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LİSANSÜSTÜ EĞİTİM ENSTİTÜSÜ
SİYASET BİLİMİ VE ULUSLARARASI İLİŞKİLER ANABİLİM DALI**



**THEORY OF THE PROTRACTED SOCIAL CONFLICT:
THE CASE OF THE SYRIAN REVOLUTION (2011-2024)**

Amina MUHANNAIA

MASTER'S THESIS

GAZİANTEP – 2025



LİSANSÜSTÜ EĞİTİM ENSTİTÜSÜ
YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZ KABUL VE ONAY
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MÜZMİN TOPLUMSAL ÇATIŞMA TEORİSİ: SURIYE DEVRİMİ
ÖRNEĞİ (2011-2024)

Amina MUHANNAIA

YÜKSEK LİSANS

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ÖZET

Bu tez, Edward Azar'ın Uzamış Sosyal Çatışma Teorisini, modern tarihin en karmaşık ve yıkıcı krizlerinden biri olan Suriye Devrimi'ni (2011–2024) analiz etmek için uygulamaktadır. Araştırma, devrimin patlak vermesine yol açan temel faktörleri, kimlik temelli hoşnutsuzluklar, siyasi dışlanma, ekonomik eşitsizlikler ve dış müdahaleler dâhil olmak üzere incelemektedir. Tez, etnik, dini ve siyasi bölünmelerin, dış aktörlerin müdahaleleriyle birleşerek çatışmayı uzamış ve bölgeyi istikrarsızlaştıran bir krize dönüştürdüğünü ele almaktadır.

Araştırma, Suriye'deki çatışmanın Orta Doğu üzerindeki yayılma etkilerine odaklanarak artan güvenlik sorunları, milyonlarca mültecinin yerinden edilmesi ve aşırılıkçı ideolojilerin yayılması gibi sonuçları incelemektedir. Azar'ın teorik çerçevesini uygulayarak, kimlik, temel insani ihtiyaçlar ve dışa bağımlılığın çatışmayı nasıl sürdürdüğünü ortaya koyarak Suriye ve bölgedeki sistemik zorlukların daha derin bir anlayışını sunmaktadır.

Çalışma, bu tür uzamış çatışmaların çözümünün kimlik temelli hoşnutsuzlukların ele alınmasını, kapsayıcı bir yönetimin teşvik edilmesini ve dış müdahalelerin sınırlandırılmasını gerektirdiği sonucuna varmıştır. Tavsiyeler arasında bölgesel iş birliğinin güçlendirilmesi, yerel barış inisiyatiflerinin desteklenmesi ve hesap verebilirlik ve uzlaşmayı sağlamak için geçiş dönemi adalet mekanizmalarının kurulması yer almaktadır. Bu tez, Suriye Devrimi'nin kapsamlı bir analizini sunarak uzamış sosyal çatışmalar üzerine akademik ve pratik tartışmalara katkıda bulunmakta ve çatışma çözümü ile sürdürülebilir barış için uygulanabilir bilgiler sağlamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Müzmin Toplumsal Çatışma, Suriye, Devrim, Güvenlik, Kimlik.

HASAN KALYONCU UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE EDUCATION INSTITUTE
DEPARTMENT of POLITICAL SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL
RELATIONS

**THEORY OF THE PROTRACTED SOCIAL CONFLICT: THE
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Amina MUHANNAIA

MASTER THESIS

Advisor
Prof. Dr. Ercan SEYHAN

ABSTRACT

This thesis applies Edward Azar's Theory of Protracted Social Conflict to analyze the Syrian Revolution (2011–2024), a conflict marked by its complexity, longevity, and devastating impact on the region. The study explores the underlying factors that led to the eruption of the revolution, including identity-based grievances, political exclusion, economic disparities, and external interventions. It examines how the interplay of ethnic, religious, and political divisions, compounded by external actors' involvement, transformed the conflict into one of the most protracted and destabilizing crises in modern history.

The research highlights the spillover effects of the Syrian conflict on the broader Middle East, including heightened security challenges, the displacement of millions of refugees, and the proliferation of extremist ideologies. By applying Azar's framework, the study identifies the centrality of identity, human needs, and external dependency in perpetuating the conflict, offering a deeper understanding of the systemic challenges facing Syria and the region.

The study concludes that resolving such protracted conflicts requires addressing root causes, including identity-based grievances, fostering inclusive governance, and curbing external interference. Recommendations include strengthening regional cooperation, empowering local peacebuilding initiatives, and establishing transitional justice mechanisms to ensure accountability and reconciliation. This thesis contributes to the academic and practical discourse on protracted social conflicts by providing a comprehensive analysis of the Syrian Revolution and offering actionable insights for conflict resolution and sustainable peace.

Keywords: Protracted Social Conflict, Syria, Revolution, Security, Identity.

ÖNSÖZ

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Bilginin yaşam boyu süren bir yolculuk olduğunu bana öğreten aileme sonsuz minnettarlık duyuyorum.

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Suriye savaşında şehit olan, tutuklanan, mülteci durumuna düşen ve savaşın etkilerini yaşayan herkesi onurlandırmak istiyorum. Fedakârlıklarınız asla unutulmayacak ve eksiklerimiz için üzgünüm.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACLED Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project

AL Arab League

ASBP Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party

CA Conceptual Argument

CAESAR Report - A Report into the Credibility of Certain Evidence with Regard to Torture and Execution of Persons Incarcerated by the Syrian Regime

CPI Corruption Perceptions Index

EO Executive Order

FH Freedom House

FSA Free Syrian Army

GDP Gross Domestic Product

GOCI Global Organized Crime Index

HRW Human Rights Watch

ICCPR International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

ICJ International Court of Justice

ICT International Criminal Tribunal

IRFR International Religious Freedom Report

IRGC Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps

IS Islamic State

ISIS Islamic State of Iraq and Syria

MDG Millennium Development Goals

NGO Non-governmental Organization

NRR Normal Relations Range

OFAC Office of Foreign Assets Control

OHCHR Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights

P3 the US, UK, and France

PKK The Kurdistan Workers' Party

PSC Protracted Social Conflict

PYD The Democratic Union Party

R2P Responsibility to Protect

RST Resolute Severe Tyrannies

RWB Reporters Without Borders

SDF Syrian Democratic Forces

SNA Syrian National Army

SNHR Syrian Network for Human Rights

UJ Universal Jurisdiction

UK United Kingdom

UN United Nations

UNODC UN's Office on Drugs and Crime

UNSC United Nations Security Council

URA Undue Risk Argument

US United States

YPG The People's Defense Units

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction to the Theory of the Social Conflict

At every level of human contact, from the interpersonal to the global, conflict is believed to be unavoidable. Different approaches regarding the understanding of politics have affected the real definition of what it stands for. Many people believe that "real" politics is about conflicting over limited resources and ideals in order to obtain a comparative edge in power, even if it is not permanent, in a constant struggle of how power is being distributed. However, there is another way of looking at politics that emphasizes prosperity, community development, and collective security. Promoting collaboration, advancing conflict resolution, pursuing socio-economic development, and facilitating peaceful interactions at all levels are the shared objectives of politics (Azar, 1990, p. 1).

After World War II, many newly emerged states experienced internal, regional, and international conflict while not being completely established, but rather still in the phase of nation-state building. Analyzing these conflict events and the constant search for peace and cooperation has increased acceptance of the latter perspective; that is, that politics must be about agreement and community building as opposed to power acquisition, as it is in the first opinion, because that would initiate a continuous state of war among mankind. A positive rather than negative view of politics is necessary in order to be likely to find mechanisms that will persuade nations to pursue a lasting peace. Understanding politics as balance of power would rarely promote end of protracted war in the affected regions (Azar, 1990, p. 1).

Conflict is a necessary and unavoidable part of social progress, according to contemporary conflict resolution experts. It expresses the diversity of ideals, interests, and ideas that emerge when newly formed social formations encounter established restrictions. Social change gives rise to conflict formations, which then spark violent or peaceful conflict transformation. This process results in additional social change as previously oppressed or marginalized people or groups begin to voice their concerns and question established norms and power structures (Ramsbotham, 2005, p. 20).

In the years following the Cold War, a new pattern of conflicts emerged, causing a new pattern of reactions. In the past, international wars were the main focus, while currently the main focus of scholars of political science are internal conflicts. Although asymmetric conflicts currently predominate, a significant amount of conflict resolution theory developed in response to symmetric conflicts. International conflicts have traditionally been

Clausewitzian affairs, in which power centers utilize organized force against opposing forces in an effort to destroy the opponent's will to continue fighting.

In recent years, a lot of post-Cold War battles have been post-Clausewitzian, with fragmented armies working against civilian populations and fractured decision-making. International battles took place between sovereign nations; internal conflicts, on the other hand, reflect state breakdowns, which suggests the emergence of "holes" in the international system of sovereign states as well as the absence of the mechanisms that maintain internal power balances and the timing of intervention. It is recommended that conflict resolution initiatives start before armed conflict starts. They apply to humanitarian assistance and peacekeeping and should be upheld even during intense combat. They are still required to help parties resolve violent disputes. Additionally, they remain relevant at the post-settlement stage, when peacebuilding need to tackle the ongoing problems in the conflict (Ramsbotham, 2005, p. 20).

1.2. The Conflict Theory

Conflict theory has been developed over a long period of time by different scholars, sociologists and philosophers who analyzed the nature of societal conflicts, such as Ibn Khaldun, Hobbes, Hegel, Marx, Weber, and others.

Ibn Khaldun states that there should exist a few elements that contribute to variations in the magnitude, quality, and impact of various human social organizations. He goes on to say that there must be a reason why big and strong states have developed—some individuals want for there to be widespread engagement between some people rather than between others. He has dubbed it "Asabiyyah," which means "solidarity," "group feeling," or "group consciousness." He brought a new, constructive meaning to a classical phrase. He used this phrase to characterize the ties that bind people together in a community. In understanding what drives social change towards conflict, Ibn Khaldoun explains different concepts, among which is 'ethnicity'. It can be used to differentiate between national minority groups, racial or social class, as well as cultural and social groupings within society.

Ibn Khaldun makes a point based on his historical experience – that any time a social group faces danger or challenges, they will take whatever necessary precautions to preserve their social unity. According to Ibn Khaldun's view, the reason behind the existence of the

spirit of 'Asabiyyah is that it originates from the primitive way of life that some tribes or nations choose when confronted with challenges or threats. They are compelled by these to unite in order to defend themselves and their fellow members from any threats that may arise from outside their group. They had to struggle to meet their fundamental needs, which gave rise to the sense of group spirit, or 'Asabiyyah (Ibn Khaldūn et al., 2015).

Until now, scholars and theorists have only discovered partial solutions for the question of “What drives social change toward conflict?”.

Ibn Khaldun sought to identify and explain the basic laws and precepts that underpinned all human civilizations. He promotes the study of social transition between elderly and new political players with his thesis of 'Asabiyyah. It would provide the subtle viewpoint that dynamic conflicts demand. The state's structure and genealogy can be used to describe how states operate and how their citizens are treated.

Karl Marx, one of the prominent scholars who had his share in the development of conflict theory in the nineteenth century states that society is in a state of perpetual conflict because of competition for limited resources. Domination and power, as opposed to agreement and conformity, uphold social order because those in positions of money and authority use whatever measures necessary to preserve their resources while repressing the weak and impoverished. Conflict theory's fundamental premise is that people and organizations in society will strive to maximize their own money and power, which inevitably leads to social change like political upheavals and revolutions.

Key principles of conflict theory, the allocation of resources, and the tensions arising between various socio-economic classes.

Conflict theory, as Karl Marx has formulated it, is a socio-political theory aimed at explaining political and economic phenomena through the lens of continual dispute for limited resources. Marx highlights the adversarial dynamics between social classes, notably between the capital owners, referred to as the "bourgeoisie," and the laboring class, identified as the "proletariat".

The Theory of Social Conflict can be defined as a sociological viewpoint that highlights the importance of the role of conflict in society, viewing it as a natural and necessary aspect of social interaction. This theory states that society is characterized by inherent inequalities and power struggles between various groups, including genders,

ethnicities, social classes, and other identity categories. Competition over limited resources, differences in wealth and status, and challenging interests and values are root causes of social conflicts. The Theory of Social Conflict emphasizes how oppressed' groups struggles to defend their rights and interests can result in societal transition (Macionis & Plummer, 2012).

Ramsbotham defines a conflict as a necessary and inherent component of social change, and he explains further that it is a manifestation of the diversity of values, interests, and ideas that emerges when newly formed social formations encounter established limitations (Ramsbotham, 2005, p. 11).

Societies with strong institutions, established ways to resolve conflicts, and resilient governance customs are typically more prepared to adapt to change peacefully; on the other hand, societies with weaker institutions, fragile social connections, and little agreement on traditions or values are more prone to fall apart (Ramsbotham, 2005, p. 10).

Conflicts symmetrical in nature are conflicts of interest involving parties who tend to be similar and on which scholars of conflict management have focused on. These conflicts are asymmetrical. Here, the fundamental nature of the parties' identities and relationships—rather than any specific issues or interests that might separate them—is the source of the conflict. It's probable that changing this system of responsibilities and roles won't be possible without causing conflict. Some scholars see that classical conflict resolution could be applied only to symmetric conflicts. In asymmetric conflicts, the dominant party always wins, while the weaker party always loses. To resolve the conflict, the existing structure should be changed, which is never in the interest of the dominant party. Consequently win-win situations are unattainable, and there comes the role of the third party, who must ally with the weaker party to achieve resolution. The third party's role is to facilitate this transformation, even if it includes challenging the dominant party. This involves converting the previously unpeaceful and unequal relationships into peaceful and balanced ones (Ramsbotham, 2005, p. 18).

Social change causes conflict formations, which in turn causes a process of violent or peaceful conflict transformation. This process then leads to additional social change, allowing disenfranchised people or groups to express their interests and question established norms and power structures.

Conflict can be either political, or armed, or violent conflict (deadly conflict). Armed conflict is a conflict where both sides resort to the use of force. Violent conflict is a conflict same as armed conflict, but also includes violence committed by one side of the conflicted parties, such as genocides against unarmed civilians, which is considered direct, physical violence (Ramsbotham, 2005, p. 23).

Contemporary conflicts are different in nature from those early conflicts defined as 'total wars' that accompanied the industrial revolution and reached their highest point in the first and second world wars. Interstate warfare was no longer feasible due to the development of nuclear weapons and military standoff between the Soviet and Western blocs. Rather, the dominant armed conflict patterns of the 1950s and 1960s transformed into national independence wars linked to decolonization, while the post-colonial civil wars of the 1970s and 1980s saw the involvement of major powers in an ongoing geopolitical struggle for influence and power. For this reason, some scholars have referred to the dominant pattern of post-1945 wars as "wars of third kind". These are "national liberal" wars, or conflicts involving resistance by different people against the post-colonial state's rule, exclusion, persecution, or seizure of lands and resources by communities seeking to establish their own states.

Since 1945, the majority of wars have been fought within states; hence, ideas and strategies from the European and Cold War eras that identified or suggested solutions for the issue of interstate conflict have significant intellectual and policy implications (Ramsbotham, 2005, p. 84).

The main forms of conflict in the international system after World War II have been mixed civil-international conflicts and civil wars, which have overcome more traditional international warfare. Cold War geopolitics influenced mixed civil-international conflicts, and despite the nuclear standoff, the two main alliances continued to aggressively prepare for the potential, if not the likelihood, of a fully Clausewitzian military battle.

Certain characteristics of the 'new wars' of the 1990s were evident from the 1970s onward. But 'Clausewitzian' wars continued to rage throughout the entire period (between China and Vietnam, Iraq and Iran, Israel and her neighbors, India, and Pakistan).

1.3. Concept of the Theory of the Protracted Social Conflict

In a series of studies that began to appear in the late 1970s, Edward Azar argued that the key to protracted social conflict (PSC), which he saw continuing in places like Lebanon (his own area of expertise), Sri Lanka, the Philippines, Ethiopia, Israel, Sudan, Cyprus, Iran, Nigeria, or South Africa, was that it indicated 'the prolonged and often violent struggle by communal groups for such basic needs as security, recognition and acceptance, fair access to political institutions and economic participation' (Azar, 1990).

It was believed that a correct comprehension of these processes had been obscured by traditional emphasis on relationships between states. The division between domestic and international politics was actually rejected as "artificial," in contrast to the concerns of international law, as there is only one social context, and its local aspect is more important.

In order to prevent or encourage conflict, the purpose of a state (together with its relationships with other states) was to fulfill or frustrate fundamental communal needs.

Using protracted social conflict data sets collected at the University of Maryland between the mid-1970s and the 1978–1984-time frame for the primary base conflict, Edward Azar methodically developed and improved his understanding of the mechanisms that led to this type of violent and protracted conflict.

Upon his death in the early 1990s, he had recorded more than sixty examples of this "new type of conflict," which "revolves around questions of communal identity, distinct from traditional disputes over territory, economic resources, or East-West rivalry"(Azar, 1990).

Azar in his most concentrated summary of fifteen years of effort, "The Management of Protracted Social Conflict; Theory and Practice", compares three elements of the then-dominant war studies orthodoxy with his own methodology.

Initially, there had been a tendency to think about conflicts in terms of a very strict separation between internal and exterior aspects. While sociologists, anthropologists, and psychologists were more interested in the former (uprisings, civil wars, insurgencies, revolts, coups, protests, riots, revolutions, etc.), international relations scholars were more interested in the latter (interstate wars, crises, invasions, border conflicts, blockades, etc.).

Second, the dominant frameworks of analysis have frequently been predicated on the functional division of conflict elements and types into various "levels of analysis" and sub-categories of psychological, social, political, and military conflicts.

Third, there had been an inclination to approach conflict dynamics in terms of conflict cycles, where the "termination of violent acts is often equated with the state of peace," and to concentrate on overt and violent conflict while neglecting covert, latent, or non-violent conflict.

However, studies on long-term social conflict have shown that many of the conflicts that are currently taking place in the less developed parts of the world are characterized by a lack of a clear separation between internal and external sources and players. Furthermore, a variety of root cause elements and dynamics are evident in the shifting objectives, actors, and targets. Eventually, there are no obvious beginning and ending points for these conflicts.

1.4. Four clusters of preconditions for Protracted Social Conflict

Protracted social conflict (PSC) is a term used to highlight the fact that the roots of these conflicts are mostly found within states rather than between them. Four sets of factors have been identified as prerequisites for the transition of these conflicts into high levels of severity.

The 'communal content' as a first prerequisite, explains that the identification group (racial, religious, ethnic, cultural, and others) is the most valuable unit of study in protracted social conflict situations.

PSC analysis has a primary focus on identification groups as opposed to the well-known "levels of analysis" framework made by Kenneth Waltz (1959), which in its traditional version distinguished system, state and individual levels.

Azar points out that the fundamental issue lies in the relationship between nations and identity groups, or what he referred to as the "disarticulation between the state and society as a whole," and how social group membership mediates individual interests and needs. Of particular concern are the societal needs of the individual, which include security, identity, and recognition, among others.

The gap between state and society in many parts of the world, according to Azar, is the result of a colonial legacy that artificially forced European conceptions of territorial sovereignty onto "a multitude of communal groups" on the pretext of "divide and rule." As a result, in many post-colonial states, a single communal group or a coalition of several communal groups that are indifferent to the demands of other social groups control the state structures. Long-term conflict and social disintegration are the results of this strain on the social fabric.

Azar and other conflict resolution theorists used social psychology and social anthropology studies as a resource when discussing the formation of identity groups to illustrate the ways in which socialization and group identity processes, which are culturally conditioned and lead to prolonged social conflict, mediate and articulate individual needs.

Second, in line with other conflict resolution analysts, Azar determined that the fundamental cause of PSC is the denial of human needs. Usually, grievances arising from denial of needs are expressed collectively. When the authorities do not address these grievances, an empty spot is created that can lead to a protracted social conflict.

In comparison to interests, needs are 'ontological' and non-negotiable, meaning that any conflict that arises is likely to be severe and, from a conventional Clausewitzian standpoint, 'irrational'.

Azar specifically mentions the necessities for political access, development, security, and identity (religious and cultural expression). He made an argument for a broader idea of "security" than that which was common in academic circles at the time, and he connected this definition to equally expansive definitions of "development" and "political access."

Reducing levels of underdevelopment is necessary for decreasing obvious conflict. Groups which use conflict as a means to fulfill their requirements for security and identity are really looking for changes to the way their society is structured. Only until underdevelopment is effectively improved can conflict settlement actually take place. Long-term conflict studies led to the conclusion that peace is development in the widest sense of the term (Azar, 1990, p. 155).

Third, Azar mentioned 'governance and the state's role' as the crucial element in the fulfillment or unfulfillment of individual and identity group needs in a world where the state

has been empowered to rule and utilize force when required to control society, protect citizens, and provide collective goods: long-lasting social conflicts are typically accompanied by weak, autocratic, inadequate, and narrow-minded governments that are unable to meet the requirements of their citizens (Azar, 1990, p. 10).

According to liberal Western ideology, the state is an organization of people charged with governing effectively and mediating disputes between the political community's constituents in a neutral way, treating each member as an equal citizen under the law. However, this is not directly the case in most of the world, especially in newer, less stable states where political authority is typically monopolized by the dominant identity group or a combination of ruling organizations that use the state to expand their own interests at the expense of others that fall short of meeting basic human needs.

When ruling elites mobilize group interests and identities and exclude 'minorities' in a reactive counter-identification, the 'communal component of the state' becomes central to the study of PSC.

A "crisis of legitimacy" is brought about by dominating individuals and organizations monopolizing power and restricting access to other groups; as a result, "regime type and the level of legitimacy" are perceived as "important linkage variables between needs and protracted social conflict"(Azar, 1990, p. 11).

Also, Azar highlights the fact that PSCs are primarily found in countries that are in process of developing, which are generally marked by a fast-growing population, an insufficient number of resources, and a limited "political capacity" that is frequently attributed to a colonial legacy of fragile institutions, a tradition of bureaucratic rule that is hierarchical imposed from metropolitan centers, and inherited tools of political repression.

Political capacity is constrained in the majority of protracted social conflict-ridden nations by a rigid or unstable power structure that prevents the state from satisfying the requirements of diverse citizens.

Last but not least are the function of what Azar called "international linkages," namely the network of political-military ties that make up cross-border interest and clientage patterns on a regional and global scale, as well as the political-economic ties of economic dependency within the global economic system. The international forces that function in the broader global society have made states, especially the weaker ones, vulnerable in recent times.

In any given scenario, the activation of visible conflict by four clusters of preconditions for PSC will rely on the casual actions and events of "process dynamics," which Azar divides into three categories of determinants: "built-in mechanisms of conflict," "state actions and strategies," and "communal actions and strategies" (Ramsbotham, 2005, p. 91).

The first of these deals with the different identity group formation, organization, and mobilization processes; it also discusses the nature and emergence of leadership; political goals and tactics (such as rebellion, guerrilla warfare, autonomy, and access); and the extent and kind of external ties.

The second primary component consists of state actions and strategies. At any given moment, ruling individuals and elites are theoretically faced with a range of policy options, from various forms of political accommodation at one extreme to "coercive repression". According to Azar the "winner-take-all" paradigm that "still prevails in multi-communal societies" and the perceived political and economic costs are associated with weak and divided policies.

According to Azar, "experiences, fears, and belief systems" create mutually reinforcing unfavorable stereotypes that sustain animosities within communities and fortify protracted social conflict. In such cases political solution suggestions become rare and are typically viewed by all parties as a means of acquiring a disproportionate amount of power and influence (Azar, 1990, p. 15).

All of this is made worse when a political crisis escalates into a war, which normalizes criminality as a political norm, elevates the most aggressive and disordered individuals of society to positions of leadership, and creates new personal interests that depend on the political economy of the fight itself.

At the boundary, breakdown emerges. Political systems crumble and break down after prolonged loss, causing a social collapse that swallows everything else. Azar emphasized the importance of disputed sovereignty, weak and authoritarian government, mobilized identities, and exclusionist ideology as the main causes of major armed conflict (Ramsbotham, 2005, p. 92).

AZAR'S PRECONDITIONS FOR PROTRACTED SOCIAL CONFLICT

Relevant discipline	Preconditions for PSCs	Correlates
Anthropology, history, sociology	Communal content	Degree of ethnic heterogeneity
Psychology, biology, development studies	Needs	Levels of human development
Politics, political economy	Governance	Scales of political repression
International relations, strategic studies	International linkages	Volume of arms exports and imports

Figure 1. Azar's preconditions for Protracted Social Conflict

1.5. Security, identity, equality, participation and freedoms in PSC Theory

John Burton argues in his Human Needs Theory that when basic human needs are denied or unmet it will be resolved in a protracted social conflict. Basic human needs are essential requirements that people need in order to survive and prosper. These are universal necessities that cannot be compromised, such as security, identity, recognition, development, participation, and justice.

Needs Theory is placed within the context of an eclectic model of intergroup conflict that focuses heavily on social-psychological theorizing to offer a more comprehensive framework for comprehending and ultimately resolving protracted conflict (Burton, 1990, p. 89).

The idea of identity, specifically social identity, has the capacity to serve as the crucial connection between Needs Theory and intergroup and international conflict resolution. Several contemporary theorists believe that the need for identity is a basic prerequisite for constructive human development.

Ethnically diverse societies are turning increasingly to multicultural policy as a means of reducing intergroup conflict and improving the cultural quality of their citizens. Multiculturalism is thought to promote equality, cultural diversity, and national cohesion by lessening ethnic discrimination.

Some needs, like identity, can only be fulfilled through the identity group, other needs, like freedom and security and the rights that go along with it, can only be satisfied by the nation-state (Burton, 1990, p. 105).

For any state in conflict to find its adequate conflict resolution and establish long-lasting peace for all its communities, it should focus on the fears and goals of the different communities and the tools by which there could be cooperation in the reconstruction of a new state without having to sacrifice values and security of any community. The highest priority, to preserve the security and values of all, should be given to the state's independence and its development.

Shared needs and values and conflicting interests should be discussed between the conflicting parties and agree upon, such as:

1. Security that consists of personal and physical security, protection of communities' identities, security of all communities from fear of threats, whether internal or external, permanence of any agreed outcomes.
2. Identity which includes personal identity based on confessional community.
3. Equality as in political participation, economic equality of opportunity and distributive justice, in region's economic development.
4. Participation and control: People's values and interests should have a final effect on structures and leadership should lead in answering their demands. There should not be complete control in the hands of one community, nor should any community in society be marginalized. Good welfare can be established only if it's provided for all.
5. Liberties such as freedom of religion, freedom of speech and opinion, and freedom of movement (Azar, 1990, p. 53).

1.6. Management of the Protracted Social Conflict

Protracted conflicts consist of hostile interactions that last for lengthy periods of time, interspersed with outbreaks of open warfare. These disputes have significant conflict situations where whole societies are at risk and where the disputes serve as indicators for the definitions of social solidarity and national identity. Even though they might have some turning points where open violence stops, they don't have a defined end point and persist

over time. These disputes cannot be resolved by clear decision; instead, they will only "end" in the long run by cooling off, changing, or withering away. Put differently, long-lasting conflicts are processes rather than isolated incidents or even clusters of related incidents at certain times. Social-ethnic conflicts typically last for a long time and show a great potential to expand in terms of the number of actors and sub-actors involved as well as in terms of the goals, aims, and grievance that sustain the conflict (Azar et al., 1978, p. 50).

Ethnic and interstate conflicts are frequently combined and create prolonged social conflict. They consistently lessen the opportunities for resolving conflicts and refuse to accept any changes to the fundamental grievances. They frequently create, support, or amplify each other's perceptions of dishonesty. Additionally, they frequently make it more likely that the parties and their allies will become confused in their direct and indirect communications. They heighten the anxieties of the conflicting parties and promote strategies that sustain tension and conflict. In protracted conflicts, the situation evolves into a platform for redefining issues rather than resolving them, making it pointless to seek a final resolution. Consequently, the conflict process itself becomes the driver of policy rather than its result. It is likely that a period of intense tension will occur in the protracted conflict environment, possibly followed by a cooling-off phase. The Normal Relations Range (NRR) is a valuable tool for predicting fluctuations in tension levels. International relations, whether marked by conflict or cooperation, encompass a variety of actions, policies, and events. The Normal Relations Range (NRR) offers a method for organizing and analyzing these diverse elements (Azar et al., 1978, p. 51).

Redefining means and goals in more realistic ways and changing one's perspective on the conflict itself are both necessary for successful conflict management. Ultimately, this leads to the parties of the conflict choosing conflict resolution as the best course of action to achieve some of their basic goals.

There is a difference between conflict resolution and conflict management. Resolving conflicts entails resolving or eradicating the underlying grievances and basic differences. When the roots of a conflict situation are eliminated or the preferences of the various conflicting parties become compatible, conflict resolution can take place.

To reduce conflict behavior's potential for violence or destruction, it is necessary to regulate, restrict, and control it. This is known as conflict management. Therefore, while

conflict management may be successful in resolving conflict, it does not always eliminate its causes. Conflict management is the only way of reducing conflict violence and making it easier to resolve when the parties involved are unable or unwilling to settle their differences peacefully. Prolonged conflicts in which the interests of both parties are completely incompatible may be unmanageable as well as unresolvable. Conflict management is extremely difficult, if not impossible, when there is a widespread perception that armed measures are the only way to end a prolonged conflict. Conflict management can be viewed by the parties involved as a cooperative process that, in addition to producing an undesirable result, reduces their chances of achieving incompatible objectives on their own. As a result, before conflict management is achievable, a few requirements might need to be met. These could include: (1) the parties must recognize that the existing resources are insufficient for a successful resolution of the conflict or its escalation; (2) external obstacles may exist; (3) the parties must agree that there are more possible drawbacks to intensifying the dispute than advantages; (4) there can be a genuine chance of unmanageable escalation; (5) there might be systems in place to repress conflicts; (6) there may be explicit or implied rules of the game limiting a war; (7) there may be institutions for preventing war (Bar-Siman-Tov, 1994).

The three methods of managing conflicts that are most frequently used are institutionalization, regulation, and suppression. All techniques of inhibition or deterrence that primarily seek to avoid or restrict conflict behavior are together referred to as suppression. Measures to restrict conflict behavior within a system of explicit or implicit rules are included in regulation. Informal or formal agreements to deter conflict behavior and facilitate its elimination are referred to as institutionalization.

Good conflict resolutions can persuade parties with opposing objectives that they must resolve their differences peacefully. Parties may be more inclined to try to settle their differences diplomatically as opposed to militarily if conflict behavior can be restrained and regulated and security protocols and confidence-boosting measures can be established. However, there are situations when lowering the costs of conflict becomes a significant barrier to dispute resolution. Because there may not be a pressing need for alternative political outcomes and because resolving a conflict may seem more expensive than continuing it under controlled circumstances, there may be fewer reasons to try to resolve conflicts (Bar-Siman-Tov, 1994).

1.7. Consequences of the Protracted Social Conflicts

The world has seen a decrease in international collaboration and security throughout the last ten years.

Multiple internationalized conflicts and large-scale humanitarian crises, growing nationalism among major world powers, transnational terror groups utilizing recruitment strategies, cyberattacks masterminded by marginalized states, persistent levels of violence in supposedly "post-conflict" nations, and a sharp increase in the number of non-state violent agents are all signs of this decline. These significant changes have also been followed by an increase in danger and violence. Utilizing the ACLED (Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project) dataset, which comprises nearly a million instances of political violence and protests in more than 100 countries, it has been identified four overarching patterns that summarize the contemporary conflict environment and suggest the probable path of disorder evolving in the future.

1. Political violence is on the rise and can take many different forms like disruption. It never goes away because it is persistent and dynamic, constantly shifting to take advantage of new political possibilities and situations. For these reasons, it is preferable to view political violence as a dynamic and adaptable aspect of political systems rather than as a failure of nations.
2. Developed states are seeing the fastest increases in political violence. Mexico and Russia for example are prime instances of how certain types of political violence find a home in comparatively wealthy states. The ongoing hostilities in Somalia, Afghanistan, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo show how unwinnable battles may be in nations with unevenly distributed and capable governments. Conflicts are most prevalent in poorer states, yet even there, the powerful use it as a tool rather than the oppressed and dissatisfied.
3. Unexpected levels of militia and gang violence are a result of numerous externally imposed peacebuilding and stability initiatives, forced elections, and corruption. This pattern is directly related to state-level domestic politics and the economic benefits of conflict. Such conflicts adjust in shape and intensity to the political rivalry among states. Thus, we should anticipate that most states will continue to see an increase in gang activity, violence, and militias.

4. Lastly, there is a marked increase in protests; yet the majority of nonviolent protesters have little impact on elite politics or political systems. State security forces persist in using force to suppress protests, while rioting in South Asia and other regions has significantly increased in number and severity due to rioters, who are frequently employed by politicians.

More than half of the world's population has lived near or in direct contact with major political violence during the past ten years. Many states have significant levels of disorder. Sub-Saharan Africa is not the "center of gravity" for political violence, despite the region's relatively high and constant conflict rates. Instead, developed states like Syria, Brazil, Mexico, the Philippines, Ukraine, Libya, and Egypt have seen the biggest increases in political violence in recent years (*Global Conflict and Disorder Patterns: 2020 2020 on JSTOR*, n.d.).

2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Problem Statement

This research is based on a question: How can we understand and analyze the dynamics of the Syrian Revolution from 2011 to 2024 and propose strategies for its resolution using the theory of the protracted social conflict?

2.2. Research Questions

This study's objective is to give a clear answer to the following questions:

1. What contribution can Syrian Revolution add to the theory of the protracted conflict?
2. How current dynamics and causes of the conflict could affect the potential solutions to the Syrian Revolution?
3. In which way could the nature of the social conflicts determine the development of the strategies for conflict resolution and peacebuilding?
4. Who are the key players that influenced the path of the conflict and what are the main underlying variables and socio-political elements that led to the protraction of the conflict?

2.3. Problem Hypothesis

Hypothesis: The protracted social conflict in the Syrian Revolution is driven by a combination of political dissatisfaction, socio-economic inequities, and ethnic differences which can be concluded in the question of security, identity, equality, participation and control and freedoms.

Sub-hypothesis: The protraction of the conflict is affected by external actor's intervention, regional power, and their goals over the Syrian Revolution, escalating internal tensions and delaying attempts to resolve the conflict.

2.4. Assumptions

1. Assumption 1: The complex and multidimensional nature of the Syrian Revolution can be represented through study. This assumes that the research design, data collection methods, and analysis strategies used can adequately explore the complex social, political, and economic dimensions of the conflict.

2. Assumption 2: The prolongation of the social conflict in the Syrian Revolution is influenced by international actors' intervention and regional power dynamics, which heighten internal tensions and obstruct peace efforts.

2.5. Literature Review

Literature review aims to analyze the existing literature on the theory of the protracted social conflicts and its implications on the Syrian Revolution. It points up issues that need additional research in the context of the Syrian Revolution.

The reason behind selecting this theoretical framework is the gap in the literature that this paper aims to fill, although studies that apply this theory to the Syrian case are frequently referred to as "protracted," there aren't many that have studied the Syrian case through its lenses.

Some of the main literature related to the research are:

1. Burton, John, "Conflict: Human Needs Theory", (UK, London, Palgrave Macmillan, 1990). He claims that protracted conflicts result from dissatisfaction of those for whom institutions that are responsible to provide basic human needs.
2. Atlioğlu, Yasin, "The Syrian Civil War and Protracted Social Conflict", (Turkey, Ankara, Ankara University SBF Dergisi, Volume 73, Issue 1, 2018). He provides a thorough analysis of the Syrian civil war using the theory of PSC. He notes that the theory allows researchers to consider a variety of factors, not just sectarianism or external interventions, and he argues that the Syrian case has many characteristics of a PSC.
3. Ramsbotham, Oliver, "Contemporary conflict resolution: The prevention, management and transformation of deadly conflicts", (UK, Cambridge, 2005). He offers a comprehensive framework for understanding modern approaches to peacebuilding and conflict resolution.

2.6. Scope of Research

The Syrian Revolution has started as peaceful demonstrations against President Bashar al-Assad's regime in 2011 and has since then been affected with different factors leading it to change its direction and escalate into a full-fledged war. After more than a decade different parties and their agendas have been involved into the Syrian Revolution,

and without being able to come to any sort of the conflict resolution, it could be characterized as a complicated protracted conflict. There is a gap in the study of the Syrian Revolution as a protracted conflict and that's why this research aims to study its unique structure and path of the evolvement and development with consideration that it will add a significant contribution to the further development of the theory of the protracted conflict by analyzing our current understandings of the dynamics, causes and potential solutions to the Syrian Revolution. This study's objective is to offer important insights into the nature of social conflicts and understand which strategies could be developed for the conflict resolution and peacebuilding and what are the key players that influenced the path of the conflict gaining a solid understanding of the main underlying variables and socio-political elements that led to the protraction of the conflict.

This research will scrutinize the following subjects:

1. Case Study: The research will concentrate on the Syrian Revolution as a specific case, analyzing it's historical, social, and political context in order to understand origins, causes and dynamics of the conflict.

2. Actors and Dynamics: Analyzing the main individuals and groups involved in the Syrian Revolution, including the government, the opposition, regional and international powers and nonstate actors.

3. Conflict Resolutions Efforts: The overall objective of the research is to analyze the efforts and difficulties involved in ending the Syrian conflict and bringing peace.

2.7. Theoretical Framework

This research will try to provide a comprehensive understanding of the theory of protracted social conflict, outlining its main ideas and how it can be used to understand and analyze the prolonged conflicts such as the Syrian Revolution and how possibly could the Syrian Revolution enrich the already existing theory by bringing its unique character and path of the evolvement.

2.8. Limitations of the Research

1. Resource Limitations: Since the Syrian Revolution is a complex and ongoing conflict there will be significant challenges finding reliable resources for data collection and access to the region, and it could affect the extent of the depth and accuracy of the conflict analysis.

2. Research Bias: The research will rely on existing literature and data sources, which may be limited or biased in certain ways. In addition, the research will involve interviews with stakeholders, which may be subject to self-selection bias. Being aware of the possible preconceptions will improve objectivity and validity of the presented findings.

3. Timing and Dynamism of the Conflict: The Syrian Revolution is an ongoing conflict, therefore there may be new developments while conducting the study. A relatively long period of conflict allows for an in-depth examination, but at the same time it implies that the most current events or adjustments to the conflict dynamics may not have been included in the study.

2.9. The Purpose and Significance of Research

1. The main purpose of the research is to contribute to the theoretical understanding of the protracted social conflict by scrutinizing its relevance to the Syrian Revolution and understanding its impact to the further development of the theory.

2. The second purpose of the research is to achieve deeper understanding of the dynamics, causes and aspects of the Syrian Revolution as a protracted social conflict.

3. The third purpose is to gain validity, relevance and explanatory power of the theory and define implications of the findings of the research for policy development and conflict resolution strategies by providing insights for policy and peacebuilding makers.

The Syrian Revolution has resulted in a severe humanitarian crisis, including mass displacement, high death tolls, and terrible suffering. Understanding the conflict's fundamental dynamics through the prism of prolonged social conflict theory can offer insights into the crisis's causes and effects, aiding in attempts to lessen suffering and promote stability. Broader understanding of the Syrian Revolution as a case study can document the historical evolution of the Revolution with perception of its causes and consequences

providing basis for the further research and discussions in the field. Contribution to the theory and practice:

This research will contribute to both theoretical understanding of social conflict and their dynamics and to the practical understanding relevant to policy and peacebuilding makers involved in conflict management and its resolution. This research will provide a non-biased and critical review of the conflict and its impact on the theory as well as existing theory's contributions to the conflict resolution. Practical investigation of the Syrian Revolution within the framework of the theory of protracted social conflict provides an opportunity to validate, disprove and further develop the existing theory. It is possible to identify and manage early indicators of conflict escalation by recognizing the factors that contribute to the protraction of social conflicts, therefore preventing further violence and instability.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Methodology

The type of research for the study on the theory of PSC in the case of the Syrian Revolution can be classified as qualitative and quantitative research.

To achieve its purpose, the research will involve a review of existing literature, as well as primary data collection through interviews with relevant parties, collecting narratives and testimonies, analyzing historical documents and analyzing qualitative and quantitative data sources.

The methodology for the research of the Theory of PSC in the case of the Syrian Revolution can be based on a mixed-methods approach that combines qualitative and quantitative research methods.

Methodology for the research will include

1. Literature Review: thorough analysis of current literature on protracted social conflict, conflict resolution and Syrian Revolution will be conducted.

2. Data Collection: In this study I will be using different methods for data collection for both qualitative and quantitative data. I will rely on primary and secondary sources.

- Primary sources: - Observation: participants and non-participants. - Interviews: structured. - Questionnaire: written list of questions. - Focus groups: in order to gather data on the social dynamics, causes and consequences. - Case studies.

- Secondary sources: - Research, books, documents, databases, reports, news articles, policy documents and historical records.

3. Data Analysis: The data collected for this study will undergo a number of processing and analysis stages through SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). In order to find patterns, themes, and connections in qualitative data, thematic analysis or content analysis will be used to examine the quantitative data using statistical analysis techniques like descriptive statistics, comparative analysis and Chi-square analysis.

4. Findings and Results: Presents findings and results of the study.

5. Analysis and Discussion: Interpreting the results of the study in the context of the research question and objectives.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations: Present the research's conclusion providing an in-depth analysis of the protracted social conflict in the Syrian Revolution.

3.2. Sampling

The sampling design for this study will include different sampling techniques on various groups of people in Syria and outside of it, specializing in different fields related to the research, in order to ensure formation of diverse perspectives. The sampling design will include over 400 participants with different backgrounds guided by research-based sampling principles and methods.

To achieve diversity of information the following types of sampling will be used:

1. Random/probability sampling: Every member of the target population will have an equal probability of being selected for the study if this strategy is used. By using random selection approaches like basic random sampling or stratified random sampling, which lessen the chance of systematic exclusion and increase the generalizability of the results, participants will be chosen equally. Non-random/probability sampling methods will be employed in addition to random sampling.

2. Non-random/probability sampling: These methods will make it possible to include particular groups or people who have specific background, knowledge, expertise, or experience that is significant to the study. Non-random sampling methods such as purposive and snowball sampling will be used to deliberately choose individuals based on predetermined standards or suggestions from current participants.

4. REVOLUTION AS A SOCIAL CHANGE

4.1. Phenomenon of Revolution as a Social Change

Revolution is “a fundamental change in political organization” and it is defined as “the overthrow or renunciation of one government or ruler and the substitution of another by the governed”. It can be described as an action or movement aimed at bringing about significant changes to the socio-economic landscape of society.

"Rapid, basic transformation of society's state and class structures; and they are accompanied and in part carried through by class-based revolts from below," is how Skocpol defines social revolutions. Social revolutions combine two events: political and social transformation and societal structural change with class upheaval. This sets them apart from other types of conflicts and transformative processes. According to Skocpol, the fundamental characteristic of revolution is successful change (Skocpol, 2008, p. 4).

The term "social revolution" refers to a radical change in the desired forms of associated behavior of people (Kautsky, 1916, p. 5).

Political revolutions are moments of profound and swift change in the political order brought by using force rather than negotiation or legal processes. Moral opinions about revolution are frequently divided or conflicted. On the other side, revolutions offer the potential to be strong moral engines that enable a society to overthrow an oppressive social structure and establish a better one. However, revolutions also considered the risk of tearing apart the political community and turning into protracted, violent wars that only succeed in reinstalling an even more oppressive system of government. Two main components of revolution are: rejecting the authority of the present government and attempting to install a new one, both including the use of coercive extra-constitutional tactics. Sometimes the word "revolution" is used more broadly, meaning that it can refer to both an attempt to overthrow an existing government and a major change in the type of governance, such as a revolution to replace a dictatorship with a democracy (Buchanan & Motchoulski, 2023).

Revolutions can be both violent and peaceful, also peaceful revolutions can develop into violent ones. Although evidently significant, this distinction is not as obvious as one might believe because there is room for disagreement over what constitutes violence. In contrast to firing a gun or setting off an explosive, attempts to topple a government through disruptive means (such as organizing mass strikes, cutting off electricity supplies, or

obstructing vital roads) are less violent but still have the potential to be fatal if not treated. In violent revolution, "violence" is regarded broadly and as occurring on a wide scale; to put it another way, the issue is revolutionary war as "war" is normally understood (Buchanan & Motchoulski, 2023).

It is important to note, however, that there is a perspective on revolution that removes the need for a theory of just revolutionary war. This perspective maintains that because of the significant risks involved, widespread revolutionary violence is never morally acceptable and the superior effectiveness of nonviolent revolution. There is strong evidence, according to certain empirical political scientists, that a peaceful revolution has a higher chance of success than a revolutionary war (Chenoweth & Stephan, 2013).

Even if that generality is true, it still raises the question of whether there are any *ex ante* identifiable exceptions in which nonviolence would either not be able to accomplish the goals of a just revolution or would do so at excessive expense to the welfare of people. A theory of just revolutionary war is required if there are any cases of this type.

Early scholars of Western Philosophy have argued about the morality of revolutions. There are those who argue that it can be justified in the broadest sense, and there are those who argue that revolution can never be justified. One of the most famous condemnations of revolutions was made by Immanuel Kant. He holds the stance that no matter how much political power was misused, the revolution can never be justified. There are two reasons for his stance, first is the Undue Risk Argument (URA) that says that there is no alternative justification for political change because the risk of violent anarchy following a failed revolution is so great. The second is Kant's Conceptual Argument (CA), which holds that acts that trigger revolution are never able to meet the criteria of legitimate authority.

John Locke provided the most well-known defense of revolution in the liberal tradition, arguing that when the state does not defend its citizens' fundamental liberties, revolution is both acceptable and justified. According to Locke's theory of the social contract, the state exists to defend individual rights and regulate conflicts between people over those rights. As a result, the state serves as a trustee for people's rights, and any violation of those rights is equivalent to a betrayal of the trust. In case the trust is violated, the rights entrusted to the state are returned to civil society and its members are given the authority to use force to defend those rights against violations.

Marxist philosophy understands revolution very differently from liberal political philosophy, which tends to justify revolution in terms of natural rights and justice. According to Marx, the entire idea of rights is an ideological construct that will be abandoned as society transitions to a developed communist society. Concept of rights is fostered by and serves to support the egoistic psychology of bourgeois society. Socialists appear to believe that the realization of the proletariat's common interests will inevitably occur historically, and that this realization will effectively drive the proletarian revolution rather than a commitment to any moral ideal (Buchanan & Motchoulski, 2023).

The degree of organization and efficacy of revolutionary leadership determines the extent of bloodshed between the conflicting parties and duration of a revolution, as well as the probability of its success. As such, there is a distinction between Lockean revolutionary contexts and Hobbesian revolutionary contexts. In Lockean contexts, revolutionaries can rely on formal or informal institutional structures to help them solve two fundamental problems: coordination (setting the revolutionaries in an organization that works) and cooperation (mobilizing a large enough number of revolutionaries). In contrast, there are no such institutional resources in Hobbesian contexts.

The contexts mentioned so far, Hobbesian and Lockean, are ideal types; most real revolutions take place in contexts that lie in the middle of these ideal types. In the American Revolution rebels had access to colonial legislatures and had gained experience leading and organizing through the participation in such legislatures. It can be concluded that the American Revolution occurred within a Lockean framework. The American revolutionaries were able to address the issues of cooperation and coordination through comparatively peaceful and democratic methods because of these institutional tools. On the other hand, Hobbesian conditions prevailed during the early phases of the Russian Revolution, leading to discord and conflict within revolutionary groups, as well as disorganized violence by comparatively small, independent groups.

Through a social context a revolution is meant to be successful if it involves the creation and establishment of new state structures (Skocpol, 2008).

Furthermore, circumstances in which revolution occur can change before enough power is successfully captured to establish a new state structure.

Appropriate aims of revolution are Resolute Severe Tyrannies (RST), which are defined as governments that consistently violate parts of the fundamental human rights of a

significant number of the population, are incredibly authoritarian (i.e., completely undemocratic), and are completely resistant to attempts at reform.

While it may be justified to overthrow an oppressive dictatorship, the question of what form of institutional organization or government should take its place if the revolution succeeds complicates the argument of revolutionary justice. Under Hobbesian conditions, this challenge is particularly severe because revolutionaries have not yet created new political processes to carry out the task of determining political goals and have rejected or are unable to employ the political processes.

Revolutionaries are at a disadvantage compared to their opponents; they tend to feel highly motivated to deploy irregular tactics. Firstly, compared to regime soldiers, they are typically smaller in number, possess lower-quality weapons, and have poorer logistical and intelligent capabilities. They also typically lack the same level of military training and organized discipline as the regime soldiers. Secondly, there is a challenge faced by revolutionaries in organizing and mobilizing a population that has endured injustice and persecution under an oppressive regime (Buchanan & Motchoulski, 2023).

Over time, civil wars have evolved into the most widespread, most disastrous, and distinctive types of organized human violence.

Kalybas defined a civil war as an armed conflict inside the borders of a recognized sovereign country between parties that were initially subject to a common authority (Kalybas, 2009, p. 17).

A civil war is typically a protracted, well-organized, large-scale, high-intensity warfare that frequently involves regular armed forces. Civil conflicts may result in a high death toll and significant resource consumption.

It is an organized struggle involving a state and domestic political actor. One-sided violence, such as a state massacre of civilians, is not included in the description of civil war. Compared to less lethal forms of social conflict like riots or social movements, they involve a large number of victims and an extensive amount of resources (Hironaka, 2005).

According to political scientists, a civil war is defined as an ongoing conflict that is primarily internal in nature, results in at least 1000 battle-field deaths annually, and pits the governing government militia against an opposing force that can inflict at least 5% of the

insurgents' deaths on the government forces. This is how a civil war is typically defined (Small et al., 1982).

Civil wars are defined by the Correlates of War dataset as conflicts in which more than a thousand people die in battle each year (Hironaka, 2005).

If we wanted to compare civil wars to revolutions, we can remember what Harry Eckstein said about them: 'Civil war is in fact the genus of which revolution is only a species' (Eckstein, 1965, p. 133).

During the Age of Enlightenment, the term "civil war" came to signify an absurd circle that the revolution aimed to break through and reveal new possibilities for. "Civil war" and "revolution" were not synonymous prior to this significant change in meaning, but they were also not mutually exclusive. These semantic shifts were hastened and made practically irreversible by the American and French Revolutions. Now that those developments have occurred, we have to deal with their aftermath while trying to keep civil wars and revolutions apart analytically (Armitage, 2009).

Dr. Tarik Alali says that terminology and concepts, especially in social and human sciences, are inseparable from values and evaluation, from the positive affirmation of values. The dream of establishing philosophy and humanities based on the model of natural sciences has been surpassed by history. Referring to the use of the term 'civil war' instead of 'revolution' based on 'scientific standards' and 'academic principles' is a belittlement of thought and thinking itself, as well as a belittlement of research and science itself. It is absolutely impossible to accept a dictionary or comprehensive terminological definition of something like a civil war and a revolution because these are historical topics, and history's topics are subjects of people's interests in history. Labeling a popular revolution as a civil war is not a matter of terminological precision or scientific methodology, except in terms of formalities and style. What remains is an evaluative process. Western academia has its own assessment (value judgments) of what is happening in our (Eastern) history, what is occurring south of modernity, and thus standards are set for what constitutes a revolution and what constitutes a civil war.

He continues saying; moreover, we do not know by what miracle names point to their referents, nor by what criteria general concepts apply to specific instances. This is particularly true in cases where there are no clear boundaries between what are supposed to be opposites or distinctions, like revolution and civil war. In his view, beyond value and

evaluation, there is a common fallacy that views revolution as the opposite of civil war, or as something distinct from it; that is: what is not a revolution is a civil war, and what is not a civil war is a revolution. However, the historical reality of what has been called revolutions and what has been called civil wars contains events and developments that are quite similar, with the prominence of one component or development over another making one description or the other more reasonable.

One of the criteria used to describe a revolution is that the beginning of the historical event involves a struggle over the nature of the system as a whole, rather than a conflict between 'communal components' over existing authority or power centers within the state. In other words, there should be a demand to change the fundamental foundations of the existing system entirely. In this sense, and according to this criterion, the Syrian revolution—especially within the context of the Arab Spring uprisings—was indeed a revolution, as it demanded a new political system.

In 'typical' cases, there was a revolution that demanded the overthrow of the political regime and called for a new political system, succeeded in coming to power, then was overthrown, leading to the outbreak of a 'civil war.' In the first instance, there was a demand for a new system of governance and a new constitution. In the coup, the plotters do not claim anything new; they simply seek to reclaim power. In the case of Syria, this did not happen, which is why the boundaries remain unclear.

On the other hand, Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben argues that there is no theory of civil war. While he analyzes and studies two models—the civil wars of the Greek polis and Hobbes' model in *Leviathan*—what he conveys is that the absence of a theory of civil war is because civil war is fundamentally linked to the politics, which cannot be limited to any specific domain; the politics are a force that penetrate all areas of life, and likewise, the potential for civil war cannot be separated from the politics—it is a possibility inherent in every political formation and disintegration.

In every emergence and every political breakdown, in every revolution and every resistance, in every war and every disaster—and even, as Foucault argues, in times of peace—there is a civil war. Civil war is the threshold of politicization between the household and the city, between the communal group and the political community. That is why Thomas Hobbes, based on his study of the English Civil War, hypothesized that the establishment of the state is grounded in the idea of the social contract to avoid the state of civil war.

The distinction of revolutions in the modern era, specifically since the French Revolution, was based on a positive political action and thought that sought to introduce emancipatory and positive political concepts for popular and class revolutions. This was not merely an anthropological, sociological, historical, or theoretical political lesson (by which everything could be studied as a civil war), but was within the context of a progressive and emancipatory political narrative aimed at overcoming the old regime; revolutions are political movements that seek to change the political system as a whole.

This is how leftist thinkers and philosophers glorified class revolutions and liberation movements, from the European Spring revolutions to the Bolshevik Revolution and to national liberation movements. They even began to argue that, in the age of globalization, the capitalist state, and colonial imperialism, there are only global civil wars and global workers' revolutions (meaning there is no longer a conception of a local revolution, as imperialist powers intervene to thwart it, whether it is a national liberation revolution or a workers' revolution; and no conception of a local civil war for the same reason) (Agamben, 2015).

Depending on the context, referred to the Syrian situation as both a Syrian revolution (within the context of the Arab Spring) and a Syrian war in the context of sectarian regional and imperialist international intervention. I believe that there is no concept or theory of civil war that can sufficiently study the history of the last decade of Syrian history. The concept of civil war, when employed, is merely a (negative value judgment) associated with this term, which diminishes the positive political significance of the 2011 revolutions and their emancipatory value by placing them within an anthropological and sociological framework of (stasis)—eternal communal groups fighting endlessly, entrenched sectarian and tribal fanaticisms locked in irrational and meaningless conflict devoid of any political value.

All historical revolutions can be viewed as 'civil wars,' whether the division is class-based, sectarian, or tribal. The two famous examples are the French Revolution and the October Revolution in Russia, despite their significant differences. The historical accounts of these events have settled on starting from the 'revolutionary event' as a political occurrence that changed the history of both countries. For instance, Russia's history is not narrated from the 'civil war,' but rather from the October Revolution as the foundational event. That's the first point.

The second point is that intellectuals usually have a positive stance towards class-based divisions, as they are considered in political and social theory—since Marxism—the exemplary and ideal division for political struggle and revolutions for freedom and social justice. This applies to both capitalist societies and pre-capitalist class-based societies. The problem is that there is no modern theory of revolution and civil war in societies divided along tribal and sectarian lines. Therefore, intellectuals tend to downplay the revolutions for justice and freedom in these societies against political regimes because they see sectarianism as a political wrongdoing.

In both cases, there is a revolution against a communal and social group in power (whether a class or a sect). However, in the case of a revolution against a class, it is easier to talk about it as a revolution. From the outset, many intellectuals took a skeptical or opposing stance toward the Syrian revolution due to the sectarian issue. Those who supported it tried to frame it in class and political terms regarding the nature of the regime (based on the work of Hanna Batatu, who established a tradition in this field, which is a leftist Marxist tradition that reduces the political problem to an economic problem and classifies it as the ideal example of political struggle and revolution).

To provide a final example, there was widespread support for the Lebanese movement against sectarianism. In this case, some intellectuals justified their support by emphasizing that the movement's slogan was against the sectarian structure, which is undoubtedly a good thing, and they did not feel compelled to frame it in class terms. The reality in the Syrian case is that the sectarian problem was not merely a 'structure', but was the very issue of Assadism itself, rooted in a party, ideological, sectarian, and class history.

The approach taken by the Syrian regime's government throughout the years of conflict has been characterized by a strong and targeted collective punishment against civilians, strongly suggesting the existence of a systematic and planned government policy. This deliberate behavior aims to cause the greatest possible harm in an attempt to break the will of the popular base supporting the forces of revolution and change.

We can say that the Syrian conflict qualifies as an international conflict for several reasons and considerations. One such reason is that direct foreign military intervention in a non-international conflict constitutes the internationalization of the conflict. This is definitively established in the Syrian conflict and is supported by judicial precedents, particularly the rulings of the International Criminal Tribunal (ICT) for the former

Yugoslavia, which classified the conflict in Yugoslavia. The Tribunal held that direct military intervention in an internal conflict turns it into an international conflict. Moreover, international legal doctrine affirms this, and since both court rulings and scholarly opinions are considered secondary sources of international law according to Article 38 of the Statute of the International Court of Justice (ICJ), they can be relied upon to classify the Syrian conflict as an international one.

Additionally, considering that the Syrian Revolution is a popular revolution recognized by the majority of the world's countries, which acknowledged the Syrian revolutionary and opposition forces as the legitimate representative of the Syrian people—since the people are the source of authority and sovereignty—and given the recognition of these forces by the Arab League (AL) as a regional organization and international recognition by the Friends of the Syrian People group, any foreign intervention against the will of the Syrian people adds an international dimension to the conflict. The foreign parties intervening against them are considered occupying forces (both states and militias). Therefore, the Syrian revolutionary forces can be classified as liberation and resistance movements—based on the right to self-determination—covered under Article 1 of the First Additional Protocol of 1977. to the Geneva Conventions of 1949, which recognize the struggle against occupation as a struggle of liberation movements, automatically making the conflict an international one under the provisions of the aforementioned Protocol.

4.2. Factors leading to the Revolution

Syria's ethnic, sectarian, and religious landscape is highly diverse. It consists of geographically, demographically, ethnic, religious, and sectarian identity groupings overlap which form Syrian society.

Its ethnic composition is as follows: 10% are Kurds and 85% are Arabs (including about 500,000 Palestinians); the remaining 5% are Turkmen, Armenians, Circassians, and Assyrians.

The religious composition of the population is as follows: Sunni Muslims (82%), Alawites (8%), Ismaili and Twelver Shiites (1%), Christians (6%), Druze (3%) and a few small communities like Yazidis and Jews.

In addition to geography, socio-economic class, rural-urban heritage, religious faith and practice, collective memory, and political orientation, there are other divisions within

this mosaic of supposedly primal entities. All of these splits have led to the creation of solidarity groups that cut across essential relationships as well as new divisions within the communities. (Since there are no official data regarding Syria's ethnic and sectarian structure from after 1960, these are merely estimates.) (Rosiny & Mahmoud, 2016).

The Syrian revolution began as a local uprising against Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and soon spread to include major powers outside of the region as well as neighboring countries. The path of the revolution changed so much since 2011; it has been transformed from a domestic problem to an internationalized crisis. The revolution has become more complex due to the parties' different and intersecting goals and the techniques and strategies they have pursued. It has had significant consequences for millions of people's lives. Its origin is complex and involves a range of issues, that escalated into complex conflict.

Syrian Revolution has historical, political, economic, social, geopolitical, strategic, and sectarian roots. In addition to this, the conflict's classification by some academics as a civil war can be attributed to the participation of regional and global powers as well as the existence and actions of non-state entities. Nonetheless, a lot of the reasons behind the revolution have historical roots and are connected to issues with governance.

The Arab Spring, or the Arab uprising that erupted in the Middle East in 2011, spread to Syria where a revolution sparked as general population's rage against oppressive regimes throughout the Middle East and North Africa. It was triggered by the self-immolation of Muhammad Bu Azizi, a seller in Tunisia, even though the revolt had far deeper underlying roots, like most Middle Eastern states, Syria's society has been divided along sectarian lines, with one community ruling over the others.

Following the 2011 uprising against Bashar Al Assad's authoritarian regime and its oppressive policies, Syria has been embroiled in a protracted and violent conflict. While many factors contribute to the violent and protracted nature of conflict, sectarianism has emerged as the most important and prominent one. Due to the minority Alawite community's dominance in the country, has resulted in discrimination against other sects, particularly the Sunni majority, which makes up 82% of the population. Prejudices like these towards Sunnis and other sects have driven the Syrian people against the government, resulting in a protracted and sectarian war that has influenced Syrian society since 2011.

Sunnis the major community in Syria suffered political and economic hardships as a result of the Alawite minority's dominance, primarily because of their non-identical identity. As a result, Syria's turmoil became an open war that lasted for a very long time. Due to the government's repressive tactics that crushed the peaceful demonstrations against the Assad's regime that called for freedom, equal access to political representation and economic resources, the conflict escalated and became one of the most cruel and bloody conflicts of this age.

Apart from the pre-existing rejection of socio-political and economic possibilities, the harsh suppression of demonstrators set off animosity and an aggressive reaction. In addition to the hardships, the sectarian character of Syrian society fueled the flames by encouraging regional actors to intervene in the conflict under the pretext of sectarian involvement. For their own political and geostrategic goals, international powers, primarily the United States and Russia, have been trying to establish each its own domination in the region through Syrian conflict (Tayyab et al., 2020).

The Assad dynasty—Hafez al-Assad (1970–2000) and his son Bashar (2000–2024)—has ruled (or been subjugated) over Syria for the past fifty-four years. They have defined their government as socialist, republican, and democratic. A majority Sunni Muslim population has been subjected to harsh dictatorial control by the Assad family, who are Alawite minority members, in an effort to create a new secular, non-sectarian national society.

In reaction to repeated uprisings by the majority Sunnis, the Assads have used dreadful methods against insurgents and innocent civilians, such as home damage, torture, and massacres. According to the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR), Hafez explicitly employed massive brutality in the late 1970s and early 1980s, most notably in Hama (1982), which claimed the lives of nearly 40,000 people. Since 2011, Bashar has been a part of the Syrian conflict. There have been around 500,000 fatalities, innumerable injuries, 11 million refugees, and significant harm to Syria's socioeconomic infrastructure as a result of the conflict.

Over three decades, Hafez al-Assad's regime was marked by widespread socio-political repression, censorship, violations of human rights, and systematic mass brutality against civilian populations using cruel methods like massacres, enforced disappearances,

and torture. Following his father's passing in 2000, Bashar al-Assad ascended to the presidency and took over the Ba'athist regime in Syria (Larres, 2022, p. 249).

With the help of their minority Alawite community, the army's elite troops, the security apparatus, and the vast, potent Baa'th party network, both father and son have established an autocratic dictatorship. Based on several socio-economic changes, media propaganda that has highlighted purported foreign policy "successes," and support from both the international (Russian) and regional (Iranian) powers.

Since Syria gained its independence from France in 1946, there have been numerous coups by the military and political disputes.

Hafez al-Assad, who overthrew Salah Jadid's opponent party in the Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party in 1970 came to power through a military coup and established the Ba'athist regime in Syria. The regime was composed of three main components: the Assad dynasty-aligned upper class Alawite elites, an effective security apparatus that included secret police, Ba'athist paramilitaries, and the Syrian military establishment, and the dominant Ba'ath party organization that controls a large portion of Syrian society.

In his fight to survive the Alawite community, the security and military apparatuses, Ba'ath activists, and the substantial military assistance from Iran and Russia have all contributed to Bashar's preservation of rule (Larres, 2022, p. 250).

Syria is ranked as the "Worst of the Worst" among the "Not Free" nations in the 50th edition of Freedom in the World, the yearly study released by Freedom House since 1973. The Assad government is one of the two regimes to receive the lowest possible score (1/100) (Freedom House, 2023).

The causes of the Syrian Revolution can be divided into two groups: those resulting from long-dormant structural tensions, such as ethnic heterogeneity, the authoritarian regime, and its conflict with Sunni Muslims; and those that literally helped to spark and facilitate the conflict, such as the drought that preceded the revolution and the hidden actions of foreign powers.

Syria's ethnic diversity appears to be one of the main reasons behind the revolution. The Ottoman Empire's fair and prudent treatment of minorities was contrasted with French authority following World War I, which deepened ethnic differences among the community.

"[T]he 'peace' the French achieved was little more than a bad-tempered and frustrated quiescence; the French did not incite hostility toward foreigners, but they certainly amplified it among the religious and ethnic communities, and they gave the native population a target that encouraged the rise of nationalism" (Çeliktaş, 2015).

After the Ottoman rule ended, the French mandate system was established. France intervened in the communal conflict between the Ismailis and Alawites in the 1920s, putting a stop to the Alawites' attacks on other communities. The primary cause of their conflict was 'demographic pressures,' which drove the Alawites to seize land from the Ismailis, leading to a revolt by the Alawites against other communities. These internal conflicts among Shia factions paved the way for French intervention, which significantly contributed to the rise of the Alawites (Balanche, 2018).

In addition, Syria was placed under French Mandate following World War I. The country was then divided into three main districts by the colonial government: the sub-Shia Alawite community living in the Alawite Mountains in the northeast; the Druze-dominated Jebel Druze district in the south; and the rest of Syria, which was maintained as a single, sizable district with Damascus as its capital. The population gap became more pronounced and institutionalized as a result of these divisions. The French implemented a number of programs that ultimately changed Syria's societal fabric and led to radicalization (Baltes, 2016).

Making it clearer, the French engineered the state of minorities in Syria, having one of two choices, to choose Alawites or Druze, at the end choosing the Alawites, and they have empowered them in society to gain power in the state.

It has been widely documented and analyzed how French colonial policies enabled the Alawites of Syria to transform from a marginalized rural community to one that achieved success in the military services.

Ethnicity should be understood in the broader sense that race, language, religion, and tribe can all be referred to as ethnic, rather than in the more limited definition that restricts ethnic groups to solely racial and linguistic groups.

The Assad government severely restricted the political and civil rights of Syrians and instilled a generalized sense of terror in the public. The regime is being described tyrant due to the absence of political engagement, fear of common demands, and its brutal police tactics (Çeliktaş, 2015).

Some of the factors and causes that led to the Syrian uprising and the Revolution were:

4.2.1. Unemployment

Unemployment rate in Syria was on the rise. Syria was found to be making progress toward a number of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in the 2010 according to MDG country report. These included attaining access to universal primary education, reducing gender disparities in education, lowering child mortality, and improving child immunization coverage. However, poverty increased in the latter part of the 2000s after declining between 1997 and 2004.

2010 had a 34.3% overall poverty rate and a 62% poverty rate in rural areas. Between 1997 and 2004, poverty decreased; but, in the second part of the 2000s, it started to rise. A decade of strong population expansion was not matched by an increase in employment possibilities, and within that decade, the unemployment rate nearly doubled to over 16 percent in 2006–07. In 2006–07, the youth (ages 15–24) had the highest unemployment rate, at 22% (Gobat & Kostal, 2016).

4.2.2. Increase in the state repression

Many consider Bashar Assad's dictator's Ba'athist Syria the most "ruthless police state" in the Arab world, imposing an enormous number of limitations on the freedom of movement of people, independent journalists, and unauthorized persons. Hafez al-Assad founded the police state infrastructure in the 1970s while governing a military dictatorship under the guise of the Ba'ath party. The Assad family loyalists from several Alawite clans are at the top of the system; they control the armed forces, the Mukhabarat (intelligence), and have significant influence over the political system. Their main responsibility is to keep the general populace calm. The Assad administration runs one of the biggest information-transfer censoring apparatuses, alongside North Korea and Eritrea. Syria ranked sixth lowest among all countries in Reporters Without Borders' 2010 Press Freedom Index (*Reporters without Borders*, 2024).

Following his victory with 99.82% of the total votes in the 2007 Syrian presidential election, Bashar al-Assad put into effect a number of policies that intensified the country's already severe political and cultural repression.

Independent press centers were closed, and a number of journalists were taken into custody. The Syrian government strengthened its control over the Internet, prohibiting access to over 200 websites, including YouTube, Wikipedia, and other popular websites. Internet centers could only begin operations with the prior approval of Syrian intelligence services. A law requiring Internet cafes to maintain records of all online comments made by patrons in chat forums, together with their browsing patterns, was passed by the Syrian government in 2007. A number of people who frequented internet cafes faced arrests, and there were rumors of specialized jail facilities for inmates charged with "internet crimes" (*Reporters without Borders*, n.d.).

4.2.3. State violence

The notorious mukhabarat, Syria's terrifying intelligence organization, had a deep reach into every aspect of society. Syrians were apathetic due to their fear of the state. There was constant state brutality, including executions, arbitrary arrests, disappearances, and widespread repression. However, the social media-documented fury over the security forces' violent handling of the peaceful rallies that broke out in the spring of 2011 contributed to the snowball effect, as thousands of people joined the uprising across Syria (Manfreda, 2020).

The 1980s saw an increase in political violence, which frightened people and affected social interactions. The regime's deliberate fear-mongering contributed to the anticipation of sectarian bloodshed in 2011, which in turn sparked sectarian reactions that set off cycles of more violence (Wimmen, 2016).

4.2.4. Corruption

Hafez al-Assad established networks of patronage among Alawite clients and Ba'ath party elites during the 1970s. Large portions of the Syrian economy came under the influence of the Assad family, and corruption spread throughout both the governmental and private sectors. Even in the 1980s, there was debate inside the Ba'ath party and among the general public over how prevalent corruption was (Sadowski, 1987).

Corruption became institutionalized during the first ten years of Bashar al-Assad's presidency, and many supporters of the regime rose to prominence in business thanks to the government's "social market" initiatives. The 2011 Syrian Revolution was sparked by the

public's anger at the party's continued corruption, sectarian bias towards Alawites, nepotism, and prevalent bribery in the bureaucracy and military (Gersh, 2017).

The 2011 Corruption Perceptions Index placed the country 129th out of 183 countries. According to the 2021 Corruption Perceptions Index, Syria came in at position 178 out of 180 different countries ("Transparency International," 2011).

4.2.5. Lack of democracy and freedom

Syria continues to be ranked as "not free" in terms of civil and political liberties and is included among the nations that violate human rights on Freedom House's "Worst of the Worst" list. Following a military takeover on March 8, 1963, Syrians were placed under an Emergency statute (Legislative Decree No. 51, dated 11/22/1962, which included a statute on the state of emergency).

As a participant to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), Syria pledges to uphold the fundamental liberties of expression and association. Nonetheless, the state's emergency laws essentially suspend these and other fundamental rights. A wide range of fundamental freedoms and rights outlined in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights are denied to Syrian citizens by the government.

The security services apparatuses (political, military, air force, and state security), which have branch offices in cities around the country, are granted unrestricted authority during a state of emergency. They call for citizens, question them, hold them for extended periods of time, and abuse and mistreat them in various ways. Furthermore, they monitor citizens' actions, whether they are social, political, or cultural in nature or are of personal matters ("UPR Stakeholder Submission - Syria," 2011).

Syria was a nominal democracy when the Baath Party seized power in 1963. With no serious opposition, the president and the armed forces held the majority of the government's power. The few elections that did occur were widely regarded as being fraudulent, and political parties were prohibited. There were serious restrictions on the freedoms of the press, assembly, and speech, and widespread violations of human rights. The president and Ba'ath Party members had most of the power in the government. It was forbidden for citizens to organize for political reasons or to freely express their beliefs.

Human rights breaches were frequent, and the use of force by the government to keep power was very frequent.

In its 2012 International Religious Freedom Report (IRFR), the US government claimed that the Syrian government was progressively persecuting members of faith groups that it considered to be dangerous. According to the research, the main target of persecution is the Sunni majority (“2022 Report on International Religious Freedom: Syria,” n.d.).

4.2.6. Sectarianism and rule of the minority

Since Sunnis make up the majority of the population in Syria, most of the early participants in the revolt were Sunnis. However, the Assad family is part of the Alawite minority, a Shiite religious group that holds the top positions in the security establishment. The majority of the demonstrators were Sunnis, and these same security officers severely violently attacked them. The majority of Syrians take great pleasure in their heritage of religious tolerance, but a large number of Sunnis continue to feel resentment at the concentration of power within a small number of Alawite families. In religiously mixed locations, like the city of Homs, the combination of a predominantly Sunni protest movement and an Alawite-dominated military exacerbated tensions and sparked an uprising (Manfreda, 2020).

It is estimated that between 7% to 9% of Syria's population are Alawites. Given that the Alawite sect had a long history of becoming leaders in the Syrian government, they possessed significant influence in the nation. Hafez al-Assad, an Alawite, did come to power and started prioritizing his own sect above other ethnic and religious groups in Syria until the 1970s. As a result, the Alawites grew in power and continued to do so throughout Syria's political landscape.

4.2.7. Economic inequality

Syrian economy before the uprising was stable. Growth was strong and inflation was minimal (non-oil growth averaged 4.4 percent from 2000 to 2009). Even though the public sector continued to dominate, fiscal deficits were managed; as of the end of 2009, public debt accounted for 31% of GDP. By the end of 2010, international reserves were comfortably

above nine months' worth of imports of goods and services, and the current account was estimated to be mostly in balance.

Syria started a phase of economic liberalization program in the early 2000s in an effort to promote prosperity. The difficulties brought about by the drop in proved oil reserves and oil production, as well as the impact this had on fiscal sustainability. It served as one of the driving forces behind the reforms. Deregulation and diversification of the closely regulated, state-focused economy were the goals of structural reforms, which also phased out energy subsidies and reformed the tax system. Private banks were permitted to open for business in 2004, and the stock market reopened in 2009 following a 40-year suspension (Gobat & Kostal, 2016).

The economy was doing rather well in 2010, and the GDP increased at an average rate of 5.5% between 2005 and 2009, despite diminishing oil revenues. Since many unemployed or underemployed Syrians were able to find work in the Gulf, the unemployment rate was above 8%, which was low. 12.5% of GDP was made up of foreign debt, the majority of which was owed to Russia. Hafez had purposefully restricted foreign borrowing to keep Syria immune to political pressure from abroad. Therefore, it is clear that there was no significant economic issue at the end of 2010 that might have been the root of the discontent that had broken out (Haran, 2016).

When the last indication of socialism was carefully reformed to allow for private investment, metropolitan upper-middle class consumerism increased. But privatization benefited only the affluent, well-connected families who supported the dictatorship. Provincial Syria, which would ultimately be the epicenter of the revolution, was boiling over with resentment as living standards rose, employment remained hard for people to get by, and inequity grew (Manfreda, 2020).

4.3. Understanding the Syrian Revolution

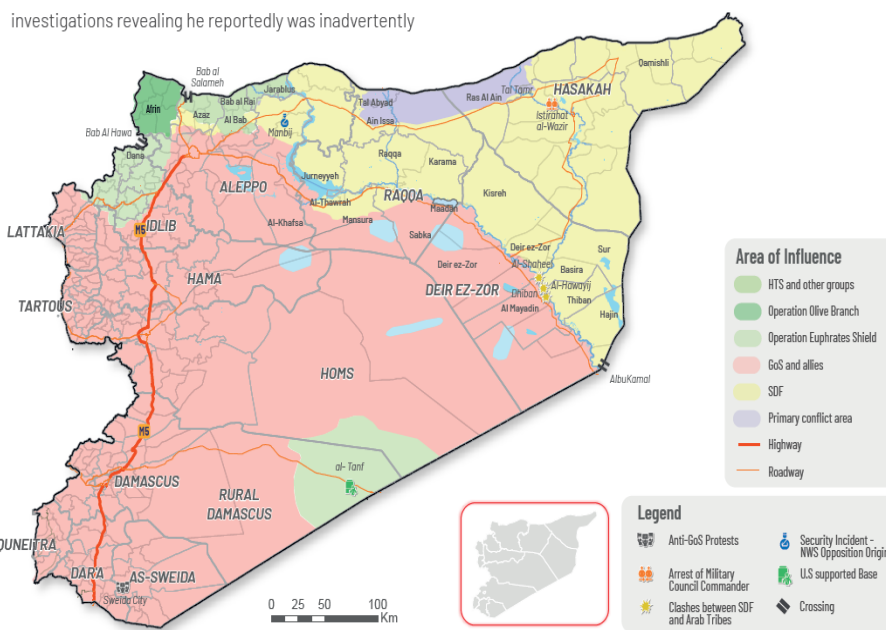


Figure 2. Syria Map and Area of Influence (as of September 2023) Source: IMMAP Context report September 2023

The Arab Spring began in December 2010 and has spread since across the Middle East and North Africa forcing dictators who have ruled for decades to step down. Dictators of Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Yemen were faced by demonstrations across country demanding them to step down, demanding freedom for nation’s right to choose their own president.

In Syria as well the uprising has started in March of 2011. when the fifteen boys in Deraa, Syria's southwest, were inspired by these protests and demonstrations, so they have got courage to spray-paint their school walls with the words, "The people want the fall of the regime." They were immediately arrested and tortured. Conflicts between police and protesters who had banded together led to an increase in the number of protests. When security forces cracked down on protests, at least 100 people were killed. The protests had extended to other cities by the end of March. In an effort to suppress protests, Homs, Damascus, Daraa, and many other cities were raided by Syrian security forces (*Syria Timeline: Since the Uprising Against Assad | United States Institute of Peace, n.d.*).

In Syria protestors asked for more moderate demands than a change of government, such as the release of political prisoners, the lifting of the 50-year-old state of

emergency, more freedoms, and an end to corruption (*Syria's War and the Descent Into Horror*, n.d.).

When the uprising spread from Deraa to other major cities, Bashar Al-Asaad attempted to calm the demonstrators by offering financial benefits as well as making political reforms. In disagreement with the regime, hundreds of Baa'th party members resigned, several members of Parliament, and anti-Bashar protests and riots grew in size. The uprising was brutally crushed by the Syrian army, a key pillar of Bashar's regime. In addition to chemical weapons, the army also employed artillery, rockets, combat aircraft, and helicopters. For example, thousands of Syrian rebels and innocent civilians were murdered and injured in August 2013 by the Syrian government (and later by Hezbollah fighters and Russian aircraft).

At that point, almost half a million Syrians—rebels, civilians, and government forces—had been killed. Furthermore, half of the approximately 11 million refugees who had been left homeless had fled to countries nearby. There has also been extensive destruction to the infrastructure and structures.

The level of bloodshed and destruction in Syria was unexpected, considerably surpassing the death toll from the revolutions in Egypt and Tunisia, even the massacre of Hama in 1982, and earlier acts of tyranny by Hafez al-Assad. The Muslim Brotherhood was the only significant rebel organization in Syria throughout Hafez's reign, although it was not a major player in the 2011 revolt. Rather, Bashar's rule was opposed by hundreds of Islamic groups as well as some secular ones, such as army defectors.

The opposition groups, who were primarily made up of Sunni fighters from Syria and other Arab and foreign countries, seized control of a significant part of the country's countryside as well as the area surrounding Aleppo and Damascus. Unlike a few civilian-political parties that had created not effective opposition fronts primarily outside of Syria's borders, by 2014 they posed a serious danger to Bashar's power.

Recommendations from Arab and foreign leaders to step down or hand up power to his deputy, Faruq al-Sharia, a Sunni, in accordance with Yemen's model of power transfer, were either disregarded or refused by Bashar. Rather, Bashar persisted in promising socio-economic improvements (Islah) and blamed domestic instability on local "criminals," "terrorists," and foreign conspiracies, particularly those "created" by Israel.

Bashar pursued minority groups concerned about an impending Islamic control while accusing Islamists of sectarianism. Christians made up around 6% of the population, followed by Druze (about 3%), and Kurds (10%, primarily Sunnis), all of whom he bestowed great benefits. But in the end, Assad's defense against the onslaught of Muslim opposition was mostly dependent on the commitment, loyalty, and support of his Alawite community, which makes up around 8% of the population and includes army leaders, soldiers, and the "shabiha," or ghosts, of armed militias (Larres, 2022, p. 259).

However, by the end of 2012, Bashar al-Assad and his exhausted military were powerless to stop the quickly spreading uprising. As a result, he approached Iran, Hezbollah, and other Shi'ite military organizations for assistance. Beginning in late 2015, Russia provided air assistance. These forces have played a major role in Bashar's continued survival as the tyrant of Syria.

The majority of attacks by the Alawite-led government and loyalist militias target Sunni Arab civilians. After bombarding and besieging opposition regions, the regime forcefully displaced up to 900,000 civilians, the most of whom were Sunni Arabs, to the Idlib Governorate in 2018–19 (*Syria*, n.d.).

The writings of the renowned historian and philosopher Ibn Khaldun from the fourteenth century confirm the inevitable fall of the Assad dynasty.

He states that “A dynasty's lifespan often doesn't surpass three generations. Because the traits of a harsh, unsophisticated country's existence, such bravery, ferocity, and cooperation in authority, are still present in the first generation. As a result, the Asabiyya's strength is preserved” (Rosenthal, 2009, p. 88).

The distinct characteristics of the Assads' 50-year rule, in contrast to other modern Arab autocrats, have produced a two-generation dynasty predicated primarily on the Asabiyya (solidarity) of the Alawite minority population, which is viewed as heretical and inferior by a large number of Sunnis.

Assad basically kept their Alawite sect as foundation that he relies upon. Hafez and Bashar created distinct balance sheets because they operated in different environments. Hafez developed a powerful state that provided socio-economic changes to workers and farmers. Bashar, on the other hand, created a varied economy. In contrast,

Bashar had to respond to a major revolt that resulted in an increasing disparity between the rich and the poor. In comparison to his father, he killed many more Syrians, destroyed the country's economic infrastructure, and allowed Russia and Iran to claim a significant portion of Syrian sovereignty. Both of these powers will continue to influence Bashar's position in Syrian politics until the Assad dynasty ends (Larres, 2022, p. 262).

Syria has been experiencing an incredibly violent civil war since March 2011. The 2011 revolt has turned into a bloody and devastating civil war, with the regime and numerous secular and Islamist opposition organizations engaged in heavy battle throughout the entire country. Politically speaking, Syria has broken apart into independent provinces and areas that are under the authority of different actors involved in the conflict (Gobat & Kostal, 2016).

The following map from November 2023 shows the divided areas of the country and which parties govern them.

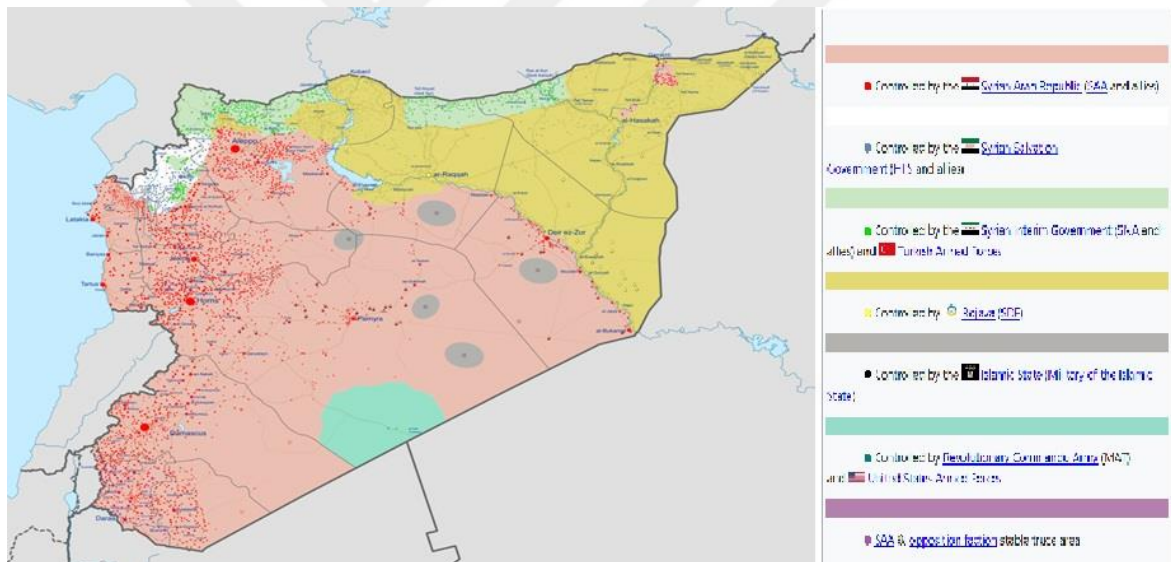


Figure 3. Detailed map of Syria showing the approximate frontlines during late November 2023.

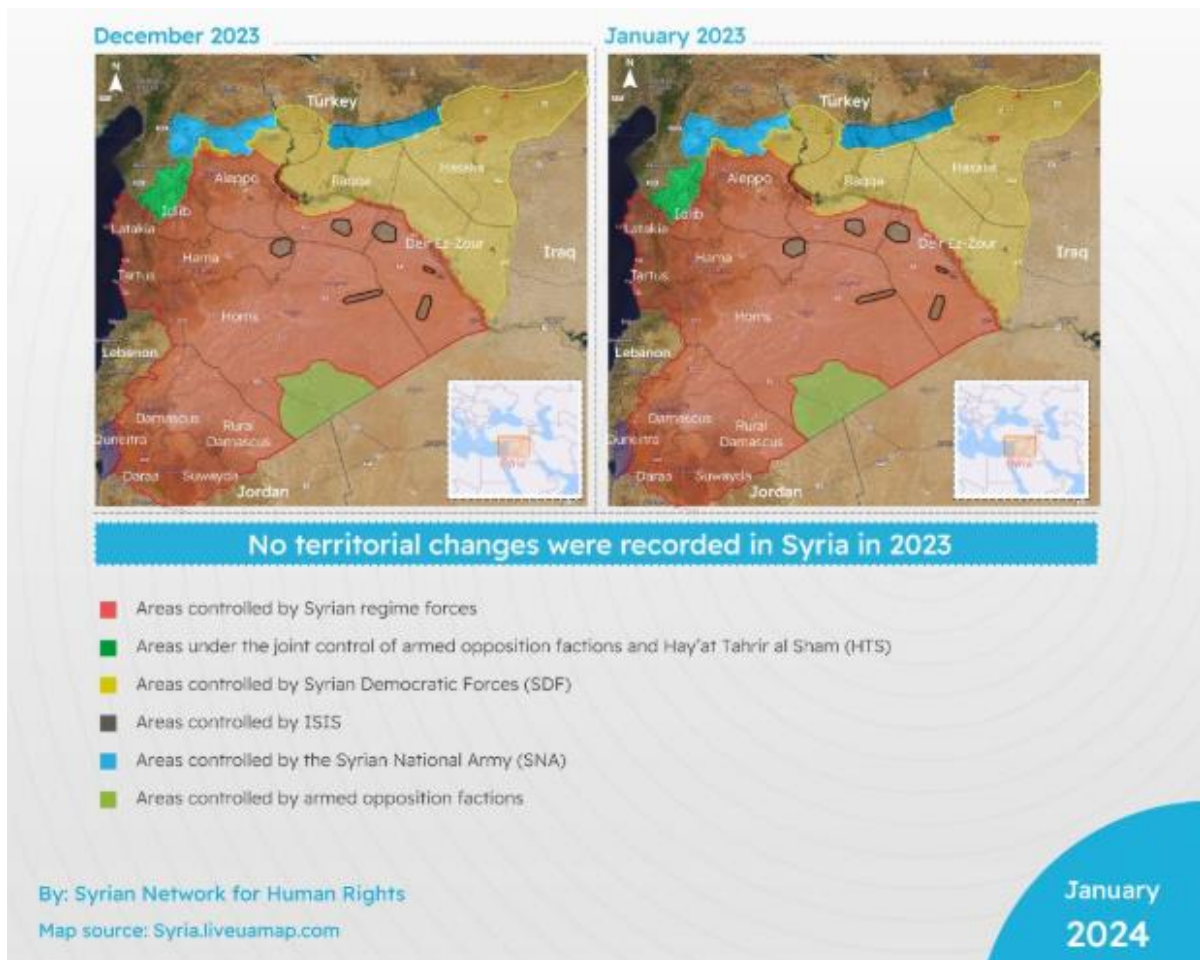


Figure 4. Changes in the territories under the control of the conflicted parties and controlling forces in Syria in 2023 (SNHR, 2024)

The Arab uprisings of 2011 have showed us the rise to the most complicated conflict to date: the war in Syria. At least twice, in the spring of 2013 and in mid-2015, the Assad regime came dangerously close to collapsing. Its comeback can be primarily attributed to external actors. The conflict has progressed through six phases, including foreign leaders and militias from numerous nations, regional administrations, and international powers—often on opposing sides.

Protests in early 2011 sparked the first phase. Teenagers in southern Daraa, inspired by the Arab Spring uprisings around the Middle East, sprayed anti-regime graffiti on walls in public spaces. Local protests demanding their freedom were inspired by their days-long detention, abuse, and arrest. The focus of peaceful protests turned to President Bashar

Assad's dictatorship, and they quickly expanded throughout Syria. The regime used its military forces as the marches gained their strength.

In the second phase, Syria descended into a full-scale civil war and an armed rebellion began.

By 2012, major northern cities, including portions of Aleppo, Syria's second-largest city, and the capital, Damascus, were under the control of rebel brigades formed by several poorly organized opposition factions, many of whom were funded by foreign donors. In June, a United Nations official used the phrase "civil war" for the first time.

In 2013, as the government began to lose huge parts of the territory, the (IRGC) sent military advisors to support the Assad regime, while Lebanon's Hezbollah publicly sent their fighters to assist Assad's regime.

The number of Syrians who have been forced to flee their country has reached 500,000 in 2012. They had reached one million by March 2013 and two million by September of the same year.

The year 2013 witnessed the rise of the self-proclaimed IS/Daesh in both western Iraq and eastern Syria that recruited both foreign fighters and local supporters which marked the third phase of the Syrian Revolution. The group took control of significant areas of both countries over a period of several months. The group controlled almost 40% of Iraq and about a third of Syria at its peak. Additionally, it led to direct military action by the US. 95% of its land had been lost by December 2017, including Raqqa, the nominal capital of Syria (“Islamic State and the Crisis in Iraq and Syria in Maps,” 2018).

Although they did not assign blame to any party, UN chemical weapons inspectors verified the use of the nerve agent Sarin in an attack on regions surrounding Damascus in August 2013. Even though there is still, to this day, proof that provides clear evidence of which party used chemical weapons, how many times, where, and when. According to the US, the Syrian Regime was to blame, stating that all-source assessments rely on an extensive body of open source reporting in addition to human, signals, and geographic intelligence (*Government Assessment of the Syrian Government's Use of Chemical Weapons on August 21, 2013*, 2013).

By June 2014, Assad had committed to turning over his remaining chemical weapons and had finished the procedure for the weapons he had declared (Deutsch, 2014).

Russia increased its military engagement, particularly using air power, against moderate rebel groups during the fourth phase, which lasted from 2015 to 2016. Some of the most advanced Russian weaponry and air defense systems were used in combat. Iran's and Hezbollah's positions also became deeper. Analysts believe that Russia's assistance has helped shift the balance of power in favor of Assad.

Resolution 2254, which called for the creation of a constitutional committee tasked with creating a new constitution for Syria, was unanimously approved by the UN Security Council in December 2015 (Security Council Unanimously Adopts Resolution 2254, 2015).

Turkish forces launched a military intervention in northern Syria in August 2016, targeting the self-proclaimed Islamic State and some Kurdish forces. Following five military campaigns between 2016 and 2022, Turkey controlled a number of areas in northern Syria. Military operations that were conducted in the North Syria by Turkey were: “Euphrates Shield”, “Olive Branch”, “Claw”, “Peace Spring” and “Claw Sword” (Reuters, 111 C.E.).

Additionally, the Syrian government recaptured parts of Aleppo, the country's second city, which had been under opposition control since 2012. This was viewed by certain analysts as an important turning point in the war against the opposition in Syria (“Syria’s Government Recaptures All of Aleppo City,” 2016).

In the fifth stage, the Assad government recaptured land and strengthened its authority over the majority of the country's territory. It has recaptured key cities, such as Aleppo, and regions along Syria's vital western spine by year's end. In 2017, it linked together rural areas to solidify the return of government authority. For the first time in five years, it had also retaken key suburbs surrounding Damascus by the middle of 2018. It then set its sights on Daraa, the epicenter of the uprising, located even further south. By summer 2018, it has taken control of the city and most of southwest Syria.

In the sixth stage a ceasefire was reached in March 2020 between Turkey and Russia over Idlib, a region controlled by multiple opposition factions. This came after the province experienced fighting for several weeks. For the most part, the truce has held (Silencing the Guns in Syria’s Idlib, 2020).

According to Chatham House, by 2020, Assad would control roughly 65–70% of Syria (Mehchy et al., 2020).

During each of these stages, the United Nations and the United States supported early diplomatic attempts that were unsuccessful. There were several deadlocks in the Geneva negotiations. With Iran and Turkey as partners, Russia started a different attempt to find solution for the conflict in 2017 that involved talks in the Kazakh capital of Astana as well as in the Russian city of Sochi. These talks were intended to strengthen the national cease-fire.

In accordance with UN Resolution 2254, a new Syrian constitutional committee met in 2019 to begin drafting the country's new constitution. 2019 talks, 2020 talks, 2021 talks, and 2022 talks all ended in failure.

Syria's war, which started in the Levant and spread throughout the Middle East, also affected Europe significantly. Since the end of World War II, it has caused the greatest humanitarian disaster. Millions of refugees flooded into Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, and even Egypt. The refugee crisis also completely changed the political landscape of several European countries. At home, almost half of Syria's population was internally displaced and living off of humanitarian aid. Homes, businesses, schools, hospitals, roadways, and infrastructure valued at hundreds of billions of dollars were thought to have been destroyed (*Syria Timeline: Since the Uprising Against Assad* | *United States Institute of Peace*, n.d.).

Types of Actors	Description of Actors	Objectives
Domestic Actors	Pro-Regime Groups	To assist the regime and its army to fight against the rebels
	Anti-Regime Groups	To adopt any measure to topple the Assad Regime
	Extremist/ Religious Groups	Want overwhelming victory and calls for a Muslim state governed by Sharia Law
	Ethnic Groups	To control their majority areas and eyes on self-rule or autonomy
Regional Actors	Saudi-Arabia	Wants an end to Assad Regime, but through a nationalist victory instead by Islamists like Muslim Brotherhood or Islamic Front
	Iran	Iran does not want to lose its strategic ally and a second line of defence, hence wants to ensure survival of Assad Regime
	Turkey	Turkey remains committed to the downfall of the Assad Regime. Though it does not want to sever its relation with Iran.
	Iraq	To resist and contain any spill over of Syrian Civil War in Iraq, while also continuing to support the Assad regime.
International Actors	United States	Initially wanted to end Assad Regime in response to the uprisings but now it then shifted its objectives to resist the victory of the extremist elements, to avoid the spill over effects of the civil war and any harming move to its interests in the Middle East.
	Russia	Russia clearly wants to see the Assad Regime intact. It wants to preserve access to its naval base in Tartus, Syria. To protect Assad regime from any UN Security Council sanctions.
	United Nations	The United Nations wants to end the conflict. Establish peace through multilateral measures.

Figure 5. Actors and their objectives in the Syrian Civil War (Mirza & Abbas, 2021).

Note: Turkey has changed its stance toward the Syrian regime, and in June 2024 has started to address opportunities of dialogue with the Syrian regime, to which the regime responded that are not willing for any dialogues with Turkey if Turkey doesn't fulfill certain conditions.

Note 2: After Bashar Al Assad rejected any talks with the Turkish government in August of 2024, Turkey has returned to fully support the Syrian Opposition.

Syria has been one of the Council's most contentious issues throughout the years. Russia and China have emphasized the need of maintaining Syria's independence and territorial integrity while expressing support for the regime there. They have also made links between the difficult humanitarian and economic conditions in Syria and the unilateral coercive measures taken against it. On the other hand, the government is criticized by the P3 (the US, UK, and France) and other similar parties for breaking human rights and international humanitarian law, detaining individuals without cause, not actively participating in political discourse, and failing to establish the necessary circumstances for refugees' safe and unhindered repatriation.

Russia has continuously criticized US forces stationed in Syria, claiming they are causing instability in the country. The United States argues that the primary objective of its military presence in the country is to combat ISIS, and it has placed the blame on Damascus for permitting Iranian-backed militias to operate there.

Various views exist among Security Council members about the normalization of relations with the Syrian regime. China and Russia have expressed support for the normalization of relations, despite the US and other like-minded countries still being against interaction with the government. "[W]e remain skeptical that the Arab League's engagement with the Syrian regime will accomplish its objectives...[and] urge[d] those engaging with the regime to do so in pursuit of the objectives of resolution 2254," the US stated at the Council briefing on May 30 (*Syria, July 2024 Monthly Forecast : Security Council Report*, n.d.).

In the early hours of December 8, 2024, Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's 24-year rule came to an end as opposition factions, led by the Military Operations Room, took control of the capital, Damascus, following an 11-day surprise offensive.

The territorial control of different groups as of 11:30 GMT on December 16, 2024, is displayed on the map below.

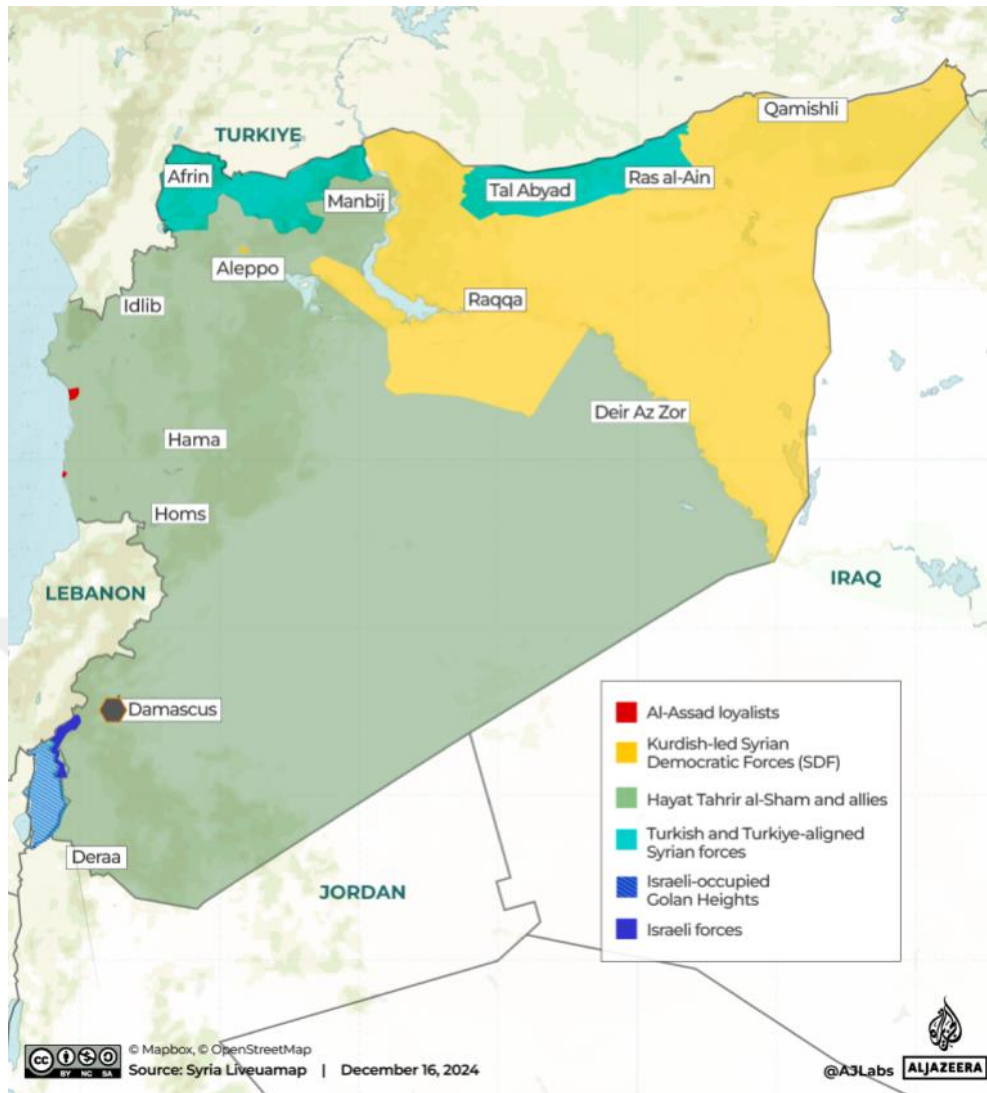


Figure 6. The territorial control of different groups as of December 16, 2024. (Al Jazeera, 2024)

5. SYRIAN REVOLUTION A PROTRACTED SOCIAL CONFLICT

5.1. Case Study of the Syrian Revolution as a Protracted Social Conflict

Syria's revolution started with anti-regime demonstrations, as a fight for freedom and democracy. However, the civil uprising soon turned violent into a widespread internal war, adding complexity to the struggle in Syria. Syria's war has taken on multiple forms, such as international/regional rivalry, sectarian violence, armed conflicts, political and ideological disputes, and massacres in the community.

The prolonged political and military crisis in Syria, undoubtedly along with the significant human and material losses it has caused, significantly impacted the nation's and the region's immediate future due to the negative recollections and hostilities it will leave in people's minds. In Syria, where hundreds of thousands have lost their lives and millions have been displaced within the country or have fled abroad, it remained uncertain how the war could be ended. Although different approaches have been proposed regarding the emergence, spread, and rapid transformation of the crisis in Syria into a large-scale civil war, these approaches often fall short of fully explaining the crisis, or they tended to focus on a single cause under the influence of political struggles, propaganda wars, and ideological rivalries.

Some academics describe the events in Syria as a revolutionary movement involving the fight for democracy and freedom against dictatorship. However, others use the Sunni-Shia conflict as a framework to understand the nation's crisis only in terms of sectarian arguments. Compared to the first two, there are less studies that examine social, geographical, and socioeconomic issues collectively in the context of the Syrian crisis. Unquestionably, one of the main factors made it more difficult to comprehend and define the Syrian crisis is the direction of outside interventions and the propaganda campaigns carried out by the international media.

It is clear that since the start of the revolt, these two elements have shaped the opinions that the international community has held about Syria.

The complex connection between the conflict's historical and social depth and the many dynamic and interconnected factors that created the conditions for it to occur, however, may be considered the primary factor making it more difficult to comprehend and define the nation's crisis. This calls for a complex approach to defining and characterizing the Syrian crisis, taking into account the political, economic, and social dynamics of the nation, historical political and economic structures, and national, regional, and personal interests and competitions (Atlioğlu, 2018).

5.1.1. The Protracted Social Conflict theory of Edward Azar

Lebanese American political scientist Edward Azar attempted to define the violent events that developed with the idea of Prolonged Social Conflict in many parts of the world following World War II and to develop a theoretical framework. Undoubtedly, Azar's concept of protracted social conflict and the model he sought to develop are among the first analytical efforts to provide a comprehensive explanation and analysis of internal conflicts. Azar states that almost all conflicts after World War II arose in third world countries and that most were persistent socio-ethnic conflicts rather than strategic ones, emphasizing that interventions by great powers deepened these conflicts (Azar et al., 1978, p. 46).

According to Azar, protracted social conflicts arise when social groups fail to meet their basic needs based on their identities. However, Azar sees this inadequacy as the result of a complex chain of causality encompassing the role of the state and international connections, and he believes that factors from the past such as colonial legacies, local historical processes, and the multi-identity nature of society play a significant role in the emergence of protracted social conflicts (Azar, 1990, p. 12).

Azar characterizes crises that emerged during the Cold War in different countries as protracted social conflicts and states that these conflicts are shaped by the unique environmental conditions of each country because of social groups' needs for security, recognition, and fair participation in politics and the economy. In this context, it is evident that Azar's concept of protracted social conflict is an attempt to reach a more widespread model that explains conflicts within a pluralistic approach (Atlioğlu, 2018).

It can be said that the internal conflicts experienced in countries such as Yugoslavia, Rwanda, and Chechnya in the 1990s after the end of the Cold War, and the power struggles

and civil wars that began with public demonstrations against authoritarian regimes in the Arab world in 2011, despite emerging under different international conditions, structurally bear similarities to previous conflicts and contain many elements of protracted social conflict. This study examines the extent to which Edward Azar's theory of protracted social conflict can contribute to defining the causes, nature, and boundaries of the conflict that began in Syria in 2011 and attempts to analyze the crisis in Syria through some selected variables included in the concept of protracted social conflict.

Countries with these multi-identity societies are often characterized by unsuccessful nation-building processes and underdeveloped economies, along with a significant lack of internal consensus necessary for developing stable political structures and processes. Azar points out that the poor political and economic legacy left by the "divide and rule" policies of former colonial powers, along with historical rivalries resulting in the dominance of one social group over another, play a crucial role in the failure to achieve internal agreement in these countries.

One social group or a coalition of several social groups usually retains control over governmental institutions and authority in these kinds of nations, while the needs and demands of other social groups are mainly disregarded. Under these conditions, efforts at social integration and cooperation enforced through coercion often contribute to delaying the nation-building process, damaging the social fabric, and ultimately leading to social fragmentation and the emergence of protracted social conflicts (Azar, 1990, p. 7).

The failure to provide fundamental human needs is the second factor that sets the stage for the development of protracted social conflict. According to Azar, there are three primary human needs: the desire for acceptance, the need for security, and the need for politics. He clarifies that effective involvement in politics, the economy, and decision-making processes are all part of political needs. Azar argues that the need for acceptance denotes social recognition as a unique identity, whereas the need for security relates to physical safety, food, and shelter.

Indeed, in multi-identity societies, basic human needs are crucial for individuals and social groups in terms of gaining self-confidence and expressing themselves in their relationships with the state and others. Furthermore, Azar highlights that individuals and

groups whose basic human needs are not met or who are deprived of these needs become marginalized and excluded from political, economic, and social organization. In this context, the failure to meet basic human needs becomes one of the primary sources of protracted social conflict (Azar, 1990, p. 7).

Edward Azar describes protracted social conflicts as prolonged, hostile interactions that can intermittently escalate into open wars. In this sense, protracted social conflicts represent ongoing processes rather than a single event or series of events. These conflicts, which tend to be a mixture of ethnic and inter-state conflicts, can remain latent for extended periods and then quickly emerge, spread, and intensify when conditions are met (Azar et al., 1978, p. 50).

Azar notes that the first factor triggering the activation of latent conflict is the actions and strategies of social groups. These actions and strategies, which involve various processes enabling the formation, organization, and mobilization of identity groups, can directly influence the selection of political goals (such as integration, autonomy, secession, revolutionary political programs) and struggle tactics (such as civil resistance, guerrilla warfare), as well as the formation of external ties. Sometimes, ordinary events among members of a social group can become significant turning points in collectively expressing their sense of victimization. The collective protest of a social group usually encourages the opposing side to respond with methods like forcible suppression and intimidation.

As tensions rise, the need for security (both physical and economic) among members of social groups becomes more prominent, while intra-group solidarity and identity affiliations are strengthened. During this process, social organization and mobilization expand, and it becomes evident that social groups diversify their strategies and tactics to include civil resistance, guerrilla warfare, and separatist movements (Azar, 1990, p. 13).

The ability of social groups to form strong leadership and their tendency to seek external support play a significant role in the spread of the conflict.

According to Azar, the second factor triggering the activation of latent conflict is the actions and strategies of states. Azar states that the political elites governing the state might either attempt to suppress the demands of social groups using force to avoid showing structural weakness or try to incorporate these groups through reconciliation. However, it is

evident that in most cases, the use of force and military methods to suppress social opposition is central to the state's strategy. Such a harsh strategy naturally leads to an equivalent military response from the suppressed groups, resulting in the intensification of the conflict (Azar, 1990, p. 14).

Finally, Azar points out that the experiences, fears, and belief systems of each social group influence the perceptions and motivations behind the behaviors of both the state and social actors. These experiences, fears, and belief systems generalize mutual negative images, making social hostilities permanent and reinforcing protracted social conflict (Azar, 1990, p. 15).

According to Azar, protracted social conflict causes significant damage to both the institutional structure of the state and social groups in the countries where it emerges. Additionally, it fosters and reinforces a sense of pessimism throughout society, demoralizes leaders, and obstructs efforts to seek peaceful resolutions to the conflict. Protracted social conflict becomes part of the damaged national culture while simultaneously contributing to a sense of paralysis that strikes a blow to the collective consciousness of society (Azar, 1990, p. 16).

At this point, the importance of how such a conflict can be resolved or ended becomes evident. However, Azar states that the theory of protracted social conflict does not claim to resolve conflicts but rather attempts to explain how they can be managed. Azar aimed to create a model that defines conflict through a pluralistic approach rather than starting from a small number of factors. It is also evident that similar arguments to those presented by Azar regarding conflict were made by both academics studying ethnic conflicts during the 1970s and 1980s when Azar conducted his work, and by academics trying to explain conflicts after his death in 1991.

Oliver Ramsbotham notes that although Azar's work was not sufficiently recognized in mainstream international relations and security studies, the arguments he presented about conflict are not contradicted by the studies that emerged because of changes in the international system from the 1990s onwards. These studies addressed war and conflict in the context of concepts such as ethnicity, nationalism, cultural differences, weak and failed states, environmental resource degradation, and demographic movements, showing

similarities to Azar's arguments on conflict. In this context, Ramsbotham asserts that the claims made by Azar with his theory of protracted social conflict remain valid in the 2000s (Ramsbotham, 2005, pp. 118-126).

5.1.2. Factors Influencing the Syria Conflict Analysis

After Syria's independence in 1946, from French mandate it has experienced post-independence conflicts, such as the 1964 Hama uprising and the 1975-1982 conflict between Muslim Brotherhood and Hafez Assad which ended with the famous Hama's massacre in 1982. These conflicts are notably consistent with the arguments presented by Edward Azar's theory of protracted social conflict. One of the conditions Azar identifies as contributing to protracted social conflict is social diversity, which aligns well with Syria's social structure. Although Syrian society is largely homogeneous culturally, it exhibits significant religious and ethnic diversity.

Religious and Ethnic Groups: Arabic is the most widely spoken language in Syria, and Sunni Muslims, who make up nearly 80% of the total population, are the largest sectarian group. Additionally, Arabic-speaking religious minorities such as Alawites (approximately 8%), Druze (approximately 3%), Ismailis (approximately 1%), and Christians (approximately 6%) are significant social groups in the country. Moreover, Kurds (approximately 8.5%), Armenians (approximately 4%), Turkmen (approximately 3%), and people of Caucasian descent are among the most important ethnic minorities.

Tribal Ties: Strong tribal ties clearly reveal the divided structure of Syrian society, both socially and geographically. The "divide and rule" policy implemented during the French mandate period significantly impacted the political, military, and economic structures that emerged post-independence. This has turned the country into a battleground where different social groups strive to protect their interests and reduce their grievances (Athioğlu, 2018).

One of the conditions Edward Azar identifies as contributing to protracted social conflict is the issue of human needs. In Syria, these needs have played a significant role in political and social competitions, both during the French mandate years and after independence.

Azar's emphasis on the role of the state in the emergence of protracted social conflict becomes particularly relevant to Syrian politics. The Syrian state's inability to meet the basic needs of different social groups has undoubtedly led to political institutionalization and economic inequalities based on ethnic and religious identities.

In the 1970s, the authoritarian security state established under the leadership of Hafez Assad, a member of the Alawite minority, adopted a political strategy that avoided overt sectarianism and emphasized a Syrian identity. Nevertheless, this approach failed to prevent the outbreak of conflicts based on religious identity, and the state could only suppress these conflicts using military force.

It is evident that regional and global rivalries in terms of ideology, sectarian affiliation, and interests have also influenced the shaping of the conflict. The authoritarian and pragmatic governance approach by Hafez failed to eliminate the conditions that laid the groundwork for protracted social conflict and only delayed the transformation of accumulating problems into an open conflict for a long time.

A new era began in Syria with the ascension of Bashar Assad to power following the death of his father, Hafez Assad, in 2000. Bashar Assad largely preserved the authoritarian state structure inherited from his father and continued his rule. Initially giving the impression of a reformist political leader to his people and to the international community, Bashar Assad's political and economic reforms were mostly limited to the economic field, and contrary to expectations, political reforms that would change his authoritarian ruling system were never implemented.

The developments in the international and regional context in the 2000s (the U.S. invasion of Iraq, the Lebanon issue, the Arab-Israeli conflict, Iran's regional influence, Russia's re-emergence as a global power) were adequate justifications for his hesitation to start any political reforms, allowing the regime to maintain its reluctance to transform itself.

There is no doubt that the anti-regime popular uprisings that began in North Africa in 2011 and spread throughout the Arab world provided a suitable environment for the political, economic, and social demands long suppressed by the authoritarian state in Syria to surface and for the protracted social conflict to become obvious. The crisis, which started with civil protests against the regime in March 2011 and quickly turned into a large-scale

armed conflict, resulted in the bloodiest and most destructive conflict in the country's modern history. While it is debatable whether Edward Azar's concept of protracted social conflict and the pluralistic conflict model, he proposed is sufficient to fully explain the ongoing complex and multi-dimensional conflict in Syria, it is clear that the arguments and pluralistic approach presented by this model provide a facilitating theoretical framework for understanding the nature and boundaries of the conflict. Additionally, analyzing the conflict in Syria through selected variables is important in demonstrating the applicability of the concept of protracted social conflict (Atlıoğlu, 2018).

5.1.3. The impact of Social Identities on Conflict

The anti-regime uprising that began in Syria in March 2011 was initially perceived by the international community as a struggle between people demanding democracy and freedom and an authoritarian regime. At the outset, the political aspect of the conflict was emphasized, and the identity-based dimension of the conflict remained hidden for a time. As the power struggle between the central government and the opposition turned from civil demonstrations into an armed conflict involving acts of violence, the identity-based foundations and sectarian hostilities of the conflict became more apparent.

While it is necessary to consider identity affiliations such as ethnicity and religion/sect as one of the conditions that prepared the ground for the conflict in Syria, presenting these as the sole source of the conflict would be a mistaken approach. In this context, it is important to determine the contribution level of identity affiliations to the emergence and development of the conflict and to analyze the relationship between the identity-based dimension of the conflict and its militarization. Although it is true that the increasing emphasis on identity affiliations has triggered the militarization of the conflict, it is also evident that as the conflict became militarized and acts of violence spread, the ethnic and sectarian dimensions of the conflict were strengthened.

Although a large portion of the demonstrators were Sunni, people from ethnic and religious minorities in the country also provided limited support to the protests. However, in the following days, signs emerged indicating that the protests were transforming into an uprising with an increased sectarian emphasis. The protests began in the predominantly Sunni city of Daraa near the Jordanian border and that the central government deployed elite

military units, such as the 4th Armored Division commanded by Alawite officers, to suppress the demonstrations contributed to the perception among the international community that the uprising in the country was a sectarian conflict (Atlıoğlu, 2018).

According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, sectarian conflict traditionally requires a symmetrical confrontation between two or more non-state entities representing different population groups. The Syrian conflict, however, was not a symmetrical confrontation between two groups. Instead, it was a confrontation between the majority of Sunni population and the minority Alawites, who ruled for over 50 years and controlled the most important spheres of the state, including the military, intelligence, and economic resources.

The idea among the opposition that the Alawite regime could be overthrown through armed struggle was spread through different Sunni preachers at the beginning of the revolution. The expectation within the international community of Sunni officers and soldiers defecting from the army, and the announcements by some officers who had defected from the army since June 2011 that they had begun armed struggle, clearly paved the way for the formation of the armed opposition group known as the Free Syrian Army (FSA).

In the later stages of the uprising, although some high-ranking Syrian officials admitted that security forces had made mistakes in handling the protests, no efforts were made to punish the responsible parties under wartime conditions, or such efforts were limited.

5.1.4. The Impact of Socio-Economic Status on Conflict

It is evident that among human needs Edward Azar considers as one of the conditions perpetuating social conflict, economic needs occupy a significant place. Since the French mandate era, certain social segments and regions in Syria have held a privileged position in the distribution of economic resources (Khoury, 1989, p. 69).

The unequal distribution of wealth in the economy has created a sense of grievance in parts of society and directly influenced competitions among social groups. After independence, these economic inequalities largely persisted in Syria, and instead of eliminating inequalities in the economic sphere through modernization and change, they

facilitated the emergence of new privileged elites, aligning economic competitions with ideological rivalries, laying the groundwork for a new conflict process.

Like many Middle Eastern countries in the 1980s, corruption, bribery, nepotism, and personal enrichment through state resources have become major problems in the public sector in Syria, which led to societal discontent and undermining public trust in the state.

When evaluating the crisis in Syria through these examples, it is observed that while the conflict has a socio-economic basis, in some cases, social class identities overlap with ethnic/sectarian identities, and in other cases, one may dominate over the other (Atlıoğlu, 2018).

5.1.5. The Impact of Psychological Factors on Conflict

Edward Azar suggests that psychological factors influencing individuals' and social groups' perceptions of each other play a triggering role in the emergence and intensification of protracted social conflicts. In this sense, it is evident that past experiences in Syria have left traces in collective memory, shaping the positive or negative perceptions of social groups towards others. Particularly under conflict conditions in Syria, prejudices and perceptions of threat among social groups have been shaped, and these psychological factors have emerged as significant motivational sources in determining the positions of parties in the conflict (Beaudoin, 2013, p. 77).

The rise to power of Hafez Assad, a member of the Alawite minority in the country, in 1970 and the continuation of an authoritarian regime under the Assad family for over 50 years have often led to debates in Syrian politics based on the president's sectarian identity.

Especially during periods of heightened political and social tension in Syria, psychological factors have been fundamental determinants in how sectarian/religious groups perceive each other, strengthening each group's sense of identity and solidarity internally.

5.1.6. The Impact of Foreign Intervention on Conflict

Edward Azar points out that direct or indirect foreign intervention plays a significant role in the emergence and course of protracted social conflicts. From the onset of the crisis in Syria, foreign intervention has created an impression of an open conflict, even named by many experts as a proxy war.

The fourth requirement for PSCs is international linkages, which indicates that the parties in conflict are dependent on stronger and wealthier powers for both military and economic support. It is underlined that the extent and kind of external connections have a significant impact on how disputes play out. There is an increase in the involvement of regional and global actors in conflict when it spreads to cover a wide range of topics. For example, the governments of Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, and Iraq are concerned about the flow of refugees because they fear that the violence will spread to their own borders, making cross-border migration a concern (Kaya, 2021).

Following the escalation of the crisis in Syria into a full-scale open war, the direct military interventions by the United States (and its allies) and Russia have transformed the conflict beyond a proxy war. Global-level external interventions in Syria are largely seen as part of the power struggle between the United States and Russia, while regional-level external interventions attempt to associate with the conflict's identity aspects. In this context, determining the level of external intervention's relation to the conflict's identity aspects becomes crucial for understanding the conflict.

Claims frequently voiced include allegations that since the 2003 Iraq invasion by the United States, a Sunni-Shiite polarization at the regional level has influenced Middle Eastern political relations and global alliances. After the onset of the Syria crisis, it was alleged that regional actors intervening in the conflict acted through sectarian divisions rather than national interests in their foreign policies (Atlıoğlu, 2018).

Global external interventionism, reflecting global competitions involving actors such as the United States, European states, Russia, and China, is also one of the factors that have deepened the crisis in Syria.

The United States and its European allies, who see the Syrian political power as an authoritarian regime that rules country with zero freedoms, openly expressed their demands to change the administration as soon as the crisis began in 2011 and provided political and diplomatic support to the opposition.

The most severe reaction to this cooperation came from Russia and China, who supported the Syrian regime in the crisis in the country.

These two global actors, who prevented the issuance of a Security Council decision against Syria foreseeing sanctions in the first two years of the crisis, played an important role in keeping the central administration alive with the political and economic support they provided. Especially Russia, which has been trying to expand its power and influence in its immediate surrounding since the end of the 2000s, has pursued a resilient policy in Syria, which no one expected to be so resilient in terms of the wide-ranging change that began in 2011 and its consequences.

5.2. Impact of the Syrian Revolution on the Theory of the PSC

We can propose that the Syrian Revolution, which began in 2011 as part of the broader Arab Spring, has had significant impacts on the theory of Protracted Social Conflict (PSC). Protracted Social Conflict emphasizes that conflicts are prolonged due to deep-seated issues related to identity, deprivation, and state formation. As it was mentioned earlier, PSC theory identifies four key clusters of variables that contribute to prolonged conflicts:

Communal Content: The role of identity groups, such as ethnicity, religion, or language.

Deprivation of Human Needs: Denial of physical, economic, and political needs.

Governance and the State's Role: How the state interacts with and represses identity groups.

International Linkages: External actors and their influence on conflict.

5.2.1. Communal Content:

5.2.1.1. Minority domination

The regime's efforts to address the people's issues were disastrously insufficient. Instead, it implemented policies that restricted political freedoms and limited access to economic markets. Assad used all available resources to ensure the Alawites' dominance over Sunnis and other groups. The majority group that rules a community and suppresses other minority communities to prevent them from participating in politics and so maintain their position of power is the main topic of Edwards Azar's writings. The reality in Syria, however, defies the conventional opinion. Here, a small Alawite (Shia) (8%) sect controls governmental affairs and has oppressed other minority communities as well as a majority of Sunnis (80%). Syria is thus faced with the "Double Minority" issue. The majority group in the Syrian government is the Alawite community, while being a minority in the entire country. The majority of Syrians are Sunnis; however, they make up a small minority in the government. As a result, the Sunni minority in the government is discriminated against in its normal role and is dominated by the Alawite majority in the government in order to maintain their position of power (Tayyab et al., 2020).

5.2.1.2. The Demographic Composition and Societal Distribution

Significant population density in Syria is along the Mediterranean coast; higher concentrations are in Aleppo, the largest city of the country, Homs and Damascus. The coastal plain, the province of Aleppo, and the valley of the Euphrates River are home to more than half of the inhabitants.

Note: The population distribution has changed due to the ongoing war. ("The World Factbook-Syria," 2024) Russia raised questions about her agenda and the potential of putting pressure on European countries through the use of migrants. Seemingly, these movements wanted to use refugees—including Syrians—to exact revenge on Europe. Some associate it with the demographic shift the Syrian regime has implemented in the territories it had controlled (SACD, 2023).

About 20.6 million Syrians were residing in Syria in 2010, according to statistics released by the Central Bureau of Statistics. The country's demographic map has drastically changed as a result of the conflict that began in 2011. A number of reasons have contributed

to this transformation, including high mortality, migration, displacement, asylum, and changes in fertility rates in particular areas. There has been an irreversible loss of human capital in Syria as a result of the population decline compared to pre-conflict levels.

The conflict has resulted thousands of civilians and fighters to die, such as detainees which were innocent civilians that the regime has arrested since the beginning of the revolution, as well as spreading of crime and murder due to insecurity and violence in different parts of Syria. These factors have all contributed to a considerable increase in the country's death rate. At the start of 2020, there were 28.7 million Syrians living in Syria and abroad, of whom 52% had fled their country of birth to seek safety as refugees or immigrants.

Every de facto authority has made an investment in the politicization of identities and the association of an individual's affiliation to their ethnic and religious heritage. One of the effects of this investment is demographic change, which contributes to regional disparities and intensifies Syria's social capital decline. The Syrian regime is widely regarded as the main player in the demographic shift process. It employed a variety of strategies, the most prominent being violence and intimidation, which has resulted in the forced relocation of numerous families from various regions, including Homs and Ghouta, to Idlib and the northern areas.

The Assad regime also made use of the legal system, as seen by the numerous rulings made by the Syrian regime that take land and property belonging to thousands of displaced people and detainees and give them to the regime's allies and supporters (Arab Reform Initiative, 2018). Numerous signs indicated involvement of foreign powers, like Iran, that have influenced the redrawing of Syria's demographic and sectarian landscape with objective of furthering their own agendas (Mehchy et al., 2022).

An enormous displacement of civilians and a humanitarian crisis have affected neighboring countries that attempted to accept refugees and burdened the international aid for infrastructure (*Syria Timeline: Since the Uprising Against Assad* | *United States Institute of Peace*, n.d.).

The severe humanitarian crisis resulting from the Syrian conflict, including mass displacement and refugee flows, underscores the need for PSC theory to incorporate the humanitarian dimension of protracted conflicts more explicitly. The sectarian and ethnic structure of Syrian society was significantly impacted by population displacement, and this impact is unlikely to be mitigated or reversed (DC, 2024).

5.2.2. Deprivation of Human Needs

Azar notes that grievances arising from a lack of needs usually arise collectively, and when the government does not address these grievances, a room is created for an extended social dispute (Ramsbotham, 2005).

For the longest period, Syrians have been denied access to not only their basic financial necessities but also their social, political, and identity needs in the areas where the state and its people are involved. To put it mildly, the regime has repressed all forms of opposition and free speech with such intensity that it has created resentment toward both the state and the rich who belong to a specific sect (*A Population and Its Discontents*, 2020).

It would then be necessary to use a great deal of creative thinking to figure out how to improve the underdeveloped and bring them up to speed with the rest of Syrian society in order to reduce violence in the protracted war. As Azar says, development in its widest sense is peace (Ramsbotham, 2005).

5.2.3. Governance and the State's Role:

5.2.3.1. Failed State Dynamics:

The collapse of state institutions and the emergence of non-state actors (such as Haya't Tahrir Sham, ISIS, PKK, YPG) serve as examples of the effects of poor governance, which supports PSC's contention that the state plays a crucial role in conflict dynamics. Given the significance of non-state players in protracted conflicts, including ISIS and other competing groups, PSC theory ought to investigate the roles these groups play even further. Their impact has the power to drastically change the conflict's direction and character.

5.2.3.2. Battlefield strategies:

Strategies used by the Assad regime went against the accepted conventions of contemporary armed combat, including the frequent and indiscriminate use of chemical weapons and the bombing of civilian targets. Over 1,000 individuals were murdered in a single chemical weapon assault carried out by the Syrian government in August 2013. According to U.S. official sources, the regime has employed chemical weapons at least 50 times, including chlorine, a dual-use chemical, and sarin, a toxic nerve agent that is

prohibited by international law (*Syria Timeline: Since the Uprising Against Assad* | *United States Institute of Peace*, n.d.).

White House documents show that chlorine and sarin have been used 50 times by the Assad regime. Public records indicate that it has been used over 200 times. In the past, sarin was a kind of chemical weapon that was a highly toxic liquid. It would immediately cause damage to the lungs if it were contaminated with air. In addition, the location where sarin was shot was unsafe to reside in for an extended period of time, and the impacts of sarin might harm victims directly. In addition to its long-term effects on an individual's health, sarin also directly causes sudden death (Pulungan, 2023).

5.2.3.3. Application of modern technologies:

Technologies used in both virtual and real warfare environments, including electronic warfare, social media, drones, and encryption.

The role of social media and modern communication in mobilizing and sustaining revolution and subsequent conflicts suggest that PSC theory should consider the impact of technology and information dissemination in contemporary conflicts.

5.2.4. International Linkages:

The Syrian war has persisted for such a long period of time, almost 14 years, because of the conflicting and overlapping interests of international actors.

The Syrian Revolution has shown that conflicts can have multiple layers, including local grievances, sectarian divisions, and international interventions. This suggests that PSC theory may need to account more explicitly for the complexity and multi-dimensional nature of modern conflicts. Number of intervening countries and the extent of their conflicting interests, as well as the method of power distribution and its overlap in the Syrian case can be a fruitful ground for further discussion in the theory of Protracted Social Conflict.

A modern case study that both supports and challenges some of the ideas underlying the Protracted Social Conflict theory is the Syrian Revolution. Although the fundamental components of identity, deprivation, state governance, and global connections are still applicable, the conflict also emphasizes how the theory could evolve. PSC theory can more

effectively explain and tackle contemporary protracted conflicts, like as the one in Syria, by considering the complexity of multi-layered conflicts, the role of non-state players, humanitarian consequences and the influence of technology.

5.3. Crime prevention

UN's Office on Drugs and Crime states that crime prevention refers to strategies and initiatives that aim to lessen the chance of crimes happening as well as their possible negative impacts on people and society, such as the fear of crime, by addressing their various root causes (*UNODC Crime Prevention*, n.d.).

Any measure intended to reduce the actual rate of crime and/or the public's perceived fear of crime is considered crime prevention.

Social theorists have studied criminal behavior throughout history. There are many various perspectives, and each one of them is distinct. Conflict theory examines how power dynamics in society affect criminal activity and how the criminal justice system functions.

Conflict theory refers to a particular process of redistribution of power achieved through the formation of structured organizations that people with disordered organizations seek out to help them defend their unique objectives and values. This means that when a person goes against the norm, the others they contact with likewise go against the norm in order to protect their values and interests. Even when authority corrupts, official criminalization requires the presence of a more powerful entity that may classify corruption as a crime. Regardless of additional influence, there needs to be some level of corruption in order for a criminal statute to be broken. Even while unlimited power has the potential to corrupt people completely, people in such positions are never officially labeled as criminals (Liberty, 2023).

According to Mills' beliefs, there are little to no legal repercussions for crimes committed by prominent individuals. Although those without resources are frequently linked to crime, wealthy and powerful individuals still commit costly and under-punished crimes in society (Conerly et al., 2021).

Understanding the differences between conflict and consensus perspectives on the social contract is essential to understanding conflict criminology. According to the

consensus approach, society is structured to reflect the interests of the majority of its members, and it bases decisions and formulates laws on popular will and the common good. Proponents of the consensus perspective argue that society represents the norms and interests of the majority of its members and that the state mediates conflicts between competing interest groups, despite the consensus perspective's recognition of the existence of rival factions in any society.

According to conflict perspectives, the role of the state is to represent the interests and values of the group or groups with sufficient power to dominate the state, rather than mediating disputes between the inevitably opposing interest groups. The conflict viewpoint contends that the balance of "opposing group interests and efforts" is what really binds society together, whereas the consensus perspective views peace and agreement as the bond holding society together (P. Black, 2014).

The confrontation between social, economic, and political interest groups is reflected in criminal activity, or crime. Group conflict or cultural conflict can lead to crime. Culture conflict arises when individuals behave within the normative bounds of their own group, but in opposition to the norms and standards of the dominant group which enacts laws.

As a result, a lot of laws mirror the moral standards that the dominant social groupings have embraced. When the actions of weaker groups deviate from the standards of the stronger group, they are viewed as deviant or illegal. However, inappropriate societal norms and rules do not always lead to crime. Although this is occasionally the case, obvious group conflict and competitiveness can also be the cause of crime, according to conflict criminology theory.

The competition among groups for limited resources and goods leads directly to this kind of crime. People or organizations may engage in illegal or deviant behavior in order to obtain resources and things to which they are not equally entitled. Crime is another political tactic that groups and the people who make up them may use to gain more power and to assist the organization take on a more dominant role in society.

In addition to drawing from Vold's previous (1958) work, Vold and Bernard developed a theory of crime and law in 1986 that included components of social learning theory and conflict theory. The following claims are part of this theory: The following are some facts about complex societies: (i) groups make up societies; (ii) people behave

according to their own interests, and this is reflected in the groups they belong to; (iii) the more power a group has, the less likely it is that its norms and values will conflict with those of society; (iv) bureaucracies, including law enforcement, aim to maximize benefits and minimize costs, so they will prosecute those with less power; (v) regardless of other variables, the official crime rates of certain groups are inversely correlated with their levels of political and economic influence (P. Black, 2014).

5.3.1. War crimes committed by the regime during the Syrian Revolution

According to a report by the United Nations released in August 2014, the Syrian Arab Republic's warring parties' actions have created unimaginable suffering for people. Another UN report from 2015 said that the war has been marked by a total disregard for international legal principles and that the suffering caused by the warring parties has mostly affected civilians.

The protracted crisis began when the administration of President Bashar al-Assad brutally put down protests in 2011. This swiftly escalated out of control and became an internationalized national conflict marked by widespread crimes against humanity, including the unlawful use of chemical weapons. Russian airstrikes have been supporting Syrian government forces throughout the fight since September 2015. According to the most recent civilian death numbers from the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), at least 580,000 people have died since the conflict began, including an estimated 306,887 civilians who died between 1 March 2011 and 31 March 2021. 6.7 million Syrian refugees are among the over 13 million displaced individuals (GCR2P, n.d.).

Different war monitors have estimated that as of May 2021 there were 580,000 deaths in the Syrian Civil War, whereas as of March 2024 there were estimated 617,910 number of deaths (*Syrian Revolution 13 Years on | Nearly 618,000 Persons Killed since the Onset of the Revolution in March 2011 - The Syrian Observatory For Human Rights, 2024*).

The legal counsel claims that drug dealing and kidnapping for ransom are among the most common crimes in Syria, along with murder, robbery, burglary, rape, and other crimes.

The Syrian detainee report, which was released on 21st of January 2014, also referred to as the Caesar Report and officially named A Report into the Credibility of Certain Evidence with Regard to Torture and Execution of Persons Incarcerated by the Current Syrian Regime, purports to provide details of the government's systematic killing of over

11,000 detainees in one region over the course of two and a half years, from March 2011 to August 2013, during the Syrian Civil War.

Following a six-month investigation, Human Rights Watch (HRW) determined that the report's photographic evidence was authentic. The title of the subsequent HRW report that was based on the Caesar Report was titled "If the Dead Could Speak". According to this assessment, there should be a trial for crimes against humanity against Syrian regime officials (*Bashar Al-Assad's Crimes against Humanity, Caught on Camera*, n.d.).

Geoffrey Nice, the former main prosecutor in the trial of former Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic, David Crane, and Desmond de Silva, the former top prosecutor of the special court for Sierra Leone, wrote the Caesar Report (Al Jazeera, 2014).

According to Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro, the large number of detainee deaths indicates that the Syrian regime is responsible for the crimes against humanity that constitute extermination.

The UK foreign secretary, William Hague, stated that this investigation provides more proof of the Assad regime's systemic cruelty and violence against the Syrian people. He said we will keep pushing for accountability for those who commit human rights breaches in Syria as well as for action to be taken against all such violations. (I. Black & editor, 2014)

The fundamental idea of conflict criminology is that crime rates are influenced by the unequal distribution of power and wealth in society.

In the Syrian case, main country's resources and power status are being in the hands of the minority sect "Alawites".

One thing that has been mostly disregarded or misunderstood is how important the Alawite community in Syria is in shaping the country's future. Similar to Ibn Khaldun's idea of the fall of group "asabiyya" in the second stage of dynasties, the basis of Alawite acceptability of the regime has been gradually undermined during the second generation of Assad reign. Sectarian instability, however, is the one strong link that connects the Alawite minority to the Syrian dictatorship. To stay in power, the Assad dictatorship needed and encouraged Alawite insecurity.

The political role of Alawite people has rarely received any serious attention from academics or the foreign media. This is mostly because Alawite identity has been suppressed by the Syrian regime from being openly expressed. When the topic of the Alawite political role in Syria is brought up infrequently, the general consensus characterizes them as "a dominant minority which universally supports the Asad regime." The Asad regime is actually a family dynasty that actively exploits Alawite sectarian insecurity as a crucial tenet of its stability rather than a confessional "Alawite regime" (Goldsmith, 2011).

The mainly Alawite minority in northwest Syria's Latakia province was the country's poorest and least educated social class in 1950. The ties between Sunni and non-Sunni Muslims, urban and rural residents, the rich and the poor, and conservative and progressive political groupings all changed as a result of the elite structure's shifting composition. The Alawites' political ascent is the culmination of the process. With the aim of improving, their policies have resulted in completely different elite recruitment and organization, political power distribution and allocation, political communication, and nearly all significant domestic policies, including those relating to economic development changed and enabled Alawites to be in charge (Faksh, 1984, p.133).

The importance of Muslim religious minorities in Syrian politics is reflected in the status of the Alawites, which is far greater than their small numbers would suggest. A misleading indicator of these minorities' political standing is the fact that they make up fewer than 8% of the population. This seems to support the claim made in 1940 by Jacques Weulersse, a prominent French scholar of the Alawites, that a minority can conquer a majority if it possesses superiority in the military, economy, or politics (Faksh, 1984, p. 134).

There are two main, divisive effects of the Alawite's growing influence on Syrian politics since 1960. One hand, the Alawite community has become more cohesive and conscious, which has led to discrimination against Sunnis, particularly urbanites. However, it has engendered opposition and response from Sunnis (Faksh, 1984, p. 145).

The ancient variety of forces has been shattered, and the country has become more split on religious lines as a result of the rise of one sectarian minority group and the subjection of the others, including the Sunni majority. In Alawite-Sunni tension and strife, sectarianism (al-ta'ifiyah), a condition that had previously been inactive, has become more apparent (Faksh, 1984, p. 146).

Ever since taking office in November 1970, Hafez al-Asad has made it a point to expand upon a strong Alawite 'sectarian grouping' (takattul ta'ifi) among the centers of power, particularly within the army. He has placed a great deal of reliance on his one and only officer faction, which is composed primarily of his close relatives and immediate kin, but also includes the first members of his tribe (al-Matawirah) and subsequently other Alawite community members. Members of other religious groups, such as Sunnis, hold prominent positions in the officer corps but are unable to pose a significant threat to the regime ruled by the Alawite people. Geographically speaking, they are typically distributed in outlying areas far from the metropolis. If any Sunni officers play a significant role, it is as military experts rather than as political operatives, and as individuals rather than as an a group (Faksh, 1984, p. 147).

President Bashar al-Assad made a commitment to open the socialist economy when he took office in 2000. By doing this, Assad brought new faces to the Syrian economy, one of them being his cousin Rami Makhlouf, who rose to prominence as one of the country's most influential businessmen. Makhlouf's economic empire spanned the entire country through corruption and nepotism, and it is estimated that he controlled 60% of Syria's pre-war economy ("The Demise of Makhlouf," 2020).

According to media reports and NGO reporting, Asma and Bashar Assad control a large portion of Syria's wealth. Bashar Assad was designated by Executive Order (E.O.) 13573 issued by the U.S. Department of Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) on May 18, 2011, and Asma Assad was designated by E.O. 13894 issued on June 17, 2020. The primary economic forces in Syria are closely allied with the Assad family, who uses their businesses to launder money obtained through illegal means and provide funding for the regime. Every area of the Syrian economy is affected by these networks ("Report to Congress on The Estimated Net Worth and Known Sources of Income of Syrian President Bashar Assad and His Family Members Section 6507 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2022 (P.L. 117-81)," n.d.).

It is widely recognized that the control of Syria's major economic resources lies in the hands of a select few. The unequal distribution of power and wealth, with the majority concentrated in the hands of the Alawite minority, was one of the key issues that led to the escalation of the conflict, which enabled the regime to commit the worst crimes against humanity.

5.3.2. Criminality rate in Syria

According to the Global Organized Crime Index criminality rate in Syria is 7.07, placing Syria as 11th of 193 countries in the world, 5th of 46 countries in Asia (*Criminality in Syria - The Organized Crime Index*, n.d.).

People: Syria is among the worst countries in the world for human trafficking, and the market for such trafficking remains widespread. Syria continues to be a key place of origin and destination for forced labor, domestic slavery, and gender exploitation that targets women, children, and men who are both local and foreign victims.

Trade: Syria has one of the biggest black markets for weapons globally, and the cost of weapons has been rising over time. According to reports, domestic and foreign players who support the Syrian regime are leading this sector. Southern Syria and the Kurdish-affiliated regions of Al-Hasakah, Raqqa, and Deir ez-Zor are still hubs for the trafficking of weapons. The majority of weapons come from neighboring nations like Jordan, Lebanon, and Iraq; some were even stolen from the regime's arsenal or sold on the black market by dishonest public servants.

Drugs: Despite the present increase in drug trafficking in Syria, the market for heroin and cocaine remains less widespread because of the high price and low demand for these substances. In this sense, the nation serves mainly as a transit nation for the trafficking of heroin and cocaine throughout the area, particularly to the Gulf states. Hezbollah is a participant in the smuggling of cocaine and heroin into Syria. Major hubs for drug trafficking include the port cities of Tartous and Latakia, as well as the city of Qamishli in northeastern Syria.

In Syria, there is a large black market for cannabis that operates in areas under the authority of the regime, the opposition, and the SDF. Cannabis is commonly grown in Syria, despite the fact that some is known to arrive from Turkey and Lebanon. It is also known that corrupt state actors, such as military personnel, and non-state armed militias carry out and/or facilitate the growing and trade of cannabis in Syria.

The country has a high prevalence of synthetic drugs, particularly Captagon. The production of Captagon is centered in Syria, which has been more intense since the conflict.

Synthetic medicine manufacturing thrives when components are easily obtainable; in recent years, the production of Captagon has increased significantly. While the manufacture of synthetic drugs is concentrated in places under regime control, smaller-scale production occurs in areas not under regime control. Syria's consumption of Captagon has become normalized, but domestic demand is still low because the nation mostly supplies the Gulf countries. Smuggled synthetic drugs are transported from Syria to neighboring countries, other parts of the Middle East, and Europe. According to recent estimates, Syria is heavily dependent on the production and trafficking of Captagons for financial gain.

Cyber Crimes: Political motivations are behind the commission of cyber-related crimes, despite their rarity in the broader community. Reputable networks are allegedly directly linked to the government and non-state armed militias, engaging in a wide range of cybercrimes, including as infecting media organizations, non-governmental organizations, commercial entities, and state agencies with malware, sending out spam, and launching denial-of-service assaults. The primary goal of cyber-dependent crimes is not to make money, but rather to put an end to dissent. Since Syria is cut off from international trade and digital payment systems, cybercrime in the nation is naturally less profitable. Rather, the restricted endeavor focuses on the diaspora and other Arabic-speaking communities residing outside of the country.

Financial Crimes: Even while it is challenging to accurately depict the scope of financial crime in Syria, it appears to be widespread, particularly when it comes to tax evasion and embezzlement of funds. These have grown to be significant problems that are costing the regime a lot of money. In addition, a vast illegal foreign exchange and finance industry that functions outside of regime control has emerged as a result of policy-driven distortions and sanctions in the financial and foreign exchange sectors.

Criminal Actors: There are many different types of criminal actors in Syria, but the most prominent ones are international actors, criminal networks, and state-embedded actors. Nepotism, bribery, and corruption are common in the country at large. Drug production and trafficking are two significant criminal marketplaces that state-embedded actors, such as the Ghaith Forces, Tiger Forces, Country Armor Forces, and National Defense Forces, continue to dominate. In addition to offering criminal groups security and weaponry, state-embedded actors shield them from prosecution and make it easier for them to pass through checkpoints.

Criminal justice and security: Even with appropriate judicial structures mandated to combat organized crime, Syria's judicial system remains incredibly politicized, severely corrupt, and reliant on the regime. Judicial personnel must be Ba'ath Party members and lack appropriate legal training. The independence of the judicial system is further compromised by the president's authority to remove judges through presidential decrees. According to reports, the jail conditions in Syria's penitentiary system do not adhere to the minimal standards required for the treatment of prisoners. In prisons children are also being detained, there is widespread malnourishment, torture and cruelty.

Economic and financial environment: Although there are laws and policies regarding money laundering, the Syrian regime selectively enforces them, making it difficult for them to be effectively implemented. Moreover, sanctions imposed by other countries seem to suggest that the central bank of Syria was involved in various money-laundering operations.

Civil society and social protection: The Syrian regime makes very little of an effort to assist witnesses and victims of organized crime in the country.

Crime prevention in Syria is constitutes community awareness-raising initiatives, which frequently target young people. The Syrian regime intended to set up centers for reporting crimes. NGO-led community-based programs to raise awareness of civil society have started, however they have mostly failed. Furthermore, the majority of crime prevention initiatives funded by international aid groups have failed to lower crime rates. In addition to failing to take action to stop some organized crime activities, like drug and people trafficking, the government has also either denied the existence of these markets or increased their influence (*Criminality in Syria - The Organized Crime Index*, n.d.).

5.3.3. Strategies for crime prevention in Syria

Universal Jurisdiction: The principle of universal jurisdiction (UJ) allows national courts to bring criminal charges against individuals for grave offenses against international law, including war crimes, genocide, and crimes against humanity. This applies even in cases where the perpetrator is not a citizen of the state bringing the case, or when the crime was not committed on that state's territory or against its citizens. By citing the idea that transnational crimes undermine both international law and society as a whole, UJ thereby broadens the traditional foundation of criminal jurisdiction. When a state has incorporated this principle into its legal framework, a national court may exercise unjustifiability. As a result, there are significant regional variations in the definition and application of UJ worldwide.

Head of state immunity: According to the principle of immunity *ratione personae*, a head of state is exempt from prosecution in foreign tribunals for any crime they may have committed. This is known as the head of state immunity in international law. It includes immunity from legal action for both official and private actions committed while in the office. Immunity *ratione personae* is sometimes described as "absolute," implying that there are never any exclusions. Criminal responsibility has been hindered by state officials' immunity from prosecution. Thus, this protection has often been challenged, particularly in cases of serious international crimes.

Many criminals accountable for serious crimes are prominently missing from the investigations and trials carried out thus far. This mostly affects (Western) corporations, but it also affects strong nations like Iran and Russia. Certain Western firms are suspected of having assisted in the commission of international crimes while conducting business in Syria, having benefited financially from the continuous violence in the country. This holds true for producers of building materials as well as Western suppliers of weapons and surveillance equipment (Kruger & Kroker, 2024).

The complex and "emerging norm" of international law known as the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) aims to give the international community a way to stop mass atrocity crimes from happening inside the borders of a sovereign state.

The R2P doctrine's current shortcomings are brought to light by the Syria conflict. The Security Council's veto power still has the potential to allowed governments to carry out mass atrocity crimes against their own civilians, even in light of R2P's significant contributions to population protection over the previous years (Williams et al., 2012).

The application of force to stop atrocity crimes is still being regulated by international law. Nevertheless, the R2P concept captures an expanding global consensus on a number of issues: (1) Protecting populations from mass atrocities is an inherent responsibility of sovereignty, which is why it is fundamental to the international system; (2) the state bears primary responsibility for protecting populations from mass atrocities; (3) in cases where a state is unable to prevent atrocity crimes, the international community should support and assist that state in fulfilling its sovereign obligations; (4) in cases where a state clearly fails to protect its population, the international community should first try to protect populations through peaceful means; and (5) The international community has the right to use force to stop mass atrocities after all peaceful measures have been exhausted (Williams et al., 2012).

Atrocity crimes must first be proven beyond a reasonable doubt. Second, in order to guarantee that force is only used as a last resort, all diplomatic channels and sanctions must be pursued in order to push the state to safeguard its citizens. Third, the permanent members' persistent opposition and recurrent vetoes must prevent the Security Council from taking any action. Fourth, the use of military action must be restricted to low-intensity measures like humanitarian safe zones and no-fly zones that are intended to safeguard communities. Fifth, the use of force must be approved by a legitimate authority. This may be the UN General Assembly, a large multinational coalition, or a regional political or security body. Sixth, legitimate opposition groups representing the victims of major atrocity crimes must request the intervention (Williams et al., 2012).

5.4. Evaluating Theory of the PSC through the Syrian Revolution

Several observations on the evolution of the Syrian Revolution at the national level can be drawn from the comprehensive analysis of the conflict.

1. The Syrian regime did not show at any moment of the conflict that it was prepared to engage in meaningful talks or make compromises in any international forum with the opposition or its foreign supporters. This implied that the dispute over its authority would be settled on the battlefield. The regime did regularly suggest "local reconciliation agreements" at the local level as part of its battlefield strategies; nevertheless, these agreements typically stopped outright fighting but did not lead to additional repression and displacement (i.e., after a cease fire had been agreed). In the event that these agreements were not reached, the regime continuously used all available tools of coercion and spoke a language of violence.

2. Throughout the conflict, the regime has combined a number of unofficial temporary "deals" (such as those with the YPG/PYD and IS), concentrated offensives, a progressive use of fear-inducing tactics (such as chemical weapons, barrel bombs, bombardment, starvation, and deportation), and various diplomatic processes (particularly in Geneva) to further its agenda of reconquest.

3. Iran and Russia, the regime's international supporters, demonstrated that they were willing to step up their support in order to save the regime from collapsing. Iran achieved this by providing military supplies and credit lines, sending in Hezbollah and Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) forces in turn, aiding in the mobilization of the National Defense Forces, and organizing Shi'a armed groups from Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iraq. In 2015, Russia moved from providing military supplies and political support (partially on credit) to an advanced military expeditionary intervention.

4. Contrary to the Russian support, other international assistance for the Syrian opposition forces has continuously consisted of a combination of encouraging words and insufficient or dispersed real support or intervention. This has contributed to the conflict's extension but has done (too) little to strengthen the opposition forces' position on the battlefield. This is especially so for the Gulf and Turkish assistance for a variety of Islamist groups (both from countries themselves and from individuals/'charities'), as well as for the limited Western backing for certain FSA factions. The original support for the FSA (Free

Syrian Army) was provided by Turkey and the Gulf countries, namely by Qatar and the KSA (in the beginning of the revolution). The US's persistent and widespread assistance for the YPG since early 2015 has been the lone exception. However, the goal was to combat IS rather than the Syrian regime, with which the PYD/YPG had actual business dealings in the early stages of the conflict (van Veen et al., 2021).

5. Seeking a settlement was in line with US policy for several reasons, not the least of which was to prevent a takeover of Syria by Sunni Islamists (linked to the possibility of radical extremism) (“Obama’s Syria Legacy,” 2017).

6. It should come as no surprise that throughout 2013, Western (particularly US) concerns about the conflict moved from battling Assad to attacking IS. Any hope of uniting and building support for the FSA and possibly nationalist Islamist groups against the regime vanished as concerns about the rebels' performance on the battlefield, their increasing religious nature, and the money flowing into the International Coalition increased. In addition to eliminating a violent group of extremists, the fight against IS made the war's devastation much worse, with cities like Raqqa being completely destroyed. The fundamental uprising against the dictatorship had run its course and it was too late to reverse the trend once the war against IS ended (*Monitors: US-Led Coalition Killed 1,600 Civilians in Raqqa* | *AP News*, n.d.).

7. By means of military intervention, Turkey has established four areas in northern Syria under its effective control, utilizing a combination of its own military and auxiliary forces (SNA) recruited from Syria. Its military in Idlib makes it more difficult for the Russian military and the Syrian regime to launch a new, significant offensive. Turkish forces have established buffer zones against the YPG/PYD in Afrin, the Azaz-Al-Bab-Jarablus region, and between Ras al-Ain and Tel Abyad. Turkey appeared to be there to stay based on the type and extent of reconstruction in the areas that it effectively controlled. It was thought that Turkey wants to resettle Syrian refugees in these regions under the supervision of the SNA and the local police force that it supports (van Veen et al., 2021).

5.5. Ending of the protracted conflicts: Example of the Syrian Revolution and potential pathways for conflict resolution¹

The national role theory explains the actions of foreign actors in the Syrian Revolution. Inspired by role theory in sociology and social psychology, which describes an individual's role in society, national role theory is a conceptual framework of study in international politics and foreign policy studies. "How do policymakers view the roles their nations should play in international affairs?" is the issue the theory seeks to answer. According to the theory, sovereign states fulfill specific roles within the international system and retain broad attitudes toward the external environment (Holsti, 1970, 235).

Policymakers define their nation's roles in the international system and how those roles will be pursued in accordance with established foreign policy goals and objectives by using institutional and external role prescriptions as well as their own self-conceptions of roles.

This theoretical paradigm aids in explaining why the Syrian conflict have been prolonged and more difficult to resolve than it should be because of the dynamics of the external environment rather than internal circumstances inside Syria and the self-serving actions of external actors. The term "external environment" refers to actors from outside the region, including the United States, Russia, the European Union, and Middle Eastern nations like Saudi Arabia and Iran, whose actions have also greatly deepened and prolonged the Syrian conflict. These countries' involvement in the Syrian conflict reflects the roles that their political elites believe their nations should play in the armed conflict and, consequently, the roles that other countries in the international system "thrust" upon them.

The Syrian conflict is made more difficult by the presence of multiple foreign actors, some of whom support the Syrian regime and others the Syrian opposition. For their own anti-Western interests, Russia, China (to a limited extent), Iran, Lebanese Hezbollah are backing the Syrian regime. While China has played a small role in keeping the regime afloat, Russia has provided the most diplomatic and military cover, with military people on the ground and armaments to back the government; Iran and the other countries have done the same.

¹ This chapter was originally written in August 2024, prior to the downfall of the Assad regime on December 8, 2024, and was later revised to include the latest developments in Syria.

The West expected the Syrian people to fight the war alone and was not willing to get actively involved in the battle. Instead, it has limited its role to delivering equipment and training. In the Kurdish region of northern Syria, Syrian Kurds, who are among the local Syrians who were permitted to fight for themselves, have successfully seized power and were reluctant to join the wider fight against the Syrian regime, which would have increased the chances that the opposition would topple the regime.

The way the West was handling the Syrian circumstance has escalated the violence and incited outside interventions that were either pro- or anti-regime. The United States and Canada, respectively, have prolonged the conflict, encouraged a complicated war, and made settlement difficult by pushing Saudi Arabia and its regional allies to get considerably more involved in the battle and by providing training for Kurdish forces (Mitton, 2016).

In an attempt to end the conflict, the West supported intra-Syrian talks between the Syrian regime and the opposition; however, it also skillfully manipulated these talks into a deadlock that prolonged fighting and bloodshed, among other things by convincing certain opposition groups to boycott the talks in protest. Since the West had no real interest in institutionalizing democracy in the Middle East, the stalemate dialogues that have rendered the conflict unsolvable thus far were encouraged and beneficial to the West, who used them to maintain their dominance over the region with little to no risk (Oligie, 2019).

The fact that the revolution has been prolonged for almost 14 years suggested that foreign powers did not want the Syrian regime to fall because it was crucial for maintaining the Middle East's global balance of power. They could not afford the risk that the world would face if a radical group were to seize control of Syria. To ensure that their national interests were upheld and sustained despite the suffering of Syrians, Russia and the United States, on the other hand, were advancing opposing objectives. By progressively neglecting to address the root causes of the armed conflict, the international community is held accountable for the protracted and complex nature of the Syrian war. The US and other foreign governments who backed the Syrian opposition were unwilling to assist the opposition in winning the conflict. Rather, they provided the rebels with the bare minimum of non-lethal armaments, which were solely required for self-defense and preserving the internal balance of power against the Syrian regime; they were not, however in their opinion, adequate for successful territorial expansion or regime overthrow. Many of the rebels' foreign supporters were hesitant to give them significant military backing because they

worried that terrorist organizations within the opposition ranks may turn that support against them. The international inclination to maintain a global balance of power by not overthrowing the Syrian regime was highlighted by the diplomacy that has been used to guarantee that the opposition in Syria receives such a low amount of military support. Therefore, the goal of resolutions like UNSC Resolutions 2042 and 2043 as well as the Geneva Communiqué from June 2012 was to contain the conflict inside Syria and keep both the opposition and the Syrian regime from winning a military triumph. As a result, several regional and international supporters of the Syrian opposition have criticized international diplomacy for Syria (Kahf, 2016).

After opposition forces overran the Syrian regime forces and captured at least 60% of the country's territory, the opposition in Syria anticipated a swift victory that would have brought an end to the conflict by late 2012 or early 2013. The opposition benefited from increased external military and political support. However, their early expectations of success were undercut by the lack of international backing, which ultimately reduced their enthusiasm and hopes for the victory (Kahf, 2016).

One of the main causes of the decline in foreign donors' external military support has been the FSA's near-complete inability to overthrow the Syrian regime, despite the group's demonstrated strength, great enthusiasm, and enormous commitment, led by several defectors from the Syrian Arab Army.

Many multinational coalitions fighting terrorism in Syria, including those led by the US, Russia, and Saudi Arabia, placed an undue focus on the battle against terrorism, giving the impression that this is the only goal of the conflict. For example, the US's actions in Syria were contradictory and failed to address the wider security concerns facing the entire region because, while targeting ISIS, the US also backs other recognized rebel groups that are less dangerous than ISIS that are opposed to the Syrian government. Due to their contradictions and opposition to any coordinated attempts to end the war, the strategies used by various external powers to resolve the conflict are pointless and simply aid "the marginalized powers in creating a perpetual conflict zone for years to come." Unfortunately, this has led to an excessive number of socio-political disputes, which has made the already dire conflict situation worse. Unfortunately, the core issue and driving forces behind the war are ignored, pushed aside, and neglected, which strengthens the Syrian government's claim that the war is solely about fighting terrorism (Kahf, 2016).

Several international diplomatic attempts to put an end to the war, like the Geneva, Moscow, and Vienna peace talks, have failed to achieve a solution because the participating nations had regional interests that were largely at odds with one another and were attempting to defend their individual interests against the common multilateral interest of all. Strong regional states disagreed on how to put an end to the war because none of them had a sustainable political plan in place. As a result, there was no military or political end to the conflict till December 8, 2024.

Although the US acted aggressively toward the Syrian regime and thought that using force was necessary to topple it, neither of these views has led to an actual military action against the regime for almost fourteen years. Such behavior just served to obstruct a diplomatic settlement of the conflict.

The engagement of foreign nations in the war has helped to bring about an end to it, but it has also prevented a settlement from occurring anytime soon because the nations were self-serving; they pursued their own interests, identifying with friendly parties, and opposing unfriendly parties. However, because the Syrian regime continued to get substantial and consistent support from Russia and Iran, the regime has grown increasingly certain of victory and has become unwilling to engage in negotiations with the opposition.

The international community has been proactive in trying to find a solution to the Syrian conflict, but the way that world powers have been handling it has made it more difficult to resolve and have created a transnational humanitarian crisis (Habets, 2016).

The international community's concerted efforts to end the Syrian war and fight ISIS have resulted in the Vienna Peace Talk and the adoption of UNSC Resolution 2254. The international community's attempted to resume peace talks in response to the progress made against ISIS in 2017 has resulted in the Geneva IV Peace Talk, which was led by the United Nations and involved the Syrian regime and the High Negotiations Committee; the Astana Peace Talk; and the Sochi Peace Talk, which was an indirect negotiation between the Syrian regime and the opposition, overseen by Russia, Turkey, and Iran.

But the Syrian government, encouraged by its military victories, resumed hostilities in the hopes of winning a war because the international community was unable to pressure it to abandon violence. This weakness has put a stop to these peace initiatives and led to the collapse of the four de-escalation zones, which included sections of the provinces of Aleppo,

Idlib, and Latakia; an enclave in the northern portion of Homs province; the eastern Gouta region, which is close to Damascus; and the provinces of Deraa and Quneitra (*7 Years into the Syrian War, Is There a Way Out?*, n.d.).

The first explanation for why the Syrian conflict is protracted and intractable holds the UN and UNSC responsible. It makes the case that the UN's institutional weaknesses and the disagreements in the UNSC between Russia and China and the permanent Western members of the US, the UK, and France, were the reasons why the conflict was going on for so long and was tough to be resolved. All efforts to resolve the war in Syria were hindered by the conflicting interests of the two opposing factions, who must have been united and in agreement before any collective and legal UN action could be done in the country. According to a different perspective, the war's sectarianizing has given it a religious meaning and drawn jihadist and terrorist activity. This has prolonged the civil war by bringing up past grievances and escalating inter-sectarian conflict. Furthermore, the extended conflict has been attributed to the Syrian opposition's selection of a violent strategy rather than a non-violent one as a means of resistance and offensive action against the cruelty of the Syrian regime. The argument is that if the opposition had persisted in their first nonviolent response to the violence of the Syrian regime, they would have received sympathy from around the world. This would have led to a persistent condemnation of the Bashar al-Assad administration, deterred the regime's allies, and ultimately prompted international intervention on their side with minimal effort and opposition.

The war is believed to have prolonged on because of the vital roles that material and financial foreign aid, as well as Syria's illicit economy, played in enabling different Syrian opposition forces to continue their battles against the Syrian regime. The Syrian regime would not have had an enemy to fight if the opposition in Syria had generally had less material and financial power, which would have naturally driven them to give up the battle, and as a result the conflict would have ended. It is further argued that internal factors, such as the complicated dynamics of the war itself, strange internal politics, and the relatively unbalanced institutional power arrangement of the Syrian regime and the Syrian opposition, were to blame for the protracted and difficult-to-end nature of the conflict. These factors created a situation in which the Syrian regime appeared to be winning the war, but the opposition was resourceful, resilient, and difficult to be completely defeated (Oligie, 2019).

Both the Syrian regime and the opposition continued to fight because their foreign supporters, who appeared to be fighting the conflict through proxy, refused to put pressure on either side to stop fighting even when doing so would greatly be profitable for them.

By November 2024, major powers concluded that the continuation of Assad's regime was no longer economically viable or politically advantageous, this conclusion represented a significant shift in global policy. Countries supporting Assad, such as Russia and Iran, have faced mounting economic pressures, exacerbated by sanctions, conflicts and domestic challenges. The cost of military and financial support to the regime have outweighed the strategic benefits, prompting a reassessment of their commitment.

With the war in Ukraine continuing to strain Russia's resources and facing prolonged Western sanctions, sustaining Russian military and financial support for Assad was no longer feasible. The economic burden of funding a regime that offers diminishing strategic returns have led Moscow to prioritize other geopolitical fronts. Russia have sought guarantees from the West for retaining influence in post-Assad Syria, particularly in Latakia and Tartus, which are critical for its Mediterranean naval strategy. A withdrawal from full support might be traded for reduced sanctions or concessions on Ukraine.

Iran's economy, weakened by years of sanctions and domestic unrest, struggled to sustain its extensive financial and military commitments in Syria. Tehran perceived Assad's fall as inevitable and it prioritized preserving its influence through allied militias and political networks in Syria. Iran would likely push for a role in shaping Syria's future governance, ensuring protection of its corridor to Hezbollah in Lebanon.

Western nations and Gulf states have viewed the end of Assad's regime as an opportunity to stabilize Syria and counter Russian and Iranian influence. Western powers, Gulf states, and regional actors may view the fall of Assad as an opportunity to reshape Syria in a way that better aligns with their strategic interests. The role of Turkey, given its position on the Kurdish issue and refugee concerns, would be a critical factor in the discussions. Gulf states, particularly Saudi Arabia and Qatar, could increase funding for reconstruction as part of post-conflict investments. Western powers might avoid unilateral actions that could lead to the chaos seen in post-Gaddafi Libya, emphasizing a managed transition.

5.6. Challenges in Rebuilding Syria

Some of the International Agreements could include UN-led frameworks such as a roadmap that might involve the revision of Geneva Process, with a focus on forming an interim government, drafting a new constitution, and holding elections. Lessons from Iraq suggest a cautious approach to dismantling the regime's institutions to avoid alienating a significant portion of the population.

Fragmentation among Syrian opposition groups remains a significant obstacle and a challenge for the future unity. International mediators would need to break unity among these groups. The international community emphasizes the need for a viable transitional government, potentially involving opposition groups, technocrats, and civil society. Ensuring stability would be a challenge, requiring detailed planning to avoid a power vacuum.

Civil society organizations could play a pivotal role in governance, reconstruction, and reconciliation efforts, supported by international NGOs and donors. Immediate challenges include addressing the needs of 13+ million displaced Syrians, both within the country and abroad. International donors would need to prioritize health, housing, and education for displaced populations.

The World Bank estimates that Syria's reconstruction could cost over \$400 billion. Securing these funds will require commitments from Gulf states, the EU, and international financial institutions. Conditional aid might be tied to governance reforms and transparency in resource allocation.

Israel would monitor Iran's activities closely, possibly seeking assurances against Iranian military presence in post-Assad Syria. The alignment between the U.S., EU, and regional powers like Saudi Arabia might be strengthened to counterbalance Iran and Russia. However, any rift between these actors could complicate the transition process.

The fall of Assad's regime has marked a turning point for Syria, but the transition's success will depend on careful planning and cooperation among global and regional actors. Stability in a post-Assad Syria will require balancing competing interests, fostering inclusivity in governance, and addressing the root causes of the conflict. Holding Assad and

his allies accountable for war crimes will be a contentious issue, potentially delaying reconciliation and governance initiatives.

The extent and advancement of reconstruction of Syria will depend on a number of factors. Most significant factors that will define period and success of the conflict's resolution, will also influence the scope and speed of political and economic reforms and the amount of foreign assistance that will be provided, as well as the extent to which Syria will be able to draw in private investment. The establishment of rapid successful achievements, particularly in the energy and agricultural sectors as well as in labor-intensive industries like textile or food processing, which could become engines of growth, will also be crucial.

It's probable that the recovery will take quite a while. A protracted conflict will have greater negative consequences on the institutions and economy and take longer to recover, according to research on post-conflict recovery. For example, Lebanon's 16 years of conflict took 20 years to return to the real GDP level that existed prior to the war, whereas Kuwait's 2 years of conflict took 7 years to return to the pre-war GDP level. It might be challenging to draw comparisons between Syria and other post-conflict situations because to the unparalleled extent of destruction (Gobat & Kostal, 2016).

Nevertheless, if we hypothetically assume that Syria's post-conflict reconstruction phase starts in 2026 and the nation's economy expands at its trend pace of roughly 4.5 percent, it will take the nation roughly 20 years to return to its real GDP level prior to the conflict. A faster recovery for the nation would be possible with a greater growth rate. This is presuming that the nation can promptly return to its pre-crisis levels of human capital and productivity and that it manages to hold onto its sovereignty. Any dissolution of the nation would have an impact on future progress and would necessitate the establishment of new organizations and systems of government.

The Assad regime had tremendous support, but it was difficult to find or even focus on any specific aspect of the conflict to identify the primary reason(s) for its inability to end it earlier, while the rebels were not only fragmented but also receiving divided support from the region and the West. As can be observed on a regional and global scale, geopolitical powers and intervention were rather evenly distributed in favor of Assad's victory or his inability to put an end to the rebellion. The disagreements nearly neutralized one another. The case for Assad's incapacity was marginally stronger at the regional level than it was at

the global level, and vice versa. At the national level, the differences were more pronounced, with a greater number of people arguing for Assad's incompetence than for his achievement.

It's clear that the Assad regime was willing to maintain its hold on power, regain control of all of Syria, and put an end to the rebellion. The regime's lack of interest in peaceful negotiations that explored a transition of power greatly limited the ability of negotiations to move forward. One could argue that the regime was prepared to use harsh and illegal methods to put an end to the uprising, as seen by its use of barrel bombs and chemical weapons on civilian targets. The UN declared that Syria's violent reaction to Western sanctions, particularly the claimed use of chemical weapons (sarin gas, a nerve agent) in Ghouta in August 2013, constituted a war crime.

However, even after using chemical weapons, the West refrained from military intervention. Global geopolitics were generally in support of Assad. By framing the conflict as merely counterterrorism rather than a civil war, Assad has given himself the green light to use any kind of force against the rebels and to ignore calls for reform or for a change in the government. Assad undoubtedly stopped at nothing to topple the rebels and restore his reign over Syria if he had possessed the necessary tools. So why did Assad continue to fail?

The main reasons for Assad's inability to put an end to the war appeared to be the regime's own lack of manpower, ineffective leadership, insufficient economic and social resources, and the cruel dictator's determination to fight to the death. The dictator was a member of the ethnic minority. It may be argued that this was the reason Assad was unable to capitalize on Iran's almost unrestricted assistance and Russia's massive direct military intervention to prevail militarily or negotiate peacefully.

Because of this, the regime was unable to take advantage of the rebels' fragmentation, the differences in regional support, and the absence of political determination from the West. It appeared to be no way to stop the war, though a federal solution could prove effective (Tan & Perudin, 2019).

As long as Assad did not have the necessary tools to win decisively, the war could only be prolonged. We could possibly conclude that cruel dictators belonging to ethnic minorities usually fight until the very last in order to destroy everything, rather than reaching a settlement or making the decision to leave.

Syria has been dominated for a very long time by a single family that benefitted at the expense of the vast majority of its citizens. According to Assad's philosophy, the nation may become a utopia by eliminating all forms of diversity, particularly those related to ideology, ethnicity, religion, and politics. Reforms, according to Bashar, are poison for all Syrians. The narrative used to defend its control and domestic failures was centered on foreign opponents. Bashar is essentially unaffected by social or economic difficulties, much like his father. He had little interest in discussing the importance of equality for women, better health, education, or any other aspect of development. He thought that conflict, not social change or reforms, was the way to address deficiencies. The Arab Spring became the spark in this instance, igniting the Syrian revolution. The opposition fighters have continuously been referred to as terrorists by Assad. The conflict has grown increasingly complex as a result of intervention by regional and international powers.

Syria's war would end when a democratic state is established in place. The second step might be to have free and fair elections that are overseen by the UN oversight committee. With the exception of UN peacekeeping forces, the third stage would be the withdrawal of regional and international state forces from Syria. War crime criminals' prosecution would be the final yet just course of action (Karimi & Mousavi Shafaei, 2018).

Western sanctions on the Assad regime could block access to international aid and investment if not addressed through a political settlement. Foreign powers might push for reconstruction projects that serve their strategic interests rather than Syria's broader needs. Over-reliance on foreign aid or loans could lead to long-term dependency and limit Syria's sovereignty in decision-making.

The lack of accountability for atrocities committed during the war could fuel resentment and hinder reconciliation efforts. Trials and transitional justice mechanisms will need to address the demands of victims while balancing the need for national unity. Many Syrians have lost property due to displacement or confiscation. Resolving these disputes will be critical for social cohesion.

Prolonged conflict has led to deforestation, pollution, and water scarcity, compounding the challenges of agricultural recovery. Syria is vulnerable to climate-related issues such as drought, which could exacerbate food insecurity and displacement.

Rebuilding Syria will require a holistic approach, balancing physical reconstruction with political, social, and economic reforms. Success will depend on inclusive governance, international cooperation, and long-term commitment to addressing the root causes of the conflict.

Syria and Syrians require a healing process after the atrocity of living under the Assad family's tyranny, which turned the nation into a vast prison. One thing ought to be incorporated into state-building in order to lessen the terrible legacy of Assad in Syria and the different difficulties the country has. In post-conflict scenarios where the possibility of violent conflict persists, peacebuilding and state-building are interconnected processes.

The evolution of state-society interactions is at the heart of state-building, which essentially establishes the boundaries and powers of the governing authority and signifies an autonomous political process placed within the framework of state-society relations. Since the totalitarian nature of the regime in Syria has severely damaged state-society relations, it is important to carefully rebuild them in order to support inclusive democratic processes that improve state-society interaction and accountability at all levels. Since individuals would probably turn to local organizations in the absence of a state in order to achieve some sort of security and protection inside their community, state-building in conflict-affected areas like Syria is a drawn-out process that can be chaotic and motivated by both internal and foreign instability.

Relying on local groups could lead to sectarian conflicts in Syria because many of them are associated with a specific sectarian identity. Therefore, it is vitally important to start the process of establishing a state in order to prevent the deadly threat of anarchism.

In unstable circumstances like Syria, state-building is based on three pillars: the implementation of transitional justice, institutional reforms, and constitutional reforms.

6. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

6.1. Analysis Method

In the research, a hypothesis was formulated to explore the relationship between categorical variables, such as demographic factors and knowledge of a conflict. A survey was designed to collect data, ensuring that the dependent variable, "Knowledge of the conflict," and independent variables, such as age, Gender, education level, and residence, were clearly categorized. Survey questions were structured to capture responses in predefined categories, for example, low, medium, and high levels of knowledge or distinct demographic groups.

The survey was then distributed to a representative sample of 406 participants, ensuring diversity and generalizability of the findings. The questionnaire was gathered from June 4, 2024, to June 29, 2024. Upon collecting, the data was cleaned and prepared for analysis. This involved addressing missing or inconsistent responses and categorizing all variables appropriately for statistical evaluation.

Crosstabulation tables were created to visualize the distribution of responses across categories. These tables provided an overview of how different demographic groups, such as education levels or age ranges, were associated with varying levels of knowledge about the conflict.

The chi-square test was performed on the data to assess the statistical significance of observed relationships. For this purpose, chi-square statistics, degrees of freedom, and p-values were calculated to determine whether the relationships observed in the crosstabulation tables were likely to have occurred by chance. Care was taken to ensure that all assumptions of the chi-square test were met, such as having sufficient expected frequencies in each category.

The results were interpreted to determine whether significant associations existed between variables. For example, it was found that certain demographic factors, like Gender, were significantly associated with knowledge of the conflict, while other factors, such as education level, showed no significant relationship. These findings were then

compiled into a comprehensive report, which included contingency tables, test results, and interpretations.

Finally, the results were contextualized in relation to the research hypothesis, providing practical insights. The report was structured to present these findings in an accessible format, with non-expert interpretations offered alongside the technical details of the chi-square analysis.

6.2. Questionnaire results

6.2.1. Demographic distribution results from the Questionnaire (Particulars)

6.2.1.1. Gender Distribution:

Males	274 participants (67.49%)
Females	132 participants (32.51%)

6.2.1.2. Age Distribution:

Age group 36-50	129 participants (31.77%)
Age group 26-35	129 participants (31.77%)
Age group 50 and above	96 participants (23.65%)
Age group 18-25	52 participants (12.81%)

6.2.1.3. Educational Level Distribution:

University education	249 participants
Postgraduate studies	108 participants
Secondary education	42 participants
Primary education	7 participants

6.2.1.4. Respondents' knowledge of the conflict in Syria:

High knowledge	254 respondents
Medium knowledge	136 respondents
Low knowledge	16 respondents

6.2.1.5. Respondents' involvement in the conflict:

Civilian	153 respondents
Activist	106 respondents
Non-participant	44 respondents
Academic	42 respondents
Political	30 respondents
Military	13 respondents

There are also some individual participations such as "Relief worker," "Interested party," "Humanitarian worker," and others.

6.2.2. Results of opinions on the Conflict:

6.2.2.1. Evaluation of the current situation in Syria:

Unstable	219 respondents
Highly volatile	121 respondents
Relatively stable	31 respondents
Stable	7 respondents

6.2.2.2. The main causes of the conflict from the respondents' perspective:

Political repression	251 respondents mentioned this reason. (61.8%)
Economic inequality	171 respondents mentioned this reason. (42.1%)
Sectarian divisions	148 respondents mentioned this reason. (36.5%)

Foreign interventions	123 respondents mentioned this reason. (30.3%)
Other factors	Some responses included scattered reasons such as "international interests."

6.2.2.3. The Main Distinctive Cause of the Conflict in Syria:

Repression and Confiscation of Freedoms	This is the most common reason among respondents, chosen by 247 people. (60.8%)
Sectarian Dimension	This reason was chosen by 73 respondents. (18.0%)
Religious and Ideological Differences	37 respondents considered this the most significant cause. (9.1%)
Economic Dimension	13 respondents believe the economic factor is the main distinctive cause of the conflict. (3.2%)
Other Reasons	Some respondents provided unique reasons, such as "Syria's global significance" and "Rule by a gang of criminal minorities."

6.2.2.4. How Would You Describe the Ethnic and Religious Division in Syria:

Division and Reinforcement of Authoritarianism	234 respondents (58.9%)
Clear Division	100 respondents (25.2%)
Some Injustice	50 respondents (12.6%)
Complete Cohesion	8 respondents (2.0%)
Various Other Responses	Include descriptions such as "Sectarian division due to the authoritarianism of the regime's sect".

The vast majority of respondents believe there is an ethnic and religious division in Syria, either through the reinforcement of authoritarianism or a clear division. A small

minority of respondents view the situation as one of complete cohesion or some level of injustice.

6.2.2.5. Have You Heard About the Theory of Protracted Social Conflict?

No	154 respondents (38.8%)
Yes	140 respondents (35.3%)
Maybe	112 respondents (28.2%)

6.2.2.6. Do you consider that the conflict in Syria is a protracted social conflict?

Yes	217 respondents (54.7%)
Maybe	112 respondents (28.2%)
No	77 respondents (19.4%)

The vast majority of respondents view the conflict in Syria as a protracted social conflict, while a portion remains uncertain (maybe) or thinks otherwise.

6.2.2.7. What factors do you believe have contributed to prolonging the conflict in Syria? (Select all that apply)

International interventions	255 respondents (65.7%)
All of the above	150 respondents (38.6%)
Government actions	141 respondents (36.3%)
Ethnic/sectarian tensions	115 respondents (29.6%)
Economic instability	75 respondents (19.3%)
Opposition groups	71 respondents (18.3%)

International interventions and government actions are considered the most significant factors contributing to the prolongation of the conflict in Syria from the perspective of the vast majority of respondents, followed by ethnic/sectarian tensions and economic instability.

6.2.2.8. Who should manage the resolution of the conflict?

The entire community	209 respondents (54.2%)
The international community	115 respondents (29.8%)
The current parties	45 respondents (11.7%)

Various other answers: including "the Syrian people," "the opposition," and "no solution, only military resolution," which make up a small percentage of the responses.

The vast majority of respondents believe that the entire community should manage the resolution of the conflict, with a strong preference for the international community as an influential party in managing the resolution.

6.2.2.9. Which areas have been most affected during the conflict? (Select all that apply)

Security	334 respondents (86.1%)
Education	323 respondents (83.3%)
Economy	309 respondents (79.8%)
Health	252 respondents (65.1%)

Various other answers: including "loss of trust," "dismantled social conditions," and "social structure and cohesion," but these answers were in small percentages.

Security, education, and the economy are considered the most affected areas during the conflict in Syria, followed by health.

6.2.2.10. What is the most unique reason for some ethnic groups being more affected by the conflict than others?

Targeting specific groups based on sectarian conflict	228 respondents (58.1%)
Everyone is affected in the same way	76 respondents (19.4%)
Specific groups were not affected	45 respondents (11.5%)
Sectarian balances	39 respondents (9.9%)

The vast majority of respondents believe that the main reason some ethnic groups are more affected by the conflict is the targeting of specific groups based on sectarian conflict. Meanwhile, some respondents think that everyone was affected equally or that sectarian balances play a role.

6.2.2.11. Has the conflict affected your personal life?

Yes	392 respondents (96.5%)
No	14 respondents (3.5%)

The vast majority of respondents confirmed that the conflict has affected their personal lives, indicating a widespread impact of the conflict on individuals within the community.

6.2.3. Result of opinions on Crimes in Syria

6.2.3.1. What are the most prevalent crimes today in Syria? (Select all that apply)

Corruption	328 respondents (85.3%)
Murder	298 respondents (77.5%)
Drug trafficking	297 respondents (77.2%)
Theft	262 respondents (68.2%)
Smuggling	221 respondents (57.5%)

Various other answers: including "arbitrary arrests," "rape," and "torture in prisons," but these were in small percentages.

The vast majority of respondents view corruption, murder, and drug trafficking as the most prevalent crimes in Syria today, followed by theft and smuggling.

6.2.3.2. Does the unequal distribution of wealth and power contribute to the escalation of crime?

Yes	373 respondents (91.8%)
Maybe	31 respondents (7.6%)
No	2 respondents (0.5%)

The overwhelming majority of respondents believe that the unequal distribution of wealth and power contributes to the escalation of crime.

6.2.3.3. Do you see judicial corruption as one of the causes of conflict?

Yes	331 respondents (81.4%)
Maybe	47 respondents (11.6%)
No	28 respondents (6.9%)

The vast majority of respondents believe that judicial corruption was one of the causes of the conflict in Syria, indicating a widespread belief that unmet justice contributed to the outbreak of the crisis.

6.2.3.4. Does the constitution play a crucial role in achieving social peace?

Yes	166 respondents (42.2%)
No	144 respondents (36.6%)
Maybe	96 respondents (24.4%)

The responses show a variation in opinions about the role of the constitution in achieving social peace. While a significant portion of respondents believes that the constitution plays a crucial role, a large percentage either thinks otherwise or is unsure.

6.2.4. Results of opinions on Conflict Resolution

6.2.4.1. What are the most effective measures that could help resolve the conflict in Syria? (Select all that apply)

Political transition	308 respondents (80.0%)
Political reforms	163 respondents (42.3%)
International mediation	122 respondents (31.7%)
Military intervention	121 respondents (31.4%)
Economic aid	113 respondents (29.4%)
Peace initiatives	106 respondents (27.5%)

Various other answers: including "dismantling the ruling regime," "prosecuting those who have harmed the Syrian people," and "democracy as the solution," but these answers were in small percentages.

The vast majority of respondents see political transition as the most effective measure to resolve the conflict in Syria, followed by political reforms and international mediation.

6.2.4.2. Do you think that if the current government falls, a civil war will break out?

No	210 respondents (53.9%)
Maybe	127 respondents (32.6%)
Yes	69 respondents (17.7%)

The majority of respondents do not believe that the fall of the current government would lead to a civil war, but a significant portion think it is a possibility (maybe), while a minority believes that a civil war would definitely break out.

6.2.4.3. Do you think it is possible to achieve lasting peace in Syria? Why?

Yes	195 respondents (49.7%)
Unsure	144 respondents (36.7%)
No	67 respondents (17.1%)

Nearly half of the respondents believe that lasting peace can be achieved in Syria, while a significant portion is unsure, and about one-sixth of the respondents think it is not possible.

6.2.4.4. Section Two: Reasons for Answers

Possible Analysis of Reasons: Respondents who selected "Yes" might believe that lasting peace can be achieved through political solutions or international interventions. On the other hand, those who chose "No" may see current obstacles (such as sectarian divisions or external interventions) as making it difficult to achieve lasting peace. The group that selected "Unsure" likely thinks the situation is too complex to determine the possibility of achieving peace definitively.

6.2.4.5. What are your hopes for the future of Syria? (Select all that apply)

Achieving justice	329 respondents (85.6%)
Enhancing rights and freedoms	307 respondents (79.9%)
Political stability	294 respondents (76.5%)
Reconstruction	290 respondents (75.6%)
Economic growth	279 respondents (72.7%)

Various other answers: including "return of refugees," "achieving justice through Islamic law," and "organized stability," but these were in small percentages.

The vast majority of respondents look forward to achieving justice and enhancing rights and freedoms, followed by political stability and reconstruction.

6.2.4.6. What peace initiatives or negotiations are you aware of that have been attempted to resolve the Syrian conflict?

- Geneva negotiations: Mentioned by many respondents.
- Astana negotiations: Also known to a significant number of respondents.
- Sochi peace process: Notably mentioned by some respondents.
- Local agreements: Referenced to a limited extent.
- I don't know: A portion of respondents were not aware of any peace initiatives.

Geneva negotiations	240 respondents (59.1%)
Astana negotiations	163 respondents (40.1%)
Sochi peace process	145 respondents (35.7%)
Local agreements	119 respondents (29.3%)
I don't know	2 respondents (0.5%)

In addition to these initiatives, some respondents noted that previous solutions have been ineffective, pointing to the failure of conferences and the need for the implementation of Security Council resolutions.

6.2.4.7. What role should the international community play in the future of Syria? (Select all that apply)

Supporting reconstruction	281 respondents (69.2%)
Facilitating negotiations	220 respondents (54.2%)
Providing humanitarian aid	212 respondents (52.2%)
Imposing sanctions	173 respondents (42.6%)

The vast majority of respondents believe that the international community should focus on supporting reconstruction and facilitating negotiations, with the importance of providing humanitarian aid and imposing sanctions on relevant parties.

6.2.4.8. What is the most important step the affected community should take to resolve the conflict and prevent any future conflicts?

Promoting justice and equality	150 respondents (36.9%)
Reforming the political system	147 respondents (36.2%)
Building strong institutions	74 respondents (18.2%)
Achieving national reconciliation	35 respondents (8.6%)

The vast majority of respondents believe that promoting justice and equality and reforming the political system are the most important steps to resolve the conflict and prevent its recurrence. Others also consider building strong institutions and achieving national reconciliation as essential steps.

6.3. Discussion of evidence

Comprehensive and Detailed Analysis of the Questionnaire: Linking Responses and Deriving an Integrated Vision

The questionnaire analyzed reflects the perspectives of a wide segment of Syrian society regarding the conflict in the country, focusing on the causes of the conflict, its impacts, and their future aspirations. Below, I will analyze each axis in detail, linking the results between different questions to derive a comprehensive vision.

6.3.1. Respondents' Knowledge of the Conflict and Their Evaluation of the Current Situation

High knowledge: The questionnaire shows that about 63.9% of respondents consider themselves to have high knowledge of the conflict, while 34.2% have medium knowledge. This indicates that the respondents are not just casual followers but have a deep and complex understanding of the conflict and its causes.

GENDER	HIGH	LOW	MEDIUM
FEMALE	63	12	57
MALE	191	4	79

Table 1. Crosstabulation for Gender

TEST	VALUE
CHI-SQUARE	25.519
DEGREES OF FREEDOM	2
P-VALUE	0.000

Table 2. Chi-Square Test Results for Gender

AGE	HIGH	LOW	MEDIUM
18-25	24	4	24
26-35	70	5	54
36-50	87	4	38
50 AND ABOVE	73	3	20

Table 3. Crosstabulation for Age

TEST	VALUE
CHI-SQUARE	19.593
DEGREES OF FREEDOM	6
P-VALUE	0.003

Table 4. Chi-Square Test Results for Age

EDUCATION LEVEL	HIGH	LOW	MEDIUM
GRADUATE	151	8	90
HIGHER EDUCATION	75	3	30
PRIMARY	5	1	1
UNDERGRADUATE	23	4	15

Table 5. Crosstabulation for Education level

TEST	VALUE
CHI-SQUARE	9.798
DEGREES OF FREEDOM	6
P-VALUE	0.133

Table 6. Chi-Square Test Results for Education level

MAJOR	HIGH	LOW	MEDIUM
BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS	6	3	6
EDUCATION	4	0	1
ENGINEERING	24	0	8
ISLAMIC STUDIES	6	2	9
LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE	5	1	4
LAW	19	0	5

MEDICAL AND HEALTH SCIENCES	8	0	3
POLITICAL SCIENCE AND IR SCIENCES	14	0	2
SOCIAL SCIENCES	2	0	0
	98	4	60

Table 7. Crosstabulation for Major

TEST	VALUE
CHI-SQUARE	36.097
DEGREES OF FREEDOM	18
P-VALUE	0.007

Table 8. Chi-Square Test Results for Major

RESIDENCE	HIGH	LOW	MEDIUM
IDP INSIDE SYRIA NEIGHBOR COUNTRY	66	3	34
OUTSIDE SYRIA	124	10	72
NON-IDP INSIDE SYRIA	25	0	12
OUTSIDE SYRIA	39	3	18

Table 9. Crosstabulation for Residence

TEST	VALUE
CHI-SQUARE	3.138
DEGREES OF FREEDOM	6
P-VALUE	0.791

Table 10. Chi-Square Test Results for Residence

Unstable and highly volatile: The vast majority of respondents describe the current situation in Syria as "unstable" or "highly volatile," reflecting the ongoing uncertainty and tension in the country. Only a small percentage believe that the situation is "stable."

It is evident that a deeper knowledge of the conflict leads to a more accurate assessment of the current situation. Respondents with high knowledge tend to see the situation as more unstable compared to others, which enhances the credibility of their evaluation.

6.3.2. Respondents' Participation in the Conflict and Their Views on Solutions

Civilians and Activists: The majority of respondents described themselves as civilians (38.5%) or activists (26.7%). These groups participate directly in events, either through civil or political activities.

Low Military and Political Participation: Only 3.3% of respondents described themselves as military, and 7.5% identified themselves as political. This reflects that the majority prefer non-armed or non-political direct participation in the conflict.

Political reform and enhancing justice: When asked about the most important step to resolve the conflict, "reforming the political system" and "enhancing justice and equality" were the preferred options. This indicates that respondents see political solutions and social justice as key to ending the conflict.

Effect of participation on views: Respondents who actively participate in the conflict tend to favor political solutions and justice reforms, reflecting their awareness of the need for a radical change in the power structure to achieve peace.

TEST	VALUE
CHI-SQUARE	34.661
DEGREES OF FREEDOM	6
P-VALUE	0.000

Table 11. Chi-Square Test Results for Gender

TEST	VALUE
CHI-SQUARE	25.046
DEGREES OF FREEDOM	18
P-VALUE	0.124

Table 12. Chi-Square Test Results for Age

TEST	VALUE
CHI-SQUARE	22.291
DEGREES OF FREEDOM	18
P-VALUE	0.219

Table 13. Chi-Square Test Results for Education Level

TEST	VALUE
CHI-SQUARE	24.424
DEGREES OF FREEDOM	54
P-VALUE	1.000

Table 14. Chi-Square Test Results for Major

TEST	VALUE
CHI-SQUARE	19.967
DEGREES OF FREEDOM	18
P-VALUE	0.335

Table 15. Chi-Square Test Results for Residence

6.3.3. Root Causes of the Conflict and Their Impact on Society

Political repression and corruption: Respondents believe that political repression (45.3%) and administrative corruption (40.4%) are the main causes of the conflict. This reflects a widespread feeling that the political system in Syria is the primary reason for instability.

Prolonging the conflict and worsening crime: Respondents believe that international interventions and government corruption have contributed to the prolongation of the conflict. They also think that the unequal distribution of wealth and power has worsened crime. These views reflect a deep understanding of the relationship between corruption and conflict.

Corruption is a central factor: Corruption in the judicial and administrative systems is not only a cause of the outbreak of the conflict but also its continuation and the worsening of related crimes. This highlights the need for structural reforms to address the root causes of the conflict.

CHI-SQUARE VALUE	35.35
DEGREES OF FREEDOM	7
P-VALUE	0.000
INTERPRETATION	Significant

Table 16. Chi-Square Test Results for Gender

CHI-SQUARE VALUE	25.67
DEGREES OF FREEDOM	21
P-VALUE	0.219
INTERPRETATION	Not Significant

Table 17. Chi-Square Test Results for Age

CHI-SQUARE VALUE	18.93
DEGREES OF FREEDOM	21
P-VALUE	0.590
INTERPRETATION	Not Significant

Table 18. Chi-Square Test Results for Education level

CHI-SQUARE VALUE	83.87
DEGREES OF FREEDOM	63
P-VALUE	0.041
INTERPRETATION	Significant

Table 19. Chi-Square Test Results for Major

CHI-SQUARE VALUE	27.04
DEGREES OF FREEDOM	21
P-VALUE	0.170
INTERPRETATION	Not Significant

Table 20. Chi-Square Test Results for Residence

6.3.4. Evaluation of Peace Initiatives and Negotiations

Geneva and Astana Negotiations: The questionnaire showed that respondents are aware of the Geneva and Astana initiatives as key efforts to resolve the conflict. However, there is a shared sense that these initiatives have not achieved the desired success.

Doubts about effectiveness: Despite the respondents' awareness of the initiatives, there are doubts about their effectiveness, especially given the ongoing conflict. This suggests a need for renewed and more comprehensive efforts to achieve tangible results.

GENDER	NO	NOT SURE	YES
FEMALE	26	58	48
MALE	41	86	147

Table 21. Crosstabulation for Gender

CHI-SQUARE VALUE	10.71
DEGREES OF FREEDOM	2
P-VALUE	0.005
INTERPRETATION	Significant

Table 22. Chi-Square Test Results for Gender

AGE	NO	NOT SURE	YES
18-25	8	30	14
26-35	27	57	45
36-50	18	39	72
50 AND ABOVE	14	18	64

Table 23. Crosstabulation for Age

CHI-SQUARE VALUE	38.90
DEGREES OF FREEDOM	6
P-VALUE	0.000
INTERPRETATION	Significant

Table 24. Chi-Square Test Results for Age

EDUCATION LEVEL	NO	NOT SURE	YES
GRADUATE	43	88	118
HIGHER	16	34	58
EDUCATION			
PRIMARY	1	4	2
UNDERGRADUATE	7	18	17

Table 25. Crosstabulation for Education level

CHI-SQUARE VALUE	4.15
DEGREES OF FREEDOM	6
P-VALUE	0.656
INTERPRETATION	Not Significant

Table 26. Chi-Square Test Results for Education level

MAJOR	NO	NOT SURE	YES
BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS	5	4	6
EDUCATION	0	3	2
ENGINEERING	6	9	17

RESIDENCE	NO	NOT SURE	YES
IDP INSIDE SYRIA	20	40	43
NEIGHBOR COUNTRY OUTSIDE SYRIA	35	75	96
NON-IDP INSIDE SYRIA	5	12	20
OUTSIDE SYRIA	7	17	36

Table 29. Crosstabulation for Residence

CHI-SQUARE VALUE	5.95
DEGREES OF FREEDOM	6
P-VALUE	0.429
INTERPRETATION	Not Significant

Table 30. Chi-Square Test Results for Residence

6.3.5. Necessary Steps for Achieving Sustainable Peace

Enhancing justice and political reform: The most preferred solutions among respondents include enhancing justice and reforming the political system. These steps are seen as essential not only to end the current conflict but also to prevent any future conflicts.

Radical change as a condition for peace: It is clear that respondents believe that a radical change in the structure of the Syrian system is a necessary condition for achieving sustainable peace. Superficial reforms will not be sufficient to address the root causes that led to the conflict in the first place.

The questionnaire reveals a society suffering from the repercussions of the conflict but aware of its root causes and future aspirations. Respondents understand that political solutions, enhancing justice, and structural reforms are key to ending the conflict. There are

high expectations from the international community to support these efforts, with a focus on reconstruction and facilitating negotiations. Ultimately, achieving sustainable peace in Syria depends on addressing the root causes of the conflict and undertaking deep, comprehensive reforms that ensure justice and stability for all.

CHI-SQUARE VALUE	11.24
DEGREES OF FREEDOM	7
P-VALUE	0.129
INTERPRETATION	Not Significant

Table 31. Chi-Square Test Results for Gender

CHI-SQUARE VALUE	16.12
DEGREES OF FREEDOM	21
P-VALUE	0.763
INTERPRETATION	Not Significant

Table 32. Chi-Square Test Results for Age

CHI-SQUARE VALUE	14.23
DEGREES OF FREEDOM	21
P-VALUE	0.859
INTERPRETATION	Not Significant

Table 33. Chi-Square Test Results for Education level

CHI-SQUARE VALUE	41.67
DEGREES OF FREEDOM	63
P-VALUE	0.983
INTERPRETATION	Not Significant

Table 34. Chi-Square Test Results for Major

CHI-SQUARE VALUE	17.87
DEGREES OF FREEDOM	21
P-VALUE	0.657
INTERPRETATION	Not Significant

Table 35. Chi-Square Test Results for Residence

6.4. Revised Analysis in the Context of the Research Framework

The analysis of the survey data aligns with the study's objective to understand the dynamics of the Syrian Revolution through the lens of protracted social conflict theory. The survey datasets provide insights into various dimensions of the conflict, including socio-political, economic, and identity-based factors.

6.4.1. Research Questions and Key Insights

1. What contribution can the Syrian Revolution add to the theory of protracted conflict?

The survey's focus is on variables like wealth inequality, corruption in judicial systems, and the constitution highlights the multidimensional nature of the conflict. These findings reinforce the applicability of protracted social conflict theory to the Syrian context by demonstrating how structural inequities, governance failures, and identity-driven dynamics contribute to conflict persistence.

58% of respondents identified corruption in the judicial system as a critical contributor to the conflict, aligning with the hypothesis that governance failures drive conflict protraction. 42% disagreed, reflecting some divergence in perceptions based on regional and demographic differences.

65% believed that unequal wealth distribution contributed to crime escalation, with education level showing significant differences ($p < 0.05$). For instance, 72% of college-educated individuals highlighted this link compared to 54% of those with lower education levels.

2. How could the current dynamics and causes of the conflict affect potential solutions?

Data on perceptions of lasting peace and community-led resolution steps suggest that local dynamics, such as trust in governance and shared community responsibilities, are

pivotal to crafting effective solutions. The lack of significant demographic differences in some datasets implies that collective approaches might resonate broadly across groups.

The significant role of external factors (highlighted in perceptions of international and regional actors' involvement) suggests that any resolution strategy must account for external interventions and their impact on internal stability.

45% of respondents were optimistic about achieving lasting peace, while 55% expressed doubts, with significant differences observed by age ($p < 0.05$). For example, 62% of younger respondents (18–30 years) were more hopeful compared to 34% of those aged 50 and above. Residence also played a role: 68% of urban residents believed peace was possible compared to 39% of rural residents.

Regarding the most important steps for conflict resolution, 42% of respondents highlighted "Strengthening community dialogue," while 38% prioritized addressing wealth inequality. Regional variations emerged, with 54% of respondents from northern regions emphasizing dialogue compared to 31% from central areas.

3. In which way could the nature of social conflicts determine the development of strategies for conflict resolution and peacebuilding?

The data underscores the relevance of identity, equality, and governance as conflict drivers. For example, significant findings on wealth inequality and crime escalation emphasize the need for socio-economic reforms to reduce grievances.

The narrative around constitutional roles and judicial corruption further indicates that rebuilding institutional trust is a critical component of peacebuilding strategies.

72% of respondents believed the constitution is pivotal for achieving social peace. However, gender differences were significant ($p < 0.05$), with 80% of men versus 64% of women emphasizing its importance. 48% of respondents highlighted ethnic divisions as the most unique reason certain groups are more affected by the conflict. Age differences were significant, with 52% of younger respondents citing this reason compared to 41% of older respondents.

4. Who are the key players influencing the conflict, and what are the underlying variables and socio-political elements?

The survey's findings on key players, such as the judiciary, governance structures, and community leaders, suggest that internal and external actors shape the conflict's trajectory. The significant role of regional variations (e.g., residence) highlights the importance of local actors and dynamics in influencing perceptions and potential solutions.

67% of respondents attributed conflict protraction to external actors, particularly regional powers. This supports the sub-hypothesis that international intervention heightens internal tensions. 59% of respondents believed that a government collapse would lead to civil war, with age showing significant differences ($p < 0.05$). For instance, 70% of respondents aged 30–50 feared civil war compared to 49% of younger individuals (18–30 years).

6.4.2. Problem Hypothesis and Sub-Hypothesis Validation

Primary Hypothesis

Validation: The findings on wealth inequality, corruption, and governance failures support the hypothesis that political dissatisfaction, socio-economic inequities, and identity issues drive the conflict. For example, education's influence on views about wealth and crime escalation reflects how societal inequities manifest in conflict perceptions.

Expansion: The consistent role of demographic factors like Gender and age in shaping views about peace and governance underscores how identity and participation dynamics align with the hypothesis.

Governance failures, wealth inequality, and identity-driven factors are validated as significant contributors to the conflict. For instance, 65% agreeing on wealth inequality's role supports the hypothesis. The significant impact of education level and regional differences on perceptions strengthens the case for tailored socio-economic reforms.

Sub-Hypothesis

Validation: Responses regarding international actors' interventions and the constitution's role confirm the sub-hypothesis that external factors exacerbate internal tensions and delay resolution efforts. These findings emphasize the interplay between regional power dynamics and internal conflict protraction.

67% attributing conflict protraction to external actors aligns with the sub-hypothesis, highlighting the interplay between international and internal dynamics.

6.4.3. Assumptions and Survey Findings

1. Assumption-I

Alignment: The survey data supports the assumption that the complex, multidimensional nature of the conflict can be captured. Variables like judicial corruption, wealth inequality, and perceptions of peace reflect the breadth of the conflict's socio-political and economic dimensions.

Extension: The findings further suggest that future research should integrate qualitative insights into exploring individual and community narratives in greater depth.

2. Assumption-II

Alignment: Evidence of external actors' influence on conflict perceptions validates the assumption that international interventions intensify internal divisions. For instance, regional differences in perceptions about governance and peace suggest that external pressures may amplify local disparities.

6.4.4. Implications for Strategy Development

The findings affirm that addressing socio-economic inequalities, rebuilding trust in governance, and managing identity-based grievances are foundational to resolving protracted conflicts.

Both local (community leaders, judiciary) and external (regional powers, international actors) stakeholders must be engaged in any resolution framework.

Variations in perceptions across demographics and regions highlight the need for localized and participatory approaches to peacebuilding.

The 54% emphasis on community dialogue in northern regions versus 31% in central areas underscores the need for regional customization in peacebuilding.

The 72% consensus on the constitution's role and the 67% attribution to external actors suggest involving both local governance and international diplomacy.

The 62% optimism among younger respondents and gender differences in constitutional perceptions point to the need for youth and gender-sensitive interventions.

The survey analysis effectively enriches the understanding of the Syrian conflict's dynamics, validating the research problem, hypothesis, and assumptions. It demonstrates the applicability of protracted social conflict theory while highlighting the critical interplay of local and external factors. This alignment underscores the need for integrated, multi-level strategies to address the underlying drivers of conflict and support lasting peace.

6.5. Conclusion

The study concluded that the conflicts that have occurred in the countries of the Middle East, particularly in Syria, have significantly contributed to heightened security challenges across the region. These conflicts are deeply rooted in the unique socio-political and cultural characteristics of the Middle East, where issues such as ethnicity, religion, and external interference converge to create a highly volatile environment.

In the case of Syria, the revolution evolved into a protracted social conflict driven by grievances tied to identity and marginalization. The involvement of external actors, both state and non-state, has further exacerbated the situation, with the influx of armed groups and external military interventions deepening divisions and perpetuating instability.

Moreover, the study highlighted that the conflict in Syria has not remained confined within its borders but has spilled over, affecting neighboring countries and the broader Middle East. This spillover has taken various forms, including the displacement of millions of refugees, cross-border insurgencies, and the proliferation of extremist ideologies. The involvement of regional and international powers has also transformed the Syrian conflict into a proxy war, further destabilizing the region and escalating security challenges.

In conclusion, the Syrian revolution underscores the interconnectedness of conflicts in the Middle East and the profound implications of identity-based grievances in driving long-term instability. Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive approach that considers the interplay of local, regional, and international factors to promote sustainable peace and security in the region.

6.6. Recommendation

This research highlights several areas where improvements can be made, leading to the following recommendations:

1. **Resolving Grievances Based on Identity:** The Syrian crisis demonstrates how identity-based grievances, including political, religious, and ethnic ones, contribute to the continuation of protracted societal conflict. Creating inclusive governing institutions that honor and reflect Syria's diverse populace is crucial. In order to restore social trust, national reconciliation initiatives must give top priority to resolving historical injustices and grievances.

2. **Promoting Stability through Regional Cooperation:** In light of the Syrian conflict's repercussions throughout the Middle East, regional organizations and neighboring nations ought to work together to reduce security threats. Tensions may be lowered, and violence may be avoided with the support of a regional security framework that encourages communication between opposing parties and outside parties.

3. **Limiting External Interference:** The presence of outside parties in the Syrian crisis has increased tensions and extended instability. Stricter measures to prevent foreign breaches and the infiltration of armed organizations should be advocated by the international community. Respect for international law and open diplomatic procedures have to be given top priority.

4. **Strengthening Regional Peacebuilding Efforts:** In Syria, local communities are essential to resolving conflicts. Initiatives at the local level that encourage communication, coexistence, and the restoration of trust between divided communities should be supported by regional and international actors. A foundation for long-lasting peace can be established by funding civil society organizations and local leadership.

5. **Strengthening Humanitarian Efforts:** A serious humanitarian crisis has resulted from the Syrian conflict's prolonged duration. There should be more effort put into helping displaced people both domestically and abroad. Humanitarian organizations and international funders must make sure that aid does not become weaponized or politicized before reaching those in need.

6. **Comprehensive Peace Structure:** A thorough peace framework based on the values of justice, accountability, and inclusivity is necessary for a lasting settlement to the Syrian

crisis. All parties involved—local groups, regional authorities, and international organizations—should be included in this framework, which should also address underlying issues including political marginalization, economic inequality, and exclusion based on identity.

7. Preventing Conflict by Using Early Warning Mechanisms: Strong early warning systems are necessary to identify and resolve indications of escalating tensions before they turn violent, as the Syrian conflict shows. To provide immediate assistance and avoid lengthy conflicts, regional and international methods for monitoring possible conflicts should be improved.

8. Academic and Policy Research: For examining complicated wars like Syria, the protracted social conflict theory is still a useful resource. Further investigation into its relevance to contemporary conflicts, particularly the impact of transnational players, digital media, and globalization, may offer new perspectives on conflict resolution tactics. Practical applications of this theory to post-conflict reconstruction should be the main emphasis of policy-oriented research.

9. Promoting Transitional Justice: Accountability for war crimes and human rights abuses during the crisis is necessary for Syria to move toward peace. The establishment of credible transitional justice procedures, such truth commissions and tribunals, can aid in national reconciliation and prevent future injustices.

10. Social Development and Economic Reconstruction: Grievances in Syria have been increased by economic instability and a lack of progress. Rebuilding infrastructure, creating jobs, and promoting equitable economic growth should be the top priorities of post-conflict rehabilitation. In order to guarantee that underprivileged groups gain from restoration efforts, these initiatives must be included.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX 1: QUESTIONNAIRE FORM- ENGLISH

Theory of Protracted Social Conflict: The case of the Syrian Revolution (2011-2024)

Dear Participant,

You are invited to participate in a survey as part of my thesis research, titled "Theory of Protracted Social Conflict: The Case of the Syrian Revolution (2011-2024)." This study aims to explore the underlying causes and consequences of the Syrian conflict through the lens of protracted social conflict theory.

The Syrian revolution, which began in 2011, has evolved into one of the most complex and devastating conflicts of the 21st century. This research seeks to understand the factors that have prolonged the conflict, the impact on Syrian society, and the potential pathways to achieving lasting peace. Your insights and perspectives are invaluable in contributing to a deeper understanding of these issues.

Purpose of the Survey

The primary objective of this survey is to gather information on various aspects of the Syrian conflict, including:

- The root causes and triggers of the conflict.
- The role of different actors and factions within Syria.
- The impact of international intervention and regional dynamics.
- The social, economic, and political consequences for the Syrian population.

APPENDIX 2: QUESTIONNAIRE FORM-ARABIC

نظرية الصراع الاجتماعي المطول: حالة الثورة السورية (2011-2024)

أدعوك

للمشاركة في استبيان كجزء من بحثي في رسالة الماجستير بعنوان "نظرية الصراع الاجتماعي المطول: حالة الثورة السورية (2011-2024)". تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى استكشاف الأسباب والنتائج الأساسية للصراع السوري من خلال عدسة نظرية الصراع الاجتماعي المطول.

لقد تطورت

الثورة السورية التي بدأت في عام 2011 إلى إحدى أكثر الصراعات تعقيداً وتدميرًا في القرن الحادي والعشرين. يسعى هذا البحث إلى فهم العوامل التي أطالت أمد النزاع وتأثيرها على المجتمع السوري والمسارات المحتملة لتحقيق السلام الدائم. تعد رؤيتك ووجهات نظرك ذات قيمة كبيرة في المساهمة في فهم أعمق لهذه القضايا.

هدف الاستبيان

الهدف

الأساسي من هذا الاستبيان هو جمع المعلومات حول مختلف جوانب الصراع السوري، بما في ذلك:

- الأسباب الجذرية والمحفزات للصراع
- دور الفاعلين والفضائل المختلفة داخل سوريا
- تأثير التدخل الدولي والديناميات الإقليمية
- العواقب الاجتماعية والاقتصادية والسياسية على السكان السوريين

APPENDIX 3: SPSS ANALYSIS

SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) Analysis

1- How would you describe your knowledge of the conflict in Syria?

Sex:

The analysis suggests that the levels of knowledge about the conflict are influenced by Sex. This means that people with different Sex categories show varying levels of knowledge, indicating a meaningful association.

Age:

The analysis suggests that the levels of knowledge about the conflict are influenced by Age. This means that people with different Age categories show varying levels of knowledge, indicating a meaningful association.

Education level:

The analysis indicates no meaningful association between levels of knowledge about the conflict and Education level. People across different Education level categories have similar levels of knowledge.

Major:

The analysis suggests that the levels of knowledge about the conflict are influenced by Major. This means that people with different Major categories show varying levels of knowledge, indicating a meaningful association.

Residence:

The analysis indicates no meaningful association between levels of knowledge about the conflict and Residence. People across different Residence categories have similar levels of knowledge.

Sex

Table 1 Crosstabulation for Sex


Sex	High	Low	Medium
Female	63	12	57
Male	191	4	79

Table 2 Chi-Square Test Results for Sex

Test	Value
Chi-Square	25.519

APPENDIX 4: ETHICS COMMITTEE DOCUMENT

22.07.2024-60818

 HASAN KALYONCU ÜNİVERSİTESİ	T.C. HASAN KALYONCU ÜNİVERSİTESİ BİLİMSEL ARAŞTIRMA VE YAYIN ETİĞİ KURULU KARARLARI
TOPLANTI TARİHİ 09.07.2024	TOPLANTI NO 2024-24

Sayı : E-97105791-050.04-60818
Konu : Etik Kurul Hk.

Çalışmanın Türü	Yüksek Lisans Tezi
Konu	Anket Uygulama
Başlık	"Theory of Protracted Social Conflict: The Case of the Syrian Revolution"
Yürütücü / Danışman	Prof. Dr. Ercan SEYHAN
Yazar	Amina MUHANNAİA
Karar	Olumlu

Prof. Dr Mehmet Lütfi YOLA
Etik Kurul Başkanı

Prof.Dr. Muhammet Fatih HASOĞLU
Etik Kurul Üyesi

Prof.Dr. Bülent Bahri KÜÇÜKERDOĞAN
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Prof.Dr. Enver BOZKURT
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Prof.Dr. Kezban BAYRAMLAR
Etik Kurul Üyesi

Prof.Dr. Mahmut Serhat YENİCE
Etik Kurul Üyesi

Prof.Dr. Mazlum ÇELİK
Etik Kurul Üyesi

Ek:Amina MUHANNAİA, Prof. Dr. Ercan SEYHAN EKBF.

Bu belge, güvenli elektronik imza ile imzalanmıştır.

Belge Doğrulama Kodu : *BSVULRYLV*

Belge Takip Adresi : <https://turkiye.gov.tr/ebd?cK=5999&cD=BSVULRYLV&cS=60818>

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Bu belge, güvenli elektronik imza ile imzalanmıştır.

ÖZGEÇMİŞ

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Adı Soyadı : Amina Muhannaia
Uyruğu : Sirbistan

EĞİTİM

Derece	Adı	Bitirme Yılı
Üniversite	: Universite Franco-Arabe Attadamoun – bachelor's in Islamic science	2018
Yüksek Lisans	: Al Madinah International University – MA in Islamic Jurisprudence	2023
Yüksek Lisans	: Hasan Kalyoncu Üniversitesi – MA in Political Science and International Relations	2025
Doktora	: -	

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Yıl	Kurum	Görevi
2019-2025		Teacher

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