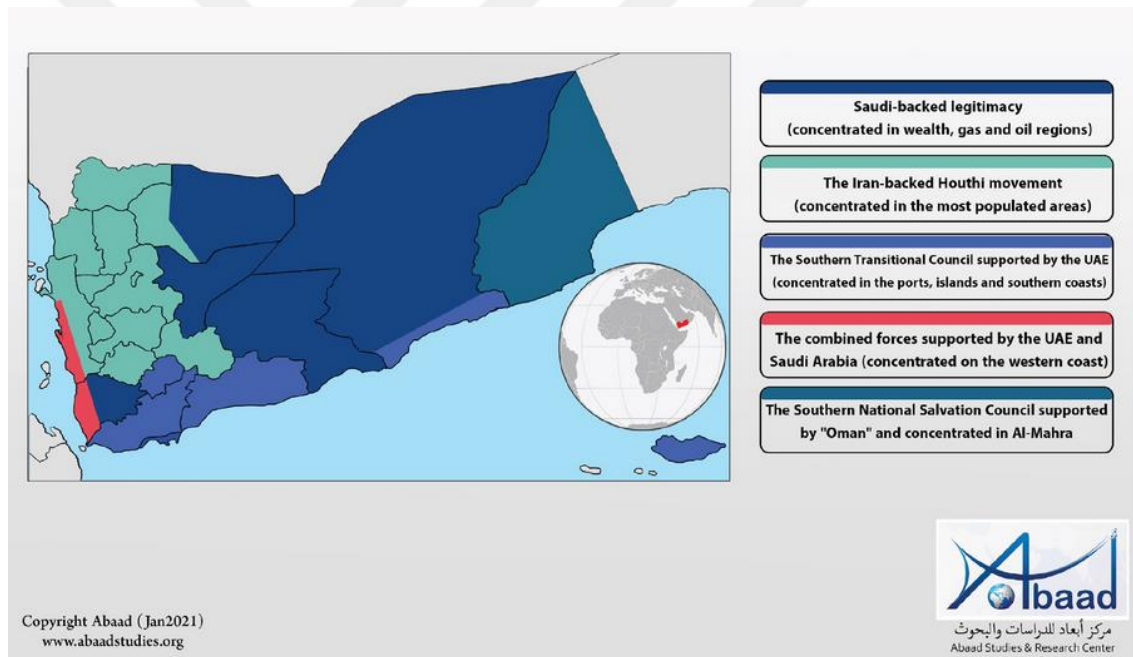Appendix A. Figure 7. Internally displaced population in Yemen.

Appendix A. Figure 8. Foreign countries involved in Syrian crisis
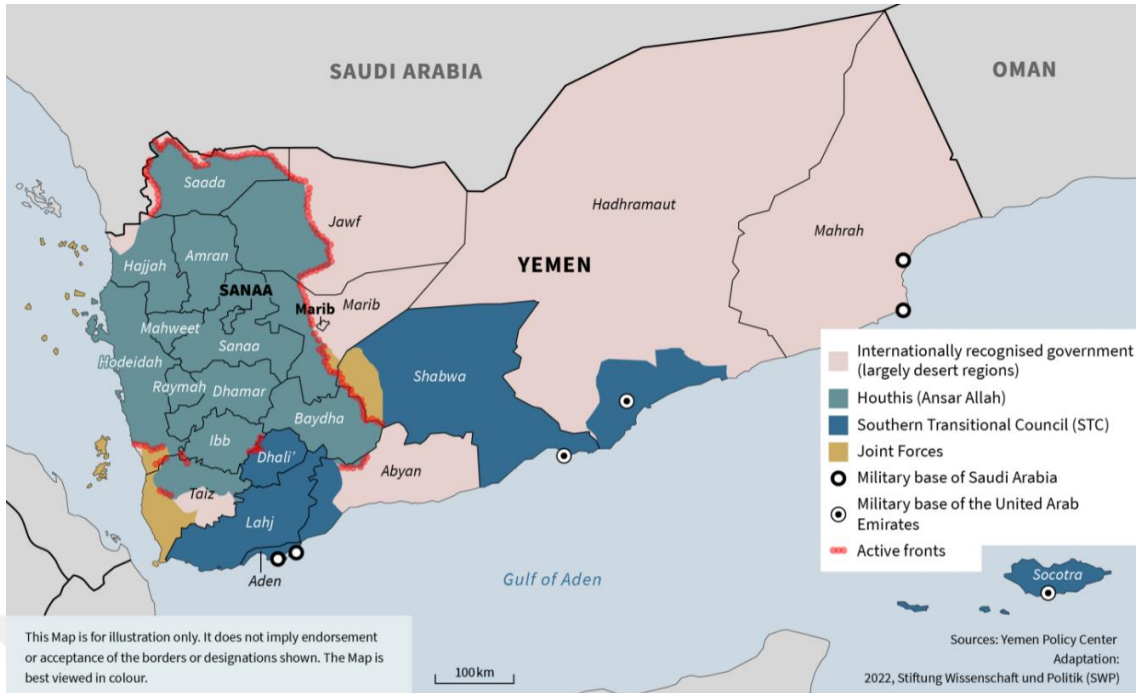
Appendix A. Figure 9. Pro–Houthi vs. pro–Hadi/Saudi coalition in neighbouring countries

Appendix A. Figure 10. Syrian territories controlled by various groups and regional actors

Appendix A. Figure 11. Local actors and their external connection and distribution on areas of wealth and population density in Yemen

Appendix A. Figure 12. Current frontlines in Yemeni conflict, 2023.