

Regional or Religious Hegemony? An Examination of the Saudi Arabia-Iran Rivalry vis-à-vis Yemen

MSc Political Science Thesis
International Politics Specialization
Nehal Hussein (s2134713)
Thesis Supervisor: Dr. Frank de Zwart
Second Reader: Dr. Matthew Longo
Date of Submission: January 10th, 2018
WC: 8786

Abstract

This thesis aims to address Saudi Arabia's and Iran's rivalry and their inability to cooperate vis-à-vis the conflict in Yemen. Since the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran in 1979, a vie for regional and religious hegemony between the two countries begun. The recent regional conflicts in Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, and Yemen have caused further strain on the bilateral relations. This paper utilizes offensive realism and constructivism to measure whether it is realist or ideological factors that hamper cooperation between Saudi Arabia and Iran. Yemen was selected as a case study not only because it the most recent regional conflict but also because its structural conditions presented the best opportunity for cooperation. The material examined in this thesis consists mainly of newspaper articles and official statements from both camps. The purpose of this study is to determine the nuances of the rivalry that hamper cooperation in general and particular to the case of Yemen. This thesis aims to prove that the ideological and realist factors that hamper cooperation between the two nations are not as mutually exclusive as the preceding literature suggests.

Keywords: Saudi Arabia, Iran, Yemen, Offensive Realism, Constructivism, and Sunni-Shi'a.

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	3
Not Your Regular Proxy War	3
Chapter 1: Literature Review	7
The Separation of the Realist and the Ideational	7
Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework.....	12
Mearsheimer’s Offensive Realism and Wendt’s Social Constructivism	12
Chapter 3: Research Design and Methodology	14
Chapter 4: Newspaper Articles Analysis	16
War of Rhetoric	16
i. Way of Rule	17
i. Maintenance of the Status Quo	18
ii. Lack of Trust.....	20
iii. Military Might.....	22
iv. Houthi Rebels vs. Ansarullah	22
v. The Infidel West.....	25
Chapter 5: Discussion.....	26
Conclusion	27
References	28

Introduction

Not Your Regular Proxy War

The war in Yemen is often portrayed as a proxy-war between Saudi Arabia and Iran in which both parties have equal involvement, but that is not the reality of the case. In fact, unlike Iran's involvement in Syria, "Tehran's involvement in Yemen has been more nuanced and limited" (Esfandiary and Tabatabai, 2016: 156). Iran did not deploy any of its elite forces and is not as openly and publically in support of any of the parties involved in Yemen as it is of the Assad regime in Syria, for example. "For Iran, deploying its elite Quds Force in Yemen is not an option" (Esfandiary and Tabatabai, 2016: 165). Furthermore, at the wake of the conflict in Yemen, Iran was in the midst of negotiating its nuclear deal, which would remove the crippling economic sanctions and re-introduce Iran to the global community. Despite Iran having less incentive to ruffle feathers or create further animosity in the region, it still remained a vital player in the Yemeni war.

The conflict in Yemen has become a topic of contestation between Saudi Arabia and Iran and has assumed the role of yet another chip that hampers the relationship between the two nations. Yemen is the area of overlap for Saudi Arabia and Iran; it is a high priority issue for Riyadh and a low priority issue for Iran (Esfandiary and Tabatabai, 2016: 156). For decades, Saudi Arabia has been involved in Yemen's affairs since the ruling royalty in Saudi Arabia, the House of Saud, viewed control over Yemen as a point of leverage and prestige for Saudi Arabia (Esfandiary and Tabatabai, 2016: 155). In comparison, Iran's interest in Yemen, as evident by its involvement in the conflict, is limited.

Assuming Saudi Arabia and Iran are rational states, according to a rationalist explanation of war, they should be more inclined to locate a negotiated settlement that all

parties would prefer to war (Fearon, 1995: 380). According to James D. Fearon's "Rationalist Explanations for War", historians and political scientists who have studied the origins of war concluded that neorealist explanations, such as anarchy and the security dilemma, are not sufficient explanations for the outbreak of conflict (Fearon, 1995: 380). In reality, wars are often fought when interest is involved and "the expected benefits of war outweigh the expected costs" (Fearon, 1995: 379). Especially in the case of Yemen, where equal interest and involvement in the conflict from both parties is lacking, cooperation was a feasible option. In fact, an Iranian official stated that "Iran is willing to compromise on Yemen with Saudi Arabia" (Esfandiary and Tabatabai, 2016: 167). This thesis does not claim that cooperation was the most likely outcome. In fact, it is more likely that Saudi Arabia and Iran would fail to cooperate on issues concerning a neighboring country. However, Yemen presented the first opportunity of truly feasible cooperation; cooperation whose ultimate goal was not to end the war in Yemen as much as it was gaining leverage in other regional conflicts. Iran recognized that Yemen is of high priority to Saudi Arabia and was willing, at least when the conflict first broke, to reach a compromise with Saudi Arabia. As the military expenses and number of bodies were on the rise, Iran could have bargained, for example, to "back away from the conflict in Yemen in exchange for an understanding that 'no one can win Syria'" (Esfandiary and Tabatabai, 2016: 167). However, the conflict in Yemen is still ongoing and the relations between Saudi Arabia and Iran remain tenser than ever. This is the puzzle this thesis aims to solve. What factors hamper cooperation and exasperate the rivalry between Saudi Arabia and Iran, particularly in the case of Yemen? Is the realist explanation of the struggle for hegemony sufficient? "Characterizing Saudi behavior toward Iran as being driven by rivalry makes a simplistic, one-dimensional observation – despite being valid up to a point" (Keynoush, 2016: 105). Might it then be an issue of indivisibility, which "lies in domestic political mechanisms

rather than in the nature of the issues themselves,” that makes cooperation between these two states unfeasible (Fearon, 1995: 382)? The aim of this thesis is to dissect what is driving Iranian and Saudi Arabian strategies in Yemen and whether these realist concerns and ideological hurdles can shed light on the nuances of the rivalry between the two nations.

The conflict in Yemen has been ongoing since 2015, but the Persian Gulf has not been stable since the Islamic Revolution took place in Iran in 1979. The Islamic Revolution challenged Saudi Arabia’s position as the leader of the Muslim world; the Shi’a regime in Iran was established in stark opposition to Saudi’s Sunni monarchy, and a vie for regional hegemony begun (Keynoush, 2016: 109). The conflict first manifested itself when Iran invaded Iraq in 1980, attempting to overthrow Saddam Hussein, an ally of Saudi Arabia. The U.S.-led invasion in 2003, which resulted in the fall of the Sunni Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein, removed Iraq as a counter-weight to Iran’s rising military power and political influence in the region, further straining the relations between Saudi Arabia and Iran. The Arab Spring in 2011 and the ongoing war in Syria did little to appease the rising tension between the two regional powers. The rivalry between Saudi Arabia and Iran has lasted for decades and many theories emerged to explain the ongoing power struggle. One aspect is the constructivist clash of Sunni-Shi’a ideologies; another is the realist strive for regional hegemony. Using the most recent regional conflict in Yemen as a case study, this thesis will examine which aspect of the Saudi-Iranian rivalry hampers the two regional powerhouses from cooperating: the clash of identities via the Sunni-Shi’a divide or the realist vie for regional hegemony and power? I will rely on John J. Mearsheimer’s theory of offensive realism (2001) and Alexander Wendt’s constructivist theory of identity formation and clashes (1999).

The significance of this research diverges into two streams: the academic and the political. “In order to resolve the current crises in the Middle East, Saudi Arabia and Iran need

to find a common ground or a range of outcomes in a negotiation that will be acceptable to both parties” (Esfandiary and Tabatabai, 2016: 156). Cooperation between Saudi Arabia and Iran is the first step towards stabilizing the currently volatile Middle East. For policymakers and negotiators to be able to find common ground between the two nations, they must first understand the factors that hamper cooperation. Only by recognizing and dissecting these obstacles can cooperation become possible. Furthermore, once common ground is found, it is easier to implement the agreements reached on issues where cooperation is most achievable. That is where the significance of the case of Yemen is most apparent. Lastly, in comparison to other conflicts in the Middle East, such as the war in Syria and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the conflict in Yemen is understudied and lacks clarity.

Chapter 1: Literature Review

The Separation of the Realist and the Ideational

This thesis raises the question of whether or not the ideational and realist factors that affect Saudi-Iranian relations are mutually exclusive. I argue that they are not. After all, the fact that both realist and constructivist claims are present does not invalidate either theory. However, International Relations literature consistently frames this debate in an either/or construction. Classical realists such as Morgenthau (1968) define interest and power in material terms, particularly military power. “The adequacy of this materialism as the foundation for the study of International Relations has been a source of continual debate within the field and is often presented as marking a fundamental divide between realists and their critics – particularly social constructivists who stress the importance of ideational phenomena” (Williams, 2004: 639). As the academic community shifted towards the neo-neo debate, many started to view neorealism as the new and improved version of classical realism. Neorealist academics such as Waltz (1988) argued that the ultimate concern of states is not power like classical realists claim but security. They geared towards a more structural approach where competition and conflict between states stemmed from the anarchy of the international system and the absence of a central authority (Waltz, 1988: 619). However, there remained a consistent desire for realists to exclude identity concerns from the realms of politics and security. Neither Morgenthau nor Waltz completely denied the effect of conflicting identities on exasperating conflicts. In fact, “realism points to the reciprocal relationship between identities and conflict, arguing that conflict stimulates the perception of group differences” (Williams, 2004: 654). However, realists and neorealist alike fear that such understandings are “radically and dangerously incomplete” in that they risk “transforming

claims about the nature of concepts into a claim about the nature of politics” (Williams, 2004: 656). This binary construction is dominant in literature that dissects the Saudi-Iranian rivalry; the research usually focuses on either the realist aspect of the rivalry or the ideological religious clash. Though they do not deny the effect of ideational phenomenon on conflict, there remains a clear exclusion of such concepts in most literature specific to the case of the Saudi-Iranian rivalry. The following section will examine the waves of literature on Saudi-Iranian relations, demonstrating the presence of the either/or construction in previous literature.

The first literature on Saudi-Iranian relations focused on the historical dimension of the relationship, which has been strained since the Iranian Revolution in 1979. Prior to his removal, Iran’s monarch, Shah Reza Pahlavi, was viewed by Saudi Arabia as a source of stability and legitimacy for the local monarchies. Both nations found a mutual ally in the Western bloc against the rising force of Arab Nationalism, Nasserism, and the influence of the Soviet Union on neighboring states. “The Iranian revolution annihilated this equilibrium by removing a key element in its makeup, shifting Iran’s regional agenda from maintenance and reinforcement of the status quo to revisionism” (Rich, 2012: 472).

The second wave of literature concerning Saudi-Iranian relations examined the rivalry via the lens of international relations theory. Most of the studies have utilized realism and constructivism to dissect the geopolitical and ideational dimensions of the relationship. Others incorporated leadership and foreign policy analysis. In the realist explanations of the relationship, literature focused on the balance of power and the security dilemma. Morgenthau equates the balance of power to the equilibrium of the human body: “whenever the equilibrium is disturbed either by an outside force or by a change in one or the other elements composing the system, the system shows a tendency to re-establish either the original or a new

equilibrium” (Morgenthau, 1932: 237). Literature explains the Saudi-Iranian rivalry through the balance of power theory in three different instances: the Islamic Revolution in 1979, the Iraqi wars in 1980 and 2003, and the Arab Spring. After the Shah was overthrown in Iran, the revolutionary ideology posed a direct threat to the Gulf monarchies. In fact, protests did erupt in Saudi Arabia after the Iranian Revolution, but were quickly squashed (Keynoush, 2016). Iran and Iraq went to war from 1980 to 1988 but Iraq was unable to replace Iran as a dominant regional power in the Persian Gulf. However, the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003 allowed Iran to achieve the position of a regional power and leader since Iraq was no longer able to serve as a military counter-power to Iran (Eksi, 2017: 133). The occupation of Iraq upset the balance of power by allowing Iran to cement its status as a regional hegemon since Saudi no longer had a regional ally with strong military power. The third time that Saudi-Iranian relations were strained due to a power vacuum was during the Arab Spring. Libya, Egypt and Syria ceased to be power centers in the region and the structure of the regional system moved from a somewhat balanced multipolairty to an unbalanced bipolarity.

Another dimension of the realist explanations for Saudi-Iran rivalry used Kenneth N. Waltz’s defensive realism, claiming that Saudi Arabia emerged as a balancing power against the rise of Iranian power after the Iranian Revolution in 1979, the invasion of Iraq in 2003, and again after the Arab Spring in 2011. In 1982, the Secretary General of the Gulf Cooperation Council identified the Iranian quest for power “as the single biggest threat to regional stability and the key concern of all Council member states” (Rich, 2012: 472). The third realist explanation for the stringent relations between Saudi Arabia and Iran is through the security dilemma. Coined by John H. Herz in 1950, the security dilemma exists when a country adopts a policy of improving its security by armament and, perceiving it as a threat, the other country also adopts a policy of improving its security. After the Iranian Revolution, Iran was left in

possession of “one of the largest and most technologically advanced militaries in the Middle East at the time, which only served to exacerbate Saudi fears” (Rich, 2012: 472).

The second branch of the second wave of literature dissected the Saudi-Iranian rivalry from a constructivist lens. Telhami and Barnett (2002) argue that “the introduction of identity informs us about the foreign policy of Middle East states in ways that we otherwise would not understand them.” Academics, such as Fürtig (2002) and Keddie and Matthee (2002) argued that there are ideational conditions and religious causes of the rivalry, focusing primarily on the Shi’a-Sunni divide. In other words, the rivalry was viewed as sectarian, not geopolitical. Although the Shi’a population in the world is around 10% of the Muslim population, many of the Arab states harbor high percentages of Shi’a Muslims within their borders: the Shi’a population in Iraq constitutes 60-65% of the total population, 70% in Bahrain, 35% in Yemen (Zeydi-Zaydis), 35% in Lebanon, 30% in Kuwait, 20% in Qatar, 16% in United Arab Emirates (UAE), 10-12% in Syria (Nusayris-Alawis) and 15% in Saudi Arabia (Eksi, 2017: 141).

Some scholars argue that it was necessary for the new Iranian regime to export its revolutionary ideology in order to maintain domestic legitimacy: “If the rebellion could be successfully orchestrated within Iran, then it was the duty of the Iranian theocracy, as the new spiritual leaders of Shi’a Islam, to foment and assist insurrection wherever Shi’ites were under oppression” (Rich, 2012: 473). However, Iran’s new image as the protector of Muslims directly clashed with Saudi Arabia’s. Saudi Arabia regarded itself as the natural leader of the Muslim world since the two holy cities of the Islamic religion, Mecca and Medina, lie within its borders (Radhan, 2016: 58). Therefore, the rivalry between the two states was not solely about power, but as the Saudi Journalist Musa bin Abdalaziz commented, it was “the real clash of civilizations” (Radhan, 2016: 61).

Literature utilizing the constructivist approach to analyze the Saudi-Iranian rivalry did so by analyzing the public war of rhetoric between the two states. Saudi Arabia and Iran waged a war of identity, in the form of a war of rhetoric, against each other. Iran constantly questions the Saudi regime's claim to guardianship of the two holy cities, delegitimizing Saudi's claim as the leader of the Muslim world due to its strong relationship and dependence on the United States, or the "infidel West" (Rich, 2012: 473). The Saudis retaliated with criticisms of their own, challenging the religious piety of the Iranian clergy, "suggesting that actions supposedly taken out of benevolence and universal Muslim altruism were merely a cynical guise for a more traditional policy of realpolitik" (Rich, 2012: 473). Saudi officials explicitly linked their anti-Shi'a sentiments to Iran (Radhan, 2016: 64). In October 2011, the Saudi Press Agency cited "an official source at the Ministry of Interior" claiming that "instigators of sedition, discord, and unrest" disturbed public peace "at the behest of a foreign country" and the government admonished the protestors to decide "whether their loyalty is to God and their homeland or to that state and its authority" (Radhan, 2016: 64).

Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework

Mearsheimer's Offensive Realism and Wendt's Social Constructivism

Though there are multiple realist explanations for the Saudi-Iranian rivalry, it is simplistic to assume that the rivalry is solely driven by hegemonic competition. However, one must not dismiss all realist theories as invalid explanations to the rivalry. In my analysis of the Saudi-Iranian rivalry, I will rely on John J. Mearsheimer's *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (2001) in which he outlines his theory of offensive realism. Similar to the line of argument in classical realism, Mearsheimer argues that great powers are constantly vying for power and hegemony (Mearsheimer 2014: 2). His theory is based on five bedrock assumptions: the international system is anarchic; great powers' main priority is survival; great powers are rational and inherently possess some offensive military capabilities; and lastly, there is a high degree of lack of trust due to the anarchic nature of the international system, lack of information, and inability of states to ever be certain about other states' intentions (Mearsheimer 2014: 30-31). This thesis primarily focuses on the last assumption of Mearsheimer's theory: the lack of trust and lack of information aspect, which causes rivals to assume the worst about each other's intentions. Using Yemen as a case study, I will attempt to measure if Saudi Arabia's and Iran's mutual lack of trust manifested itself in the Yemeni conflict. Not only will I utilize Mearsheimer's offensive realism to dissect the actual realist hurdles that drive the rivalry between Saudi Arabia and Iran, but also to determine if there were mistrustful assumptions about the other state's intentions in its involvement in Yemen. "In any closely competitive system, it may seem that one is either paranoid or a loser." (Waltz, 1988: 628). Mearsheimer's lack of trust assumption is the theoretical manifestation and application of the paranoia, as Waltz calls it, of both countries. As shown in the literature

review, the Saudi-Iranian rivalry has primarily been examined through the lens of balance of power theory and the security dilemma. However, Mearsheimer's offensive realism theory would allow us to investigate the deeply-rooted assumptions behind this animosity and the factors that drive Saudi and Iranian strategies. It would provide a way to investigate the nuances of why Saudi Arabia and Iran have failed to cooperate to end the turmoil that plagues the Middle East. Mearsheimer's theory is also concerned about the vie not only for power, but hegemony. The politics between Saudi Arabia and Iran, be it geopolitics or identity politics, is framed in the struggle for regional hegemony (see Mabon 2013; Keynoush 2016; Alsultan and Saeid 2017).

Additionally, I will also rely on Alexander Wendt's *Social Theory of International Politics* (1999), a pillar in the field of constructivist theory. Constructivists believe that inter-state relations are heavily reliant on the way identity is constructed (Luimo, 2008: 15). Wendt identifies the unit of analysis as the state, which applies to this thesis' purpose of dissecting the rivalry between Saudi Arabia and Iran. Wendt also argues that the kind of conception states have about security is directly connected to how states view their identity in relation to others. "The daily life of international politics is an ongoing process of states taking identities in relation to Others, casting them into corresponding counter-identities" (Wendt, 1999: 21). The heart of the Shi'a-Sunni divide lies in the Persian Gulf and manifests itself in the security concerns of Saudi Arabia and Iran (Luimo, 2008: 25). I have sketched two theoretical approaches to analyze the Saudi-Iranian rivalry vis-à-vis the conflict in Yemen. This thesis will utilize the case of the Yemeni conflict to determine whether a combination of realist interests and ideological concerns are the driving mechanism behind the Saudi-Iranian rivalry.

Chapter 3: Research Design and Methodology

Unlike the historical conflicts over Iraq, or the ongoing conflict in Syria, academics, policymakers, and officials from both camps believed that Yemen could have served as an opportunity for cooperation between Saudi Arabia and Iran. “‘Iran is willing to compromise on Yemen with Saudi Arabia,’ according to an Iranian official. And some GCC officials recognize that while Syria and Iraq are too challenging, Yemen could provide the basis for negotiation” (Esfandiary and Tabatabai, 2016: 167). Despite these predictions, the conflict in Yemen seems to have only exasperated the animosity between the two rival nations. However, the question of why still remains to be answered. What factors hampered cooperation? Was it because of the regional struggle for hegemony? Did this struggle manifest itself in Mearsheimer’s lack of trust terms? Is this evident in the case of Yemen? Perhaps it might have been the clash of the Sunni-Shi’a identities. Is the relationship mutually exclusive? Perhaps it was a combination of realist and ideational factors.

I hypothesize that a combination of the ideological clashes and the regional rivalry between Iran and Saudi Arabia is present in the Yemeni conflict and made both parties particularly averse to cooperation. I will test the validity of this hypothesis by analyzing Saudi Arabian and Iranian involvement, or lack thereof, in the Yemeni conflict. As mentioned before, a single case such as Yemen is selected because it allows for a concrete opportunity to research the details and nuances of the rivalry. The structural conditions of the case of Yemen and other evidence presented earlier supports the statement that cooperation on Yemen, particularly in comparison to Syria, was feasible. Furthermore, unlike other conflicts in the Middle East, there is no evident interest and involvement equally present from both sides.

Conceptual variables such as power games and identity games are challenging to operationalize and measure in real life. In order to measure the presence and effect of both

ideological clashes and realist hurdles, I will rely on discourse analysis, secondary content analysis, and process tracing. I will peruse newspaper articles, press releases, official statements by both countries, as well as academic papers. This is the most appropriate method of research for several reasons: though there is a plethora of research on the Saudi-Iranian rivalry, there is little that covers the conflict in Yemen. Most of the sources that discuss this conflict are newspaper articles. Secondly, due to the time limit of this thesis, I do not have the opportunity to personally conduct field work or interviews particular to the situation in Yemen.

I will examine the presence and effect of realist hurdles by analyzing how Saudi and Iranian officials portrays the Houthi insurgents. I will also look at how often Saudi Arabian officials refer to Iran's involvement in other ongoing regional conflicts, which might explain Saudi Arabia's hesitation to cooperate with Iran on Yemen. Hegemonic struggle can be examined by looking at if and how often realist factors such as way of rule (monarchy vs. republic) and the status quo are mentioned by officials from both countries and in newspaper articles.

I will investigate the presence of an ideational clash by examining if and how often Yemen's ethnic and religious background, as well as the Houthis' Shi'ism, is mentioned by Saudi and Iranian officials in relation to the conflict in Yemen. Another operationalization of ideational clashes is how often Saudi Arabia and Iran view the other's Muslim religious identity as "the other" and if either one attempts to claim the title of the leader of the Muslim world. The same examination schemes will be applied to secondary literature and newspaper articles.

Chapter 4: Newspaper Articles Analysis

War of Rhetoric

In this chapter, I will rely on Western, Saudi Arabian, and Iranian newspapers to dissect the animosity between Saudi Arabia and Iran. All the articles utilized in this analysis concern the case of the ongoing civil war in Yemen and will thus cover news from the start of the war in 2015. Needless to state, some of the newspaper articles used in this paper will demonstrate brazenly biased views on the war. However, this will aid the research since these statements would reflect how each country views the other and its involvement in the conflict and perhaps shed light on the particularities of the animosity that exasperate the rivalry and hamper cooperation.

In alignment with the theoretical framework used throughout this paper, I will measure realist incentives by focusing on statements that particularly address the way of rule, nominal and verbal references to military might, references to the maintenance of the status quo and Saudi legitimacy, and Iran's involvement in other regional conflicts, particularly Syria, Iraq, and Lebanon. I will measure ideological incentives by focusing on statements that reference to the Sunni-Shi'a divide or religion, the illegitimacy of the Houthis as a representative body of the Yemeni population, Saudi Arabia's support to the previous Yemeni regime, and lastly references to Saudi Arabia's relationship with the United States and Israel and their involvement in the conflict. I predict that while some references, such as the use of military might, are particularly realist, many others, such as the maintenance of the status quo and Saudi's support of the previous regime, will include evidence of both ideological clashes and realist concerns.

i. Way of Rule

References to way of rule and Saudi's monarchal regime are dominant in Iranian newspapers. In the publication of Yemen's message to the UN for durable peace, there were constant comparisons between Iran's republic and Saudi's monarchy, implying that the main reason for Saudi Arabia's involvement in the conflict stems from its original fear of the exportation of Iran's revolutionary wave to the Gulf. Furthermore, the Yemeni delegation emphasized that the upcoming peace negotiations in Sweden, starting in December 2018, did little to appease Saudi's fear of the expansion of this revolutionary ideology but only exasperated it: "It is clear the Saudis fear the prospects of talks in Sweden next month among the various Yemeni groups since this might lead to restoration of peace and stability through democratic means in the Arabian Peninsula's only republican country, thereby encouraging the suppressed masses groaning under the tyrannical rule of the Najdis to rise up for their own rights" (*Kayhan International*, 2018).¹

Iranians believe that Saudi Arabia considers the conflict in Yemen as a starting point to the collapse of all the Gulf monarchies. In fact, Yemeni newspapers publically share this view. Dhamar News, a Yemeni newspaper agency in support of the Houthis, published an article claiming that the main objective of the war was to "prevent Yemen's liberation from Saudi hegemony" and "Yemen's emancipatory model" presents a direct threat to Saudi Arabia since "this model of liberation if established may extend to the heart of the Gulf states and push masses to the revolution to free its wealth" (Hardan, 2018). As evidenced by the first literature discussing Saudi-Iranian relations, the removal of Shah Reza Pahlavi in 1979 shifted Iran's agenda of maintenance of the status quo by preserving the local monarchies to a revisionist

¹ Najd is a region in Saudi Arabia that houses the capital, Riyadh, and where the House of Saud, the royal Saudi family, stems from.

one. Saudi Arabia shares a border with Yemen and has long meddled in its local affairs of governance. There is an established fear that Yemen is one of the weakest links in the Gulf and if Yemen does collapse, to a Shi'a republican power, then there is a direct threat on the viability of not only Saudi Arabia's monarchy, but all the monarchies in the Gulf. This leads to the examination of the second realist incentive, the maintenance of the status quo.

i. Maintenance of the Status Quo

A perusal of historical articles and newspaper articles demonstrates that Saudi Arabia wants to preserve two continuities: its historical involvement in Yemen's governance affairs and Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi's presidency. For decades, Saudi Arabia has been involved in Yemeni politics via tribal links and bribery. Saudi Arabia seldom denies its involvement in Yemen's affairs. However, Saudi journalism often portrays this involvement in a positive light while Iranian journalism portrays it in a negative light. Fars News Agency, based in Iran, cited the Yemeni Politician Abdulrahman al-Hamdi saying that "history is repeating itself. There is a history of Saudi intervention in Yemen, from the revolution in 1962 to the 1994 Yemeni civil war." Though the statement cited was addressed to delegates in a conference in London and was covered by a plethora of news agencies, Iranian news agencies such as Fars referenced it within an article that cited Saudi Arabia's historical and current involvement in Yemeni affairs as tyrannical. However, in an article written by Jamal Khashoggi, a notable Saudi Arabian journalist, for the Washington Post, Khashoggi claimed it was Saudi's King Faisal's involvement that ended the war in 1965 and lead to peace in Yemen. Therefore, "only Saudi Arabia can initiate a complete reboot of peace talks" (Khashoggi, 2017). Whether to establish peace or continue fighting, Saudi Arabia wishes to remain as involved as possible in

Yemeni affairs and continues to do so by not only leading the military coalition against the Houthis but also by supporting the deposed president Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi.

Following Ali Abdullah Saleh overthrow during the Arab Spring after 30 years of rule, Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi was elected as a transitional president for a two-year term. After he was ousted in 2014 by the Houthi rebellion, Hadi took shelter in Saudi Arabia and has seldom returned to Yemen. Many Western media outlets recognize the direct tie between Saudi Arabia and Hadi and do not shy away from critiquing the relationship: “Hadi is a Saudi puppet who supported a Saudi scheme to create a federal system that would impoverish the Houthis” (Dyer, 2018). The proposed federal system would have reserved the country’s shrinking oil revenues to the southwestern provinces and denied the equal distribution of these revenues to the northern highlands, one of the most impoverished regions in Yemen and where the Houthis are established. This reconfirms Saudi’s desired status quo by ensuring that power remains in Hadi’s hands and out of the Houthis’. Saudi Arabia does not dismiss its link to Hadi In fact, Al Bawaba News, a news, blogging, and media website headquartered in Amman, Jordan, with an office in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, directly links Saudi’s involvement in the war to Hadi’s presidency: “The coalition’s intervention was ostensibly justified by a goal to return ousted President Abdrabbu Mansour Hadi to power over a united Yemen” (Beavor, 2018). In addition, Western and Saudi Arabian media outlets constantly describe Hadi as the “internationally recognized president”, delegitimizing any other source of power, particularly the Houthis. An article in *Asharq Al-Awsat*, an online Saudi newspaper based in London, implored Houthi rebels, who were referred to as “Iran-backed militias” to return the weapons to the “legitimate state” because the legitimate state of Hadi’s presidency is “the only true guarantor of a decent life for all Yemenis” (*Asharq Al-Awsat*, 2018). Saudi’s backing of Hadi is twofold: it contains the realist incentive of having full control over the president of Yemen.

As a neighboring country, strategically located on the Red Sea and bordering both Saudi Arabia and the Gulf of Aden, the continued involvement of Saudi Arabia in Yemeni affairs is a matter of security and survival. However, it is important to note that Hadi is a Sunni Muslim, which is an added virtue to Saudi Arabia. Hadi has also demonstrated that he is willing to consolidate power solely in the hands of the Sunni Muslim majority. His federal scheme to deprive the northern Houthis from the oil revenues is evidence that Hadi was willing to do Saudi's bidding, starting by isolating their Shi'a enemies and keeping them powerless. The Houthis have expressed their desire for power sharing in 2015 since the start of the war. Nasser Bagazgooz, a member of the Houthi delegation, told a reporter from the New York Times in 2015 that "the Houthis have asked for the formation of a new government from across the political spectrum and elections within a year" (Al-Batati and Fahim, 2015). However, be it for the maintenance of the status quo or the religious clash, or a combination of both, the Saudis preferred to form the coalition and fight to reinstate Hadi's deposed government.

ii. Lack of Trust

"In any closely competitive system, it may seem that one is either paranoid or a loser" (Waltz, 1988: 628). I hypothesize that Iran's involvement in several regional conflicts, such as the Syrian Civil War, increased Saudi suspicions and worries of growing Iranian presence and influence in the region and thus hampered cooperation on Yemen. The previous sections in this chapter highlighted each country's rational vie for regional power and scramble for security and survival. This section will demonstrate how each country's paranoia, as Waltz coins it, hampered cooperation between the two countries not only in Yemen, but also in

Syria, Iraq, and Lebanon. Perhaps the conflict in Yemen, in combination with the Syrian Civil War, are the starkest examples of how sectarian politics and geopolitics are not mutually exclusive. Most of the newspaper articles that I examined tied the conflicts in Syria and Iraq to the war in Yemen, particularly highlighting the danger of the “Shia crescent” on Saudi’s survival. “Today, Iran can easily construct a highway extending from Tehran to Beirut across Iraq, Syria and Lebanon. This arc of influence is a very real threat to Saudi Arabia” (Khashoggi, 2017). The threat of this ‘arc of influence’ undoubtedly lies in the geographical proximity of all these countries to Saudi Arabia who hold friendly bilateral relations with Iran. However, the threat is intensified in Saudi Arabian terms if all the governments of these countries are Shi’a-led. In Syria, Iranian troops and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, a branch of Iran’s Armed Forces, have been helping Bashar Al-Asaad’s government battle ISIS and the Saudi-backed Sunni opposition since 2012. Saudi suspicions in regard to Yemen were heightened due to Iran’s direct involvement in Syria and Iraq, despite the lack of evidence supporting Iran’s backing of the Houthis. The lack of trust is mutual; Iranian media and officials have extensively criticized Saudi Arabia’s involvement in Syria. Iranian president Hassan Rouhani publically stated on state TV last year that “Saudi Arabia's intervention in Yemen and their support of terrorists in Yemen and Syria are main hurdles to improve ties between Tehran and Riyadh. Saudi Arabia should stop backing terrorists” (*Al Jazeera*, 2017). Iran and Saudi’s suspicions are not only caused by the other’s involvement in the conflicts but are also heightened by their support of opposing sides. The fear is not only a fear of regional hegemony, but that of religious hegemony as well.

iii. Military Might

One must not dismiss realist incentives as legitimate hurdles to cooperation between Saudi Arabia and Iran. Although some factors, such as maintenance of the status quo and Saudi and Iranian involvement in other regional conflicts, encompass realist and ideological elements, other predominantly realist factors, such as offensive military capabilities, hold weight and made a constant appearance in media from both camps. “Saudi Arabia accused Iran of supplying ballistic missiles to the Shiite Houthi movement in Yemen and called it, ‘a blatant act of military aggression’” (*Agencia EFE*, 2017). In response to Saudi Arabia’s accusation, and in a direct attempt to remind the Kingdom of Iran’s military might, Hassan Rouhani addressed Saudi Arabia’s authorities during a cabinet meeting: “A government which knows nothing about regional and international politics, and has always done everything using dollars, has chosen bombs this time to show its power. This is a strategic fault. You are aware of the Islamic Republic of Iran's power and position; those bigger than you have not been able to do anything against the Iranian nation” (*Agencia EFE*, 2017). Interpreted through Mearshimer’s offensive realism, this is an attempt from Iran to demonstrate to Saudi, its regional rival for hegemony, that it possesses offensive military capabilities. This particular exchange is mainly based on demonstrating power in the most realist terms.

iv. Houthi Rebels vs. Ansarullah

I hypothesize that the sectarian “othering” between Sunni and Shi’a Muslims is a driving factor in the Saudi-Iranian rivalry. This polarizing mechanism drives the Iranian and Saudi strategies in Yemen. The war in Yemen is framed as a struggle between “Sunni Arabs, supported by a Saudi-led coalition, and Iranian-backed Houthis” (Cooper, 2017). In other

words, the “us vs. them” mentality is not just limited to Saudi Arabia vs. Iran but also extends to Sunnis vs. Shi’a. Particularly in Western media, this classification between Sunni Saudi and Shi’a Houthi rebels is dominant. The conflict is framed in religious terms, with each side accusing the other of “sectarian expansionist policies” (Khashoggi, 2017). In their war of rhetoric, Iranian and Saudi leaders and news outlets attack the other’s image as a pillar in the Muslim world.² Saudi journalists argue that Iran utilizes religion to reach its own political goals by “convincing Iraqis and Yemenis that they are a targeted Shi’a minority, and Sunnis that they are targeted in a Christian world, and Arabs that they are targeted by Israel, and the East that it is robbed by the infidel West” (Al Rashed, 2018).

In retaliation, the leader of Yemen’s Ansarullah movement, Abdul Malik Badreddin al-Houthi, described the Saudi regime as “an outsider and a traitor to all Muslim nations” (*Fars News Agency*, 2017). There is no doubt that religion plays a major role in the animosity between Iran and Saudi Arabia and plays an even bigger role in Yemen. Many describe Saudi’s involvement in Yemen as “the Saudi Crown Prince’s campaign against political Islam” (Kashoggi, 2017). Some Yemenis believe that Riyadh and Abu Dhabi’s involvement in Yemen stems from their desire to establish “a client regime in Yemen, coupled with total deprivation of the rights of over forty percent of the country’s Zaydi Shi’a Muslim population which forms the overwhelming majority in northern Yemen” (*Kayhan International*, 2018). The role that religion plays in Yemen, and more noticeably the role it plays in Saudi-Iranian relations, is undeniable.

Houthis are not only portrayed as “the other” in the regional Sunni-Shi’a divide, but also within Yemen. There is evidence to support the claim that Saudi Arabia and its aligned

² Due to the undemocratic nature of Saudi Arabia and Iran, which results in a lack of independent media, it is assumed that local media outlets reflect the leaders’ and governments’ stance.

media outlets made a consistent effort to portray the Houthis as a non-indigenous group planted and supported by Tehran to oppose the wishes of the actual Yemeni population (the 65% Sunni majority) and destabilize the country. “The Militias of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates describe the Houthis as Iranian proxies and support, arm, and train opposing militias in hopes of restoring power to the controversial but internationally recognized president, Abdu Rabbu Mansour Hadi” (Coker and Kalfod, 2017). This “othering” and delegitimization of the Houthis as representatives of the desires and wishes of part of the Yemeni population has hampered cooperation exponentially. In fact, in their message to the UN, Yemen’s delegation warned that “as long as Saudi Arabia and the UAE continue to brand Ansarallah as ‘Houthi rebels’, peace is not possible in Yemen” (*Kayhan International*, 2018). Saudi journalists have also expressed that in order for Iran and Saudi Arabia to cooperate on peace in Yemen, “Saudi Arabia would have to recognize the Houthis as a legitimate Yemeni faction” (Khashoggi, 2017). The Houthis have long dominated the northern region of Yemen and have been fighting against the previous regime since 2004. Furthermore, the Houthis are from the Zaydi branch of Islam, which, while Shi’a, follows a different path from Iranian and Iraqi Shi’ism (Minority Rights Group International, 2018). They do not visit Shi’a shrines nor do they observe Shi’a commemorations. Most importantly, they do not believe in an awaited Imam who will reappear on Judgment Day. In more than one instance, they have rejected Iran’s model of theocratic governance and have called for the formation of a government that represents all political and religious factions. For Houthis, “it is resentment at an increasing marginalization within Yemeni society, and an aggressive program of Salafist proselytizing in their northern heartland funded by Riyadh during the 1990s that threatened their religious identity” that caused them to rebel (Shanahan, 2015).

v. *The Infidel West*

In an effort to delegitimize Saudi Arabia as the leader of the Muslim world, Iranian news outlets and officials reference to Saudi Arabia's close relationship with the United States and Israel. Iran has a very complicated relationship with the United States and has always been publically hostile towards Israel since 1948. It considers Israel an illegitimate state and a natural enemy to all Arabs and Muslims. In fact, Iranian officials refer to their regional alliance with Lebanon's Hezbollah and the Syrian government as "a resistance movement or an 'axis of resistance' against Israel" (*Azer News*, 2017). Furthermore, the leader of Yemen's Ansarullah movement, Abdul Malik Badreddin al-Houthi, stressed that "Saudi Arabia and its regional allies are serving the interests of the Zionist regime of Israel in their military campaign against Yemen" (*Fars News Agency*, 2017). In his unveiling of conditions to resume ties with Saudi Arabia, Iranian president Hassan Rouhani conditioned that "Riyadh stops 'bowing to Israel' by stopping airstrikes in Yemen" (*Azer News*, 2017). There is a high degree of Muslim solidarity that emanates from Iran towards the topic of the occupation of Palestine and its officials and media have utilized the United States' involvement, particularly Trump's relationship with the Saudi Crown Prince, to portray an image of Saudi Arabia as a betrayer of Islam and its fellow Arab countries. This rhetoric is transferred to the conflict in Yemen, portraying Saudi as a dependent aggressor whose main role in Yemen is furthering the agenda of the U.S. and the Zionist regime in Israel.

Chapter 5: Discussion

There is empirical support for all the hypothesis mentioned in this paper. There is evidence of realist hurdles to cooperation between Saudi Arabia and Iran on Yemen. There is also evidence of an ideological clash between the two countries that hampers cooperation on Yemen. Most importantly, there is evidence that these factors are not mutually exclusive. The reality of the case is that both the realist struggle for regional hegemony and the ideational Sunni-Shi'a divides manifest themselves simultaneously, specifically in the case of Yemen.

Mearsheimer's offensive realism is evident in both country's public boast of military might. Additionally, there is a clear element of security in Saudi's desire to maintain the status quo and preserve the Gulf monarchies. Saudi's fear of an expansionist revolutionary ideology directly manifests itself in Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, and Yemen. Wendt's argument about how states' conception of security is directly connected to how states view their identity in relation to others is also evident in this thesis. In their public war of rhetoric, there is a constant portrayal of the "us vs. them" mentality, not only in terms of nationality but also in terms of religion. Saudi's conception of cooperation with Iran is skewed because it views Iran as the Shi'a "other". This sense of sectarianism is heightened when Iran constantly intervenes in regional conflicts, particularly those with a religious aspect. Due to the sensitive sectarian politics in Syria and Iraq, Saudi's hesitation to cooperate with Iran in Yemen is exasperated due to the Houthis' Shi'ism. In alignment with Mearsheimer's lack of trust assumption, Saudi Arabia would assume that Iran is not only backing the Houthis to meddle in Saudi's backyard but to also further its religious revisionist agenda.

Conclusion

The purpose of this thesis was to examine the rivalry between Saudi Arabia and Iran. The main aim of the research question was to utilize Yemen as a case study to determine whether it is realist or ideological factors that hamper cooperation and exasperate the rivalry between Saudi Arabia and Iran. I conducted the research by using process tracing and secondary content analysis to analyze the content of newspaper articles and official statements concerning the conflict in Yemen. John J. Mearsheimer's theory of offensive realism and Alexander Wendt's constructivist theory were the main theoretical framework utilized throughout this paper to operationalize and measure realist and ideological hurdles to cooperation between the two countries. There is strong empirical evidence that supports the existence of realist hurdles towards cooperation, which is apparent in the references to the monarchical way of rule and Saudi Arabia's desire to maintain the status quo. Respectively, there is also strong empirical evidence that supports the existence of ideological factors that hamper cooperation, which is apparent in the statements from both camps that address the Sunni-Shi'a divide and the othering of the Houthis both religiously and politically. The major conclusion of this thesis is that the realist and ideological hurdles are not mutually exclusive and should thus, for the case of the Saudi-Iranian rivalry, be studied as simultaneously-occurring phenomena. As peace talks have recently commenced in Stockholm, a better grasp and understanding of the nuances that hamper cooperation is a prerequisite for a successful round of negotiations.

References

- Al-Rashed, Abdelrahman. (2018). “al’ālm wfqā’ llmršd: fylm krtwn.” (The World According to the Guide: A Cartoon). *Asharq Al-Awsat*.
- Al-Rashed, Abdelrahman. (2018). “Hġwm lȳrān ‘lġ bāb ālmndb.” (Iran’s Attack on Bab Al-Mandab). *Asharq Al-Awsat*
- Alamos, Adnan. (2018). “hđā mā tlbth wāšnṭn mn mġls āl’mn ḥwl ālhdnṣ fy ālymn - ‘dnān ‘lāmḥ.” (This is What Washington has Asked the UN Security Council about a Truce in Yemen). *Kayan International*.
- Alsultan, F.M. and Saeid, P. (2016). *The Development of Saudi-Iranian Relations Since the 1990s: Between Conflict and Accommodation*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Ansarullah: US Main Architect of Saudi Military Aggression on Yemen. (2017). *Fars News Agency*.
- Asharq Al-Awsat. “Gḥwd Ymnṣ tklk blġlāq «ālmsyrṣ» ālḥwtȳṣ ‘l Nāyl Sāt.” (Yemeni Efforts to Close the « Houthi March» on Nile Sat). (2018). *Asharq Al-Awsat*.
- Baraka, A. (2015). Invading Yemen: Criminality in Support of Hegemony. *Guardian (Sydney)*.
- Beever, Eleanor. (2018). The War in Yemen and the Death of the Geneva Convention. *Al Bawaba News*.
- Clausen, M.L. (2015). Understanding the Crisis in Yemen: Evaluating Competing Narratives. *The International Spectator*, 50(3), pp.16-29.
- Cooper, Helene. (2017). Jim Mattis, in Saudi Visit, Calls for Political Solution in Yemen. *The New York Times*.
- Dyer, Gwyne. (2018). Yemen: The Bigger Saudi Lie. *Cyprus Mail*.

Ekşi, M. (2017). Regional Hegemony Quests in the Middle East from the Balance of Power System to the Balance of Proxy Wars: Turkey as Balancing Power for the Iran-Saudi Rivalry. *Journal of Gazi Academic View*, 11(21), pp. 135-156.

El Ghamari, M. (2015). Jemen-the Proxy War. *Securitologia*, 2(22), pp.43-56.

Ersoy, E. (2012). The Rivalry Between Saudi Arabia and Iran in the Middle East. *The Journal of Turkish Weekly*, 6(6), pp. 295-298.

Esfandiary, D. and Tabatabai, A. (2016). Yemen: An Opportunity for Iran–Saudi Dialogue? *The Washington Quarterly*, 39(2), pp.155-174.

Fahim, Kareem and Saeed Al-Batati. (2015). Yemen Peace Talks End with no End to the Conflict. *The New York Times*.

Fearon, J.D. (1995). Rationalist Explanations for War. *International organization*, 49(3), pp.379-414.

Gelvin, J.L. (2017). *The New Middle East: What Everyone Needs to Know*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Hafizoglu, Rufiz. (2017) Iran’s Rouhani Unveils Conditions to Resume Ties with Saudi Arabia. *Azer News Agency*.

Hafizoglu, Rufiz. (2017). “Will Saudi Arabia revive new Pan-Arabism?”, *Azer News Agency*.

Harden, Hassan. (2018). “Mā Hy ḥsbāb d‘w Wāšnṭn lwqf Alḥrb Fy Alymn?” (What Are The Reasons for Washington's Call to Stop the War in Yemen) *Dhamar News*.

Hill, G. (2017). *Yemen Endures: Civil War, Saudi Adventurism and the Future of Arabia*, London: C. Hurst & Co. Publishers.

Iltis, T. (2016). Yemen: Behind Saudi Arabia's Largely Unreported Brutal War. *Green Left Weekly*, (1087), p.14.

Iran's President Says US Wants to Keep Middle East in Servitude. (2018). *Agencia EFE*.

Kalfood, Mohammed Ali, and Margaret Coker. (2018). Savage Chaos in Yemen War, And All Sides Spread Blame. *The New York Times*.

Kechichian, J.A. (1999). Trends in Saudi National Security, *The Middle East Journal*, 53(2), pp. 232–253.

Keddie, N.R. and Matthee, R. eds. (2011). *Iran and the Surrounding World: Interactions in Culture and Cultural Politics*, Seattle: University of Washington Press.

Keynoush, B. (2016). *Saudi Arabia and Iran: Friends or Foes*, New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan

Khashoggi, Jamal. (2017). Saudi Arabia has Devastated Yemen - But a Lesson from 1965 Can Help Fix the Mess. *The Washington Post*.

Luomi, M. (2008). Sectarian Identities or Geopolitics. *The Finnish Institute of International Affairs, Working Papers*, 56(9), pp. 1-62.

Mabon, S. (2012). The Battle for Bahrain: Iranian-Saudi Rivalry. *Middle East Policy*, 19(2), pp.84-97.

Mabon, S. (2013). *Saudi Arabia and Iran: Soft Power Rivalry in the Middle East*, London [etc.]: Tauris.

Marcus, J. (2017). Why Saudi Arabia and Iran are Bitter Rivals. *BBC News*.

Mason, R. (2015). *Foreign Policy in Iran and Saudi Arabia: Economics and Diplomacy in the Middle East*, London: I.B. Tauris.

McLachlan, K., (1992). Iran and the Continuing Crisis in the Persian Gulf. *GeoJournal*, 28(3), pp.357-363.

- Mearsheimer, J.J. (2001). *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, New York, NY [etc.]: Norton.
- Minority Rights Group International. (2018). Zaydi Shi'a. Retrieved January 2019 from <https://minorityrights.org/minorities/zaydi-shias/>
- Morgenthau, H.J. (1968). The Balance of Power. *Politics Among Nations. The Struggle for Power and Peace*, pp.183-193.
- Reardon, M. (2015). Saudi Arabia, Iran and the 'Great Game' in Yemen. *Al Jazeera*.
- Rich, B. (2012). Gulf War 4.0: Iran, Saudi Arabia and the Complexification of the Persian Gulf Equation. *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, 23(4), pp.471-486.
- Rouhani Slams Merciless Attack on Yemen. (2015). *Trend News Agency*.
- Rouhani warns Riyadh of Iran's Might as Regional Situation Deteriorates. (2017). *Agencia EFE*.
- Rouhani: Saudis Should Stop Backing Terrorists. (2017). *Al Jazeera*.
- Saudi Intervention Risks All-out Civil War in Yemen. (2015). *Financial Times*.
- Savouljian, R. (2015). Yemen War Part of Saudi Power Bid. *Green Left Weekly*, (1050), p.20.
- Shanahan, Rodger. (2015). Crisis in Yemen no Proxy War. *The Australian*.
- Sunnis and Shia: Islam's Ancient Schism. (2016). *BBC News*.
- The Guardian View on the Crisis in Yemen: Resolve it Now. (2015). *The Guardian*.
- Turner, R.G. (2008). *Balance of Power Theory, Implications for the US, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and a New Arms Race* (Doctoral dissertation, Monterey California. Naval Postgraduate School).
- Waltz, K.N. (1988). The Origins of War in Neorealist Theory. *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 18(4), pp.615-628.

Wehrey, F., Karasik, T.W., Nader, A., Ghez, J.J. and Hansell, L. (2009). *Saudi-Iranian Relations Since the Fall of Saddam: Rivalry, Cooperation, and Implications for US Policy*. Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation.

Wendt, A. (1999). *Social Theory of International Politics*, Cambridge [etc.]: Cambridge University Press.

Williams, M. C. (1998). Identity and the Politics of Security. *European Journal of International Relations*, 4(2), pp. 204–25.

Williams, M. C. (2004). Why Ideas Matter in International Relations: Hans Morgenthau, Classical realism, and the Moral Construction of Power Politics. *International Organization*, 58(4), pp. 633-665.

Yemen: Politicians, Experts, Activists Raise Alarm After MBS Trip. (2018). *Fars News Agency*.

Yemen's Message to UN for Only Durable Peace vis-a-vis Saudi Seditious. (2018). *Kayan International*.

Zehfuss, M. (2001). Constructivism and Identity: A Dangerous Liaison. *European Journal of International Relations*, 7(3), pp.315-348