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EFFECTS OF DIFFERENT TYPES OF ACTORS ON CIVIL WAR DURATION

ВЛИЯНИЕ РАЗНООБРАЗИЯ ВИДОВ УЧАСТНИКОВ НА
ПРОДОЛЖИТЕЛЬНОСТЬ ГРАЖДАНСКОЙ ВОЙНЫ

ҚАТЫСУШЫЛАР ТҮРЛЕРІНІҢ АЗАМАТТЫҚ СОҒЫС ҰЗАҚТЫҒЫНА ӘСЕРІ

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by

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SCHOOL OF SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES**

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Abstract

The proportion of civil wars that involve external intervention has increased dramatically since the end of the Cold War. So has the duration of such internationalized internal conflicts. This thesis seeks to explain the relationship between these two phenomena by accounting for the diversity of actors involved in civil wars. Existing research shows that multiple actors substantially reduce the prospects for a negotiated settlement by introducing their own set of goals in the conflict. Current civil war dynamics, however, show that parties involved in a conflict vary by the types of their organizations. Building on the existing research, this thesis argues that types of actors equally matter as they represent the diversity of goals that actors can pursue in civil wars. The mixed-methods approach of the Cox proportional hazards model and a case study of the Yemeni civil war demonstrates that greater diversity of actors leads to longer civil wars.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The wave of Arab uprisings also known as the “Arab Spring” did not go unnoticed in the Syrian Arab Republic, which suffers its consequences to this day. What initially started as peaceful pro-democracy demonstrations, evolved into a full-scale civil war when Syrian president Bashar al-Assad brutally oppressed the protesters. By 2013, two years after the conflict began, the UN declared that the conflict generated about 90,000 casualties (BBC News, 2017). This number has increased significantly since then, with millions of other Syrians displaced from their homes.

The conflict now is not a mere confrontation between the government and rebels but a multidimensional civil war with the inclusion of various actors. Moreover, it has acquired a sectarian narrative and attracted regional and global powers. Two big warring parties – Russia and Iran – support Assad’s regime along with the Hezbollah group. On the other hand, the Gulf States, Turkey, and Jordan support rebel groups such as the Free Syrian Army and Syrian Democratic Forces. Furthermore, Turkey invaded to support the Syrian opposition in order to resolve the issue of Kurds that became empowered by the instability occurred as a result of the war. All of these forces at the same time fight against the jihadist Islamic State (IS) that aspires to create a caliphate on the controlled territories. The US, which has always been deterministic in its counter-terrorist motives, also took part in the conflict by supporting local groups and initiating military strikes. Not to mention is the military support provided by the states like Israel and Lebanon which also fuels the conflict further. Syrian war continues for 9 years now and there is still no end in sight. Why has it become so challenging to end civil conflicts in some states? Why do they persist for so long and go hand in hand with the atrocities and civilian casualties?

These questions are of critical importance for policymakers since “the costs of war tend to be directly related to its duration” (Cunningham 2006, 875). The longer the civil war continues, the higher are the human and material costs for the state. Civil war duration varies widely from state to state (Fearon 2004, 276; Cunningham 2006, 875). While some conflicts end in a couple of years, others drag on for decades. Yet, civil war duration is growing steadily in the aftermath of WW2, reaching about 16 years in 1999 (Fearon 2004, 275). Most of the civil wars include third-party intervention, which is one of the main factors increasing the duration of intrastate conflicts (Balch-Lindsay and Enterline 2000; Elbadawi and Sambanis 2000; Regan 2002). Cunningham (2010) argues that states often intervene with an independent agenda which then leads to longer civil conflicts. For example, the United States did not intervene in Afghanistan in 1979 to terminate the conflict. It did so to resist the Soviet ideology and ensure its national security (Findley and Teo 2006, 828). The indirect confrontation between the Soviet Union and the US prolonged the civil war in Afghanistan, which lasted for 10 years. Such confrontations are labeled as “proxy wars” in political science and refer to a conflict in which states fight an indirect war by using “surrogates”, usually on a territory of another country (Mumford 2013, 40; Cragin 2015, 312). Civil wars can also include more than one proxy wars resulting in a multi-proxy war between different parties.

Long-running civil wars are also characterized by the operation of non-state actors that became prominent recently (Cragin 2015, 312). Often, these non-state actors and groups are terrorist in nature and possess the ability to challenge the regimes globally. The involvement of Hezbollah and ISIS terrorist groups in the Syrian civil war and similar engagement of Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) in Yemen demonstrates the level of their proliferation and power. Cragin (2015, 311) highlights the possession of chemical weapons by such entities as

Hezbollah and Al-Qaeda, which amidst their suicide bombings and martyrdom assaults, poses a serious threat to national and global security. As a result, civil wars turn into chaos in which all kinds of actors (global and regional powers, neighboring states, transnational terrorist organizations, rebel groups) fight with each other.

Lengthy civil wars are therefore a result of multiple and diverse external actors intervening with their independent goals. Engaging in unclear and confusing alliances, these actors try to advance their interests thereby turning the initially domestic conflicts into multidimensional civil wars. Considering these dynamics, **the research questions** proposed in this thesis are as follows:

- *How do the number and type of actors involved in a civil war influence its duration?*
- *In what way does fighting a proxy war on the territory of the civil war state affect its length?*
- *How does the operation of non-state armed actors other than rebels influence the resolution of conflict?*

To answer these questions, I build on Cunningham's (2010) research on external interventions with an independent agenda and propose that diversity of actors can be considered as an additional factor to study the duration of civil wars. This argument stems from the assumption that civil wars today are fought not only between two actors, the government and opposition, but also multiple external actors interested in affecting the outcome of the conflict (Cunningham 2006). This correlation between the types of actors and the duration of intrastate conflicts has been overlooked in the existing civil war literature.

The paper proceeds as follows. The next section provides the definitions of basic concepts used in this thesis project, such as civil war, non-state group, and third-party intervention. In the next chapter, I review the existing literature on civil war duration and identify the main factors

that affect how long civil wars last. I discuss these factors based on explanations of greed, grievance, and information asymmetries. In chapter 3, I outline how different types of actors can pursue their interests when engaging in civil wars. Three main explanations are identified: conflict spillover, proxy wars, and transnational jihad. I then introduce the bargaining framework, which I use to explain how different types of actors affect the implementation of a negotiated settlement in civil wars. In the next chapter, I introduce my research methods – statistical Cox proportional hazards model and qualitative case-study. I provide my results and outline the main findings from the statistical analysis in chapter 4 and present the case study of Yemen in chapter 5. In the last chapter, I provide my conclusions, limitations, and policy implications.

Chapter 2: Civil wars: who fights whom

According to Small and Singer (1982, 210), civil war is “any armed conflict that involves (a) military action internal to the metropole, (b) the active participation of the national government, and (c) effective resistance by both sides.” Most importantly, what distinguishes a civil war from other conflicts is that it occurs within the boundaries of one state, which narrows down the number of civilian victims to that particular state. Moreover, civil wars take place when there is a strong opposition that can challenge the government militarily. Therefore, civil wars always involve a disagreement over political control (Cederman and Vogt 2017, 1993).

With the prominence of civil wars after the end of the Cold War, military thinking has been mostly concentrated on armed disputes between states and non-state actors (NSAs) (Zohar 2016, 423). Even given the military superiority of the states, it has been extremely difficult to fight these weak-armed non-state actors that often lack financial and military support. It is also argued that contemporary armed forces “are helpless in fighting off small groups of often ill-trained, ill funded, ill-equipped terrorists” (Van Creveld 2008, 223). Non-state actors comprise all the organizations that are independent of state funding and control that originate from civil society, market economy or political affairs. These entities are also capable of operating in networks that transcend the boundaries of two or more states thereby building and participating in transnational linkages and relations (Josselin and Wallace 2001, 3-4). Accordingly, these actors have a considerable impact on world politics and institutions. They range from non-governmental organizations (NGOs), banks, and multinational companies (MNCs) to paramilitary and armed resistance groups (Josselin and Wallace 2001, 2). Of them, non-state armed groups (NAGs), being the main government opponents, are of particular importance to civil war dynamics. A standard definition of an armed group is that of “an armed, non-state actor in contemporary wars...[with]

a minimal degree of cohesiveness as an organization and a certain duration of its violent campaign” (Krause and Milliken 2009, 203). It possesses armed groups and is able of controlling a certain territory and conducting military operations.

Non-state armed groups present a serious problem to the notion of the Westphalian state sovereignty that includes the state’s right to legitimately use force within a given territory proposed by Weber (Krause and Milliken 2009, 202). These groups are recognized as a major threat to political stability and order in different states around the world, but they are especially prominent in weak and unstable regimes. Most of the non-state armed actors today pursue economic goals by capturing state resources and engaging in illicit trade and transnational networks (Davis 2009, 221; Krause and Milliken 2009, 204).

Zohar (2016), in this sense, offers a classification of contemporary armed non-state actors which comprise four major categories: secessionist organizations, radical left revolutionary armed NSAs, sectarian-based revolutionary armed NSAs, and global revolutionary organizations. It is important to note that this categorization of armed NSAs was created based on the different goals these organizations pursue. As Zohar (2016) argues, secessionist groups fight for an autonomy or full independence. Radical left revolutionary organizations instead pursue the overthrow of the existing regime and subsequent accession to power. Sectarian based revolutionary armed NSAs also seek the regime change, but they are mainly preoccupied with state marginalization. Lastly, global revolutionary armed NSAs constitute the most powerful organizations that aim at establishing Islamic rule through jihad. They are considered as transnational terrorist organizations that employ suicide bombings and martyrdom assaults as their main means of fighting (Zohar 2016).

Based on the goals of these non-state armed groups, their structure and mode of operations, civil wars can also be classified in different types. A civil war can be viewed as governmental if it includes a radical left revolutionary organization or a sectarian-based revolutionary group that seeks full control of the state. In case if the war includes a secessionist organization, it can be considered as a territorial civil war (Cederman and Vogt 2017, 1993).

Last but not least, civil wars can often be characterized by external intervention. Civil wars are not just domestic conflicts, today they seem to be an area for the foreign strife as well. Out of 150 civil wars between 1949 and 1999, 101 of them included external intervention (Regan 2002). In this thesis, I use the definition of third-party intervention developed by Regan (1998, 756), as “convention-breaking military and/or economic activities in the internal affairs of a foreign country targeted at the authority structures of the government to affect the balance of power between the government and opposition forces.” While in his analysis of foreign interventions Regan (1998) excludes the incidents of diplomatic (mediatory) and multilateral (such as Saudi-led coalition in Yemen), I incorporate all of these kinds of interventions in my research as I am explicitly focusing on the effects of interventions with an independent agenda. In doing so, I will test the relationship between the independent and non-independent interventions and the duration of civil wars to see which of them leads to longer wars. Having defined the main concepts of this thesis, I now turn to an analysis of civil war duration in the literature.

Chapter 3: Civil war duration in the literature

The existing literature offers several explanations for an increased duration of civil wars. These explanations can be classified into three main schools that are roughly consistent with theories stressing greed, grievance, and information asymmetries in civil wars. Greed-based logics examine the effect of economic incentives on the onset, duration, and termination of civil wars. In contrast, scholars highlighting the prominence of grievances in civil war dynamics view the conflict as a rebellion over the issues of identity such as ethnicity, religion, or social class. While greed and grievance approaches center the motives to explain civil wars, a third approach focuses on the battlefield outcomes and their effect on the bargaining process. These approaches are not mutually exclusive and can sometimes overlap.

Greed-based approach rests on the assumption that war continues as long as the factors making it less costly for combatants exist. At the same time, war can serve as a lucrative business for some actors that receive high rents only as long as the conflict continues thereby decreasing their incentives to end them (Collier, Hoeffler, and Söderbom 2004). Fearon similarly suggests that conflicts in which rebels receive funding from a contraband are quite long-lived. Rebel groups' financial backing is also a subject of study by Conrad et al. (2009) who argue that rebel natural resource exploitation does not prolong the civil war by itself, but the way rebels receive funding from these resources. In line with Fearon's (2004) study, Conrad et al. (2009) find that smuggling of natural resources rather than extortion leads to longer civil wars. Thus, rebel groups that manage to fund themselves can resist the government and continue fighting thus leading to longer conflicts.

The grievances logic is typically associated with ethnic cleavages in civil wars. Wucherpfennig et al. (2012) and Kaufman (2006) argue that ethnic civil conflicts tend to last

longer due to the attributes of ethnicity that give a sense of belonging to individuals and facilitate collective action. Fearon (2004), in this sense, differentiates between the types of civil wars and argues that land conflicts between ethnic minorities and migrants of the state's dominant ethnic group ("sons of the soil" conflicts) last longer. However, Wucherpfennig et al. (2012) argue that it is not ethnicity itself that prolongs civil wars but the political context in which the social exclusion takes place. The way in which the governments tend to politicize ethnic relations by discriminating against certain ethnic groups can ultimately increase the solidarity of rebel organizations and thus their resistance to government (Wucherpfennig et al. 2012, 80).

The third school assumes that conflict is a bargaining failure as a result of information asymmetry and views its duration as a function of information about combatants' capabilities and their incentives to misrepresent it (Cunningham 2006). The battlefield serves as a means to reveal that information and enables bargaining to take place. Several studies in the literature suggest that longer civil wars can be a result of the warfare itself. Balcells and Kalyvas (2014) find that "technologies of rebellion" significantly affect the duration and outcome of civil war. They argue that irregular civil wars that occur when the government's conventional military forces oppose poorly equipped rebels are more likely to last longer. Because rebels who fight in irregular "guerilla" fashion tend to evade direct confrontations with the government, the information asymmetry arises, and agreement does not emerge. Paradoxically then, civil conflicts last longer not when the rebels have strong military forces but rather when they are weak. Caverley and Sechser (2017) similarly analyze the effect of military technology on the duration of civil conflict and find that mechanized military leads to quicker resolutions to these conflicts. Authors claim that to end a conflict, adversaries must minimize information asymmetry by fighting decisive battles that "reveal each side's true fighting ability" (Caverley and Sechser 2017, 704). According

to this logic, longer civil wars occur when parties lack combined arms (both conventional and mechanized), which precludes them from engaging in battles and exposing information on their military potential.

Another way that rebels can hide the information on their capabilities is through operation in remote and rough terrain (Buhaug, Gates, and Lujala 2009; Cunningham, Gleditsch, and Salehyan 2009). To end a civil war, a government needs to beat rebels in a decisive battle or provide political concessions that rebels demand (Caverley and Sechser 2017; Cunningham et al. 2009). The second option is rarely considered by governments, especially if the rebels are relatively weak. When the rebel groups are weak to engage in a military confrontation with the government, they can resist it and still function thereby prolonging the conflict. Operation of rebel groups in peripheral areas and rough terrain allows them to escape government repression and refuse to lay down arms (Cunningham et al. 2009, 574). Governments that have to defeat rebels operating in the periphery and away from the capital are disadvantaged because it is difficult for them to control these regions. Additionally, rebels can gain support from foreign states when operating near or beyond the national boundaries (enjoy safe havens) (Buhaug, Gates, and Lujala 2009, 547). Thus, rebel groups manage to oppose the government even when they are weak if they operate in the peripheral areas that include rough terrain. These findings can be correlated with the argument made by Balcells and Kalyvas (2014), according to which civil wars last longer with weaker rebels.

As such, the battlefield serves an important task in civil wars by revealing information on combatants' military capabilities and thereby providing an opportunity for bargaining. Any factors that impede direct confrontations to take place whether it is military technologies or rough terrains therefore also impede bargaining to happen. Without knowing opponents' military potential,

combatants cannot start offering concessions or agreements because they risk providing more than opponents could really obtain through the battlefield. As a result, all of these developments influence the length of civil wars.

External intervention

Information asymmetries can also arise as a result of external interventions that increase the number of combatants and shift the balance of power. The interest-based approach developed in this research is not contrary to the approaches discussed above. Rather, the inclusion of additional actors exacerbates existing problems in civil wars whether it is greed, grievance, or information asymmetries. Prior research suggests that longer civil wars are fought not only between the government and rebels but also with various external actors (Balch-Lindsay and Enterline 2000; Cunningham 2006). Third-party intervention in civil wars prolongs those conflicts because it increases the number of actors and accordingly, the number of opinions and demands. This, in turn, makes difficult for the parties to negotiate and end the conflict (Cunningham 2010). External interventions are associated with a higher number of veto players that take part in decision-making and as a result, complicate the bargaining process. Such circumstances result in “fewer acceptable agreements, informational asymmetries and shifting alliances” (Cunningham 2006, 875). Cunningham (2010, 116) claims that states do not intervene to end the conflict and Regan (2002, 71) argues that interventions do not act as a viable means of conflict resolution. In contrast, Walter (2002) argues that external actors can act as mediators and help enforce the negotiated agreement, thereby solving the commitment problem. Doyle and Sambanis (2000) also find that external states can use certain strategies to reduce hostilities and establish peace. Therefore, these scholars focus on the ability of international actors to affect negotiations between internal parties.

Several authors have recognized the link between third-party intervention and the ability of internal parties to reach military victory. Balch-Lindsay and Enterline (2000) find that one-sided intervention, whether on the side of government or rebels, leads to shorter civil wars because they increase the likelihood of only one side's military victory. In contrast, multilateral interventions on government and opposition sides prolong civil conflicts as they decrease each side's probability to win (Balch-Lindsay and Enterline 2000, Elbadawi and Sambanis 2000, Regan 2002). Moreover, Balch-Lindsay et al. (2008, 359) claim that such balanced external interventions result in a "lock-in" of the conflict and are likely to increase the difficulty of bargaining.

Regan and Aydin (2006), who analyze the effects of interventions on both negotiations and military victory, find that diplomatic interventions result in shorter civil wars while economic and military interventions account for longer domestic conflicts.

The literature on civil war duration offers various explanations based on greed, grievance, and information asymmetries. The external intervention appears to be yet another explanation for long-lasting civil wars, the one that can be complementary to those three logics as it focuses on additional actors that participate in the conflict. In other words, interveners exacerbate the existing tensions as they increase the number of combatants, thereby complicating the conflict. The main reasoning behind this is that it is warring parties that decide whether to continue fighting or negotiating over the agreement (Cunningham 2010, 116). In this sense, it is of utmost importance to accounting for additional foreign actors that are interested in affecting conflict outcomes.

While the literature thoroughly examines the role of external interventions on the duration of civil wars by accounting for the ability of parties to negotiate or achieve military victory, it fails to consider the modern aspects of wars that today include the combination of various types of actors. In this research, I build my theory on Cunningham's (2006, 2010) analysis on the number

of external actors and their goals in civil wars as he highlights the issue of divergent interests in conflicts. Before digging into what factors or considerations shape belligerents' decisions at the bargaining table, it is important to account for the complexities of the bargaining process in the first place. Therefore, this research focuses on the issues of foreign interventions and their effect on the duration of civil wars. In particular, it analyzes the role of various types of external actors that introduce their interests into civil wars. The next section presents an argument that the involvement of different types of actors makes civil wars more difficult to resolve and thus last longer.

Chapter 4: Diversity of actors and civil war duration

In order to show the relationship between civil war internationalization and its duration, it is necessary to outline how civil wars become internationalized in the first place. In other words, how conflicts end up being multiparty and what goals can actors pursue in civil wars. The types of external actors that can be involved in civil wars vary as follows: (1) neighboring countries, (2) regional powers, (3) global powers, and (4) transnational terrorist groups. Each type of these actors can have a different goal when engaging in conflict. I propose that neighboring countries can intervene in the fear of conflict diffusion or in contrast as an opportunity to pursue their national interests in the country. Regional and global powers might be interested in expanding their influence in the region or containing their long-standing rivals. Transnational terrorist organizations can in turn use instability created by civil wars to promote their influence and establish an Islamic rule. I discuss each of these cases in detail further.

As I build my argument based on Cunningham's (2010) research on external intervention and civil war duration, I use his theoretical explanation to account for the variation in civil war duration. Therefore, the bargaining framework is employed to understand how civil wars are resolved. Problems that impede the bargaining process impede the resolution of civil wars. The involvement of different types of actors exacerbates these problems and thus delays the settlement.

Internationalized civil wars

The Uppsala Conflict Data Program defines intrastate conflicts that include foreign involvement as "an armed conflict between a government and a non-government party where the government side, the opposing side, or both sides, receive troop support from other governments that actively participate in the conflict" (Uppsala Conflict Data Program, Definitions). It also differentiates between actors based on the level of their involvement in an armed conflict. This

creates primary and secondary parties in conflict. Primary parties are those directly fighting over the incompatible positions formed against each other (Uppsala Conflict Data Program, Definitions). Secondary parties can also be divided into warring and non-warring based on the type of support they provide for the primary parties. While warring parties also take part in a military confrontation by providing active troop support, non-warring parties provide only financial, military (except troops), or logistic support in armed conflict (Uppsala Conflict Data Program, Definitions).

In any case, for intervention to happen, third parties must have an interest and motivation to do so. More importantly, interventions often occur as a result of the prior interest of third parties and preexisting ties between interveners and domestic parties (Mitchell 1970). In this sense, interventions appear to be a broadening of the third parties' existing commitments. Mitchell (1970, 168) notes that it would be difficult to discern between the levels of conflicts, the parties that are involved, and the issues they are concerned about.

Given that interveners frequently pursue their interests, which can also contradict the interests of main opposed parties in the civil war, the resolution of conflict can take more time. Multiple actors mean multiple interests that often contradict each other. The phenomenon of multiple actors with diverse goals is examined in detail by Kalyvas (2003), who emphasizes the complex and ambiguous nature of civil wars. He discusses two competing frameworks explaining the outbreak of violence in civil wars, that is, Hobbesian and Schmittian approaches. According to the first frame, the ontology of civil wars is confined to private and local motives (greed and loot), which can result in a "war of all against all." The second frame, in contrast, stresses the importance of political and ideological motives in an ontology of civil wars that considers adversaries not as "man to man" but as "state to state" (Kalyvas 2003, 475). What Kalyvas (2003)

suggests is that civil war comprises both of these types of motives: private and political. The interaction of these identities through alliances generates joint actions that often result in violence but yet reflects the divergent goals of actors. Such behavior tends to cause a frequent shift of alliances because actors are eager to ally with each other to achieve their goals. Therefore, civil wars entail a complex environment, one in which local and supralocal actors cooperate in pursuit of their diverse motives and interests (Kalyvas 2003). In other words, intrastate conflicts incorporate both greed and grievance, which, in turn, make them more ambiguous, and therefore difficult to resolve.

Diversity of actors in civil wars

Third-party intervention has substantial effects on the duration and outcomes of civil wars. In revealing what these effects are, it is important to differentiate between the cases of external intervention with and without an independent agenda. When third parties intervene to fulfill independent goals, the resolution of the conflict is complicated by the presence of an additional actor whose interests have to be either suppressed or taken into account (Cunningham 2010, 117). The interest-based approach towards civil war duration can be traced through the examination of the number and types of actors involved in the conflict. By studying the effect of these variables, it is possible to determine how the competing interests of multiple actors in a civil war can prolong the conflict. Building on Cunningham's (2006, 2010) research on the effect of multiple actors on the duration of civil war, this paper brings in the concept of "diversity" of actors. Given that a higher number of actors leads to longer wars as a result of the increased number of opinions and demands (Cunningham 2010), the diversity of actors involved in the conflict can account for the diversity of these opinions and demands.

Before digging into the discussion about the diversity of actors in civil wars, it is important to identify the relationship between the number and diversity of actors. These two concepts are interrelated, and the diversity of actors is dependent upon the number. A war cannot have a high diversity of actors if it does not have a high number of actors in it. As such, the concept of diversity will be superior for this research, especially considering that the number of actors has already been studied in the civil war literature (Cunningham 2006).

The variation in types of actors involved in civil wars shows the complexity of motives for the intervention in the conflict in the first place. That is, it demonstrates the multiplicity of ongoing confrontations between parties and can serve as a measurement of external actors' competing interests. The concept of diversity includes in itself the variety of types of actors involved in a conflict. Ranging from super and regional powers, diversity also accounts for transnational terrorist organizations. This concept is particularly important because it demonstrates the presence of different actors in one conflict that oppose each other. As multiple actors create multiple interests, it takes much more time to resolve civil conflicts that incorporate different types of actors. Therefore, the involvement of various actors that have different and often competing interests complicates conflict resolution because each actor would prefer fighting until its interests are recognized. It is not just multiple actors' engagement in the civil war that prolongs it, it is their demands and expectations of conflict resolution that create a stalemate. Walter (1997) argues that third parties serve as guarantors of commitments that belligerents make. External states ensure the credibility of the parties and thus facilitate settlement. This finding indicates that when external states are willing to end the conflict, they can actually do so by ensuring the implementation of a peace treaty and engaging in diplomatic interventions. However, in cases when third parties intervene with their own agenda that is additional to the main belligerents' interests, the early

settlement of civil war is highly unlikely. Therefore, I propose that the following types of actors matter in civil wars:

- a. neighboring countries
- b. regional powers
- c. great powers
- d. transnational terrorist organizations

Each type of actor has its own interests/range of interests that can lead to long civil wars. As such, I assume that the proposed types of actors have divergent interests when engaging in civil conflict. That is the precise reason why types of actors involved in civil wars matter – they all have different and conflicting interests. Therefore, the presence of a mix of different actors in itself shows the diversity of interests and demands laid down by warring parties during the conflict.

Civil war diffusion

As Kathman (2011, 849) notes, “civil wars are international events”, and their influence extends the borders of states in which they are experienced. Because states do not exist in isolation and are part of an international community, civil conflicts cannot be considered as a fully domestic phenomenon. Particularly, transnational linkages and interactions between states can influence the likelihood of intrastate conflict (Gleditsch 2007). On the other hand, once civil conflict has broken out, it certainly affects external states especially ones that share a border with the civil war country (Kathman 2011). Civil wars generate both threats and opportunities for third parties, and they tend to intervene in conflicts that either pose a threat to their national security or provide an opportunity to improve its position. Especially interested in containing the conflict would be the states that have significant relationships with civil war states. These ties may vary from state to

state and include economic, military, or other valuable ties. The spillover of domestic conflict would disrupt those ties and even threaten its security if the state becomes infected with hostilities (Kathman 2011, 851).

As such, Kathman (2011) finds that in cases when civil war risks infecting the region, neighboring states would be interested in containing it. Those interests include both threats and opportunities. Bordering countries might feel threatened by the possible spillover of hostilities and migrants/refugees and would therefore intervene to prevent that possibility. The most notable case of massive regional spillover is the Arab spring that affected several regimes in the Middle East and North Africa. Another scenario is that continuing unrest and instability in the civil war country would prompt its neighbor to use this opportunity to pursue its own interests in that country (Gleditsch, Salehyan, Schultz 2008). Such kinds of involvements and attacks in civil wars are referred to as “opportunism” in the international conflict literature discussed in detail by Walt (1996). The Russian annexation of Crimea against the Ukrainian civil war is a particular example of such behavior.

Therefore, geographic distance is recognized as an important factor affecting the likelihood of third-party intervention. But if neighboring states are the first to experience the impact of civil wars, how to explain widespread interventions on the part of distant countries? Pearson (1974) explains this puzzle by arguing that large powers more than others tend to intervene in distant countries. The main reason behind it is that these states are more able to pay the costs of distant interventions than are middle or small powers. He also finds that one of the factors shaping the likelihood of intervention by large and small powers is regional power balance, which is a topic of the next section.

Proxy war

Foreign states take part in civil wars usually by supporting one of the conflicting parties. This often results in the retaliatory intervention by another state that supports the other side. It appears that the conflict thus changes its nature from an internal confrontation between the government and opposition, to one incorporating foreign states. Findley and Teo (2006), in this sense, find that the probability of a state to intervene in a civil war is 11 times greater given that a rival state was supporting the government in this conflict, and four times greater if it was supporting the opposition. Such interventions are therefore closely related to rivalry, which is an “ongoing and hostile strategic relationship” between two states whose behavior is related to, and dependent upon, one another (Mitton 2017, 280). As such, it is evident that rival great and regional powers would intervene in civil conflicts to oppose each other, thereby pursuing their own interests. Such interventions tend to exacerbate conflict and generate violence and bloodshed. According to Mitton (2017, 278), there occurred 34 instances of balanced interventions in civil wars between 1945 and 2002. This shows that rival interventions are not accidental and instead, follow certain political and strategic dynamics.

The involvement of great and regional powers in civil conflicts is common in the history of international relations. Proxy warfare is becoming increasingly widespread in the states’ contemporary conflict behavior. The Middle East, in this sense, represents “the most obvious current cauldron of proxy conflict” (Marshall 2016). Proxy war can be defined as a conflict in which states fight an indirect war by using “surrogates”, usually on a territory of another country (Loveman 2002, 30; Mumford 2013, 40). Generally, both sponsors and their proxies pursue a shared goal of defeating their common enemy. An ongoing civil war in Syria is described as a “semi-proxy war” by Cragin (2015) to highlight the significance of various non-state actors such as Hezbollah and Al Qaeda. He argues that these groups changed the nature of conflict in Syria

and the same patterns have appeared in Iraq, Yemen, and Lebanon (Cragin 2015, 312). States exploit other states or, in this case, interstate parties to fight their rivals, which would intervene on behalf of the other party. Firstly, proxy wars are less costly because they take place on a territory of the other state, therefore, decreasing the possible numbers of civilian casualties and the amount of destruction. Secondly, such wars are easier to justify in front of the international community because states would not explicitly express their interests when engaging in the proxy wars. In this regard, proxy wars are less costly than direct intervention in terms of both, human and material costs (Loveman 2002, Mumford 2013) and they provide fewer risks (Hughes 2014).

States, especially powerful states, tend to intervene in civil conflicts when they are interested in defeating their actual adversaries, which support the opposite side of the domestic strife. In such cases, civil conflicts tend to escalate into international and, hence, increase “the intensity, duration, and viciousness of a conflict” (Loveman 2002, 33). Such wars also result in higher casualties as a result of the flow of arms from external sources (Mumford 2013, 45). According to Loveman (2002, 30), the current international system and technological progress reduced the likelihood of direct confrontation while proxy warfare became the “logical replacement.” Through the use of proxies in conflicts, great and middle powers have found a way to contain conflicts in strategically important areas without suffering great human and reputation costs. Mumford (2013, 45) claims that after the end of the Cold War, proxy wars are driven primarily by regional powers rather than global powers. Ideological wars have been replaced by the wars fought for regional supremacy. However, as Cragin (2015) mentions, these indirect wars include not only states interested in affecting the outcome but also various non-state actors. The result is a “semi-proxy war”, which often turns into chaos.

Transnational jihad

Non-state armed groups present a serious problem to the notion of the Westphalian state sovereignty that includes the state's right to legitimately use force within a given territory (Krause and Milliken 2009, 202). It has been argued by Weber and Tilly that state formation is closely linked to warfare and the state's monopoly on violence (Davis 2009, 225). In other words, the state fights a war (usually with other states) to defend or gain its sovereignty. Despite that these groups do not have a right for legitimate use of force, they nevertheless possess the violent and destructive forces. Non-state armed groups differ from states in a number of ways but most importantly, non-states actors lack territorial integrity, which is one of determining properties of modern states. However, the absence of defined borders can also be an advantage for rebel groups as they are not constrained by national boundaries (Salehyan 2007, 218). Mobile rebels are, therefore, able to escape state repression by using external territories as a base of operations. In this sense, neighboring states often serve as externalities for rebels because close proximity alleviates the costs of attacking the target state. At the same time, rebels' mobility limits the state's ability to fight them because otherwise, states would violate the sovereignty of their counterparts, where rebels hide. Transnational rebels can thus strike a better deal by effectively using external territories to strengthen their military capabilities. Better bargaining opportunities, on the other hand, increase the duration of conflict as rebels can introduce new demands and interests. An external mobilization is an important tool for securing a better bargain for rebels, but it comes not without its costs (Salehyan 2007, 222). Host governments can prevent rebel activities by fighting them, given that they are willing and capable of doing so. In cases when supporting rebels and fueling opposition is profitable for those states, it is most likely that they will cooperate with rebels to undermine their rivals. But mostly, transnational rebels use failed and weak states as externalities since they serve as safe havens for violent NSAs (Salehyan 2007, 225). In any way,

transnational rebels pose a serious threat to the stability of both target and host states as they are extremely unsustainable and hard to monitor.

Another significant characteristic of transnational rebel groups appears to be the terroristic and often ideological nature of their organizations. To mention a few, there are such groups as Al-Qaeda, Hezbollah, ISIS, Taliban, and many others that are able to operate internationally. As mentioned at the beginning of this thesis, such transnational terrorist groups often pursue the aim of creating an Islamic State through jihad. And again, weak and failed governments provide opportunities for these groups to arise, grow and threaten the stability of whole regions. The collapse of the Afghan government after the overthrow of the Taliban government gave rise to several insurgencies that benefited from the emerging anarchy (Jones 2008). The inability of the government to provide basic services and ensure security, therefore, was a precondition for insurgencies to spread in Afghanistan. Another factor is an extremist Sunni ideology that motivated insurgent groups to fight for the control of the government. Not only the Taliban and al-Qaeda were able to mobilize the support of local Afghan people but also of external governments like Pakistan, Iraq, and others who share their ideology (Jones 2008). The increasing prominence of such transnational militant groups gives incentives to greater powers and neighboring countries to contain their activity and protect their own national interests. The involvement of the US and NATO in the aforementioned Afghan case demonstrates this motivation. Particularly, in the aftermath of 9/11, the US has been very decisive in its “war on terror” campaign. To some extent, this campaign can explain the widespread presence of US troops in several intrastate conflicts.

Civil war settlement

To account for the increased civil war duration, it is important to recognize that conflicts are processes rather than discrete events (Balch-Lindsay, Enterline, and Joyce 2008, 346). Throughout its persistence, civil war generates different military situations that affect parties' decisions to negotiate. Findley (2012) proposes that peace can be achieved only as a result of the process of battle, negotiation, agreement, and implementation of that agreement. To reveal why in some cases this process is prolonged, it is important to examine how civil wars end. Civil war continues until parties come to an agreement or until one side defeats the other in a decisive military battle (Caverley and Sechser 2017; Cunningham, Gleditsch, and Salehyan 2009). Warring parties are constantly given a choice of whether to end the conflict through a negotiated settlement or continue fighting. This choice is dependent upon parties' expectations on the conflict outcome, that is, whether they are better off fighting or not (Mason and Fett 1996, 548). The parties recognize that eventually, the conflict will terminate in a military victory of the government or rebels and that until that moment they have to bear the costs of continued fighting. Therefore, warring parties calculate their probability of victory, the expected payoffs and costs, and how long it will take to achieve this victory (Mason and Fett 1996, 549). However, civil wars are not that plain and simple. Most of them go beyond the descriptions of military disputes between the government and rebels. As Kalyvas (2003, 375) notes, civil wars are "complex and ambiguous." The civil war literature predominantly treats rebel actors as unitary actors, thereby focusing on state- and country-level dynamics while ignoring inter rebel strife (Fjelde and Nilsson 2012, 605). In fact, most rebel groups tend to spend as much time fighting with each other as with the government. Therefore, civil wars are not confined to the confrontation between the government or rebels but also between the various rebel groups themselves.

In either of these cases, the process of decision-making throughout conflicts is generally regarded by scholars of international relations as a bargaining process. The bargaining theory, being a primary model of interstate war, was adopted by civil war scholars as well. The classic model for bargaining theory was proposed by Fearon (1995) who claims that states can always find an agreement that would be preferable to a costly and risky war. He finds three conditions under which states would prefer fighting over the agreement: (1) private information and incentives to misrepresent it, (2) commitment problems, and (3) issue indivisibilities. Below I briefly analyze these three conditions and their applicability to intrastate wars.

I discussed the problem of information asymmetries in the previous chapter when I talked about the factors that lead to an increase in the duration of civil wars. In this section, I present this issue in the context of formal bargaining theory. Fearon (1995) claims that belligerents would almost always prefer reaching an agreement to bearing the costs of war if they had complete information about its outcomes. As such, to calculate the expected utility of this agreement, parties must also know the profitability of continued fighting. What Fearon (1995) suggests is that settlement fails because parties tend to misrepresent the information on their capabilities so as to secure a better agreement. As a result, both sides have asymmetric information about each other's capabilities and continue fighting because they strive to strengthen their bargaining power. That is why the bargaining table is not a reliable source of information compared to a battlefield, which is a costly way of obtaining knowledge (Narang 2014, 4). War eventually ends when battles reveal enough information on parties' relative strengths.

According to Walter (2009), information asymmetries between combatants in civil wars can be significant. Firstly, as rebel groups are one of the main adversaries in intrastate wars, the information on their capability is harder to obtain. To compare, information on states' military

potential is almost always displayed publicly, which is not the same for rebels. Moreover, rebels' military capability and strength can change throughout the conflict by attracting higher levels of support among the population. Secondly, rebels are much more reluctant to display information about their capabilities than states particularly because they are afraid of being repressed by the government once this information is available.

Commitment problems represent a second major obstacle for the arrangement of a settlement that would be preferable to war. It is evident in cases where belligerents cannot credibly commit to following the terms of an agreement (Fearon 1995; Wagner 2000). Given that there is a chance that disputants can renege on the terms of an agreement over time, the settlement is not preferable to other sides as it leaves them vulnerable to attack. In such cases, disputants pursue a military victory that is perceived as the most secure and stable possibility for conflict resolution (Walter 2009, 246).

However, the civil war termination process is much more difficult than that of the interstate conflict because adversaries in civil conflict cannot preserve their armed forces once they commit to a negotiated settlement (Walter 1997, 337). The losing side has to disband its forces and therefore expose itself to extreme vulnerability and insecurity, given that there are no guarantees that the other side will comply with the terms of the agreement. Because rebel groups are often weaker than their government adversaries, the probability of the government reneging on its commitments is quite high. In contrast, interstate adversaries can use different strategies to create binding agreements such as military defenses, alliances, economic coercion, and trade relationships (Walter 1997, 338).

Lastly, Fearon (1995) argues that settlement fails because some issues over which parties fight appear to be indivisible by their very nature. Issue indivisibility is, therefore, another reason

why states cannot reach a compromise ex-ante (prewar) and avoid the costs of fighting. Those issues, however, can often be resolved through various arrangements but as Fearon (1995, 382) argues, what makes them indivisible are the internal political and other mechanisms that impede bargaining. However, Fearon (1995) views the divisibility problem as being less compelling to explain wars because, for the most part, there exists an agreement short of war. There are always other ways, including side-payments, available to come to an agreement. Nevertheless, in civil wars, this problem may be present in the form of a struggle for the control of the government or a certain piece of territory (Walter 2009).

External intervention and bargaining

Bargaining problems, therefore, represent important aspects of war occurrence, duration, and termination. It appears to be especially challenging to bargain in the context of an intrastate conflict that by virtue of its very nature exacerbates bargaining problems. Fewer negotiated settlements, higher duration, and more decisive military victories among civil wars support this point (Walter 2009, 244). Nevertheless, most of the research in the civil war literature has been focused either on the civil war state characteristics or political, social, and economic grievances that while explaining structural causes has not accounted for the decision-making process itself. In a civil war environment, there exists one major factor that affects this bargaining process, which is external intervention (Cunningham 2006, 876). For the most part, the literature has viewed civil wars as having only two parties, that is, the government and rebels, whereas many intrastate conflicts in contemporary political settings involved (or still involve) more than two actors. Examples include such civil wars as in former Yugoslavia, Colombia, Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Syria, Yemen, and many others. Such conceptualizations of civil wars generate both theoretical and empirical problems for studying these conflicts (Cunningham

2006). Below, I turn to an analysis of how external actors affect the bargaining environment in civil wars, which, in turn, influences the duration of conflicts. First, external interveners in civil wars can introduce additional demands and preferences, thereby decreasing the range of bargains (Cunningham 2006). It is more difficult for parties to find an agreement that would satisfy all actors involved in the conflict, an agreement that is equally acceptable for opposing sides and each side within the allied forces. In the absence of a satisfying agreement, actors prefer to continue fighting to gain a better deal. As Cunningham (2006) argues, the size of the bargaining range depends not only on the number of additional actors but also on how divergent their preferences are. In this sense, the involvement of different types of actors, that by virtue of their nature have different interests, also shrinks the range of bargains in civil wars. I discuss this point in greater detail in further sections.

Second, third parties in civil wars might complicate the bargaining process by enhancing information asymmetries that impede negotiated settlement. In multiparty civil conflicts, information is harder to obtain because battle outcomes no longer serve as a reliable source of updating their beliefs compared to dyadic conflicts (Cunningham 2010, 118). Nevertheless, battles in multiparty civil wars are mostly dyadic with the difference that the number of such separate battles is higher. Combatants have to update their probability of victory not only in relation to each other but also against all actors involved in the conflict (Cunningham 2006, 879). Moreover, parties in civil wars also have incentives to misrepresent the information about their capabilities and delay the settlement thus prolonging the conflict. As a result, they have to cope with severe information asymmetries arising as a result of the involvement of multiple external actors. This is not, however, to suggest that it is impossible to reach an agreement in such circumstances. Rather,

it will take much more time for combatants to update their beliefs on the probability of victory and thus, lead to longer civil wars.

Another issue that affects the bargaining process in multiparty civil wars is the problem of shifting alliances between parties (Cunningham 2006). In civil wars, several weak rebel groups can engage in alliances to oppose the government. While all of them have a common enemy, their alliance is not credible since each of these groups wants to gain bigger concessions and particularly does not want to be exploited by the others. This issue is closely related to the credible commitments problem with the difference that it now concerns not the credibility of a peace agreement but an alliance. The problem is further exacerbated when different external actors intervene in the conflict.

Divergent actors might find it difficult to cooperate even when they have a common goal due to the differences in the nature of their organizations. For the most part, external interveners are the states that have both political and military authority to affect the conflict outcome. They can support either side of the conflict, that is, the government or rebels, but there will be power imbalances between them and their agents. Obviously, this is not a golden rule but just a generalization of most of the contemporary civil conflicts. Thus, large power asymmetries between allies in civil wars make commitments on the side of a stronger actor less credible as it can renege on their promises.

Therefore, civil wars with diverse actors are prolonged as a result of small bargaining range, severe information asymmetries, and shifting alliances. The inclusion of different types of actors exacerbates these problems in intrastate conflicts and impedes a negotiated settlement to take place, indicating that civil wars with diverse actors last longer.

Hypotheses

The connection between the diversity of actors in a civil war and its duration that I am trying to demonstrate rests on the assumption that all of these actors involved in the conflict have diverse goals. This, in turn, brings additional demands and interests to the bargaining table and thus prolongs the conflict. The bargaining framework is used to show how civil wars are prolonged and why resolution fails to take place. I am thus interested in the increased duration of civil wars that are also associated with their failed termination.

I argue that different types of actors pursue different goals as they differ in their nature and defining features of their entities. However, I also do not exclude the possibility of converging interests between different types of actors, which can be evident in the alliances that actors make as they fight. But such alliances tend to be weak since actors lack commitment and credibility. This results in the shifting alliances that are recognized as an important feature of modern civil wars (Cunningham 2006).

The types of actors proposed in this research matter because parties in civil wars engage in different kinds of confrontations and often against different actors. Again, their interests might converge but it does not guarantee effective cooperation between them. Once civil war has begun, the state is no longer stable and unitary in a sense that conflict between the government and rebel group(s) breaches its existing state of affairs. This creates an opportunity for third parties to intervene in the conflict. Neighboring states can intervene to contain the conflict spillover or limit the activity of transnational rebels. These groups themselves often engage in civil wars of other states to support warring parties that share their ideology and goals, or to defeat their adversaries. As most such rebel groups are often terrorist in their nature, global and regional powers may intervene to fight them and protect regional stability. In some cases, the intervention of one regional power can trigger a retaliatory intervention of their rivals and result in a proxy war

between them. As for global powers, their interests can range from strategic and security interests to the provision of stability or regime change. The intervention of one actor can cause the intervention of the other and the whole situation is like a vicious cycle that in the end makes it harder to differentiate between all the actors involved in a conflict.

The key reasoning is that every additional actor (whether it is a state or non-state) introduces its own interests and demands to the bargaining table and therefore prolongs the bargaining process and the war itself. Differentiating between the types of actors involved in conflict presents another way of discerning among the kinds of interests these actors can pursue. It is important to mention that the cases laid down above are all hypothetical and do not mean that every civil war has a proxy war or that every rebel group triggers the intervention of global or regional power. Those are just examples of intervention behavior that third parties can have given that they differ in their types. However, the ongoing conflicts in Syria and Yemen are close to these scenarios as it is not apparent at first glance who fights whom and why in these conflicts. In any way, the intervention dynamics in civil wars have important implications on their duration, which is the main rationale of this research.

As such, the main hypotheses developed from this discussion are:

Hypothesis I: The greater the number of interveners, the greater the duration of conflict.

Hypothesis II: The greater the mix of types of interveners, the greater the duration of conflict.

Although my main interest lies in the effect of the diversity of actors, I additionally test the effect of the number of actors as well. There are two reasons for it. First, as I mentioned before, the diversity of actors is dependent upon the number. Second, I will test the effect of these variables both separately and together to see whether civil wars with multiple actors (the number) last longer than with multiple interests (the diversity).

Chapter 5: Statistical Analysis

The research examines the effect of the number and types of actors and their diverse interests on the duration of civil wars. The timeframe for analysis covers every civil war that began after the Cold War, that is, after 1991. Because I focus on the goals of interveners, I seek to examine the incidents of third-party interventions in the absence of a rivalry between two superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union. Given that during the Cold War most of the external interventions in civil wars were shaped by this confrontation, it appears to be more reasonable to study post-Cold War interventions. This research employs a mixed-method approach of qualitative and quantitative methods which when employed together allow generating more accurate results. I start with a quantitative analysis that helps me to reveal general patterns of my question and then turn to a case study of the Yemeni civil war to demonstrate it on a specific case. Yemen, being one of the major ongoing civil wars that includes a variety of different actors, has now continued for almost 6 years. Therefore, the analysis of this case is an important contribution to my research.

The dataset

To test my hypotheses empirically, I need to identify the set of external actors involved in civil wars. The main explanatory factors in my thesis are the interests that actors pursue and, therefore, I will use Cunningham's (2010) research named "Blocking resolution: How external states can prolong civil wars" as a groundwork for my own research. As Cunningham examines the effect of independent goals of interveners on the duration of civil wars, I will use his data to see whether types of actors prolong internal conflicts. The diversity of actors is, therefore, another measurement of the interests that actors pursue when engaging in conflict. The criteria to identify civil wars that will be included in this research are those used by the Uppsala/International Peace

Research Institute. To be considered a civil war, a conflict has to satisfy following criteria: (1) result in at least 25 battle deaths per year, (2) originate within the generally recognized borders, (3) have an incompatibility over the control of government or territory, (4) encounter resistance from both government and rebels (Gleditsch et al. 2002).

Accordingly, the data used in this research is longitudinal thereby accounting for the timing of civil war occurrence. Cunningham (2010) uses the Uppsala/International Peace Research Institute Oslo Armed Conflict Dataset (ACD) to determine the incidence of interventions into civil wars. This dataset lists all conflicts starting from 1945 and identifies four types of them – interstate wars, extra systemic wars, intrastate wars, and internationalized civil wars. For the purposes of this study, only the last two categories are included. ACD dataset also divides the participants of each conflict into the “Side A” (the government) and “Side B” that opposes it. This classification allows capturing all external actors that take part in the conflict, thereby making the data-collection process easier. In another study, Cunningham (2006) examines the effect of external veto-players on the duration of civil wars. Veto-players are the parties of the war that can impede the resolution of the conflict and thus continue the war. If there are no at least two such opposing actors present in the conflict, it will end (Cunningham 2006, 882). As such, Cunningham (2006) codes a party as “veto-player” only if it meets three conditions, which are: autonomy, cohesiveness, and viability. This research, however, holds a simplified version of this definition and simply counts all actors included in the conflict as being able to affect the delay of settlement. This issue will be examined in greater detail further.

Firstly, I needed to obtain observations on civil wars from 1992 to 2018. As I am focusing on the post-Cold War civil conflicts, I excluded the observations from Cunningham’s dataset that took place before 1992. I dropped the incidents of conflicts based on the minor start date, that is,

the date of meeting all ACD criteria. I did not use the date of first fatality or year of observation as a variable to classify post-Cold War conflicts as I am only interested in conflicts that started after the Cold War. This is why, for example, the war in Afghanistan that started before 1992 is not included in the dataset though it persisted long after it. Furthermore, I dropped a control variable measuring whether the conflict took place during the Cold War, which was included in Cunningham's (2010) dataset since I do not account for these conflicts in my research.

The next step was to add observations of civil conflicts that occurred from 2004 (the year of last observation in Cunningham's data) till 2018. To do this, I used the ACD dataset's latest version (version 19, 2018) that covers all armed conflicts from 1946 to 2018. Several variables indicating the basic conflict information (such as start and end dates, conflict IDs, and warring parties) were taken from this dataset to add them to the already existing dataset. Other variables used by Cunningham, including his explanatory variables and control variables, were complemented respectively.

Independent variables

The goals of intervention. In his study, Cunningham (2010) used different methods to measure the goals of external interveners and to identify whether they were different from that of other parties. Firstly, he traced the divergent interests of factors by looking at relations between external states and their internal allies. In some cases, the parties would shift their allies and even engage in military conflict. These conflicts are the indicators of external states' independent goals that are different from that of their allies in civil conflict. Secondly, Cunningham (2010) analyzed interveners' demands that were explicitly stated by them. However, states prefer to hide their motivations especially if they are separate from main warring parties. That is why a third method of identifying parties' goals was used by the scholar. To reveal the goals of remaining

interventions, Cunningham (2010) reviewed historical sources by using news reports and scholarly works describing historical cases. Therefore, he was able to come up with three types of external interventions, which are coded as non-independent, clearly independent, or quasi-independent. The last category includes cases of ambiguous interventions such as the US in Iraq. However, because Cunningham's (2010) examines interventions only until 2004, I complemented the observations of these variables until 2018. It is important to note that the main distinction between the clearly independent and non-independent interventions is whether the interests of external parties are different from that of internal combatants. In case if they have competing interests, the actor was coded as having "clearly independent" goals motivating its intervention (Cunningham 2010, 121).

This method of measuring the motivations behind external interventions allows me to capture a general trend among foreign actors that can affect the outcome and duration of civil wars. What matters is whether the involved external actors have divergent preferences with internal parties. The dataset created for this research reveals several instances when actors did not experience this divergence. In Angola, for example, the Namibian troops were deployed to the country as a result of a mutual defense pact signed in 1999. The same year, Angola engaged in counter-insurgency operations against the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) and Namibia intervened to support the government. Thus, Angola and Namibia shared a common goal – repression of the secessionist movement in Angola. In other cases – such as UK's intervention in Sierra Leone in 2000, Russia and Uzbekistan in Tajikistan in 1992-1998, South Africa and Botswana in Lesotho in 1998, DR Congo in Uganda between 2014 and 2018, and Chad, Niger, and Cameroon in Nigeria between 2012 and 2018 – foreign states intervened to prevent an allied government from being overthrown or to fight a common threat. All in all, there

were 18 cases of interventions in which external allies were involved in the conflict to support an internal party (usually the government) and therefore hasten the conflict settlement.

In the opposite cases, external interveners have introduced their own interests to the internal conflict. For example, while it was the Somalian president who invited Ethiopian troops in the country in 2006 to beat the Islamic Courts Union, al-Shabbab, and other militant groups, it ended up as a struggle between the transitional government of Somalia and Ethiopia. In 2010, other states such as Burundi, Djibouti, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, and Uganda all became involved in the conflict that persists to this day. It is also supported by the western states like the US and UK, which further alienates its resolution. Other cases include such major conflicts as in Rwanda, Ukraine, Syria and Yemen. Overall, there were 10 cases of interventions in which the external state was becoming involved to protect its own interests or national security.

Other intermediate cases include conflicts in which it is not clear whether the intervener brings competing interests to the conflict. According to Cunningham (2010, 121), even if an external party has an independent goal, if it allows its ally to operate and bargain freely, it is not considered as an actor with clearly independent interests that have to be counted in the conflict. As mentioned above, the US invasion of Iraq is an example of such quasi-independent preferences of the US over the outcome of conflict. While there are clear differences among the US and Iraqi vision of the conflict outcome and the means of achieving it, the main question is whether the US would continue fighting if Iraq was able to find a compromise among the several competing factions (Cunningham 2010, 121). Same quasi-independent goals were identified for Yugoslavia in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia, the US in Libya, Iran and Russia in Syria, and the US in Yemen. It is important to mention that the measures of independent agenda, that is, clearly independent and quasi-independent interventions are not mutually exclusive, and some conflicts

can have positive measures for both of these variables. Examples are civil wars in Somalia, Syria, Ukraine, and Yemen.

Number of actors. For the purposes of this research, I needed to additionally measure the number and types of actors involved in civil wars. For the number of actors, I created a variable measuring it by simply counting each party to the conflict as an additional actor. The minimal measure of this variable is therefore 2, which shows the main adversaries of the conflict – the government and rebels. I did not apply any additional criteria to measure this variable as my main interest lies in the diversity of actors involved. As an example, the number of actors in the Angolan civil war in 1992-2002 rises from 4 to 5. When the war broke out, the Angolan government fought against three insurgent groups – UNITA, FNLA, and MPLA. In 1999, Namibia deployed its forces to support the government, so the number of actors rose from 4 (including the government and 3 militant groups) to 5. Civil wars that do not include any external actors and that are fought only between the government and one rebel group were coded as having only 2 actors. Examples include civil war Russia against the Republic of Chechnya or Ethiopia against the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF).

Diversity of actors. As for the types, I created a variable called the diversity of actors. The types of actors in this research vary accordingly: global powers, regional powers, neighboring countries, and transnational terrorist groups. It is important to note that in some conflicts, a regional power can also be a neighboring country and in such cases its presence in the conflict will only be coded once. The government and rebel groups were not included in this variable since every civil war in any way involves these actors. Moreover, I did not account for the presence of multiple internal rebel groups in a conflict such as Guatemalan civil war that includes 6 rebel groups: MR-13, FAR, EGP, PGT, ORPA, and URNG. Although these groups can have competing

interests, it is beyond the scope of this research to account for it as I am testing the effect of the types of actors on the duration of civil wars and all these organizations represent one type of actors, that is, rebel groups. I also do not account for the effect of each type of actor on the duration of civil war. Rather, I examine the effect of the mix of those types to see how they can prolong the conflict, if any. Therefore, I assume that the greater the diversity of actors in civil war (ranging from 0 to 4), the longer the conflict persists. As such, while 0 means that the conflict does not involve any external parties, subsequent numbers stand for every additional type of actor in the conflict. For example, the Yemeni civil war that includes the Saudi-led coalition (GCC countries), the AQAP and IS, and the US is coded as having the highest diversity of actors, that is, 4.

Control variables

Following Cunningham (2010), I included control variables such as the presence of lootable resources (obtained from Buhaug et al. (2002), an annual measure of the number of battle-deaths (as more deaths mean higher costs), regime type, civil war state population, country's measure of GDP per capita, the level of ethnolinguistic fractionalization (obtained from Fearon 2003), a measure of the incompatibility of the conflict: whether it is a governmental or territorial conflict (obtained from ACD), and the proportion of neighboring countries that are democracies (obtained from Gleditsch and Ward (2006). Other variables vary by the year of observation, so they needed to be updated. However, because most of them come from other works, they are not updated annually. That is why I obtained the GDP per capita and population variables from the World Bank data and the battle-deaths variable from the ACD (version 19). Thus, most of the observations were obtained following Cunningham's dataset with the difference that I used a different time frame for my analysis. I also added a variable measuring the diversity of actors engaging in civil wars to test my own hypothesis.

Analysis

Since my research focuses on the duration of civil wars, a Cox Proportional Hazards model regression is employed. Unlike conventional regression analyses, the Cox model introduces the factor of time (Box-Steffensmeier et al. 2003, 34) and thereby enables to research and address more questions. This method is perfectly suited for studying duration and political change and therefore is appropriate for my research. In particular, it is often used to predict causal or predictive claims for the occurrence of events. For example, political scientists can research the duration of time until states get involved in military disputes, the duration of peace once an agreement was signed after the conflict, or the length of parliamentary careers (Box-Steffensmeier and Jones 1997, 1417).

The proportional hazard (PH) assumption examines the extent to which the effects of independent variables on the duration of a state stays proportional during the period under review. In PH analyses, it is implied that the effect of the covariates remains constant over time or, in other words, proportional. This model tests the effect of covariates on the probability of observing an event (a war end, in this research) at any point of time, given that the conflict has continued to that point (Cunningham 2010, 120). It, therefore, treats time as a function of a risk of a war ending at each time point.

Because time is a function of a dependent variable in Cox models, the measurements of duration play an important role. The ACD data are not suitable for such analyses as they measure the duration of conflict by calendar year and thus fail to account for recurring conflicts in the same country that can have a break in fighting. Cunningham (2010), in this sense, uses data from Gates and Strand (2004) who provide precise start and end dates for each conflict and codes recurring conflicts as new ones. In this data, start and end dates are measured in days and thus every

additional year of fighting adds 365 days to these variables. Such precise coding of start and end dates allows to run a duration analysis with more accurate measurement of the dependent variable.

In this research, I ran several Cox regressions models that test the effect of number and types of actors on the duration of civil war (see Table 1). Following Cunningham, I included three variables in a “core model” that can affect both the dependent and main explanatory variables (number and types of actors). Among those three additional variables is the availability of lootable resources that can account for the prolonged presence of external actors in the conflict. As such, lootable resources can substantially prolong the conflict.

The second variable – the number of battle-deaths – can, in turn, shorten the duration of civil wars as costly conflicts (in terms of human costs) can discourage parties from continuing them. Lastly, the civil war state’s regime type measured as Polity2 variable from the Polity IV dataset was included in the core model. Interventions in democracies can be harder to justify internationally so states are less likely to intervene in democracies to pursue their own interests. As such, a democratic regime type of civil wars state could be associated with shorter civil wars. For the purposes of this research, I also added the measures of number and types of actors in the core model. Model 1 includes the measure of number of actors along with the aforementioned three variables. Model 2 instead tests the effect of types of actors while Model 3 incorporates both these measures. Model 4 additionally includes the measures of remaining control variables: a measure of population in the civil-war country, a measure of incompatibility, the natural log of GDP per capita, the level of ethnolinguistic fractionalization (ELF), and the measure showing the proportion of neighboring countries that are democracies. I first test the effect of the number and types of

Table I. Cox proportional hazards models of civil war duration.

| | <i>Model 1</i> | <i>Model 2</i> | <i>Model 3</i> | <i>Model 4</i> | <i>Model 5</i> | <i>Model 6</i> | <i>Model 7</i> |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|----------------------|------------------|
| Number | -0.171*(0.101) | | -0.105 (0.114) | -0.321 (0.257) | -0.301 (0.269) | -0.299 (0.269) | -0.339* (0.23) |
| Diversity | | -0.305*(0.162) | -0.21 (0.191) | -0.488* (0.335) | -0.442 (0.351) | -0.436 (0.359) | -0.585* (0.33) |
| Clearly-independent interventions | | | | | -42.634** | | |
| Quasi-independent interventions | | | | | | -34.631** (1.075) | |
| Non-independent interventions | | | | | | | 1.415 (1.571) |
| Lootable resources | 0.069 (0.175) | 0.047 (0.174) | 0.039 (0.176) | 0.081 (0.282) | 0.085 (0.282) | 0.086 (0.282) | 0.094 (0.285) |
| Logged battle-deaths | -0.288** (0.067) | -0.288** (0.065) | -0.28** (0.067) | -0.309** (0.101) | -0.305** (0.01) | -0.306** (0.99) | -0.314** (0.103) |
| Democracy | -0.539** (0.539) | -0.556** (0.238) | -0.566** (0.236) | -0.007 (0.304) | -0.007 (0.306) | -0.006 (0.304) | -0.037 (0.31) |
| Log population | | | | -0.327** (0.125) | -0.328** (0.125) | -0.328** (0.125) | -0.326** (0.126) |
| Incompatibility | | | | -0.305 (0.304) | -0.308 (0.303) | 0.308 (0.303) | 0.351 (0.315) |
| LogGDPpc | | | | 0.326** (0.123) | 0.320** (0.123) | 0.319** (0.123) | 0.327 (0.125) |
| ELF | | | | -0.359 (0.523) | -0.343 (0.52) | -0.342 (0.519) | -0.404 (0.54) |
| Proportion of neighboring democracies | | | | -0.771 (0.705) | -0.740 (0.71) | -0.738 (0.712) | 0.774 (0.671) |
| Subjects | 170 | 170 | 170 | 83 | 83 | 83 | 83 |
| Failures | 130 | 130 | 130 | 60 | 60 | 60 | 60 |
| Observations | 525 | 525 | 525 | 258 | 258 | 245 | 258 |
| Wald Chi-square | 32.19 | 31.64 | 33.36 | 44.84 | 40.15 | 3813.84 | 49.93 |
| Log pseudo-likelihood | -549.017 | -548.829 | -548.409 | -201.811 | -201.608 | -201.609 | -201.31 |

Reported are the coefficients of variables in parentheses.
* significant at 0.1 level, **significant at .05 level, one-tailed tests.

factors separately to see which of them affects duration more. Then, I combine both measures together first with three variables in a core model, then with the inclusion of all control variables. In Models 1 and 2, both measures of number and types of actors perform as expected as they have coefficients with negative signs. This means that the hazard (likelihood of war end) is lower and therefore duration of war is longer. Both measures achieve significance at 0.1 level (one-tailed test). In Model 3 that incorporates both measures of number and types of actors, coefficients decrease, and measures fail to achieve statistical significance. The coefficients on these measures increase as we add measures of the remaining control variables in Model 4, with the measure of diversity of actors achieving statistical significance at 0.1 level. This shows that a high number of actors in civil wars does not lead to longer wars by itself, rather it is the types of actors and their divergent interests that matter. The measure of diversity receives greater coefficient than does the measure of number and is statistically significant meaning that the involvement of diverse multiple actors affects civil war duration more than the involvement of multiple actors. These results generally show that conflicts with higher number of actors and greater diversity among them tend to last longer.

As for the three additional measures in these core models, the lootable resources measure does not perform as expected suggesting that conflicts with resources do not make civil wars more difficult to resolve. This finding contradicts Cunningham's results and needs further exploration to understand this correlation. The measure of battle-deaths is statistically significant in all four models but not in the expected direction: conflicts are more likely to endure when they have more battle-deaths. Finally, the models also show that conflicts in democracies last longer, with Models 1 through 3 having statistically significant results, which suggests that conflicts with independent agendas in democracies last longer. Model 4, that includes the measures of all control variables

as well as two explanatory variables, confirms the effect of divergent actors on the duration of civil wars and largely reiterates the correlation between three control variables (resources, battle-deaths, and regime type) and conflict duration. Of the remaining control variables in Model 4, only the measures of GDP per capita and population in the civil war state reach statistical significance, with the measure of GDP having the opposite effect. Conflicts that take place in states with greater population tend to last longer while conflicts in states with greater GDP are not associated with longer duration. The measures of ethnic fractionalization, the proportion of neighboring democracies, and whether the conflict is a governmental or territorial conflict do not have a statistically significant effect on the duration of civil war.

In Models 5 through 7, I additionally include the measures of independent agenda introduced by Cunningham (2010): clearly independent (Model 5), quasi-independent (Model 6), and non-independent (Model 7) interventions. As such, I test the effect of the measures of number and types of actors along with the measures of interveners' goals. Bearing in mind that diversity can be viewed as another measure of external actors' goals (diverse actors mean diverse interests), I expect that the measure of diversity will be robust to Cunningham's (2010) measure of independent goals. All the control variables are also included in these models. Again, the measures of number and types of actors are negative, and their coefficients are higher once we control for the goals of intervention. However, only Model 7 with the measure of non-independent goals, gives statistically significant results for one of these variables – diversity. Whereas, the measure of non-independent goals itself fails to reach statistical significance and therefore does not affect the duration of civil wars. In Models 5 and 6, both measures of independent goals reach statistical significance at 0.05 level and have very large coefficients. These results are consistent with Cunningham's (2010) findings and indicate that conflicts in which third parties intervene with an

independent agenda last substantially longer. However, the measures of number and diversity of actors did not perform as expected, failing to achieve statistical significance when controlled for independent interventions. Surprisingly, the measure of diversity is statically significant only when interveners do not bring independent goals in the conflict. This suggests that greater number and types of actors in civil wars prolong the duration even when actors do not have a separate agenda. Although, maybe it is exactly because the measure of diversity of actors is only an additional way of measuring actors' interests that it did not affect the duration of civil wars in models involving independent interventions.

The measures of control variables in Models 5 to 7 have similar effects as in the models before with the only difference that the measure of democracy does not reach a statistical significance. Logged battle-death, population and GDP (in the opposite direction), in turn, have a substantial effect on the duration of civil wars.

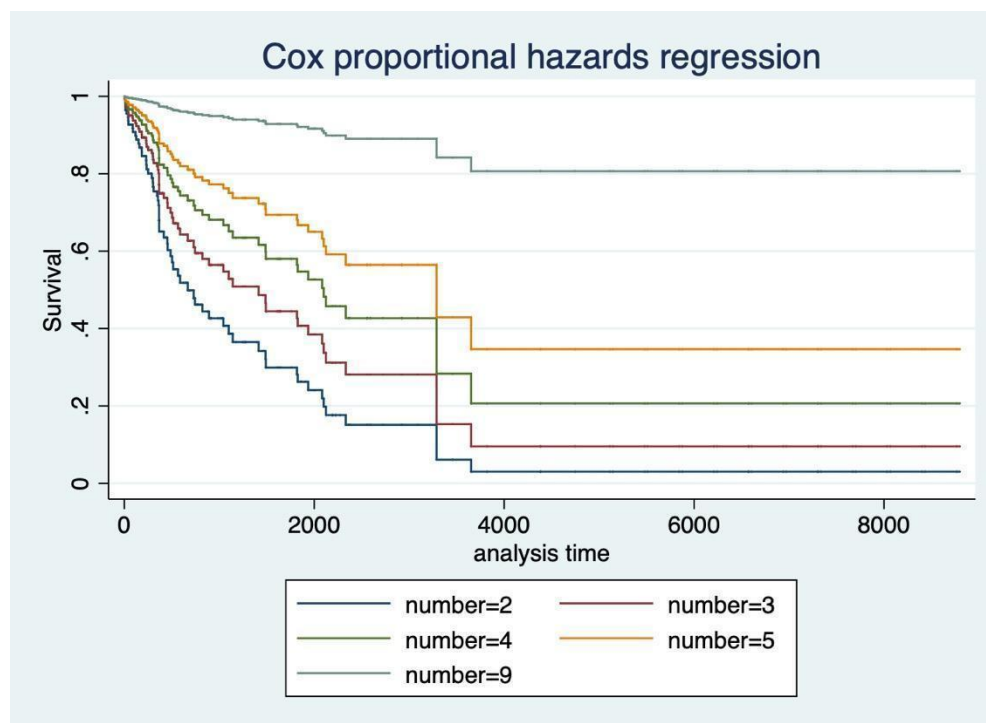


Figure 1. Survival functions for conflicts with different number of actors

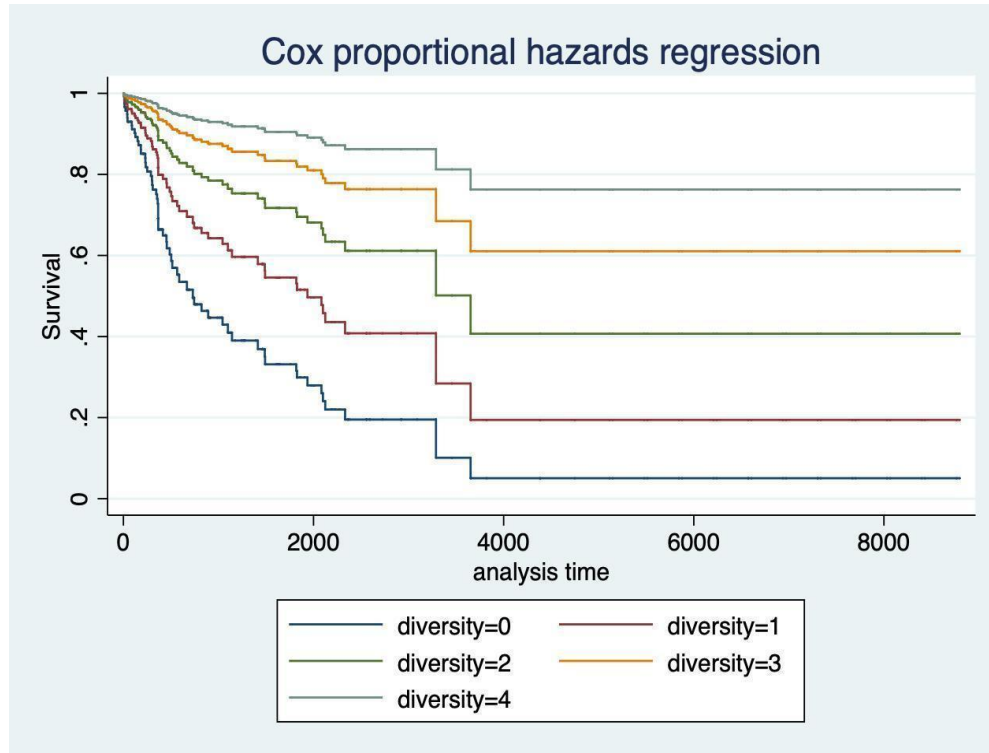


Figure 2. Survival functions for conflicts with different diversity of actors

To further illustrate the performance of the number and types of actors, Figures 1 and 2 demonstrate the predicted survival functions of civil wars based on Model 4. However, in this case, the effect of the measures of number and types of actors is tested separately thereby showing the comparison between conflicts with greater and lower numbers and types of actors in civil wars. This function illustrates the percentage of conflicts surviving beyond a certain point in time, measured in days (Cunningham 2010, 124).

The figures show that the measures of number and types of actors involved in civil wars have a substantial effect on their duration. Almost 80% of wars that have the highest diversity of 4 have a chance of surviving to 5000 days (about 14 years), as compared to 60% with diversity of 3, 40% with diversity of 2, 20% with diversity of 1, and about 5% with 0 diversity. This means that the greater the diversity of actors, the higher the likelihood that conflict duration is longer. As

for the measure of number of actors, 80% of wars that include 9 actors survive to 3800 days (about 10 years), while wars with 5 actors have a 40% chance, wars with 4 actors have a 20% chance, and wars with only two actors have a 5% chance. Similarly, a higher number of actors results in a higher probability of war being continued longer. Therefore, it is clear that both greater number and diversity of actors in civil wars prolong their duration. These figures do not account for the goals of interventions as I assume that diversity of actors performs this role.

Generally, the results obtained from both the Table 1 and Figures 1 and 2 show that the number and types of actors involved in civil wars do affect the duration of these conflicts. Greater diversity of actors is found to be more significant in its effect than does the number of actors, especially when controlling for other variables. However, the findings show that the correlation between the number and diversity of actors and longer civil wars is not robust to the inclusion of variables controlling for the independent agenda. Overall, the hypotheses proposed in this research are broadly confirmed and indicate that conflicts that involve a greater mix of different actors such as great powers, regional powers, neighboring countries, and transnational terrorist organizations tend to last longer.

Chapter 6: Case Study

The Yemeni civil war is one of the long-standing wars with the inclusion of various state and non-state actors. Started in 2015, it is now not only an internal conflict between the government and rebels (the Houthis) but also a proxy war fought between the regional powers of the Middle East, that is, Saudi Arabia and Iran (Clausen 2015). The situation of instability and chaos created as a result of this conflict provided an opportunity for terrorist groups such as al-Qaeda and ISIS to enter Yemen and propagate their ideals. To complicate things even more, the United States also takes part in the course of the conflict by providing indirect military assistance through Saudi Arabian inclusion (Byman 2018). The provision of arms to Saudi Arabia which leads the coalition against Iran in Yemeni civil war can be considered as a driver of military activities in the conflict zone that seems to be continued for an unknown period of time.

The case of Yemeni civil war was chosen because it demonstrates how various different actors being involved in one conflict and yet pursuing different goals can affect the resolution and duration of civil war. Started in 2015, the war is still ongoing with no prospect for settlement in the nearest future. As long as the actors participating in the war choose to pursue their interests, the war will endure and continue to cause sufferings and devastation to Yemeni people.

Notwithstanding the involvement of various external actors, it is important to emphasize that the origins of the Yemeni civil war are domestic and emanate from its government's incompetence and corruption. Third parties complicate the resolution of conflict by bringing in their own interests, but they did not act as its initiators. The goal of this chapter is precisely to show how the involvement of different types of actors changes the course of events in Yemen: how they impede the bargaining and complicate an already difficult situation. Below I provide the

characteristic features of every actor involved in the civil war, their links to Yemen, and main reasoning behind their engagement in conflict.

Yemen before 2014

Yemen is not and never has been a country with a stable regime. Instead, it was always weak and prone to civil war, but even for such conditions, the current situation in Yemen is unprecedented. With about 50,000 Yemenis dead, and even more struggling from starvation and disease, civil war has produced a humanitarian crisis with no end (Byman 2018, 141). Understanding of why civil war has occurred and evolved as it did requires the examination of Yemen's political system and state structure. Yemen is an authoritarian state ruled not by formal ministries but by an uncountable elite. The president controlled both formal and informal state institutions that resulted in public's distrust in government's legitimacy and competency (Hill and Nonneman 2011, 4). Lack of legitimacy is a major obstacle for Yemen's stability which stems from the coexistence of different concepts of legitimacy within the state that compete for power.

In addition to overall dissatisfaction with the Yemeni government, the opposition is polarized within itself too. The current civil war is not the first and even second to experience in Yemen. As such, the first civil war took place in 1962 not so long after the Ottomans left the region. It began when the recognized ruler of Yemen, Imam Yahya, had died and his son became his successor. The Zaydi Imamate, which was under the control of Yahya Hamid, mostly embraces the territory of today's Yemen. As a result of this war, the nationalist forces formed the Yemen Arab Republic in the north in 1970. The Imamate faction, however, controlled more of the seats in the government and a share of patronage. This system of political representation became entrenched in Yemeni politics and caused public discontent in the years to come (Byman 2018, 143). As such, southerners backed by the Soviet Union gained enough power to challenge the

government and fought wars with the North in 1972 and 1979. In 1986, South Yemen had its own civil war.

The history of modern Yemen begins in 1990, when the North and South Yemen were united as the Republic of Yemen under President Saleh. In 1994, however, the South tried to secede from the North, but their attempts proved unsuccessful (Byman 2018). The president Ali Abdullah Saleh managed to keep the control over Yemen by using the policy of divide and rule. He rewarded those who supported him and excluded those who opposed. The networks of politicians, military officials, tribal leaders, and other elites linked to Saleh controlled Yemen's resources and thereby sustained the regime (Brehony 2015, 234). As a result, the country suffered from corruption and its people from poverty. Moreover, Yemen suffers from the sectarian issues of the Shia-Sunni divide that negatively shape Yemen's identity and politics in general (Esfandiary and Tabatabai 2016, 156). The main representatives of Shia Islam are the Houthi rebels that became a well-structured militia opposing the regime in Sana'a.

The main source of public discontent in Yemen are the rampant elite corruption and extreme income disparity among the public. This eventually resulted in mass public non-violent demonstrations in the wake of the Arab Spring that affected the entire Arabian Peninsula (Hill and Nonneman 2011, 1). The pro-democracy activists called for political change and resignation of the president Ali Abdullah Saleh who was in power for 30 years (Clausen 2015, 17). The rise of popular support for protests revealed the competition within Yemen's ruling elite with the military general's open backing of the opposition and thus splitting from Saleh's regime. A decisive moment in this state of affairs took place in March 2011, when the government attacked a peaceful protest act in front of Sana'a University which resulted in over 50 casualties (Clausen 2015, 18). All these events put already fragile Yemen at the risk of civil war and the international community

demanded Saleh's resignation (Hill and Nonneman 2011, 4). Eventually, the Gulf Cooperation (GCC) and the United Nations (UN) took the initiative in designing a transition plan, according to which Saleh was replaced with his vice-president, Abd Rabbuh Mansour Hadi. Saleh, in return, was granted immunity and was allowed to lead his former ruling party, General People's Congress (GPC). In this way, the threat of civil war was prevented in Yemen but at the cost of essential amendments in the political system and elite structure (Alley 2013, 74). However, the initiators of the protests and the opposition movements like the Houthis and Hirak were not included in the new political system. This issue is a turning point for understanding why the crisis of 2014 occurred in Yemen after the government took the measures to avoid internal conflict (Clausen 2015, 18).

New Yemeni government

The transition of the Yemeni government as a result of the youth-led pro-democracy demonstrations has not proven to be effective for creating a real political change. Instead, this was a political move which resulted in elite rearrangement that again drew opposition's attention. However, a National Dialogue Conference (NDC) was created in which grievances and suggestions could be addressed in order to establish a new and more sustainable state (Clausen 2015, 19). This was meant to be a platform for integrating all Yemeni political actors such as the Houthis, to lay out the framework for the new constitution.

Despite all efforts, the government under Hadi was also weak and unstable, which was further undermined by a collapsed economy and subsequent decrease in the provision of public services (Byman 2018, 145). In addition, the former president, Saleh, still had control of the many military units that stayed loyal to him. By using his influence, Saleh tried to undermine Hadi's regime in the hope of regaining power in Yemen.

In addition, the continuing political uncertainty and instability in Yemen created a safe haven for the operation of terrorist organizations such as Al-Qaeda in Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) (Hill and Nonneman 2011, 2). At the same time, the Houthis, seeing no change from the 2011 revolution, became more radical and violent. Taking advantage of Hadi's weak regime, the Houthis seized the capital of Yemen, Sana'a, in 2014. President Hadi escaped first to the southern part of the country and eventually to Saudi Arabia. Meanwhile, the former president Saleh, taking the opportunity, joined his military forces (that were still loyal to him) with the Houthis, which were fighting for his resignation back in 2011 (Byman 2018, 145).

Following his escape to Saudi Arabia, president Hadi asked the GCC countries to intervene and halt the Houthi forces invasion. In response to this, Saudi Arabia was quick to launch a military campaign under the operation "Decisive Storm" in Yemen that was mostly ineffective. In March 2015, Saudi-led coalition started bombing Yemen that was followed by a military intervention to fight the Houthi rebels. The coalition included such states as Bahrain, Egypt, Kuwait, Sudan that provided nominal support for Riyadh while the UAE, Eritrea and Somalia provided bases and airspace (Byman 2018, 146).

While the first campaign was successful in taking the southern part of Yemen providing help for the forces loyal to president Hadi, the progress halted when the coalition attempted to move to the northern areas that were controlled by the rebels (Byman 2018, 147). Saudi Arabian expectations for a quick victory in Yemen were dashed despite the four years of fighting and an excessive amount of resources it had put on the ground. The military campaigns only resulted in mass civilian casualties and the destruction of infrastructure assets but not the elimination of the Houthis as such (Nissenbaum 2018). Particularly, one disastrous consequence of military

operations in the conflict zone was the destruction of a hospital in 2016 that resulted in the death of at least 15 people. Another dramatic incident includes the bombing of a Yemeni funeral which killed about 140 civilians (Craig 2017, 2).

Therefore, from its establishment in 1990, Yemen was subject to different crises such as separatism, insurgency, and terrorism. These crisis situations have not been without its consequences for the well-being of the Yemeni citizens. With its population of nearly 26 million, various ethnic groups fight for limited resources of the Yemeni state (Esfandiary and Tabatabai 2016, 158).

The Houthis

As mentioned above, the Houthis are a Shia-based rebel organization fighting for the regime change in Yemen. While Shi'ism is central to Iranian identity, the fundamental beliefs practiced by the Houthis are essentially different from that of Iranian's. In this regard, they are not fully perceived as Shia Muslims by some believers in Iran and Gulf Arab states (Esfandiary and Tabatabai 2016, 157). However, it was the president Saleh and Saudi Arabia that disseminated the narrative that the Houthis are the Iranian puppets in order to delegitimize their movement (Clausen 2015, 20; Esfandiary and Tabatabai 2016, 157). They portrayed them as so to present the rebels as a foreign-backed group that was sent by Iran to oppose the people of Yemen. As such, this narrative was spread among the Gulf Arab countries, where a lot of states now believe that the Houthis are Iran's proxies. In reality, however, this group has more in common with the rest of the Arabian Peninsula than with its alleged patron. Iran, in turn, takes advantage of this narrative by increasing its influence and involvement in Yemeni civil war (Esfandiary and Tabatabai 2016, 157).

The Houthi movement emerged in the early 2000s as a result of political and economic marginalization and religious repression experienced under Saleh's regime (Brehony 2015; Parveen 2019). They interpreted it as the betrayal of Zaydi values by the state alongside the backing of Islah and other tribal elites that was eventually leading to the penetration of Wahhabism in their homeland of Sa'ada (Parveen 2019, 237). The 2011 Arab spring uprising gave them an opportunity to express their grievances and enter the political scene. The Houthis along with other marginalized groups took part in the peaceful protests during the uprising. Regime change, being the central theme of it, resonated with the Houthis' main goal – the overthrowing of President Saleh and his family from power (Clausen 2018, 561). Thus, the uprising gave the group an advantage to strengthen their political profile and build networks in the country. They did not seek to secede and create a "Houthistan" (Salmoni et al. 2010), but rather to struggle against the decades of political exclusion and repression (Clausen 2018).

The Houthis, being the main opposition group in Yemen, have legitimate and reasonable grievances towards the government in Sana'a. As such, their main interests in the war are the proportional representation in the political system, protection of Shia minorities, elimination of corruption and patronage in the government (Esfandiary and Tabatabai 2016, 157). In the long run, they want their country to be sovereign and stable, free from any foreign influence, including Iran.

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia has always been a central foreign actor in Yemeni politics as it had expressed continuing interest in containing the country (Durac 2012, 168). Bordering with Yemen on the south, wherein the Houthis' influence extends, the Saudis were actively involved in the Yemeni civil war from the day one. To compare, Yemen was not really a sphere of influence for Iran,

which was claimed to be supporting the Houthi movement. As these rebels became powerful enough to be able to capture the capital of Yemen, the Saudis raised their concerns on Houthis' expanding influence and the possibility of observing an Iran-friendly regime in Yemen (Clausen 2015, 20). Iran enhanced Saudi Arabia's fears by providing rhetoric support for the operation of the Houthis movement in Yemen (Salisbury 2015). What was started as an internal struggle for power within the Yemeni political elite became a locus for the regional contestation between the long-standing rivals, Saudi Arabia and Iran (Clausen 2015, 20). However, it would be a mistake to claim that the conflict in Yemen is actually rooted in this rivalry. Instead, it was only exacerbated by this regional Cold War in the Arabian Peninsula.

Given the limited amount of natural resources and overall economic collapse of Yemen, it appears that Saudi Arabia is looking more for prestige and legitimacy both internally and externally in its numerous attempts to contain Yemen (Esfandiary and Tabatabai 2016, 155). However, beyond the threat of Iranian dominance go Riyadh's concerns about Yemen's weakening central authority as the kingdom fears that it can have a spillover effect on its own political stability. Yemen, being a sole non-monarchy on the Arabian Peninsula and having strong links to transnational and tribal communities among its countries, can substantially impact the security of the whole peninsula (Hokayem and Roberts 2016, 162). The operation of terrorist groups like AQAP and ISIS in Yemen poses a much greater security threat for Saudi Arabia than a regional confrontation with Iran and yet, Riyadh seeks to establish Hadi's regime which implies that it is equally concerned about Iranian influence. That is why the coalition started by Saudi Arabia is interested in the territorial integrity of Yemen, which can be possible only with the establishment of a strong central government. In this sense, the GCC countries support president Hadi and aim to restore him to power in Yemen (Karakir 2018, 130).

The Islamic Republic of Iran

Since its establishment as an Islamic Republic after the revolution in 1979, Iran has put itself as an anti-Western theocratic state. Its stress on the Shi'a sect and willingness to export the revolution to other states have left the Arab region highly concerned. Taking into account that much of the Arab Gulf countries include Shi'a minorities, the threat of Iran calling to revolt against their corrupt regimes became more than viable (Karakir 2018, 133). Among these countries, Iran mostly confronts with Saudi Arabia as to whom will dominate in the Muslim World.

The Arab Spring allowed Iran to increase its influence in the region and propagate its Shi'a rhetoric. Following its prominence in the wars in Syria, Lebanon and Iraq, Iran took a leading role in its fight for regional supremacy with Saudi Arabia and the UAE (Byman 2018, 150). Though neither Bashar al-Assad nor Hizbollah or Iraqi Mahdi Army are Iranian puppets, they are well-known allies of Iran. Its relations with the Zaydi Houthis who belong to another Shi'a sect are confined only to the latest civil war in Yemen. As Byman (2018) argues, it was Saudi Arabia's aggressive campaign against the Houthis that pushed them to look for an external ally like Iran. The Iran-Houthi nexus is thus a mutually beneficial alliance: the Houthis need Iran's weapons and Iran needs them as a proxy to undermine the Saudis. However, it is worth mentioning that Tehran has not triggered the Houthi rebellion, instead it was a result of a long-term resentment against a corrupt government (Karakir 2018, 136).

For Iran, Yemen is a second priority when compared with its strategy for Iraq and Syria that pose a greater threat for its stability. That is why Iran is not allocating much resources in this conflict which appears to be more about sustaining overall regional stability rather than national security (Esfandiary and Tabatabai 2016, 161). Although the Hadi government along with the Saudi authorities and the US have constantly accused Iran for providing arms to the Houthis and

violating the UN arms embargo, some specialists claim that this has not been proved (Rugh 2015; Juneau 2016; Esfandiary and Tabatabai 2016). Yet, in 2017, the Houthis attacked one of the Saudi airports using missiles that are said to be provided by Iran (Byman 2018; Karakir 2018). In the meantime, Iran has increased its rhetorical and humanitarian support for the Houthis against the growing Saudi accusations. As the kingdom's policy in Yemen becomes more aggressive, Iran acts as defender of oppressed Shi'a minorities thereby expanding its influence (Karakir 2018). It uses the situation in Yemen to its own advantage by providing support for the Houthis which Riyadh is trying to defeat. More importantly, it is Saudi Arabia that shares a border with Yemen thereby posing greater threat to Riyadh rather than Tehran. In fact, Byman (2018, 149) claims that Iran is the only victor in Yemen's civil war so far.

Southern secessionists, the UAE, and Hadi

Along with the Houthis, another movement named HIRAK gained prominence in Yemen. The movement is a Southern secessionist organization pursuing southern autonomy (Byman 2018, Clausen 2018). Bearing in mind that the Yemeni government fought numerous wars with southern forces that always wanted to secede, the establishment of the HIRAK group is no surprise. As well as the Houthis, southerners had long-standing grievances against the government as a result of repression and uneven distribution of state resources. More than a decade later after their defeat in the 1994 civil war, the members of the Yemeni Socialist Party created Al-HIRAK movement to resume fighting against political and economic exclusion (Parveen 2019, 133). The Arab Spring served as an opportunity for them to achieve their goal.

The movement has found support from the United Arab Emirates which is one of the most visible external actors in Yemen along with Saudi Arabia. While Saudi Arabia has focused on the air campaign, the UAE takes the lead on the ground, especially in southeast Yemen and Aden

(Byman 2018). It provides logistical and material aid to different local groups as well as fiercely fights AQAP. This is in part due to its historic kinship ties to Yemen that date back to prehistoric times (Hill and Nonneman 2011, 11). Additionally, the UAE has been accused of taking control over strategic territories in Yemen and its ports that appear to be one of the busiest shipping routes in the world (Clausen 2018, 570). This includes the port of Hodeidah, which the Houthis use to deliver food and other supplies, is also said to be used to receive Iranian weapons by the group (Byman 2018, 148). This has resulted in armed clashes between the UAE groups and Hadi forces.

Hadi, though recognized as a president of the country, in reality has no power over the situation in Yemen. Being a southerner himself, he failed to rally the south around him as the political system exercised under Saleh continued to endure even after his resignation. Neither could he repress or co-opt elites as Saleh did in the past nor create strong institutions to bring stability to his country or at least sustain the public's basic needs. Instead, he engaged in power games with various internal and external actors that all chased their own goals (Clausen 2018). The absence of order and governance resulted in armed clashes between tribes and groups for control over state resources (Parveen 2019, 135). In this sense, the Houthis, who once fought against government corruption and patronage, now turned to resource smuggling, torture of opponents, and other unlawful activities. With external interveners like Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Iran and others pursuing their own interests, and internal groups like the Houthis and Hiraq fighting for political recognition, Yemen therefore became an arena for violence, hostility, and warfare.

Terrorist threat in Yemen

The resulting chaos and collapse of order in Yemen have been to the benefit of terrorist groups such as AQAP and ISY. Al-Qaeda in Arabian Peninsula is considered the most powerful

branch of al-Qaeda and its presence in Yemen long predates the current civil war. The branch began to settle in Yemen after Osama bin Laden's associates returned from Afghanistan in 1990 (Karakir 2018, 138). From Yemen, they launched a series of attacks on Western targets. In 2009, the branches of al-Qaeda in Saudi Arabia and Yemen merged to form the al-Qaeda in Arabian Peninsula (AQAP). In 2011, AQAP also managed to expand its territory as a result of uprisings and subsequent disorder in the country. The port city of Mukalla located in the south-east of Yemen was seized by AQAP in 2015 (Byman 2018). The group also stormed the central prison and freed about 300 prisoners including 2 AQAP leaders. What is more important, the group has been able to exercise an administrative control of the city by creating a local council and providing public services to citizens. This situation stresses the significance of strong central government for combating terrorist threat elsewhere (Parveen 2019).

In 2016, the UAE along with the US finally ousted AQAP out of Mukalla and backed anti-AQAP southern groups to fight the organization. Although it lost control over Mukalla, AQAP still enjoys the support of several tribal leaders (Karakir 2018). This fact can be explained by the common willingness to beat the Houthis, rather than any ideological commonalities with the terrorist group like AQAP. It can therefore be assumed that these alliances will continue until the Houthi movement endures for lack of a better alternative.

In 2014, another transnational terrorist organization Islamic State, or rather, its branch named Islamic State of Yemen (ISY) joined AQAP (Byman 2018, 150). Despite that AQAP was more powerful than ISY, IS branch nevertheless posed a serious threat, recruiting people and sometimes fighting with its jihadist rival – AQAP. Yet, ISY remains weak and rather unpopular in Yemen. Given its weakening in Iraq and Syria, the group tried to settle itself in Yemen where sectarian rhetoric has taken prominence (Karmon 2015). However, both of these jihadist groups

are losing their public support and the number of their attacks is falling in the recent years. The main reason for this is that the US and other Western states have engaged in the counter-terrorism activities along with the Saudi-led coalition (Clausen 2018).

Both AQAP and ISY oppose the Houthis and ally with local groups to fight with them as well as with the GCC countries. Additionally, they fight with each other and engage in a real competition for the supremacy in the Arabian Peninsula and, particularly, Yemen. One of the immediate consequences of large-scale jihadist presence in Yemen is the support of outside forces like the US, Britain and France which expand their war on terror all the way to Yemen (Byman 2018). Although the Houthis remain the main target of the Saudi-led coalition, western states support it with the belief that it will stabilize Yemen and thus limit AQAP and ISY's operation in the country (Karakir 2018, 140).

The US involvement

The United States as a long-term Saudi Arabian ally has also played an important role in Yemen. Under the Obama administration the US did not wholeheartedly support the military intervention in Yemen but at the same time it did little to stop the Saudi campaigns. However, there are speculations made in the media that the US provides essential support for the military operations to endure. Covertly, the United States delivers intelligence, aircraft and logistical support for the Saudi and UAE forces to tackle the spread of AQAP and the strengthening of the Houthis (Byman 2018, 153). Experts also say that Obama could end or at least decrease the mass slaughter in Yemen just by cutting off the military support it provides for Saudi Arabia (Ahmed 2016). Given that American weaponry and surveillance are the most powerful in the world, it is evident that their use facilitates civilian targeting by the coalition. The US is also interested in containing Iranian influence in the Middle East and therefore supports its long-term ally, Saudi

Arabia. By providing arms to the coalition, the US thereby shows its approval for the conflict in Yemen at the same time without having to directly intervene into the dispute.

With Trump's winning the office in 2017, the military support for the Saudi Arabian-led coalition became more prominent as the president viewed the Saudis as one of the States' important strategic allies. In this sense, Trump cares little about the crisis in Yemen as such, the Saudi relationship being of higher priority to him. He therefore abolished Obama's ban on smart-bomb transfers that were believed to cause many civilian deaths among Yemenis (Byman 2018, 153). The adoption of this ban in the first place shows that US actually cares about its international reputation that was damaged as a result of coalition's numerous bombings of civilian targets. However, Trump's abolition once again shows that sometimes humanitarian principles can be overridden in favor of national and economic interests. As a result, the military operations of late January 2017 led to more than 20 civilian casualties (including children), which marked Trump's first engagement in war.

The military campaigns led by the Saudi coalition in Yemen violate international humanitarian law and resulted in numerous war crimes in this country. To date, the experts have accused third states like the US, France and the UK in providing the arms for the continuation of disastrous military operations (Todd 2019). Trump however only highlights the financial benefits of US-Saudi arms deals while staying silent on the human sufferings caused by American weapons. Numerous media outlets since the outbreak of war have accused the indirect involvement of the US in the Yemeni civil war, which negatively affects American pro-democracy agenda used elsewhere in the world (Nissenbaum 2018). As a result, the US Congress issued a flurry of legislation aimed at slowing down the arms transfers from the US to Saudi Arabia. However, Trump has been successful in vetoing the Congress bans so far by advocating the

leverage of US arms sales to the Middle Eastern region (Todd 2019). Another narrative used by the Trump administration is the need for American support and training for Saudi coalition to prevent civilian casualties. Meanwhile, Saudi campaigns and aerial attacks have caused more than 20,000 airstrikes that constitutes about 12 attacks a day (Bazzi 2019), of them only one third being military targets. The Saudi-led coalition has bombed schools, hospitals, mosques, factories and other socially inhabited and unprotected places in Yemen so far.

The involvement of regional powers and other GCC countries has introduced additional serious interests and goals to the Yemeni civil war. Apart from the regional rivalry between Saudi Arabia and Iran, their intervention was also based on the Shi'a-Sunni divide thereby aggravating the sectarian strife. The same sectarian rhetoric was unsurprisingly used by transnational jihadist organizations such as al-Qaeda and Islamic Republic. In addition, western countries like the US, UK, and France also indirectly engaged in conflict by providing military assistance to combatants. Their main interest in this conflict is the defeat of terrorist groups and therefore the provision of security and stability both regionally and internationally. Not to mention are various internal tribal groups that also want to protect their interests. The UAE, for example, though being a Saudi ally also pursued its own interests by ceasing the valuable ports of Yemen. Both presidents of Yemen sought to ensure their own well-being while also trying to impose their rule. Overall, all actors attempted to take advantage of the situation in Yemen and have turned the country into a playing field between each other.

Not only are the external interests diverse but also conflicting with each other meaning that one's victory would be another's loss. While the main confrontation is between the government and the Houthis, the Saudi-Iranian rivalry is yet another example of such a scenario. Even terrorist groups compete with each other for the influence in Yemen thereby generating the

most threatening environment in the country. In this sense, the terrorist threat being common to all of the actors involved in the conflict and even to the world community as a whole, still has not produced joint actions of external parties to combat it. Instead, the parties engage in separate struggles against each other in the pursuit of their goals. Sometimes, the warring parties form alliances in order to eliminate their common rivals while trying to obtain control over the state. However, such alliances were not proved to be effective. In 2017, for example, the Houthis' dubious alliance with the former president Saleh, whom they opposed fiercely, has finally come to an end. Shortly after that, Saleh was killed (Clausen 2018, 568). This and other numerous cases of the sides aligning with each other and then breaking off their bonds illustrate the problem of "shifting alliances" in Yemen discussed by Cunningham (2006). As Parveen (2019, 141) notes, some local Yemeni groups supported both the Hadi government and the Houthis throughout the conflict. The current war in Yemen is therefore too complex to be viewed as a confrontation between the two sides, that is, the government and rebels (Parveen 2019).

Discussion

The disastrous civil war in Yemen has become a locus for a major humanitarian crisis and excessive human rights violations. Causing hundreds of thousands of casualties, this war is still ongoing with no prospect for settlement. The full magnitude of the human distress caused by the civil war is indefinite since the UN stopped reporting the civilian death rate in January 2017, when the number reached 10,000 (Bazzi 2019). The long-standing corruption and patronage exercised by Saleh during his 33-year long rule that resulted in political and economic marginalization in relation to numerous minorities in Yemen were the major causes of the conflict. The 2011 Arab Spring uprisings allowed those groups to express their grievances and fight for their political rights. However, the involvement of different actors willing to affect the outcome of the conflict

changed its nature and prolonged the initially domestic strife. The situation in Yemen is additionally complicated by the existence of tribal, sectarian, and regional divides that are skillfully manipulated by combatants in their attempts to attract supporters and advocate their military campaigns.

One particular problem for the resolution of this conflict is the existence of various military and tribal forces in Yemen that all struggle for power (Byman 2018, 147). External actors also complicate the issue by putting their national interests before anything in Yemen. The engagement of different types of actors ranging from local groups to global powers and transnational terrorist organizations presents a particular challenge for the resolution of the Yemeni civil war with every additional actor introducing a new set of goals. Differing in their nature, the actors engaged in civil war also diverge in their interests that conflict with each other. By examining the actors participating in the Yemeni civil war, this chapter sought to demonstrate how the continuous involvement of different types of actors with their own and competing goals, as well as the absence of commitment among them, can reduce the chances of a negotiated settlement being reached.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

Contemporary civil war dynamics can be summarized with two puzzles: internationalization and increased duration of conflicts. More and more civil wars tend to include foreign states and last longer. As such, this thesis sought to reveal the causes of prolonged civil wars by accounting for third-party intervention. The role of external parties in civil wars has been extensively examined in the literature and the conventional wisdom is that third-party interventions prolong civil wars. However, while existing literature has offered several important explanations in this area, it has not accounted for the presence of multiple types of actors with multiple interests. Building on Cunningham's (2010) research on the effect of interventions with an independent agenda, I argued that the type of actors involved in civil wars equally matters.

As empirical analysis demonstrates, the greater number and diversity of actors lead to longer civil wars. The general driving factor for this relationship is the diverging interests of the actors that tend to complicate the bargaining process and impede the resolution of conflicts. By bringing in the measure of the diversity of actors, this research sought to demonstrate this precise finding that external actors' own interests prolong civil wars (Cunningham 2010). As such, longer civil wars are fought between multiple types of external parties that have diverse interests. The case study of the Yemeni civil war clearly demonstrates these dynamics and confirms the findings obtained from statistical analysis.

Though results support the theoretical argument developed in this thesis, the analysis is not without its limitations. In the theoretical part, possible shortcomings might arise as a result of neglect of civil war state characteristics such as state capacity and stability. As the case study shows, the root cause of continuing chaos and humanitarian crisis is its government's lack of legitimacy. Moreover, the presence of tribal, regional, and sectarian divisions further exacerbates

the war in Yemen by providing narratives for external states to take advantage of while engaging in conflict. As such, there might be some other important explanations for increased civil war duration that need to be addressed. This might be a topic for further exploration in the future that will yield critical results when tested along with the number and types of external actors.

Another set of limitations can be related to statistical analysis. There might be more proper ways of coding certain variables such as using dichotomous coding or applying more strict criteria for the measurement of independent variables. Moreover, in his study on the effect of veto-players on the duration of civil wars, Cunningham (2006) uses the other statistical method named Binary Time-Series Cross-Sectional (BTSCS) analysis using logit. Accordingly, the selected approaches for statistical analysis are a subject for further improvement.

Nevertheless, the results of this research provide important policy implications for policymakers interested in resolving such “never-ending” civil wars. The international community should pay more attention to civil wars with both the greater number and diversity of external actors. Such multiparty conflicts are often harder to resolve than two-party conflicts and, hence, Cunningham (2006, 891) suggests that policymakers should find ways to decrease the number of external actors. This thesis further develops this implication and encourages policymakers to consider reducing actors’ diversity as well. Another solution for policymakers would be to seek ways to reach a peace agreement that includes all major actors of the conflict. In the Yemeni war, for example, the international community should not overlook the Southern secessionist group “Hirak” that was largely marginalized even after it fought 2 wars with the North. At the same time, external actors like Saudi Arabia and other GCC countries, Iran, the US, and undoubtedly, the Houthis need to be included in negotiations. External actors should instead focus on

eliminating the terrorist threat in Yemen that became a safe haven for Islamist groups like AQAP and ISY.

These policy implications derive from the fact that civil wars are complex events with multiple combatants pursuing multiple interests. Understanding how the number and diversity of those combatants can shift the duration of civil wars is of critical importance for both theorists and policymakers.

However, getting all external parties to support one side of the conflict might be problematic because they can still have commitment problems (Walter 2002) and non-state actors can take advantage of rough terrain or corrupt regimes. Non-state actors can additionally transform into insurgencies or terrorist organizations as ISIL did. Or, states can deal with non-states actors by manipulating their images (Kalyvas 2003) and portraying them as terrorists. A particular example of this are Bashar al-Assad's actions in the Syrian civil war. He labelled the groups opposing him as terrorists but then he opened the prisons and released the same Islamists. And now, he cooperates with Russia in the hope of gaining control of the state. But the question is, what are the prospects for Assad's winning the war and is he even running Syria today? With escalating violence in Syria, external actors do not want to settle for less than the regime change. They believe that regime change equals peace, which can only be attained with Assad's stepping down. Therefore, it might be the case that peace comes at the price of one party's surrendering its sovereignty to an external power.

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