

**Geopolitical competition between Iran and Saudi Arabia (2001-2020):
Implications for Stability of the Middle East**

By

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DEDICATION

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LIST of ABBREVIATIONS

APSA	American Political Science Association
ARAMCO	Arabian American Oil Company
EU	European Union
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
IRI	Islamic Republic of Iran
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant
IGOs	Inter-Governmental Organization
JCPOA	Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action
KSA	Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
NCTC	National Counter Terrorism Authority
NPR	National Public Radio
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organization
NSAs	Nonstate Actors
OPEC	Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries
OIC	Organization of Islamic Countries
P5 + 1	UN Security Council's five permanent members China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, United States, Germany.
US	United States
UAE	United Arab Emirates

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the geopolitics of the Middle Eastern region which is dynamic and multidimensional. The ideological and sectarian impact on internal and global politics produced various aspects of the Saudi-Iran relationship. The objective of this research is to investigate the contention between KSA and Iran who are competing for decades to gain hegemony in the region. Iran in the light of its Islamic revolution creates and supports the anti-Saudi position in the Middle East. So, the Cold war represents Sunni Islam by Wahhabism and Shi'ite Khomeinism by Iran. The nature of the Saudi Iranian contention has led many Middle East specialists to discover their contention as a New Middle East Cold War. The regional instability periods include civil unrest and offer a beneficial look at instances for investigating the phenomenon of contention. Therefore, this makes a specialty of the Tehran and Riyadh reactions to the activities associated with the Arab Spring. It argues that the loss of life of Saddam Hussein, Iraq's plunging into civil war, and the outbreak of Arab Spring to violent moves in Syria, Libya, Bahrain, and Yemen accentuated Saudi-Iran opposition in the region. The study reveals that their contention lies at the structural stage and may be understood by focusing on their aspiration for Muslim global leadership.

Keywords: Iran, Saudi Arabia, Middle East, Sectarianism, Arab Spring.

Maps



Source Map Middle East

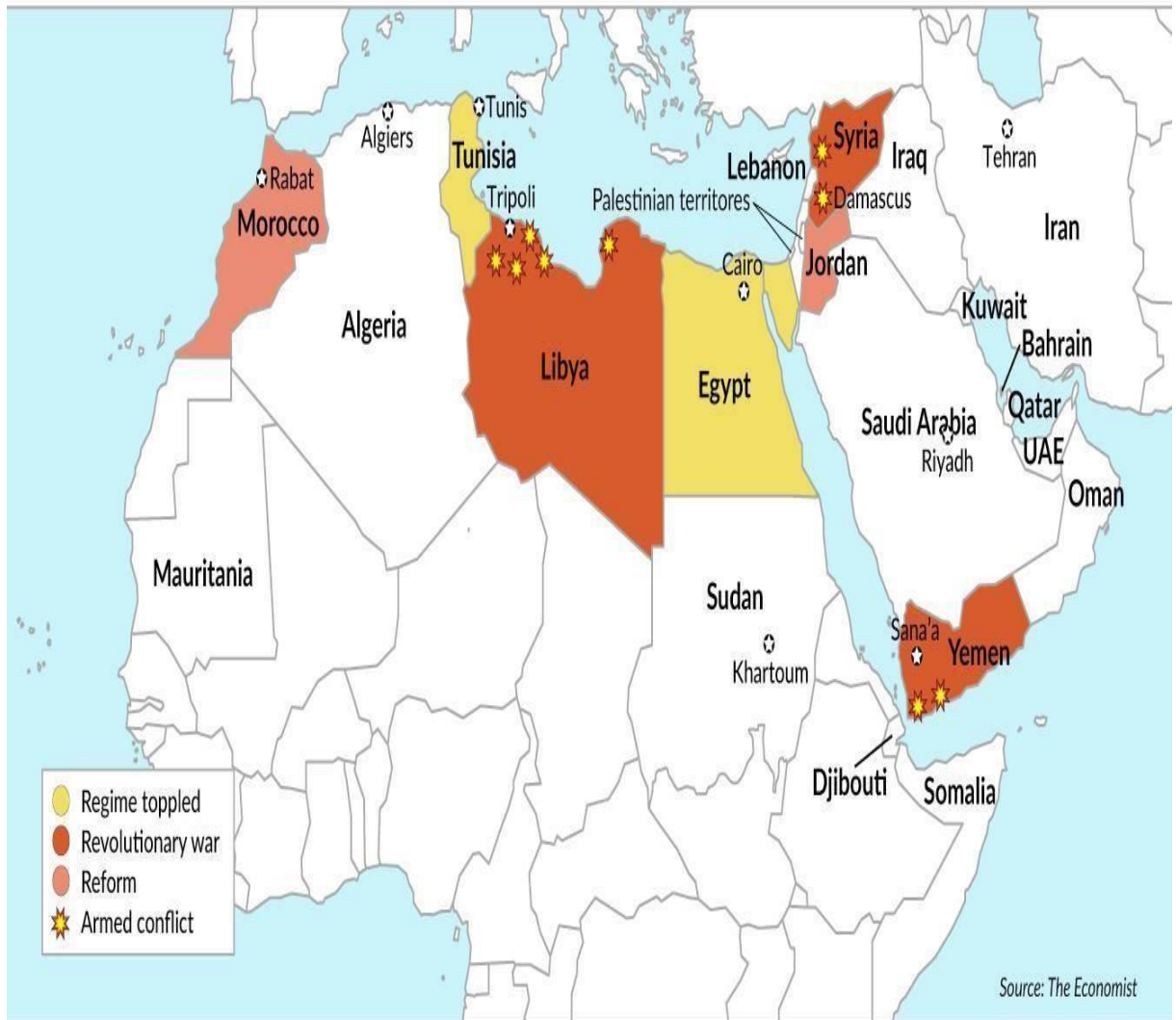
Who supports whom

■ Saudi side
 ■ Iran side
 ■ Split*
 ■ Non-aligned



Source BBC

Region in turmoil The Arab Spring of 2011



Source GIS report on Twitter

Introduction

The Middle East is a region of greater significance due to its natural resources and ideological confrontations across the region. Apart from its undeniable historical significance based on its ideological and cultural roots, the Middle Eastern region generally remained a battleground for great power politics in the past. The Middle Eastern region had a series of conflicts in the presence of ideological and religious politics.¹ The superpowers like European countries, the United States, and Russia tried to enhance their sphere of influence on the resource-rich nations of the Middle Eastern region, and the changing aspects of these external involvements linking to regional resources had a great impact on the Middle Eastern political economy.

The Middle Eastern region is considered the home of the world's important area of resources, particularly fossil fuels. In the 20th century, the abundance of oil has made the region tactically important to the world's power bloc while the significance of the Middle East has grown up more because oil is the main fossil fuel along with natural gas, and the Middle East is a major supplier of oil to the world market.² The Middle Eastern countries that found just 5.2% of the world's inhabitants adored 55.2% of the world's oil assets and 27.5% of the world's natural gas assets.³ The Middle East has always been rich in natural resources which brought various changes in the geopolitical features of the Middle Eastern nations. Presently, the abundant oil grounds govern the region's economy. The Middle East is also excessively rich in natural gas approximately 38.4% of the world's natural gas assets which are spread across the region.⁴ The natural resources in the region have not only attracted the extra-regional powers towards the Middle East, but it has triggered an unending competition between Muslim states which are mainly divided into two sectarian groups; Sunnis and Shias. The governments of the Middle Eastern states have joined two main groups supported by Saudi Arabia and Iran.

¹ Luiza Gimenez Cerioli, "Roles and International Behaviour: Saudi–Iranian Rivalry in Bahrain's and Yemen's Arab Spring," *Contexto Internacional* vol. 40(2), May/Aug (2018): 295.

² Michael Klare, "The Important Middle East Oil Politics Essay," *UK Essays* (1st January 2015):3.

³ Dina Rashed, "Geography, Resources, and the Geopolitics of Middle East Conflicts," *E-International Relations*, (24th May 2019): 8.

⁴NS Energy Staff Writer, "Countries with largest natural gas reserves in the Middle East," *Analysis paper of NS Energy*, (29th November 2019): 4.

The diplomatically cooperative and politically supportive ties of Riyadh and Tehran with their ideological allies intensified the role of power politics in the region under the broader rubric of intra-religious divisions.

The oil-rich Middle East attracted external players i.e., Europeans, Russians, and Americans, since the discovery of oil in the Persian Gulf at the start of the twentieth century. In various eras, Europe, Russia, and America have tried to dominate the region with their varying imperial designs. Their competition, as a part of the international Great Game, left devastating impacts on the politics of the Middle Eastern states. The region's tyrannical political designs intensified the politics of the Muslim world as well, and it has become an essential part of international power politics. The governments of Muslim states, especially from the Middle Eastern region always remained ambitious in maintaining their diplomatic connections with foreign powers. In this way, the region became an epicenter of great power politics which widened the diplomatic gaps between various Muslim states parallel to attaching them to the global power competition.

Additionally, the regional power struggles in the form of ideological competition between and IRI are mainly observed as the primary factors complicating the Middle Eastern regional political order. Four factors have contributed to the intensification and perpetuation of conflicts in this region. First, the regional balance of power has been very uncertain after the 2011 wave of political revolts and the consequences of the American attack on Iraq. Second, local clashes have become the section in which regional contentions are still present in mainstream conflicts in the region. Third, arms importations into the region have hit the roof, sales for which the United States and its European partners are actively competing. And the last, the Middle East suffered from a prominent shortage of rules of war and disagreement mechanisms compared to other regions of the world, resulting in complicated scenarios of various military interventions in the region.⁵

The changing patterns of power policy in the Middle East disturbed the scope of peace and stability in the region. The ideas of peace and stability and their relevance to Middle Eastern politics have been affected by an unending contention between Iran and Saudi Arabia. The peace and firmness in the Middle East are the key interests of the world and

⁵ Michele Dunne and Perry Cammack, "Fueling Middle East Countries or Dousing the flames," *Carnegie Endowment for Internal Peace*, 10.

the region. Arab spring is the main factor that disturbed the political stability of the region. The Arab Spring, a wave of protests for political change that disturbed the region, started in the Middle East in 2011. It challenged some of the non-democratic regimes under authoritarian rules, as the result of a broader wave of anti-government protests at a societal level. The wave of political changes started when political unrest in Tunisia and Egypt collapsed their respective political regimes while having spillover effects on other Arab countries. However, not all countries had success in the mass protests, and protesters demanding political changes created a broader wave of social unrest in different countries. Encouraged by the rapid success of demonstrators in Tunisia and Egypt, protest activities took hold in Yemen, Bahrain, Libya, and Syria at the end of March 2011.⁶

There were some geostrategic objectives of Saudis Iranians in the Arab Spring. The place of Saudi Arabia in the Arab spring has been molded by its own geopolitical goals i.e., to Detach the empire from the blow of change, secure the survival of the crown regime, and counter Iran's growing influence in the region. Saudi Arabia has used its armed capacity, political impact, and financial abundance to encompass the effects of uprisings in the Arabian Peninsula, particularly in Bahrain, Yemen, and Oman.⁷ The Arab Spring appeared to present an opportunity for Iran to locate itself as a regional power by increasing its influence, leveraging the transition route to expand further, and making more allies in the region. The making of alliances was a diplomatic tool, particularly characteristic of Ahmadinejad's administrations, which looked far away from the region to the Far East, Africa, and Latin America. It was also an aspect of Muslim world politics where the Iranian nuclear program became another important dimension of Middle Eastern politics. In geostrategic terms, Iranian aims had so far been limited to Iran's immediate neighborhood.⁸ Because of this situation, it can easily be maintained that the Iranian-Saudi rivalry has various faces consisting of multifaceted points of disagreement. Therefore, the central theme of this research revolves around the geostrategic rivalry between Riyadh and Tehran by analyzing the role of the Middle

⁶Adam Zeidan, "Arab Spring pro-democracy protests," *The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica*, January 27, 2021. <https://www.britannica.com/event/Arab-Spring>

⁷Zaki Samy Elakawi, "The geostrategic consequences of the Arab Spring," *NORTH AFRICA, WEST ASIA*. [https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/north-africa-west-asia/\(22nd November 2014\): 1](https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/north-africa-west-asia/(22nd%20November%202014):%201).

⁸Erzsebet N Rozsa, "Geostrategic Consequences of the Arab Spring," *Research Gate*, (January 2013).

Eastern countries under the influences of two ideologically opposite blocs. It is also focusing on different phases of Middle Eastern politics after the war on terrorism while contesting attributes of different Muslim countries under the broader conception of Arab Spring. The role of Middle Eastern countries cannot be ignored in the clash of the two most important pillars of the Muslim world because the Muslim world is divided into violent sectarian lines supported by Riyadh and Tehran. This research endeavored to address the question of stability in the Middle Eastern region under the shadows of political mass movements which are dubbed by the international academic community as the Arab Spring. It is an intellectual survey of geopolitical competition between Iran and Saudi Arabia post 9/11 incident and deeply during the phase of Arab Spring.

Statement of the Problem.

This study intends to investigate the competition between both countries, Saudi Arabia, and Iran, which have a remarkable history in the Middle Eastern region due to several disagreements on various issues at regional and international levels. Both countries are deeply involved in expanding their ideological alliances in the Muslim world by providing various financial and strategic assistance to their allies. This environment has resulted in many proxy wars, different territorial clashes, and numerous border skirmishes in the Middle Eastern region under the larger sectarian divisions of the Muslim world.

The wave of Arab Spring is an appropriate example of the Riyadh-Tehran rivalry which validated the continuation of sectarian politics between two pillars of the Muslim world, cemented in their contesting approaches.

Because of the above-mentioned scenario, this study is designed to address the question of harmony and stability, and involvement after the 9/11 incident in the broader Middle Eastern region while analyzing the role the of Riyadh-Tehran confrontation during the Arab Spring.

Objectives of the Study

The quest for conducting this research on rational and impartial grounds led this study towards the understanding of the vision of a stable Middle Eastern region in the presence of unstoppable and irreversible standards of Saudi Iranian confrontation. Instead of covering the whole picture of sectarian politics between Riyadh and Tehran, this research is primarily designed to focus on the Muslim world located in the Middle

Eastern region. While highlighting the War on Terrorism and deeply emphasizing the first five years of Arab Spring, this research is an academic attempt to provide an idea of changing political attributes of different countries with the following objectives.

1. To examine the geopolitical nature and evolution of hostility between Saudi Arabia and Iran.
2. To examine the fundamentals of politics under the geopolitical confrontation.
3. To study the political impacts caused by Iran and Saudi Arabia in the Middle East during the Arab spring.
4. To understand the nature of political changes and its implication for the region's stability.

Research Questions

To achieve the objectives mentioned above, the research is primarily designed to address the following questions.

1. What is the evolution of geopolitical competition between Saudi Arabia and Iran.?
2. What are the fundamentals of the geopolitical confrontation between Iran and Saudi Arabia?
3. How did the political divisions of the Muslim world and political traits of states shaped under the Arab spring?
4. How do the Middle Eastern countries respond to the divisions in the region?

Core Argument

The core argument of this research is that the threat posed to Iran has led Saudi Arabia to take a competitive position against Iran and counterbalance it in the region after the war on terrorism and during the wave of Arab Spring whereas the Iranian government adopted a similar position against Saudi Arabia. This situation has resulted in an unending geostrategic struggle between Tehran and Riyadh and the impacts of this competition have threatened the politics of the Middle Eastern region under the shadows of a larger sectarian conflict. An exclusive focus on the era of Arab Spring needs the appropriate attention of the international strategic community which is the gravitational point of this research. Post 9/11 scenario has quickly covered highlighting the war on terrorism. The unstoppable and irreversible geostrategic contest between Iran and Saudi Arabia has become a permanent feature of the Middle Eastern region where the

contesting sectarian patterns have prevailed. This situation has been augmented in the era of greater political changes under the Arab Spring.

Literature Review

A brief review of the available data collected from different studies that have been discussed by different authors in their books, research papers, and opinion articles are considered as the concerning background of the research. These books and articles explained the rivalry between Tehran and Riyadh and comprehensively discussed the war on terrorism or the 9/11 incident, sectarian issues, and named their clash the cold war which is observed supportive to explain the main argument of my research. A survey of books by Peter Mansfield *A History of the Middle East* (1992), Peter Hinchcliffe *Conflicts in the Middle East since 1945*, Dilip Hiro *Cold War in the Islamic World Saudi Arabia, Iran and the Struggle for Supremacy* (2018), Derika Weddington *Rivalry in the Middle East The History Of Saudi Iranian Relations and Its Implications on American Foreign Policy* (2017), Saqib Yaqoob *Cold War and Rivalry Between Iran and Saudi Arabia. Reasons for the absence of interstate War* (2018), Ibrahim Fraihat *Iran and Saudi Arabia Taming a Chaotic Conflict* (2020), Kim Ghattas *Black Wave* (2020), Geneive Abdo *The New Sectarianism: The Arab Uprisings and the Rebirth of the Shi'a-Sunni* (2017), Nader Hashemi, Danny Postel *Sectarianization: Mapping the New Politics of the Middle East* (2017), Simon Mabon *Saudi Arabia and Iran: Power and Rivalry in the Middle East* (2015), Frederic M. Wehrey *Beyond Sunni and Shia: The Roots of Sectarianism* (2017), Lawrence G. Potter *Sectarian Politics in the Persian Gulf* (2014), Brigitte Maréchal, Sami Zemni, Sabrina Mervin *The Dynamics of Sunni-Shia Relationships* (2013). These studies are considered to help maintain the initial argument of the research. It helped in properly developing the main argument of the study with the help of varying viewpoints of the authors.

The deep study of relevant research papers is the Mahdi Alikhani & Mehdi Zakerian *Study of Factors Affecting Saudi Iranian Relations and Conflicts and Their Resulting Behavior Pattern* (2016), Gregory Aftandilia *Maneuvering the Saudi Iranian rivalry in the Middle East* (2018). They described a distinction between Sunnism and Shiaism which are two groups of religion and to the advanced theory, both belong to orthodox explanations of Islamic ideologies. These authors proved to be appropriate in further understanding and analyzing the sectarian politics in the Muslim world supported by

two different blocs. In other words, the contesting ideological revelation of geopolitical conflicts revolved around the Saudi and Iran governments and their political upheavals in the Middle Eastern region. These writers explained the geostrategic competition between these two hostile nations highlighting sectarian issues between them. The study of co-authors explained the probability that they would engage in war is low, as incitement by either side would lead to American participation to stabilize the situation. They explained the Saudi Iranian relationship as a chaotic conflict because it lacks communication, and uncertainty about their decision-making process and further explained that sectarianism, security, and geopolitics have affected their relationship for decades and considered their relationship a zero-sum relationship because the safety and future of the Middle East rely on both Saudi Arabia and Iran. If they concentrate on their common benefits, neighboring states will follow this suit. This will help put out most of the issues in and around the region and will let peaceable coexistence with Israel. They spotlight the basic changes in Middle Eastern politics and the battle for economic, political, and social influence in the region. Saudi Arabia has its economic clout, while Iran is powerful because of its military abilities and its ambitions to become a hegemonic power. A detailed survey describes that various identity groups within Saudi Arabia and Iran made up of different religions, ethnicity, and tribal groups suggest that internal insecurity has a major impact on the broader ideological and geopolitical competition between the two. Most of the literature produced on the Iranian and Saudi rivalry is based on this analysis. Most books are considered helpful in understanding the root causes of the rivalry and cold war between two important and dominant countries of the Middle East. The arguments in the books are considered helpful in explaining the war on terrorism, political unrest, and the proxy wars during the Spring under the influences of external powers.

The combined study of a few research papers and books described the role of the Saudi Iranian relationship during the wave of Arab Spring by making allies in the region. Books and research papers by Raphael Israeli *From Arab Spring to Islamic Winter* (2013), Cenap Çakmak, Ali Onur Özçelik *The World Community and the Arab Spring* (2018), Marc Lynch *The New Arab Wars: Uprisings and Anarchy in the Middle East* (2016), Mark L. Haas *The Arab Spring: The Hope and Reality of the Uprisings* (2018), Paul Amar, Vijay Prashad *Dispatches from the Arab Spring* (2013), Guido

Steinberg *Leading the Counterrevolution: Saudi Arabia and the Arab Spring* (2014), Toby Matthiesen *Sectarian Gulf: Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, and the Arab Spring* (2013), Ali Fathollah-Nejad *The Iranian– Saudi Hegemonic Rivalry* (2017), Dr. Farhat Konain and Muhammad Shafiq *Evaluating Iran-Saudi strategic competition in Middle East: Implications for regional security* (2018), Shahram Chubin *Iran and the Arab Spring: Ascendancy Frustrated* (2012), and Kayhan Barzegar *Iran's Interests and Values and the 'Arab Spring'* (2011), Sania Zehraa, Noor Fatima, Noor Ullah Khan *Iranian-Saudi Strategic Competition in the Middle East: An Analysis of the Arab Spring* (2018). These writers tried to further explore the question of political stability and sustainable peace in the Middle Eastern region under the shadows of sectarian politics.

A comprehensive survey of these authors explained the role of sectarianism and the Saudi Iranian relationship that had created regional instability and considered Arab Spring as a disturbing trend that broke up the Arab world, where Iran would grant a chance to expand its interventions and considered the US presence in the region as alarming for both states. The changing aspects of the Middle East after the movement of the Arab Spring hugely removed the nature of threats and authorized the non-state actors in the state systems and process of worldwide terrorism. Several writers discussed that the Saudi Iranian competition is neither sectarian nor it is the ancient hostility between the Sunni and the Shiite branches of Islam. They call it a game of gaining hegemony and increasing geopolitical influence over the states affected by the Arab Spring by joining opposite sides. Therefore, the rivalry based on an unending power struggle increased the security tensions between the two rival states. Neither Iranians nor the Saudis are actively investing their efforts in managing the regional politics during the Arab Spring crisis. Both competitors remained organized against each other for possible conflict in the region. The authors described the presence of the US in the Middle East region and how its policy tilted with the changing events in the region sometimes it enjoyed good relations with Saudi Arabia and sometimes it enjoyed friendly ties with Iran. They highlighted the US role in the regional politics of the Middle East during the proxy wars and the role of other Middle Eastern countries in the region. They described the interest and values of two hostile countries during the period of Arab Spring. They described the popular protests in the Arab world, which began in 2011 and caused massive political and security unrest in the West Asian region. The struggle

between those in power to maintain the status quo and opposition forces calling for change has taken on a violent way form coercive means on both parties to achieve their ends in Yemen, and Syria in the beginning of the Arab Spring. These articles and books tried to explain the power and hegemonic struggle and the sectarian issue and the Era of Arab Spring.

Research Gap

In the available literature reviewed for this research, there was a research gap in the literature prepared by various authors on Middle Eastern politics under the external involvement after 2001 and during a broader wave of Arab Spring. The political changes under the dimensions of the Arab Spring did not discuss by most authors while studying the changing dimensions of Middle Eastern regional politics. The interconnection between the Middle Eastern regional politics under the influences of Saudi and Iranian conflicted attributes has not been touched by major studies conducted on the politics of the Muslim world. Thus, the impacts of sectarian divisions in the Muslim world under the wave of political revolutions have remained an area of less scholarly significance. Therefore, this study is primarily designed to comprehend the nature of changes that occurred during the Arab Spring under the influences of the Riyadh-Tehran sectarian conflict. Moreover, this research is fundamentally structured to study the role of conflicted sectarian claims of the Saudi and Iranian governments in the Muslim world and their impact during the Arab Spring. This study tried to explore the role of geopolitical objectives of KSA and IRI during the unrest of Arab Spring which shocked the entire Middle Eastern region by causing a broader wave of political changes in the region.

Theoretical Framework

Theory of Neorealism well applicable to geopolitical competition between Iran and Saudi Arabia in the Middle East. It seems as a sectarian conflict but it is more geopolitical conflict and power politics or both states are in struggle to gain hegemony in the region. This competition is not ideological or religious but it is the game to gain supremacy in the region. Many writers considered the rivalry between Riyadh and Tehran as the Cold War of the middle East same as the Cold War between two powerful blocs of the world after WWII to gain hegemony. Both countries are in struggle to

influence smaller identities of the region and making alliances in the region to become powerful.

The theory of neorealism is a result of old balance of power theories of International Relations and was foremost formulated by Kenneth Waltz. Waltz was an American political scientist at University of California, Berkeley and Columbia and a dominant scholar in the field of International Relations. He was a veteran of WWII and Korean war, influenced by Hans Morgenthau, Niccolò Machiavelli, Thomas Hobbes, Immanuel Kant. His books are *Realism and International Politics*, *Man the State and War*, *Theory of International Politics* and awarded by American Political Science Association

. These concepts are mentioned by many realistic scholars of international relations such as: Barry Buzan is the professor of IR who belongs to London, he wrote a book named as *The Logic of Anarchy* in 1993, John H. Herz was an American Scholar and wrote a book *Political Realism and Political Idealism* in 1951 , Andrew K. Hanami is the author of *Perspectives on Structural Realism* (2003) , Robert Jervis was an American political scientist and wrote a book *Anarchy in International relations Theory* in 1994, Robert Keohane an American researcher, wrote a book *Neorealism and its Critics*, John Mearsheimer was an IR American scholar and wrote a famous book *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* in 2001 , Kenneth Oye is a political scientist and wrote a book; *Economic discrimination and political exchange* in 1986, Jack Snyder was a political scientist and discussed the difference between defensive and offensive realism and wrote a book *Myths of Empires* in 1991, and Fareed Zakaria is an Indian-American Journalist with several changes in their definitions. The ideas of Waltz upgraded the traditional notion of realism through highlighting the role of international anarchical structure in defining the states' priorities in the world politics. Neorealism is also titled "Structural Realism" or Neorealism emphasized the structure of international power system which determines the role of state governments in taking certain decisions in specific direction.¹⁰ According to Waltz, the international system of rules is anarchical where there is no central authority that can implement the rules of the individual states. The states act based on self-assistance as per the realist descriptions of global power politics. They function with the aim of survival and their actions with other states' point their purpose to survive. The structure only alters when the great powers take action that leads to various changes in the international system. Most of the states have no power to

modify the structure. In this discourse, states try to balance each other out because they will try to increase their likelihoods of existence in the anarchical international system. Since states are afraid for their own security, they try to increase their power over the expanse of other states.

Waltz's theory is chiefly a critique of “reductionist” theories which examine the behaviors of units in the system which is anarchical in nature.⁹ He claims that this approach ignores the restrictions placed on government behavior by the international environment. In addition, there are international activities that cannot be described with differences at the national level. With a view to the variables at the structural level, he explains sparingly why “different units behave similarly” in the international system. The structure socializes respective states to act likewise because it limits the reach of actions that states can take to respond to international phenomena. Waltz emphasizes in his consideration of the international institutions which are not the main actors in the international system, but that states remain the main decision-makers in the world politics. Sometimes, the states formulate international institutions if they do not have a significant influence on the results. Thus, the international systems are characterized in terms of the number of great powers that adapt at a given point in time. Although this seems to be at the unit level, Waltz clears up the problem by distinguishing the distribution of power, which is a variable at the structural level, as opposed to power itself, which is a variable at the state level.¹⁰

The waltz's theory considered as one of the most influential International Relation theories of the 20th century, its self-discipline has been admired by scholars and it has been used across the world to declare war and peace. Neoclassical realists such as Rose claimed that leaving out variables at the unit level greatly reduced the predictive ability of neorealism, which is too static and cannot explain changes in the international system, such as the end of the Cold War and the disintegration of the Soviet Union. On the other

⁹ Timothy McKeown, “Introduction to Neorealism,” *Oxford Bibliographies*, April 28, 2014. <https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199743292/obo-97801997432920037.xml>

¹⁰ Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, Inc. Philippines copyright, 1979), https://d11.cuni.cz/pluginfile.php/486328/mod_resource/content/0/Kenneth%20N.%20Waltz%20Theory%20of%20International%20Politics%20Addison-Wesley%20series%20in%20political%20science%20%20%20%201979.pdf

hand, there are neoliberals like Keohane and Axelrod, who, use the same assumptions as neorealists and arrived at different conclusions. These generalizations tend to suggest cooperation in international affairs. By this he means that we must observe where state preferences come from and then predict international behavior. All these criticisms have significantly reduced the dominance of states in the international system. In particular, the literature on the theoretical dimensions of the international institutions is increasingly concerned with the effects of NGOs and IGOs, noting that, unlike Waltz and his theory, they are important actors for shaping specific policy making mechanism of states. There are some differences among classical realism and neorealism. The classical realist locates the origins of international conflicts and wars in the defective human nature whereas the neorealists believe that their causes lie in the structure of international system. The states are into logically sense of superiority in classical realism as opposed to neorealism which leaves more way for maneuver in the older approach.¹¹ The classical realists differentiate status-quo powers and revisionist powers, while neorealism regards states as unitary actors which reacts to the international system as per the demands of global power politics.¹²

Neorealists seek to develop a more difficult and scientific approach to the study of international politics which is influenced by the behaviorist revolution of the 1960s, while classical realism limits their analysis to subjective assessments of international relations.¹³

Kenneth Waltz first described this theory in 1979 in his book *Theory of International Politics*.¹⁴ Neo-realism come out from the American field of political science and has developed the classic-realistic custom of E. H. Carr, Hans Morgenthau, George Kennan, and Reinhold Niebuhr. Moreover, neo-realism is divided into defensive and offensive neo-realism. Defensive realism presumes that nations focus on keeping their security i.e., states maximize their safety, while offensive realism asserts that all nations are

¹¹ John M Hobson, *The State and International Relations*, (Cambridge University Press, 2000): 17-63, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511612442>.

¹² Randall L. Schweller, *Neorealism's status-quo bias: What security dilemma?*, (Security Studies, 1996), 90-121, DOI: 10.1080/09636419608429277

¹³ Robert Jackson, Georg Sørensen, and Jørgen Møller, *Introduction to International Relations: Theories and Approaches*, 7th ed, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), doi: 10.1093/hepl/9780198803577.001.0001

¹⁴ Scott D Sagan, *Realist Perspectives on Ethical Norms and Weapons of Mass Destruction, Chapter. In Ethics and Weapons of Mass Destruction: Religious and Secular Perspectives*, edited by Sohail H. Hashmi and Steven P. Lee, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004): 73–95.

trying to gain as much power as possible. Mearsheimer suggests that nations ultimately maximize relative power and aim for regional hegemony.¹⁵

The anarchic principle of order of the international system is dispersed, which means that there is no official authority every independent state is formally the same in this system. These act according to the reason of selfishness, which means that states follow their welfare and do not subordinate their benefits to the comforts of other states. It is expected that states want at least to guarantee their survival, as this is a prerequisite for the pursuit of other goals. This survival driver is the main factor manipulating their behavior and, in turn, causing nations to develop offensive military capabilities for foreign involvement and to intensify their relative power. Since nations can never be certain of the future purposes of other nations, there is an absence of trust between nations that must protect against relative sufferers of power that could allow other nations to threaten their supremacy.

The neorealists consider that there are three types of systems in politics of the world, depending on fluctuations in the system of ability well-defined by the number of superpowers within the international classification i.e., a unipolar system that contains only one power, a bipolar system contains two powers and a multi-polar system, the system contains more than two powers. The neorealists accomplish that the bipolar system is firmer than a multi-polar system. Since there is only an internal equilibrium and no external equilibrium in a bipolar system, there are fewer opportunities for misjudgments and thus fewer opportunities for a great power war.¹⁶

According to Waltz, the characteristic of anarchy is that it is localized and has no government agency, in this scenario it consists of equal autonomous nations that act according to the philosophy of serving and protecting their interests. The main goal of the state is to safeguard their survival on the international act, it is also believed that their active force in increasing survival is to overcome and gain control over other states. Although the needs of countries are perceived as being equal, the means of meeting those requirements vary from country to country. As resources are unequally distributed between nations, the collaboration between countries has been relatively limited for fear

¹⁵Mearsheimer,[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neorealism_\(international_relations\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neorealism_(international_relations)) - CITEREFMearsheimer2001*The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, (New York, 2001): 12.

¹⁶ Adam R. C.Humphreys,<https://www.academia.edu/2309090>"Another Waltz? Methodological Rhetoric and Practice in Theory of International Politics," *Sage Journals*, (November 2012).

of the capabilities of each country Maximizing power to achieve the desired results is confined to one another and has created stability of power in international relations. There are two ways of achieving stability in the international arena. The first is inner equilibrium, in which nations develop their skills and resources by goodness from economic growth. Second, a balance of power can be achieved by an outer balance in which states form coalitions to harness the power of more powerful coalitions.¹⁷

Application to Saudi Iran Case

Theory of neorealism has proven to be the most compatible international relations theory for discussing the geopolitical competition between Riyadh and Tehran in the Middle East in the context of the post-9/11 Era and mainly under the Arab Spring. A shift in world politics occurred after the Cold War, the global politics changed into new world order characterized by unipolarity and local hegemony. This change in many interventions in some dominant regions and the world got engaged in numerous navy operations withinside the Middle Eastern regions.

The assault on US soil on September 11, 2001, led the Bush management to proclaim the War on Terror and release proxy wars in the Middle East. The US-led wars withinside the region, from Afghanistan to Iraq, didn't happen as a surprise since the position of the United States in this place has been intervened during the 20th century.¹⁸ According to theory, states try to maximize their power to advantage protection and shield countrywide interests. However, as one nation feels safe, others may sense much less safe. As a result, growing protection for one nation i.e., Iran will bring about a relative lack of protection for the other i.e., KSA therefore main to the so-called "protection dilemma."¹⁹

Watching a reinforced Iran expand its impact in Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, and Yemen has positioned a developing protection risk on KSA, who sees their relative distribution of power and authorities withinside the Gulf region diminishing.²⁰

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Poowin Bunyavejchewin, Theories of International Politics after the Incident of 9/11: The Richness and Weakness of Realist Tradition in the Twentieth-First Century, *Kasetsart J. (Soc. Sci)* 33 : 161 - 169 (2012), <https://pbunyavejchewin.files.wordpress.com/2013/04/theories-of-international-politics-after-the-incident-of-911-the-richness-and-weakness-of-realist-tradition-in-the-twentieth-first-century.pdf>

¹⁹ Mearsheimer, J. 2001. "The Tragedy of Great Power Politics". New York: Norton.

²⁰ "Understanding the 'Islamic Cold War': How can the growing rivalry between Iran and Saudi Arabia and their behavior in recent years best be explained using IR theory" By Gustav Skjold Bang Dahl Course "International Relations of the Middle East" Taught by Professor Fawaz A. Gerges Fall 2018

For many years, heavy financial sanctions, and an essential risk from a neoconservative American wonderful electricity confined Iran's cap potential to increase its impact on the vicinity IRI's policy has been regarded as neorealist in the Middle Eastern region according to the geopolitical and cultural realities of the Middle East in the post 2003. It seeks to reinforce its safety and create possibilities to form worldwide political realities in accordance with the interest of the country. Tehran's policy under Rouhani's presidency appears to venture the zero-sum game theory of international relations.²¹ KSA and IRI both consider each other their potential enemy and strategic competitors. They want to counter each other during the crisis in the Middle Eastern region. They consider themselves insecure, so they have started to enhance their role during the wave of Arab Spring. The anarchic structure of the regional politics formed their competing behaviors due to their rivalry for managing influences in world politics. The governments of both states want to get power with the objective of gaining hegemony the Middle Eastern politics by adopting several ways. The contesting attributes of both states are inherited to achieve their contesting political interest in the Muslim world. Riyadh and Tehran shaped the politics of the Middle East intending to become dominant in the regional anarchical structure of the Muslim world. The leaders of both nations are active in spreading their influence in different countries such as Lebanon, Iraq, Syria, and Yemen. The leading state officials of both states are conflicting militarily and economically for the fulfillment of contesting geostrategic interests. They formed a structure in a way that without their intervention the politics of the region is incomplete. KSA has used religion as a cause of legitimacy to enforce its benefits over those of opposing pretenders of Islamic and regional inspiration including IRI.²² It has also used its oil dollar fortune and Islam to follow policies of expansion abroad.²³ Riyadh's foreign policy after the Iranian revolution of Iran was driven by the fear that the Iranian

²¹ Hazal Muslu El Berni, *Iran's Security Dilemma in The Middle East: A Neorealist Approach to Iran's Foreign Policy in Syria*, ISSN: 2536-5029.

²² Fred Halliday, *The Middle East in International Relations: Power, Politics, and Ideology*, (Cambridge University Press, 2014): 120.

²³ Al Rasheed Madawi, *Kingdom Without Borders: Saudi Political, Religious and Media Frontiers*, London: Hurst and Company, (Cambridge and New York, Cambridge University Press, 2006): 112-114.

government might assemble Shiites in the Arab world which could affect Saudi Arabia as well.²⁴

The foreign policy of Iran and Saudi Arabia is aimed at securing their supremacy in the Muslim world, which the neorealists perceive as security rivalry. According to neo-realism, key behaviors include incentives, compulsions, and behavioral standards. Neo-realism describes that the motivation of the actor to pursue a certain foreign policy is goal-oriented, which is occasionally a policy that seeks influence.

Neorealists agree that international politics is a fight for power.²⁵ Iran and Saudi Arabia are anxious about their economic development, but for security concerns, both countries are also worried about the goals they are following in their foreign policy, hence Saudi Arabia's energetic role on the international stage after the Iranian revolution is declining. Both countries have been in a diplomatic conflict for domination in the Muslim world since the Iranian revolution of 1979 and are suspect that the two are leading states into insensitive security competition and grounds them to significantly influence politics in the Muslim community by strengthening diplomatic discussions and the politics of alliances. Waltz emphasizes that maximizing the energy demonstrates that it is dysfunctional because it activates an alliance of contra-lances states. These conflicts and chaos can become a never-ending struggle as every state continues to struggle to survive. Furthermore, Herz points out that one of the disastrous consequences of the security dilemma is that mutual anxiety of what may never have occurred in the beginning it can later do exactly what is most feared.²⁶

This theory highlights the goals of Iran and Saudi Arabia are carried by security explanations to assure its stability and clash for domination, Iran might want to promote diplomatic ties with the countries in the region. Iran's foreign policy goals are in any form of association policy, such as occupation and education, it is worth noticing that the Shiites formed the ideological base of Iranian foreign policy.²⁷

²⁴ Steinberg, "Leading the Counter-Revolution: Saudi Arabia and the Arab Spring," SWP Research Paper, 7, *German Institute for International and Security Affairs*, (2014).

²⁵ Tim Dunne and Brian C. Schmidt, "Realism," in *The Globalization of World Politics*, eds. John Baylis, Steve Smith, and Patricia Owens, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008): 92-103.

²⁶ Herz John, "Idealist Internationalization and the Security Dilemma," *World Politics*, Cambridge University Press, vol.2 no.2 (1950): 157.

²⁷ Rouhollah K. Ramazani, "Khumayni's Islam in Iran's Foreign Policy," *Islam in Foreign Policy*, (1983): 29.

Saudi Arabia has utilized religion as a source of credibility to enforce nation interests over those of rival opponents of Islamic and regional inspiration including Iran.²⁸ It also used its oil fortune and Islam to follow policies of expansion overseas.²⁹ According to Steinberg, the policy of Saudi Arabia after the Iranian Revolution in 1979 was driven by the anxiety that Iran might assemble Shiites in the Arab world and even in Saudi Arabia.³⁰ It is worth remembering that the Saudi kingdom was confronted immediately after the Revolution. These statements clearly show that Saudi Arabia's foreign aim is also driven by a security dilemma to combat the influence of Iran and the spread of Shiaism in the Muslim world.³¹

By using neorealism as the theoretical framework, it has tried to enlighten the details of the foreign policy actions of Iran and Saudi Arabia and the regional competition that is emerging between them. The international system had great descriptive power in amplifying the pragmatic foreign policy of Iran and the attempt of Saudi Arabia to counter the rising impact of Iran, such as state identity and insights, thoughts of the leaders also played a vital role in explaining the manner of the foreign policy both countries.

It proved to be a suitable framework for this analysis, as it assisted to examine the applicable variables in both Iran and Saudi Arabia that might explain their behavior. The strength of the theory lies in its wealth of clarifications and evocative accuracy, but as a theory, it can be responsible for its lack of prognostic power and lack of generalization, so it is not essentially useful for forecasting the future of regional rivalry.

Research Methodology

The qualitative method delivers researchers with an understanding of social reality using a scientific technique which is used in this research.³² It is a tool that supports the testing stage of hypotheses or research questions established from theories or previous research.

²⁸ Fred Halliday, *The Middle East in International Relations: Power, Politics, and Ideology*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014): 218.

²⁹ Al Rasheed, Madawi. *Kingdom without Borders: Saudi Political, Religious and Media Frontiers*, (London: Hurst and Company, 2008): 2.

³⁰ Steinberg, "Leading the Counter-Revolution: Saudi Arabia and the Arab Spring," SWP Research Paper, 7, *German Institute for International and Security Affairs*, (2014): 6.

³¹ Muhammad Ravi, "A Comparative Study of Iran and Saudi Arabia's Foreign Policy Objectives in Indonesia", *The Journal of Iranian Studies*, Vol: 3, No: 1, (2019): 121-147.

³² Yan Zhang https://philpapers.org/s/Yan_Zhang & [https://philpapers.org/s/Barbara M. Wildemuth](https://philpapers.org/s/Barbara_M._Wildemuth) Barbara M. Wildemuth, *Qualitative Analysis of Content*, (Cambridge University, 30 (7), 2005).

The purpose of this type of research is to ground the investigation of themes and the allegations resulting from these themes. The application of this approach in this research made this research qualitative in nature. Qualitative research has been considered in this research as an appropriate approach to maintaining a brief account of various rational arguments. This qualitative approach enabled this research to reach an explanation of impartial findings for a clear and cohesive understanding of its central point of investigation.³³The adaptation of the qualitative approach also enabled this research to arrange data into groups based on the researcher's interpretation of the data. This research primarily focuses on qualitative methodology. These sources range from government documents, journal research papers, magazine opinion articles and mainstream scholarly books. Key information is drawn from reports, and leading newspapers, especially the English versions of Arab newspapers.

Secondary data from the current studies are subjected to a rational analysis in this research. The data collected in the study is thematically analyzed using an analytical method of research to attain the objectives of the study. While the background information collected from different secondary sources is adopted in this research for the understanding of the causes of the Arab Spring. With the support of various sources of secondary data, this research explained the social, security, economic and financial consequences of the political uprisings under Arab Spring. Thus, this research is analytical research in which the researcher tries to analyze the behavior of two enemies and their goals behind making the alliances during the Arab Spring in the Middle Eastern region. The influence of the Arab Spring on the geopolitical system and its degree of causation of geopolitical instability is measured by an iterative secondary analysis in this research. The secondary data used some primary sources of data by accessing various online sources such as the formal positions of the leaders and government standings available on their websites. Moreover, the availability of declassified documents on different websites and video lectures of different independent research institutes is also considered the primary source of data. The combination of secondary and primary sources of data remained effective in this research to reach a concrete conclusion based on rational and impartial arguments.

³³ Bruce L. Berg, *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences*, 4th Edition , (California State University, Long Beach 2001).

Thus, this research attempted to analyze that the historical events in the Middle Eastern region have molded the nature of an uncontrollable bitterness between Saudi Arabia and Iran. The ancient relationship analysis provides information on the interaction patterns between both states by exploring the questions of how and in what way they act and react against each other.³⁴ Iran and Saudi Arabia always regarded themselves as role models and claim they always wrestled for regional and global influence in the Muslim world³⁵ which is validated in this research by various arguments collected from both sources of data. Saudi Arabia has always sought to influence Sunni Muslims, whereas Iran has been well received by Shiite Muslims around the world. The scenario has been proved rationally in this research. It is proved in this research that the Shiite Muslims are the majority in Iran, Iraq and Bahrain, and there are sizable Shiite populations in Lebanon, Yemen, and Kuwait as well. Additionally, this research inquired whether the lack of direct interstate war between Tehran and Riyadh is due to the confrontational designs of both states and their ambitions for maintaining hegemonic status over the Middle Eastern region. So, the methodology applied in this research deals with the determination of variables leading to the absence of war and its description of why and how they are affecting this absence of war. It described the role of Middle Eastern countries in the region and the effects of their proxy wars which cannot be neglected when studying Middle Eastern regional politics.

Significance of Research

This research focused on the question of stability and its relevance to Middle Eastern regional politics. It is integral to the national interest of the Saudi and Iranian governments parallel to continuing their conflicting explanations of a stable regional political order. The conflicting interaction between both states has a long history of varying patterns. The change in the Muslim World has been observed in this research which is directly linked to foreign involvement and the era of Arab Spring which augmented the existing conflicting frameworks between Saudi Arabia and Iran. Thus, it is more appropriate to main that this research is an academic endeavor to maintain a

³⁴Muhammad Nadeem Mirza,<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/21582440211032642>Hussain Abbas,<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/21582440211032642>Irfan Hasnain Qaisrani, “Structural Sources of Saudi–Iran Rivalry and Competition for the Sphere of Influence,” *Sage open*, (July 2021).

³⁵ Hamad R, *Book Review: The Shia Revival: How Conflicts Within Islam Will Shape the Future* by Vali Nasr,” (Inquiries Journal/Student Pulse 4 (04) 2012).

comprehensive account of the Riyadh-Tehran geopolitical conflict cemented in their ideological differences which has resulted in an overwhelming wave of sectarian politics in the larger Middle Eastern region. It treated Riyadh and Tehran as the most important actors which are playing their active roles in the geopolitical competition in the Muslim world during the Arab Spring era. In its concluding part, this research summarized the nature of changing Saudi Iranian rivalry and its impacts on the first five years of Arab Spring. Thus, this research could be treated as an appropriate study to focus behaviors of the Saudis and Iranian governments and their sectarian politics which remained an influential factor in the era of political unrest in the Middle Eastern region. Moreover, this study could be considered an appropriate survey to comprehend the increasing roles of sectarian divides in the Muslim world. The concluding part of this study could be interesting feedback to the leading policymakers, politicians, and academicians interesting in rationally analyzing the changing attributes of the Middle Eastern region. According to this study, Saudi Arabia and Iran have led the Muslim world toward the exploitation of the sectarian and ethnic divisions of the Islamic countries, because the state character and foreign policy activities of Saudi Arabia and Iran are analyzed to comprehend the defining characteristics of Middle Eastern political order. It observed the use of sectarianism for obtaining political interest has been considered the key actor shaping the geostrategic outlook of the Muslim world. In addition, the proxy wars between Iran and Saudi Arabia in the Middle Eastern region, and the 9/11 incident in Arab Spring provided fertile ground for extremist groups like ISIS to emerge as powerful actors in the region.³⁶ Therefore, this research could be helpful for policymakers who show their interest to understand the Middle Eastern region and in understanding the bilateral, sectarian, and hegemonic conflict between Iran and Saudi Arabia. It is generalized in this research that the geostrategic competition between the two antagonistic governments has disturbed the regional security environment of the Middle East.

Limitation

This research lacks the financial aid to visit the Middle Eastern region to conduct interviews with government officials, politicians, authors, and citizens. Moreover, there

³⁶ Tali Rachel Grumet, "New Middle East Cold War: Saudi Arabia and Iran's Rivalry," *University of Denver, Electronic Theses and Dissertations*, (2015).

is also a lack of resources for the researcher to get access to the Middle East. The authoritarian atmosphere of the Middle Eastern States seems to be the utmost obstacle to showing field research in Arab countries. Authoritarian governments tend to be sensitive to data collection, so it is common to archive resources related to politics discussed by specific sources of information.

Delimitation

This study investigates the Geopolitical competition between Iran and Saudi Arabia and its implications for the stability of the Middle East during the time period 2001-2020. This study is restricted to the Middle Eastern region and two important rivals of the regions i.e., Tehran and Riyadh.

Organization of study

This research is divided into four brief chapters that address the four research questions of the study. Align with the core objective of the study, the four research questions tried to provide different arguments on rational and impartial rounds. A comprehensive summary of the central theme of this research is given below:

Chapter 1

The first chapter : Historical Overview of Saudi Iranian hostility, contains the history of the Middle Eastern region that how external powers entered the political affairs and how they made alliances in the region and explained the geopolitical nature of Saudi Iranian competition and its implication on the Middle East. It also highlighted the role of Middle Eastern countries and their divergence towards Iran and Saudi Arabia. It quickly surveys the Oil politics, the Saudi-Iran Association, Role of the U.S to understand the politics and policies. It focused on the grounds of rivalry and the competition of gaining power is not as it has become politicized to show an ancient conflict between sects and countries. The result of the competition between Saudi Arabia and Iran for regional hegemony and the hostility between Riyadh and Tehran that has enlarged in recent years, whereas the competition has established itself in different places, this has found its appearance in the firming of alliances, and participation in the region. The power of the regional status quo, while Iran seeks revolutionary changes in the Gulf region and the Middle East, often with changing degrees of concentration is the central theme of the first chapter.

Chapter 2

The second chapter: The Fundamentals of competition among Islamic Republic of Iran and Kingdom of Saudi Arabia explained the politics of the Middle East under the geopolitical sectarian divisions. Moreover, this chapter looked at the rivalry in its old context to understand how conflicted actions between Saudi Arabia and Iran emerged. This chapter focused on the beginning of the sectarianism that occurs between Sunni and Shiite Muslims and the political upheaval in the Middle East by the view of dual religious sectarianism. It quickly surveys the Saudi-Iran initiative behind making the alliances. It exclusively emphasized the ideological partitions between Sunni and Shiite Muslims. The sectarian clash is political and social rather than pure and the drivers of the clash between Sunnis and Shiites are political whereas the political and social contexts determined the importance of sectarian identity and the occurrence of sectarianism in the Muslim world.

Chapter 3

The third chapter: Political divisions of the Muslim World and political traits of states post 9/11 scenario and under the Arab Spring seeks to explain the political impact of sectarianism caused by Iran and Saudi Arabia in the Middle Eastern region post 9/11 scenario and during the Arab Spring. It discusses the rivalry between Iran and Saudi Arabia during the Arab Cold War and the tactics they had adopted during this war. This chapter quickly surveys the sectarian issue which seems to be the major cause, but the major cause of their rivalry is to become hegemon and strengthen their terms in the region or outside the region. The ideological dimensions of the competition between Saudi Arabia and Iran continued to include the increasingly sectarian nature of the political clash in the region as Saudi Arabia and Iran capitalize on weakened political institutions in the Middle East. The situation is strengthened in the wake of political revolutions as the result of the Arab Spring which sparked several regional issues and tensions in the Middle Eastern region, according to the analysis of chapter three.

Chapter 4

The final chapter of the research: Impact of Saudi Iranian Rivalry on the Middle Eastern Countries described the nature of political changes during the 9/11 era and Arab Spring under the influences of sectarian politics and regional dynamics. It will discuss the role of countries that had played during the political upheaval in the region and their interest

and goals behind supporting their bloc. This chapter will analyze the nature of the conflict where Saudi Arabia and Iran continued to wage indirect conflicts and armed interventions in Bahrain, Syria, and Yemen to uphold their spheres of impact in the Gulf region. The Arab Spring has exposed the power of mass protests and peaceful protests, as well as the aptitude of social media to fuel the protest and join its goals to the outside world. The Arab Spring was the elimination of these autocrats in the long run and was thought of by the world as a good attempt at democracy. As the protests became more organized, the people of different countries had to declare him the true voice of democracy. This whole process failed to manage escape from the sectarian politics of the Muslim world.

Chapter no 1

Historical Overview of Saudi Iranian hostility

The geopolitical structure of the Middle East controlled vital assets and strategic straits inside foremost European colonizers to lower the function of the Ottoman Empire. Even nowadays this opposition entails actors which are nonetheless occupying several the international locations of the area, or workout new sorts of colonization over a few illegitimate regimes, which can be best serving western hobbies and agendas withinside the area. The sequels of colonization withinside the Middle East are nonetheless obvious because the area faces its contemporary instability. The governments hooked up withinside the post-colonial technology now no longer always mirror the ideas and aspirations of the people. In a few international locations, minority groups have managed over the system stopping any type of democracy to be hooked up. Other international locations are nonetheless going by the hassle of figuring out their countrywide identity. The emergence of Islamism and Arabism is a symptom that post-colonial governments are in search of to locate answers to conditions that they locate unacceptably. They have an impact on globalization, and overseas interference withinside the area has provoked disturbances and revolutions in several Middle Eastern regions. The results of this evolving situation must redefine the character of governments using giving them legitimacy. On the opposite hand, this converting manner without a doubt affects the character of relationships with western powers, specifically due to the fact of the Arab-Israeli war and the continuing exploitation of the natural assets of the area.³⁷

The present-day Middle East started after the First World War, when the Ottoman Empire turned into defeated by the British Empire and its allies and partitioned into some separate entities, beginning with the British and French Mandates. The maximum critical local differences following the cease of the Second World War blanketed the established order of the country of Israel in 1948, the departure of the colonial powers i.e., Britain and France from the vicinity by cease of the 1960s, and the growing influence and local involvement of America from the 1970s onwards. During the Cold War, the Middle East turned into a theatre of ideological warfare between America and

³⁷ Ahmed Kamal, History of Middle East, Fairleigh Dickinson University, January 2012.

the Soviet Union and their respective allies. Between many critical regions of rivalry between the superpowers turned into their choice to benefit strategic benefit within the vicinity and steadily get right of entry to oil reserves at a time while oil turned into an increasing number of critiques to the financial system of the industrialized nations of the West. Consequently, America sought to save the Arab international from being uncovered to Soviet influence. The crumble of the Soviet Union within the early 1990s had numerous effects on the Middle East.

First, it allowed massive numbers of Jewish human beings to immigrate from Russia and Ukraine to Israel, in addition to strengthening the Jewish country. Second, it reduces the very best supply of credit, armaments, and diplomatic aid to the anti-Western Arab regimes, weakening their position. Third, it unfolded the possibility of reasonably priced oil from Russia, using down oil charges and decreasing the dependence of the Western international on oil from the Arab states. Fourth, it discredited the version of improvement by authoritarian country socialism that Egypt below Nasser, Algeria, Syria, and Iraq had accompanied because the 1960s – leaving those regimes politically and economically stranded. As a result, local rulers, along with Iraq's Saddam Hussein increasing depended on nationalism instead of socialism. In a bid for local hegemony, Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait in 1990. In reaction, America shaped a global coalition that blanketed Middle East states along with Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Syria and evicted Iraq from Kuwait. However, the Gulf War later caused an everlasting US army presence within the Persian Gulf, specifically in Saudi Arabia the land wherein the holy towns of Mecca and Medina are located, which indignant many Muslims, and turned into a cause frequently stated via way of means of Osama bin Laden as justification for the 11th of September attacks. The extrude of governance from autocracy to democracy that came about in lots of locations around the sector following the cease of the Cold War did now no longer take area within the Middle East. At the equal time, in maximum Middle East nations, the boom of marketplace economies turned into confined via way of means of political restrictions, corruption, cronyism, overspending on hands and status projects, and over-dependence on oil revenues. The hit economies had been the one nation that had oil wealth and coffee populations, along with the Gulf States wherein the ruling elites allowed a few political and social liberalization – however without giving up any in their power. Lebanon additionally rebuilt a reasonably hit financial

system after an extended civil struggle is within the 1980s. During the 2000s, most of these elements intensified warfare within the Middle East, which affected the globe. The failure of the Clinton Administration to deal a peace deal between Israel and Palestine at the Camp David Summit in 2000 led ultimately to the brand-new uprising that marked the primary predominant outbreak of violence because of the 1993 Oslo Peace Accords. At the equal time, the screw-ups of a maximum of the Arab regimes and the financial ruin of secular Arab radicalism led a segment of knowledgeable Arabs and different Muslims to include Islamism, promoted to differing degrees using Iran's Shia clerics in addition to Saudi Arabia's effective Wahhabist movement. Many of the militant Islamists received their army education at the same time as combating Soviet forces in Afghanistan. In reaction to the 11th of September attack, US President George W. Bush determined to invade Afghanistan in 2001 to overthrow the Taliban regime – which has been harboring Bin Laden and al-Qaeda. However, Bush's choice to invade Iraq in 2003 went towards the recommendation of Sunni Middle Eastern states and maximum drastically Saudi Arabia. It caused an extended career of a Middle Eastern capital via way of means of Western military and marked a turning factor within the records of the vicinity. Despite elections held in January 2005, most of Iraq had all however disintegrated because of a post-struggle insurgency. Many disappointed Sunnis who as soon as served within the Iraqi Army below Saddam Hussein had been a hit in organizing a brand-new business enterprise, particularly ISIS. While ISIS has been considerably weakened within the Levant, branches of the business enterprise have unfolded to different nations out of doors the Middle East and maximum drastically Africa. By 2005, the scenario between the Israelis and the Palestinians had additionally deteriorated at the same time as in 2006 a brand-new warfare had erupted between Israel and Hezbollah in southern Lebanon – in addition to placing lower back any possibilities for peace within the vicinity. Meanwhile, in 2004, a Shia insurgency had additionally begun in Yemen. This ultimately caused a struggle, this is nonetheless raging at the time of writing, and to the deterioration of Iran–Saudi Arabia family members as each has become embroiled in a proxy struggle are in Yemen. Finally, beginning in past due 2010, the Arab Spring introduced predominant protests, uprisings, or even revolutions to numerous Middle Eastern nations. This challenged the prevailing social and political order of the vicinity and ultimately caused an extended Syrian civil

struggle that has visible the army intervention of Western powers, Russia and plenty of local states to both aid the Syrian competition companies and the ruling Ba'ath party. All those tendencies have delivered to local complexity, which the members to this extent have tried to unpack.³⁸

Riyadh and Tehran built their bilateral terms in 1929 after the adoption of a relationship treaty.³⁹ The relations between the m were sustained until 1943, when a pilgrim from Iran, Abu Taleb Yazdi, was aborted by the Saudi kingdom for his misconduct in the Holy Kaaba. The Saudi King sent a letter to the Shah of Iran to re-establish terms in 1946, by which means their terms had been reestablished. Until the 1960s the relationships between them were lazy due to alterations in religious practices and the acknowledgement of Israel by Iran.⁴⁰ Saudi King Faisal visited Iran in 1946 to strengthen ties between other countries. The Shah of Iran Mohammad Reza Pahlavi shared an official visit to Saudi Arabia, which eventually directed to a peaceful resolution of the states. King Faisal's hard work to promote Islamic harmony enthusiastically donated to the formation of global Islamic organizations, as well as the Organization of the World Islamic Congress, the World Muslim platform, along with the creations of the League, and the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC). Saudi Arabia and Iran signed an isolation agreement in 1968.⁴¹ When Britain proclaimed its removal and withdrawal of the Persian Gulf in the late 1960s,⁴² Iran and Saudi Arabia supposed primary duty for harmony and security in the region.

The Shah of Iran sent letters to King Faisal in the late 1960s and advised him to revolutionize Saudi Arabia: "Please, my brother, bring reform and open your country for all. Make schools a combination of women and men. Allow women to wear miniskirts. Otherwise, I cannot assure you that you will remain on the throne." In response, Saudi King Faisal wrote:

³⁸ Yannis Stivachtis, "Conflict and Diplomacy in the Middle East: External Actors and Regional Rivalries," *E-International Relations*, (2018).

³⁹ Brooks Wrampelmeier, "Saudi-Iranian Relations 1932-1982," *Middle East Policy*, vol. 6, Issue 3, (1999).

⁴⁰ Harrison Ackerman, "Symptoms of Cold Warfare between Saudi Arabia and Iran: Part 1 of 3", *Northern University political review*, (November 2011).

⁴¹ Fariborz Mokhtari, <http://www.ndu.edu/nesa/publications/Mokhtari.pdf> "No One Will Scratch My Back: Iranian Security Perceptions in Historical Context", https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Middle_East_Journal *Middle East Journal*, Spring, (2005): 209-229.

⁴² Roham Alvandi, "Nixon, Kissinger, and the Shah: the origins of Iranian primacy in the Persian Gulf," *Diplomatic history*, (2012), 36 (2): 337-372.

“Your Majesty, I value your advice. Let me remind you that you are not the Shah of France. It's not at the Elyse. The population is 90 percent Muslim. Please don't forget.”

⁶¹ In the 1970s, Saudi Arabia's worries about Iran were the transformation of its armed forces and its military supremacy across the region along with the recalling of the islands of Big Tunb, Little Tunb, and Abu Moussa in 1971. This development dared the UAE's claim on the islands. The clash between Saudi Arabia and Iran started a persistent evolution. The relationship between both states was never as welcoming as it was between 1968 and 1979.⁴³

Ties between the two countries were not free of tension in the mid of 1970 when the Shah of Iran tried to shape Iranian security way in the region, and Saudis resisted these efforts with smaller neighboring states of the Persian Gulf that still exist today.⁴⁴ After the Iranian revolution led by Imam Khomeini in 1979, it began to attack and openly disapprove of the religious validity of the Saudi regime.⁴⁵ However, Saudi King Khalid sent Khomeini an admiring message in which he stated that Islamic solidarity could be the basis of closer terms between Riyadh and Tehran ⁴⁶ He said that with the establishment of Iran, there were no problems for collaboration between them.⁴⁷ After the Makkah incident, Khomeini stated in a speech that Wahhabis are like penknives that have always injured Muslims' hearts and proclaimed that Makkah was in the hands of a band of heretics. After this development, the terms between the two countries remained under dramatic changes until 1991.⁴⁸

President Mohammad Khatami took office and began a period of intervention in the Gulf region in 1997; meanwhile, Crown Prince Abdullah attended the summit of the Organization of the Islamic Conference in Tehran and became the highest-ranking Saudi visit to Iran since 1979. Iran and Saudi Arabia signed a treaty on terrorism in 2001.

⁴³Henner Fürtig, “Iran and Saudi Arabia: External "Game Cocks? “ *Middle East Institute*, (January 2009).

⁴⁴ F. Gregory Gause, *The International Relations of the Persian Gulf*, (Cambridge University Press November 2009): 38–39.

⁴⁵ Reza Ekhtiari Amiri, Ku Hasnita Binti Ku Samsu, Hassan Gholipour Fereidouni, “The Hajj and Iran's Foreign Policy towards Saudi Arabia”, *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, (October 2011): 678–690.

⁴⁶ Abdurhman A. Hussein, *So History Doesn't Forget: Alliances Behavior in Foreign Policy of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 1979-1990*, (Author House, 2012).

⁴⁷ Gil Feiler, *Economic Relations between Egypt and the Gulf Oil States, 1967–2000: Petro Wealth and Patterns of Influence*, (*Sussex Academic Press*, 2003): 151.

⁴⁸ Kenneth Katzman, <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/RL32048.pdf> "Iran: U.S. Concerns and Policy Responses" <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/RL32048.pdf> CRS Report for US Congress, *Congressional Research Service*, (June 2013).

When President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad came into control, he took a harder stance on foreign policy. Both countries increasingly seek to support their regional influence by unintended fighting in Lebanon, Palestine, Iraq, and Afghanistan. In the same year, the Arab Spring stimulates tensions by expanding their sectarian divides. The Saudi officials blame Iran for stirring protests the country's Sunni royal family in Bahrain. The kingdom sends 1,000 soldiers to suppress the uprising which was the basics of Saudi Iranian hostility during the broader wave of political upheavals.⁴⁹ Since the radical ideology of the Khomeini government is anti-monarchical, Iran used its foreign policy to incite unrest and coup the monarchies in the Arabian Gulf, but its goal had been to support the rightfulness of Saudi Arabia as the guardian of the holiest places of Islam. Saudis discredit Khomeini's view of Islam by underscoring his Shiite identity. Its foreign policy put the welfare of the nation and the nation comes first, meaning that the nation is not elongated and held captive to regional political proceedings and ideologies.⁵⁰

While keeping in mind the situation discussed above, this chapter continued to explore the hostility and the competition between Riyadh and Tehran through a historical lens. The central theme of the chapter discussed the evolution of their hostility cemented in various ideological dissimilarities. Their competition stems from direct challenges by Iran's populist Islamic theocratic government to the legitimacy of the Saudi monarchy which resulted in severe ideological confrontations.⁵¹

1.1. Post-2011 Geo-political competition

Presently, the two conflicting nations are on opposing closes of various bloody clashes, counting Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Lebanon, Bahrain, and Palestine. It may be a dreadful series of territorial clashes that worsen the ill-will and doubt between Iran and Saudi Arabia, which in chance compounds the territorial clashes between both divisions of the Islamic world. The rotting clash in Syria and Iraq has given fruitful ground for radical Sunni activists such as Daesh, which combines the leftovers of al-Qaeda and Saddam Hussein's military. Although Daesh could prove a hazard to both Tehran and Riyadh, it is improbable that the two verges will manage to directly cooperate against it given their

⁴⁹“Timeline of Iran-Saudi Relations,” *United State Institute of Peace*, May 29, 2018, <https://iranprimer.usip.org/blog/2016/jan/06/timeline-iran-saudi-relations>

⁵⁰Najat AlSaied, “Sectarianism and ideology: The cases of Iran and Saudi Arabia”, *Middle East Institute*, (August 2021).

⁵¹ Victoria Chen, "Saudi Arabia and Iran: Sectarianism, a Quest for Regional Hegemony, and International Alignments" *Syracuse University Honors Program Capstone Projects* 1000, (2017).

dissimilar conclusion on the problem. Iran properties Daesh's increase to Saudi budgetary and philosophical support, whereas Saudi Arabia properties it to the restraint of Sunni Arabs in Syria and Iraq. Iran presents itself as a pragmatic leader of the Muslim world and regards the regional order as unfavorable for the Muslim world. With the motto Neither East nor West, the administration combined itself during the Cold War as the power of speech of all those Anti Monarchies, Anti-West, and Anti-Israel sentiments.

In addition, Khomeini, the front-runner of the Islamic Revolution, took benefit of historical Persian patriotism and entitled Iran to emerge as the center of a new Middle Eastern region. This self-image became clear in the subsequent speech by Iran's President Rouhani: As a regional power, Iran will act responsibly regarding regional and international security and is ready and willing to cooperate bilaterally in these areas and multilaterally with other nations across the globe. Iran has gained the kindness of many radical actors in the region before those responsible players who claim that the global order should be fairer to regional players in the Middle East and fill their bombast with words like resistance and greatness. Iran has its unique significance in the Muslim world due to its strict ideological devotions whereas Saudi Arabia is amongst the richest countries in the Middle East, holding the position of first oil producer and the first Gulf realm to serve as a model for the region's smaller kingdoms. The country assumes itself as the supreme leader of the Gulf region.

The clash between IRI and KSA has been structurally established because of the tiresome processes of the past. This clash has now converted into a part of their national and official assemblies. It also influences their own scopes of inspiration and shapes the outlines of local and sometimes supra-local politics. Its rivalry for the management of the Muslim world, opposing views on the local order, the Iranian nuclear agenda, and Saudi worries about it, backing for regional associates, oil price matters and control over natural capitals, and the different and conflicting state and government structures remained a mainstream feature of this ideological clash. Systemic affiliations with opposing and sometimes warring great powers, sectarian, and ethnic divisions in the

societies of both states, and allegations of promoting disobedient behavior are just some of the matters that have powered their aggression.⁵²

Iran and Saudi Arabia have multilayered levels of conflict which have engaged both governments in loads of proxy wars wherein they assist rival facets and militias across the region.⁵³ The desire for regional domination and the ambition for controlling geopolitical events became the common objectives of Saudi and Iranian foreign relations. The mainstream foreign policy mechanisms of Iranian and Saudi foreign policies are closely related to the regional stability of the Muslim world. The creations of a coalition of all these factors pose a significant threat to their own domestic political systems. Being a major geopolitical player means surviving an appropriate regional political system does not endanger their survival. Attitude towards one another always remained antagonistic between Iran and Saudi Arabia whereas the hostility and controversy continued the primary factors for augmenting the hostility between both blocks of the Muslim world. The leaders of both nations are strictly linked to their contesting ideological approaches. In this way, it is more appropriate to say that Iran and Saudi Arabia frequently take benefit of conflicts or share security and interfere in local struggles and their presence in the Gulf region.

Tehran and Riyadh compete in diverse areas with lots of troubles associated with the Gulf region. Their leading disagreements have resulted in various contesting geostrategic clashes on oil charges, meeting with non-state actors, or even the area's terms, in a habitually recurring fervent dialogue over the relations in the Persian Gulf.⁵⁴ Post-2011 geopolitical surroundings were marked by the Arab Uprisings that influence both nations' alliances and their mainstream alignments structures. It has collapsed nation's political orders specifically in Iraq and Syria, and the comparative withdrawal of US strength over Syria and Russia's access to regional disasters. Iran has been specifically successful in filling the void left by deteriorating and unsuccessful states through radical and army means.⁵⁵ The Arab Spring carried physical

⁵²Muhammad Nadeem Mirza,<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/21582440211032642>Hussain Abbas,<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/21582440211032642>Irfan Hasnain Qaisrani, "Structural Sources of Saudi-Iran Rivalry and Competition for the Sphere of Influence", *Sage Journals*, (July 2021).

⁵³ Jonathan Marcus, "Why Saudi Arabia, and Iran are bitter rivals", *BBC News*, September 2019. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-42008809>

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵Dr. Ali Fathollah-Nejad, "The Iranian-Saudi Hegemonic rivalry," *DGAP external publications*, (October 2017).

improvements to several Middle Eastern countries. The transformation of government in Tunisia: The exclusion of the Islamists from politics ended in January 2011 with the overthrow of the Ben Ali regime and at the end of 2011 the Ennahda was the strongest party in the country with 90 seats out of 217 MPs. Assembly responsible for drawing up an offer new constitution replacing the suspended 1959 text ⁵⁶ and in Egypt, Cairo's Square turned into the center for 18 days of protests with hundreds of Egyptians demanding that their president, Mubarak, footstep down. The protests finally compelled Mubarak, who had dominated for 30 years to step down. The upheaval is escorted by the technology of political disorders and uncertainty in Egypt, which has persevered to curb its citizens. The vision of democracy additionally proved fleeting in Syria, wherein the nonviolent pro-democracy activists had encountered authority's antagonism. Subsequently, the Syrian establishments killed and caged Arab Spring activists, the country break up into blocs and sectarian violence broke out. Civil struggle fare quickly shadowed. Foreign interference didn't prevent the struggle fare, which has exiled greater than 1/2 of all Syrians and murdered as much as 1/2 of 1,000,000 people as well as the crises in Iraq: The Iraq War changed into an extended armed war from 2003 to 2011 that started out with the invasion of Iraq with the aid of using the United States—a commanded alliance which conquered the Iraqi authorities of Saddam Hussein. The war persevered for lots of the subsequent era as a rebellion arose to face the alliance armies and the post-incursion Iraqi creations. An expected 151,000 to 1,033,000 Iraqis deceased withinside the first years of war, whereas the US army had formally reserved in 2011 ⁵⁷, in Yemen: The disaster began with the 2011–12 upheaval ⁵⁸ in opposition to President Saleh, who had commanded for greater than 3 decades.⁵⁹

⁵⁶L. Carl <https://www.britannica.com/contributor/Emma-Murphy/4608> Brown, "Britannica," *Al-Jumhūrīyah at-Tūnisīyah, Republic of Tunisia*, October 11, 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Tunisia/additional-info#history>

⁵⁷Gerald Henry Blake <https://www.britannica.com/contributor/Gerald-Henry-Blake/3789>, "Britannica Iraq War," 11 January 2022. <https://www.britannica.com/place/Iraq>

⁵⁸ Mona Al-Naggar, "In Yemen, Hard Times Remain a Constant as Rebels Take Charge," <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/07/world/middleeast/yemen-rebels-take-over-a-struggling-country.html?hp&action=click&pgtype=Homepage&module=photo-spot-region®ion=top-news&WT.nav=top-news> *The New York Times*, 9 February 2015. <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/07/world/middleeast/yemen-rebels-take-over-a-struggling-country.html>

⁵⁹ Hamza Hendawi, "Yemen's crisis reflects arc of Arab Spring revolts," <https://news.yahoo.com/yemens-crisis-reflects-arc-arab-spring-revolts-115411382.html> *Federal News Network*, 9 February 2015. <https://federalnewsnetwork.com/national-world-headlines/2014/10/yemens-crisis-reflects-arc-of-arab-spring-revolts/>

After Saleh left the workplace in 2012 as a part of a facilitated settlement between the Yemen authorities and competition collections, the authorities controlled utilizing Saleh's former vice president, Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi, fought to tie the political scene of the state and standoff fears each from Al-Qaeda withinside the Arabian Peninsula and from Houthi activists that have been fighting a long insurrection withinside the north for years⁶⁰ and in Syria: Anti-authorities demonstrations started in March of 2011, as a portion of the Arab Spring. But the nonviolent objections quick escalated after the authorities' violent crackdown, and armed competition organizations started preventing back. By July of 2011, army defectors had loosely prepared the Free Syrian Army and plenty of civilian Syrians took up palms to enroll in the competition.⁶¹

All these events de-generated the hierarchical structures of the Middle East and controlled Iran and Saudi Arabia to block the power void instantly after the political variations. The Shiite population of Bahrain was reinforced by Iran, while the dominant government was reinforced systematically by Saudi Arabia; The Houthis, with the help of Tehran, conquered the government in Yemen, while Riyadh hurled a military movement to reestablish central government. KSA began backing the insurgents who protested President Bashar al Assad as soon as the drive began, while IRI started backing the Syrian government. Furthermore, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia urged the Lebanese prime minister to resign, whereas Iranian-backed Hezbollah increased tremendous influence in Lebanon. KSA allies, UAE and Bahrain established relations with Israel, whom Iran measured as one of its greatest opponents in the region. The subsequent power struggle between the two fueled ancient hostilities in the Middle East between both states by sectarian divides. Their hostility has not only government, local, and general implications, but also national implications in which the individual civilizations have been involved.⁶²

⁶⁰ Gregory D. Johnsen, "Meet The <https://www.buzzfeed.com/gregorydjohnsen/meet-the-group-that-now-rules-yemen> - .rxPB6yvewGroup That Now Rules Yemen". *BuzzFeed News*, 6 February 2015. <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/gregorydjohnsen/meet-the-group-that-now-rulesyemen><https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/gregorydjohnsen/meet-the-group-that-now-rules-yemen>

⁶¹ Mercy Corps, "The facts: What you need to know about the Syria crisis," (blog), March 09, 2017, <https://www.mercycorps.org/blog/quick-facts-syria-crisis>

⁶² Ibid.

1.2. Hostile Geopolitical Aspirations

The issue of domination between Iran and Saudi Arabia is causing severe security, political and economic issues in the Muslim world. Iran's security threats to Saudi Arabia are the same as for any other Gulf state. Iran is a radical and philosophical danger to Saudi Arabia because it funds the Saudi Shiite minorities and Iran's opposition to the existence of US militaries in the Gulf States. While Iran has additional concerns about security intimidations, those intimidations are primarily triggered by US involvement in connection with the rising occurrence of US militaries and armed bases in the GCC. These factors increased the participation of exterritorial forces in the safe environment of the region. The rulers of these nations decided to formulate their foreign policies with adjacent countries such as Iraq, Lebanon, Palestine, Bahrain, Yemen, and Syria.⁶³ The formulation of official ties with Muslim states has let the US intensify the regional political order of the Middle East. As Iran continued its nuclear ambition toward its stated aim of energy individuality, its dangers further estrange Tehran from the international community.⁶⁴ Iran's atomic issue is one of the factors that have shaped the regional dynamics of the Gulf region. It became an important factor that can influence the perception of other actors in the region, international and regional actors. This issue postures a thoughtful challenge to the security of the Gulf States.⁶⁵ Iran's achievement of nuclear weapons does not stand a threat to Saudi Arabia, but it will inspire Iran to be more violent in its war with Arab countries. In the Gulf region, Saudi Arabia performs as a deliberately important member, but when Iran has its own nuclear scheme, this position stance a threat to Saudi Arabia's dominance in the region.⁶⁶

1.3. The Conflict within the Civilizations

From Saudi Arabia's view and the other Arab Gulf states, the political unrest in the Arab world was the introduction of disorders, variability and government change that shaped a little worse situation than ferocity and fiscal changes. The pressures between Iran and Saudi Arabia reflected a comprehensive power fight that emphasizes internal

⁶³ Ghadah Alghunaim, "Conflict between Saudi Arabia and Iran: An Examination of Critical Factors Inhibiting their Positive Roles in the Middle east," *Doctoral dissertation. Nova Southeastern University, Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences*, (2019).

⁶⁴ Jessica Drum, "Vying for Influence: Saudi Arabia's Reaction to Iran's Advancing Nuclear Program," *NTI*, (July 2008).

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ Blockmans S. & Waizer S, "Coercive diplomacy towards Iran: Do the economic sanctions add up?" *CEPS*, (June 2013).

safety, regional influence, and irregular threats than nuclear militaries. This fight between Iran and Saudi Arabia gradually became more complex because of rising worries between Saudis and other Arab nations about their association with the United States. It is just because of the American permanent presence in the region. These doubts have led both contestants towards a diversity of Arab plan theories such as the United States setting to recklessness its alliances in the Arab world and twisting to Iran. At the administration and security level, these misgivings are spoken in doubts that an energy independent and war-exhausted America is weakening, numbed by the president's political indecisiveness and economic budget debates. This scenario turned to the US position towards Asia by shifting Washington's focus on the Middle Eastern region.

There is an intermittent case in the United States and the West that see the level to which this is a time when both the Saudi and Iranian governments are fronting a dilemma of the growing struggle for the future of Islam, a struggle between Sunnis and Shiites, but also amid all nations' regime and the violent Islamist extremists. In this struggle, data released by the National Counter-Terrorism Center and further exertions to track terrorist patterns show that almost all attacks and victims were triggered by Muslims who embattled Muslims, and most of the conflicting points between Iranian and Saudi disagreements caused widespread violence in the Muslim world. The West is only on the edge of this struggle, but it is not the only factor stopping the involvement of West in the Arabian affairs. The genesis of this power struggle between two blocks of the Muslim world is rooted in the conflict within their civilizations.⁶⁷

These are the views of the Gulf and Arab countries that the United States and Europe can't disregard the real differences and intimidations in a region that accounts for about 20% of global oil exportations and 35% of total oil delivery that is carried out by the sea. They cross the Strait of Hormuz with huge amounts of natural gas. Lots of barrels of oil stream by the Red Sea, Oil flows from Turkey, and its transit routes are also affected by regional uncertainty.

The world economy and the economy of any industrialized country are reliant to a larger extent on the stability and security of this stream, as well as the steady growth of its

⁶⁷ Arleigh A. Burke, "Chair in Strategy, Saudi Arabia, Iran, and the "Clash within a Civilization," *CSIS*, (February 2014).

future oil flow. Most of the countries cannot separate themselves from the Gulf crisis due to the dependency of different states on the natural resources of Arab states. Most of the western states realized that they could face a financial crisis in case of any disturbance in their supplies of natural resources of Arab nations. The United States' Energy Liberation Dialogue ignored the fact that the U.S. Branch of Energy forecasts that the U.S. will be subject to imports of at least 32% of liquid fuels by 2040. This is only a reference case in the estimates published in December 2013. More importantly, compared with direct oil imports, the US economy continued to rely more on indirect imports of Asian exports that rely on Persian Gulf oil. In this way, the growing strategic competition between Iran and Saudi Arabia placed the politics of the Middle Eastern region under western influence.

1.4. The Nuclear Arms Race

Saudi Arabia and other Arabian Gulf countries have not placed the nuclear threat above a more direct threat. This does not mean that they do not recognize this truth. The nuclear matters have dragged the Arabian region towards the nuclear policy of the US based on Washington's commitments to implement the broader agenda of its nonproliferation campaign. The Iranian nuclear outflow is currently becoming the focus of the P5 + 1 mechanism which was initially created to address the Iranian nuclear program. The main voice of Saudi Arabia is pushing for the formation of a zone free of armaments of mass demolition in the Middle East whereas Saudi Arabia is given its own military choices against the Iranian nuclear question. Saudi Arabia had raised the ballistic missiles program supplied by China which is appropriately expanded and launched by the Iranian government. There are several Saudi authors generally, and the Saudi security establishment particularly who started mentioning the threats of Iranian nuclear capability. Conventional Saudi thinkers like Prince Turki al-Faisal said that Saudi Arabia is bearing in mind nuclear options, and some experts believe that the Saudi government can get help from other states in the nuclear domain. The United States is not only negotiating with the Saudi government, but it continued to improve its preventative military capabilities against the Iran nuclear threats. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton then argued that the Arab Gulf countries should have the same nuclear deterrent force as the United States. They proposed Europe in 2008 and published the proposal on the NPR radio program on August 29, 2009. The United States has

frequently stated that it would not ignore Iran's use of nuclear weapons and has formulated a military option for active action carrying out a strike that has been unofficially confirmed by US officials at the US Joint Chiefs of Staff. The purpose of this strike is to counter the Iranian nuclear threats which could serve the US broader geostrategic interests in the Arab world. In this respect, the Israeli case cannot be ignored because the Israeli security forces the adaptation of preventive strikes against the potential nuclear threats originating from Iraq. Israel designed and implemented a more limited form of preventive strike first against Iraq, then against Syria. More prominently, Israel has been participating in a preventive nuclear weapons contest with Iran for a long time, and Arab nations such as IRI and KSA are aware of this factor while establishing their ties with Israeli state officials.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia also had reason to doubt the contemporary and future commitments of the United States of America to defend the Persian Gulf and aid Saudi Arabia from the nuclear threats of Iran in the Arabian Gulf. Iran is persistently upgrading its nuclear program which could counter the deterrence and combat readiness of the United States and Arab countries in the Persian Gulf. If the United States imposes sanctions on Iran, the Iranian parliament is facing various difficulties in cooperating with US non-proliferation policy and its Middle Eastern directions. From the viewpoint of Saudi Arabia, Iran's nuclear program is not proof of status or prestige, nor it is reaching the nuclear threshold, but the capabilities obtained by Iran is directly linked to its geostrategic interests. If it is warned, the actual nuclear program will be activated in response to a small conventional attack. The Iranian government is seriously thinking about the American presence in the region by strictly treating the nuclear ambitions of Arab states beyond Israel.

1.5. Oil Politics

Riyadh and Tehran have several common interests, given the importance of the market in their economy. Both countries strived to stabilize oil prices by emphasizing their geostrategic interests. The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries holds 79.4% of the world's oil capitals, of which 64.5% are mostly located in the Middle East. Saudi Arabia and Iran account for 35.5% of OPEC capitals. Since the establishment of OPEC in 1960, the two countries have collaborated for many periods to reach an agreement on the oil supply and oil prices. The economic planners of Saudi Arabia and

Iran are producing higher predictabilities of the global oil market. .⁶⁸ Relations between Saudi Arabia and Iran, both oil-enriched countries of the Middle East, have ranged from cooperation to battle in past. Along with several events in history which shaped their rivalry on sectarianism lines, their competing oil policies also remained an important domain of their strategic contest. Oil is an international strategic product and is widely used as a radical instrument. Its role in the rivalry between Saudi Arabia and Iran cannot be unspoken without untangling the international setting and power erections that rule the method in which the nations cooperate. The focus of US on the global oil politics shows America's dominance over the international trading infrastructure of oil. The oil rivalry between Saudi Arabia and Iran is said to be the business of these two countries, it has always had an international dimension overshadowed by the US.⁶⁹

After the lifting of nuclear sanctions in the recent past, the heads of the state government of Iran were determined to make up for the vanished period and income. Unexpectedly, they quickly increased production to a level not reached since November 2011, and actively reduced hopes for them in the evolving oil politics. The leaders of both nations always showed their deep interests in the global oil market which is under the shadows of global power politics.

Tehran plan has a history of more than ten years when the "20-year forecast" sometimes called "Vision 2025" was released in 2005. The plan contains various incredible expectations that as rapid economic growth and fast job creation and focusing oil diversification. With the immediate impacts of the sanctions, Iranian oil exports reduced and the promotion of the expansion of non-oil trade became the prime factor for strengthening the role of Iranian leaders in the world. The participation of the leader of Iran Khomeini in a resistance economy in which oil exports account for a negligible share further empowered Iran. In Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Salman's words, the Saudi Arabian 2030 vision has the aim of eradicating oil obstacles in the oil marketplace which is called the oil addiction by him. Saudi Arabia has an objective to create a prosperous economy and terminate Saudi Arabia's dependence on oil incomes by 2020. The state-owned Saudi oil company Aramco has created the world's largest state-owned

⁶⁸Mohsen Tavakol, "Regional stability is in the interest of both Saudi Arabia and Iran," *Atlantic Council*, (November 2020).

⁶⁹Sukru Cildir, "How Saudi-Iranian oil rivalry has been shaped by American power," *The Conversation*, (November 2019), <https://theconversation.com/how-saudi-iranian-oil-rivalry-has-been-shaped-byamerican-power-124123>

asset. A fund that manages national revenues aims to create 450,000 new jobs in the remote sector by critical public sector wages and increasing the country's non-oil exportations, all of which are shortened at the same time frame.⁷⁰

1.6. Regional Stability

Rather than recognizing the common interests of these regional powers in world politics, the varying levels of their political disputes and religious differences have intensified the bilateral bonds between Saudi Arabia and Iran. The harsh political rhetoric between the state officials from Saudi Arabia and Iran has degraded the scope of peace and stability in the Middle Eastern region which could be regarded as the politics of "great enemies". Riyadh and Tehran competed for influence in the region in history. The recent phase of this competition began after the United States invaded Iraq in 2003 and Saddam Hussein overthrew the Sunni government. The major focus of this era was on the political changes of Arab Spring in 2011. The armed existence in the region has further increased as an outcome of increasing uncertainty. Consequently, the United States strengthened its role in the Middle East and Iran has extended its actions more deeply to backing allied governments such as the Bashar al-Assad regime in Syria. Riyadh and Tehran also focused to strengthen their bilateral relations with faithful collections and countries around the globe. This power struggle in the region has caused large variations in oil prices in various countries. The unchanging areas where tensions and armed conflicts have significantly reduced are areas of the oil markets where their common interests are creating a power struggle.

Another common concern of both states is the issue of Israel and Palestine. Despite reports of an increased intelligence collaboration between Saudi Arabia and Israel, both Riyadh and Tehran continue to support the Palestinian cause and the governments of both states are worried about Israel's control of Muslim holy places and its development of the West Bank. Moreover, the potential of Israel's undeclared nuclear weapons and its offensive regional policy against the territorially adjoining Arabian nations is another dimension of the Saudi Iranian conflict. The question of Israel's recognition has

⁷⁰ Emma Borden [https://www.brookings.edu/author/emmaborden/Suzanne Maloney](https://www.brookings.edu/author/emmaborden/Suzanne%20Maloney), "The political implications of transforming Saudi and Iranian oil economies," *Bookings*, (June 2016). <https://www.brookings.edu/experts/suzanne-maloney/>

presently become a permanent feature of Muslim world politics because Saudi Arabia has not tracked the UAE and Bahrain in regularizing relations with the Jews.

Another area of interest for Riyadh and Tehran is the closer relationship with the European Union (EU), which is understood as a partner with fewer problems than the United States, Russia, or China. The normalization of relations between Saudi Arabia and Iran will bring relations between the two-sided governments which could let European Union increase their economic deals with the Muslim world. Over the last 41 years, after the Iranian Upheaval and the Mosque of Mecca's siege, the importance of exporting revolutionary Islam to Iran and Saudi Arabia has diminished. As the United States attempts to withdraw troops from the Middle Eastern region, Riyadh has also reduced its dependence on the United States as its main defensive ally. It led Saudi leaders towards diversification of their oil economy. Therefore, it is more appropriate to maintain that the security and well-being of the Middle Eastern region are heavily reliant on the two-sided interaction of Saudi Arabia and Iran. It is equally believed that If Riyadh and Tehran emphasize mutual interests, neighboring nations will soon follow. This will aid extinguish most of the fires in the region and its surrounding areas. It will also help in achieving peaceable cohabitation with Israel. Therefore, the upgraded relationship between Riyadh and Tehran will not only benefit the Middle East but also North Africa and East African states. This will enable Muslim countries to emphasize reducing deficiency, religious prejudice, and terrorism, parallel to indorsing democratic modifications.⁷¹

1.7. Arab Spring and Saudi-Iran Associations

By the end of Ali Abdul's rule in the first week of January 2011 and Saleh had begun protests and rallies for political changes in the country, the Middle Eastern region was placed under an era of massive social unrest. Nearly 2,000 people were murdered in conflicts between security forces and demonstrators which disturbed the social and political conditions of the Muslim world. After a sequence of protests, President Saleh made an Agreement for a 33-year term, but Jordan was one of the first countries to witness the warmth of Arab Spring. Demonstrations began in Jordan in 2010. These antigovernment objections were organized by teachers and trade unions initially. The

⁷¹ Emma Borden and Suzanne Maloney, "The political implications of transforming Saudi and Iranian oil economies," *Bookings*, (June 2016).

most important thing for the government of retired officials is to boycott the opposition. When the rulers of Tunisia and Egypt were overthrown, the Jordanian government followed the suit closely behind. Additionally, the Syrian government started witnessing the threats of civil war. After the political war in neighboring Syria, this had been realized as a major influence on Jordanian politics. The Syrian policy of Jordan was controversial, although it seems to be a wise choice. However, under the pressure of the Syrian war, there was a massive political change happened in the Arab world. During the Arab Spring in Jordan, the iconic slogan of the Arab Spring, *Alshaab Jurid Iskat Alnizam*, was very common which means the people wanted to overthrow the regime which did not appear in the protests in Jordan. Protesters in Jordan focused on economic reforms. Political pressure has not increased like in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Yemen, and Bahrain. However, the Jordanian Spring was shadowed by political and economic concerns. A new system was established, and some political improvements were carried out as the result of the mass social movement. Given the country's increasing domestic obligation and feeble macroeconomic environment, Saudi Arabia was pleased to help in economic affairs. Another reason for the failure of the spring in Jordan was that the demonstrations were organized by the famous Muslim Brotherhood group. This opposition was capable enough to mobilize people without questioning the government. Therefore, the Jordanian regime was more resilient than most Arab regimes during the broader wave of Arab Spring. The challenges facing Jordan are still massive in social and political affairs.

In the larger wave of social demonstrations, Yemen and Tunisia were considered geo-strategically important for Iran because of their political upheavals which were ideal conditions for cultivating the ideology of the 1979 revolution. In both countries, Iran was engaged in public uprisings and has close relations with the opposition of the ruling government. The policies of Syria, Jordan, and Iran were the same as their goal of defending national interests and bilateral relations were common. Iran supported the Arab Spring and opposed its country's public uprising when comes to Tehran, but the turmoil in Syria makes Iran very worried about the whole situation. Because of Jordan's strategic role in ensuring regional security in the Middle Eastern region, the importance of Jordan in Arab world politics started involving Iran in Middle Eastern affairs. Iran started paying close attention to the Jordanian uprising due to its geopolitical interests.

Therefore, Iran's primary task was to maintain bilateral relations with Jordan cemented in its ideological interests. For example, despite internal opposition to Jordan's request for the cancellation of the invitation Iranian visit, Jordan became a significant point in Middle Eastern politics. The invitations had been sent to King Abdullah when President Ahmadinejad announced that the visit would be conducted again. Moreover, Syria became Iran's closest ally and the strategically important player with regard to the Levant. Therefore, Iran has a different position on Syria and constantly responds to Syria while emphasizing the role of foreign powers, mainly Saudi Arabia and the United States.⁷²

1.8. Role of Internal Factors

The internal factor of the region consists of diplomatic relations among neighboring states in addition to ideological and ethnic divisions in states. In Iraq, for example, there's an ethnic divide between Arabs and Kurds, and an ideological divide among Shi'as and Sunnis. Similarly, the Israeli career of Palestinian territories and its competitive regulations at the lines of ideology and ethnicity had been a primary source of instability in the region. The anxiety among Iran and the Arab world is also taken into consideration to have its roots in ideological and ethnic differences. The territorial disputes among Middle Eastern states shape another key subject of internal politics in addition to a challenge for local stability. These disputes, which regularly reflect centuries-old ethnic divisions and rivalries, have pitched Arabs towards non-Arabs, e.g., Kurds, Turks, and Persians, etc., and represent a weak spot that would conveniently be exploited by way of means of outside interests.⁷³

The contemporary aggregate of outside factors and inner political gambits are leading the region into new instructions inclusive of Saudi Arabia's new "Look East Policy." The Riyadh's strong illustration in the world's leading local and worldwide exchange companies associated with petroleum and power assets could have a right way effect on international strategic realities. While the initiative is paving the way for new dimensions in the Saudi scenario, it has the capacity to noticeably influence the complete

⁷²Noor Ullah Khan,<https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Noor-Fatima-39Noor-Fatima>,<https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Sania-ZehraaSania-Zehraa>, "Iranian-Saudi Strategic Competition in the Middle East: An Analysis of the Arab Spring," *LASSIJ*, (December 2018).

⁷³ Al-Jazeera, May 13, 2007, "Iran calls for Gulf of Peace," <http://english.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/FA9EB904-7553-4641-B715-C394D2CCF0F1.htm> – October 26, 2007.

scenario of the Middle East. Numerous ethnically and ideologically special resistance companies and armed militias are running withinside the Middle East. They have their personal networks and are generally financed, allegedly, by some ‘charitable’ companies, casual banking systems, bulk of coins and commodities that may be sponsored in any currency. The presence of those companies is a right way hazard to the kingdom structure of the Middle Eastern countries. Indeed, the troubles which can be rising because of their effect on the public ought to affect the region in numerous methods and sooner or later change the politics of the region.⁷⁴

1.9. Role of External Factors in the Political Upheavals in the Middle East

The Middle Eastern region has an area of interest for external powers due to its unique features, and abundance of oil, minerals, and other resources. External powers always wanted to interfere in internal politics and had succeeded in achieving this goal by making alliances with the two worst enemies of the region i.e., Iran and Saudi Arabia. Some of the involvements and role has discussed below:

1.9.1. Role of U.S

After the termination of the Cold War, the countrywide position theory of the U.S withinside the Middle East has been that of a hegemon. In a place that has been characterized as a multipolar scheme with no internal authority able to affirm supremacy, the United States has performed the position of balance guarantor, a supporter of democracy, and negotiator withinside the Arab-Israeli conflict. The United States has sustained the stability between local influences and averted any local performer to acquire domination by direct army interferences and protection alliances with a number of those local powers, together with Israel. The United States speak for the protection of center and small powers within the region. The United States has developed the supervisor of The Middle East oil flows and is the negotiator of lots of its arguments.⁷⁵ These roles started by the US in the region have emerged due to its self-description which coincided with local actors’ expectancy of its behavior inside the region. Under the Obama administration, a brand-new position theory inside The Middle

⁷⁴ Albert Aji, 2007, July 19. “Iranian President Visits Syria.” The Washington Post. (<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/07/19/AR2007071901540.html> – October 26, 2007.)

⁷⁵ Kenneth M. Pollack, “U.S. Policy toward a Turbulent Middle East,” *Brookings*, 24 March 2015. <https://www.brookings.edu/testimonies/u-s-policy-toward-a-turbulent-middle-east/>

East has changed. The excessive invoice of the Iraq war in 2003, the rate of involvement in Libya in 2011, the concern of bearing the expenses of clashes between local players, and the contribution to prolonged civil wars are all fundamentals that donated to squeeze out within the US position theory towards The Middle Eastern region. Barrack Obama specified that: The hostility between the Saudis and the Iranians which has assisted to feed proxy conflicts in Syria and Iraq and Yemen demands us to mention our pals in addition to the Iranians that they need to determine a powerful means to amount the neighborhood and institute a bloodless peace.⁷⁶ The US reacted in a different way to the Arab revolutions based totally on expenses and motivations.⁷⁷ This state of being inactively curved into take place to the US loss of help or safety to a few long-status associates during the 2011 uprisings, together with Mubarak in Egypt. Also, its unwillingness to take a strong status in opposition to Syria's Assad turned into another most important choice that marked an extrude to the US position within the region.⁷⁸

1.9.2. Role of the Arab League

The Arab upheavals in The Middle East and North Africa that started in 2011 provided the association with a possibility to redefine itself. After helping the takeover of Qaddafi in Libya, the Arab League grew to become its awareness of the struggle in Syria. It put off Syrian membership, brokered an ill-fated peace settlement with President Bashar al-Assad's regime and assembled a group of spectators to screen the application of its strategy. Unsatisfied with Syria's loss of amenability, the association is known for Assad to footstep down in 2012 and asked for a decision from the UN Security Council to help the suggestion. The Arab League ultimately identified the Syrian competition because the valid consultant of the Syrian individuals, however, associates of the Assad regime, which include Iraq, Lebanon, and Algeria, blocked the competition's complete supposition of the role.⁷⁹

⁷⁶Jeffrey Goldberg, "The Obama Doctrine," *The Atlantic*, April 2016.

<https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2016/04/the-obama-doctrine/471525/>

⁷⁷ Abdullah K. Al Shayji, "The GCC-U.S. Relationship: A GCC Perspective," *Middle East Policy* 21, no. 3 (1 September 2014): 60–70.

⁷⁸ May Darwich, "Great and Regional Powers in the Middle East: The Evolution of Role Conceptions," *Shifting Global Politics and the Middle East* 23 (2019).

⁷⁹Jonathan Masters <https://www.cfr.org/bio/jonathan-masters> and <https://www.cfr.org/bio/mohammed-aly-sergie> Mohammed Aly Sergie, "The Arab League," February 19, 2020. <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/arab-league>

1.9.3. Role of GCC

The Gulf Cooperation Council is a regional, political, and financial combination that includes Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates.⁸⁰ On 25th May 1981 the Document of the GCC was signed, authoritatively forming the foundation.⁸¹ All contemporary states include 3 constitutional monarchies i.e., Qatar, Kuwait, and Bahrain, absolute monarchies of Saudi Arabia and Oman, and one unified monarchy; the United Arab Emirates, which consists of 7 member states, every of that's an absolute monarchy with its representative. There had been deliberations concerning the destiny club of Jordan, Morocco, and Yemen.⁸²

GCC agreements are commonly recognized in both safety and financial management. In phrases of safety management, regulations have covered the advent of the Peninsula Shield Force in 1984, a combined army undertaking primarily based totally in Saudi Arabia, and the adoption of an intelligence-sharing in 2004. The first widespread placement of the Peninsula Shield Force turned in 2011 in Bahrain to protect the authority's structure in opposition to upheaval there during the Arab Spring remonstrations.⁸³

1.9.4. Role of the UN

A wide variety of United Nations mediation and political undertakings are organized in The Middle Eastern Region. These undertakings are mandated with the aid of using the Security Council to assist preserve armistices and ceasefires, to document to the Security Council the movements of the events, and to hire the Secretary-General's suitable places of work to sell peace, protection, and the decision of conflicts. The warfare in Syria that exploded in 2011 has negotiated protection inside the whole country and exiled

⁸⁰ Sara Hamdan, "A Call for Private Investment in Gulf Health Care," https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_York_Times/New_York_Times, 8 July 2013. <https://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/05/world/middleeast/a-call-for-private-investment-in-gulfhealth-care.html?pagewanted=all>

⁸¹ "Charter of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)," https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/125347/1426_GCC.pdf *International Relations and Security Network*, 2 March 2017. https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/125347/1426_GCC.pdf

⁸² Asma Alsharif, "1-Gulf bloc to consider Jordan, Morocco membership," <https://web.archive.org/web/20110513114436/http://af.reuters.com/article/moroccoNews/idAFLDE7492I020110510Reuters>, 13 May 2011. <https://web.archive.org/web/20110513114436/http://af.reuters.com/article/moroccoNews/idAFLDE7492I020110510/>

⁸³ "The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica," *Gulf Cooperation Council International Organization*. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Gulf-Cooperation-Council>

hundreds of thousands of Syrians. Human rights destructions have happened on huge gauges for the duration of the Syrian disaster and the UN has spoken “on the point give up to violence, the discharge of prisoners, independent investigations to give up freedom, make sure responsibility and convey perpetrators to justice, and reparations for the victims” In December 2014, the UN released the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan to deal with the developing issues in Syria.⁸⁴

1.10. Conclusion

The rivalry between Saudi Arabia and Iran is one of the competing legitimacies of the Muslim world. A regional command that promotes their benefits and guarantees their internal safety at a time when they only have adequate influence to provoke chaos. There is no usual balance of power in the Middle Eastern region due to the contesting positions of Iran and Saudi Arabia over various regional extra-regional issues. Ultimately, it is proved internationally that the region's problems can only be tackled by entirely operational and strong states under the guidance of a cooperative security regime. Neither Saudi Arabia nor Iran has the authority to truly marginalize or defeat the role of each other in international affairs, but both counter political and economic difficulties of varying strengths. The strategic thinkers of both states are well equipped with the competing values which have caused the political and diplomatic gaps between the governments of both nations.

⁸⁴ Elizabeth Sellwood, “The role of the United Nations in Middle East conflict prevention,” *Source Center on Int.l Cooperation*, 6 Jul 2009. <https://reliefweb.int/report/iraq/roleunited-nations-middle-east-conflict-prevention>

Chapter no 2

The Fundamentals of competition between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

This chapter talks about the politics of The Middle East under the geopolitical confrontation between Iran and Saudi Arabia because the key arguments in this chapter emphasized the core theme of the research after formally providing a historical background of the central theme of the research. A brief history of Saudi Iranian two-sided relations is deliberated in the chapter along with the conceptual understanding of the subject with the help of relevant theoretical background. The main debate in this chapter particularly clarifies the role of religion in the Saudi Iranian geopolitical competition and its impact on The Middle Eastern region. The competition between Saudis and Iranians for dogmatic and religious impact has geopolitical allegations that cover beyond the diplomatic waters of the Gulf region to include almost every major conflict area in The Middle Eastern region.⁸⁵ The Saudi Kingdom has followed to encompass Iran's influence since the Revolution of 1979. The outcome of the attack on the Iraqi Leader established Saudi-controlled significantly. Since the 2011 political uprising, the social movement for political changes remained less successful in Riyadh. The dispute between both blocks of the Muslim world has contended diverse regional arenas, notably Yemen, Iraq, and Bahrain. The 2011 upheavals prompted a replacement ferocity within the Saudi Iranian rivalry and provided new grounds for opposition like Syria and Yemen.

The Sunni-Shiite divide has weighed on the relationship but is not a significant factor in shaping Saudi Iranian rivalry. The sectarian and ideological differences between the two states have upsetting effects on the region but are not the most important determinants from a political perspective. The Sunni-Shiite divide certainly influences leadership calculations and is promoted or downplayed as an instrument in a wider range of geopolitical maneuvers. Sectarianism is deeply penetrated in the Muslim world and accepted generally in the Muslim communities. Although, this is more the instance in Saudi Arabia and Iran where the political leaders have adopted contrasting sectarian

⁸⁵ Kristian Coates Ulrichsen,, Iran-Saudi crisis 'most dangerous for decades,' *BBC News*, January 4, 2016. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-35219693>

ideologies. The Saudi regime pressured the Salafist clergy to adopt an anti-Shiite stance in dealing with Iran, and in late 2006, public pressure from the Saudis to protect Sunnis in Iraq grew was increased dramatically. Saudi Arabia appears to have exploited or tacitly endorsed this rhetoric to counter the greater threat posed by pan-Islamic populism in Iran. In the face of a candidate for representational leadership in The Middle East, Saudi Arabia has attempted to portray Iran as a cultural and conceptual departure from the other countries of the region, and the speediest means of doing so has been by the Shiite ideology. The Saudi regime considered Iran as a potential threat while considering the Persian ambitions of the Projecting of Islamic Republic as a threat to Sunnis everywhere.⁸⁶ The same views appeared from the Iranian side to oppose their Saudi counterparts. Therefore, the discussion on the deeply penetrated ideological confrontation between Riyadh and Tehran cannot be comprehended without studying the following factors.

2.1. Divergent Ideologies.

The politics of KSA is based on some points, which are "loyalty to God and then to the king, morality, openness and tolerance towards representatives of other cultures and religions, transparency, and creativity". The Saudi government represents itself as the protector of Islam and the dominant leader of the Muslim World. This thinking of Saudis is figurative, as it is the custodian of the holy places of Makkah Mukarma and Madina Munawara. The Saudis try to handle the decision-making of the three largest Muslim international organizations, i.e., the Arab League, Organization for Islamic Cooperation, and Gulf Cooperation Council. Riyadh also plays a very significant role in the matters OPEC. The position of the king in the political system of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia also takes special attention. Without a doubt, he is considered the highest political figure, whereas there is an absence of religious associations as the Leader in Iran. The Saudi king can do anything he wants to do, but the House of Saud's position is the consequence of public and traditional rivalries. In contrast to Saudi Arabia, Iran plays a vital role in Saudi strategies. As former intelligence of KSA chief Turki al Faisal Aziz al Saud said: "Riyadh has two other apprehensions about Iran. It is in our interest that the Iranian

⁸⁶ Frederic Wehrey, Karasik Theodore W, Alireza Nader, Jeremy Ghez, Lydia Hansell, and Robert A. Guffey, "Saudi-Iranian Relations since the fall of Saddam: Rivalry, Cooperation, and Implications for U.S. Policy," *Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation*, (2009).

management does not develop a nuclear weapon, because that would make nuclear proliferation the norm in the region. The other concern is the interference and disruption of efforts in Shiite majority countries, Iraq, and Bahrain, and in countries with Shiite minorities such as Kuwait, and Yemen. The Syrian issue is also an example of this concern. The Saudis perceive Iran's role in combat as a struggle to expand its domain to regional hegemony.⁸⁷

Whereas the politics of IRI is based on various points, these are isolationism, spiritual democracy, the primacy of Islamic thinking in international relations, loyalty to the vilayet-e-faqih, and the supervision of Islamic jurists, the preservation of national unity and social justice. Tehran's statehood is one of the important features that discriminate IRI from the other Arab states, especially the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. While the Shah of Iran was a partner of the United States and did not plan to encounter Saudi Arabia directly, whereas all the scenarios had transmuted with the success of the great Iranian Revolution in 1979.⁸⁸ Under the Constitution of IRI, the Leader is the homeland's political and spiritual frontrunner who has the supremacy to perform functions during the absence of the hidden Imam. When Imam Mahdi will come back, the great Leader of Iran will leave the office and give his powers to the Imam who will regulate the world. It is undeniably one of the important differences between Sunni and Shiite Muslims. Whereas the Sunnis do not agree to take this belief, they believe that Imam Mahdi will rule the world before the Day of Judgment. There have been various eras when the Iranian rulers have been rational and ready for international cooperation to encourage Shiite values and confront the Middle Eastern Arab states.

The uprisings between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Islamic Republic of Iran have led to some indirect wars, the Yemen war and Syria war that was based on their conflicting ideological values. The opposing sides contend for political impact on other countries. Also, there was the greatest concern for some powers of the world and as well as some powers in the region on Iranian ideological influences. The various hostility groups abandoned clear sectarian opinions at the start of the conflict and expressed a nonsectarian resolution with a clear vision of Syria without Bashar al Assad. Later, they

⁸⁷ Przemysław Osiewicz, "Ideological Determinants of the Current Saudi-Iranian Rivalry in the Middle East," *Przegląd Politologiczny*, no. 2 (June 2016): 115-26.

⁸⁸ P. Osiewicz, "The Iranian Foreign Policy in the Persian Gulf Region under the Rule of President Hassan Rouhani: Continuity or Change?" *Research Gate*, vol. 7, (2014).

reformed their maneuvers to seek funding from wealthy powers, mostly from the Arab countries including the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. With the help of other states, the two-sided governments of Saudis and Iranian officials endure their fight against regime armies.

This battle started as a political upheaval between the regime of Bashar ul Assad and other antagonist groups, Assad did not want to terminate as a dictator in other Arab nations, such as Egypt and Libya, and decided to change the situation. The internal circumstances were changed and transformed into a raged conflict. The countries: Russia and Iran fully supported the Assad regime whereas Turkey supported some opposition groups and the Free Syrian Army in collaboration with western countries, Arab monarchies, and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. In this way, the Syrian fight has become a kind of indirect war between Sunnis and Shia Muslims. The Syrian government have received support from the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Hezbollah and the Arab nation also from Turkey. The policies of Riyadh became an exposed and direct shot to overthrow the political administration due to the increasing brutality of the Syrian rulers and as a sign of a more demonstrative foreign policy, which was reflecting the public sympathy for the Syrian nation.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has barely any capable background for regional assistance, cooperation with Western powers and collaboration with Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and its neighboring country Pakistan or with the other states in the Gulf. This is of the cause that the authorities of IRI must be aware of all imaginable political developments in the only Iran-allied country in the Arab world, predominantly Syria.

Tehran and Riyadh are suspects due to favoring some radical activities and organizations and supporting some terrorist establishments in the United States and the EU. In both cases, such support is seen as ideologically motivated. The groups: Hezbollah and Hamas are often associated with IRI whereas Wahhabi extremist groups are said to have indirect terms with KSA, even with ISIS which has funding from some wealthy Saudi Arabia citizens with or without the consensus of the Saudi authorities. Therefore, it is more appropriate to maintain that the Iranian and Saudi governments are determined to stand against each other on every issue. The common interests sometimes are more central than dividing lines. The support for worried nations and Palestinians remains a significant part of Tehran's foreign policy. The people of IRI also lean towards

perceiving themselves as a worried country in the Muslim world. To conclude, the formation of ISIS is dangerous for all Shiite Muslims and particularly for IRI. Daesh positions a fatal threat to Tehran, especially since its fruitful military operation in Iraq in 2014. The seizure of Iraq's second largest city Mosul was a notice to Iran. Subsequently, Tehran's authority has no option but to discourage and fight ISIS. According to Tehran ISIS was created by Takfiris and funded by the US by KSA to weaken the Bashar al Assad regime, split Iraq, and win control of its oil to take over. They believed that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was in collaboration with ISIS on Syrian issues and in capturing Iraq which can make the contemporary circumstances poorer.

2.2. Region's growing sectarian tensions

The two players of the Muslim world perceive the region as a vital region for force prediction besides considering the outer settings can produce critical dangers to their individual domestic political frameworks. Being significant international players implies ensuring a good territorial political request that won't undermine their endurance. Competition, by definition, signifies sensations of ill-will between Saudi and Iranian nations, emerging in a relationship portrayed by outrageous contest, and typically mental aggression. The issues and places of competitors are administered principally by their disposition towards one another. This sort of clash between and KSA includes supremacy and philosophical predictions, counteractions, philosophical rebalancing. Tehran and Riyadh have frequently profited in the region by hostilities to achieve or ensure partners and to show interest in local contentions.⁸⁹

The territorial areas are associated with dangers which work inside areas and universally. The unrest going on in the region inclines to affect safety on the loose. The monetary contest between IRI and KSA is designed to rule the oil marketplace. The Islamic Republic of Iran and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia are among the greatest oil property and distributing nations of the Organization of Petroleum Export Countries (OPEC). The oil markets are open for Iran after the atomic settlement, to trade its oil to the energy starving lands. Thus, this development is utilized as a defense to impact the

⁸⁹ P. Osiewicz, "The Iranian Foreign Policy in the Persian Gulf Region under the Rule of President Hassan Rouhani: Continuity or Change?" Research Gate, vol. 7, (2014).

marketplace contest in global oil politics.⁹⁰ The essential dispute is warming up because Tehran is endearing the regional battle from various points of view. The Iranian and Russian support for Syrian President Bashar al-Assad has permitted his position to generally rout rebel gangs funded by Saudi Arabia and the US. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is bidding desperately to comprehend rising Tehran's impact while the realm's Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman has high ambitions for dominating the regional politics against Iran. A conflict in contrast to the agitator Houthi development in connecting with Yemen is chasing by him, to shoot apparent Tehran's impression there. The Islamic Republic of Iran has left without allegations that it is resounding armaments' support to the Houthis in Yemen. The advanced reports from a committee of UN experts have displayed dangerous help for the Houthis from Iran as far as both modernization and armaments. In Lebanon, Tehran's important partner, the Shia citizen army stimulated Hezbollah and flock into a politically implausible combination while controlling a massively fitted out engaging power. Some powers from the outside are persuading everything. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has been stimulated by aid from the US support to Israel which considers Iran to be a threat. It stays more appropriate to express that it is backing Riyadh's action to comprehend Iran. The state of Jews is luckless of the violation of satisfaction to Tehran's combatants in Syria. So, Israel and KSA were the two countries most confrontationally went in contrast to the 2015 peaceable accord limiting Tehran's atomic package which is challenging in that it didn't far away sufficient to interchange back any prospect of IRI acquiring the bomb.⁹¹

2.3. Impact of Spiritual and Material Structures on the Relations between Tehran and Riyadh

Relations between Tehran and Riyadh remained critical because both are considered internationally the two vital participants and two territorial forces of the Muslim world. The extraordinary spot of the two nations has made the inter-state relations between them vital in the development of local requests in the Persian Gulf. The leaders of both nations are concerned with the Middle Eastern and Mediterranean regions. Distinctive personal conduct and contradictory standards in their terms have occurred from the start

⁹⁰David J. Pervin <https://www.routledge.com/search?author=David%20J.%20Pervin>, Steven L. Spiegel, *Practical Peacemaking in the Middle East: Arms Control and Regional Security*, (Routledge, 2014).

⁹¹David J. Pervin, and Steven L. Spiegel, *Practical Peacemaking in the Middle East: Arms Control and Regional Security*, (Routledge, 2014).

of the terms yet. Subsequently internal, local, and worldwide improvements in 1999, IRI and KSA pass away from uniqueness to the compromise, conjunction, and collaboration in the administration of Rafsanjani and Khatami. Later 2005 the two incredible adjoining nations another time entered opposition, pressure, and divergences of interests.⁹² The relations between IRI and KSA were intensified during the upright revolution tenure because, during post Revolution duration of IRI in 1979, the two nations figured out how to push toward concurrence and the resulting reciprocal and provincial collaborations. Gradually, the terms between KSA and IRI remained troubled and unpleasant. The character related advancements influencing Iranian-Saudi relations during 2005-2013 has come because of personality oriented features at the governmental level. The ascent of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, the new leader of Iran, in 2005 brought development in the homegrown political field.

However, it likewise achieved a total change in territorial and global methodologies, showing another image of Iran enlivened by transnational and Islamic contemplations. As indicated by this, progressive, Islamic, and uncommitted components of Iran's personality somewhat balanced out during the Positions of Rafsanjani, and Khatami become more featured than at any time in recent memory. Looking for equity, bringing harmony and keeping away from danger were viewed as the three significant international strategy components of the Iranian government by the new president as indicated by honor, premium, and astuteness. Affected by the thoughts and understandings of the new government, the idea of the public authority inside the Islamic-Shiite philosophy structure was characterized in this period. The Islamic Republic took a strict and Islamic nature in its domestic political system. As indicated by this, the Islamic Republic is viewed as an Islamic and heavenly express, the unique obligation of which is to oversee equity and advancement at public and global levels. Personality redefinition and the new translation of it between the decision world-class in Iran were related to character redefinition and diverse understanding of Saudi Arabia concerning which is viewed as "self" and "other". Vulnerability and disarray about the spot and approaches of Iran's president, just as Iran's high profile tranquil atomic program issue agreed with personality-related and philosophical improvements in the

⁹²Mahdi Alikhani and Mehdi Zakerian, "Study of Factors Affecting Saudi-Iranian Relations and Conflicts and Their Resulting Behavior Pattern," *Journal of Politics and Law*, Vol 9, No 7, (2016):178.

region. It has driven Saudi Arabia to change its methodologies and turns. This change started in Iraq after the breakdown of Saddam and the weakening of the Sunni position between revolutionary Wahhabi ideologues. It was harmonized with Saudi's view as it brought about an alternate personality understanding of the past. An adjustment of Iraq's homegrown climate and the increment of Iranian impact on the nation featured the component "Arabism" in Arab personality, particularly in Saudi Arabia. With the ascent of the Shiites in Iraq, and the ascent of their impact in Lebanon, the issue featured the "Sunni" component between the Arabs and "Wahhabi" in Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia's inclination to undermine because of personality improvement in The Middle East, especially advancements in Iraq and Lebanon, expanded with the activities of the national ideologies.

Besides, considering the political advancements in Iraq and Lebanon, turmoil in the Arab world and the Wahhabi and Arabian components supposedly compromised Saudi Arabia, which drove the whole nation to settle on a reasonable choice about strengthening the gap between the Shiite and the Sunni ideologies. These ideologies are trying to build support for their partners and face Iran and its ideological partners. On analogous rounds, the Saudi Arabian political government under King Abdullah authoritatively rose to control as the lord, and see an alternate view of "self", Iran, and the Shiite concerning Saudi Arabia. With the ascent of King Abdullah, some radical and anti-Shiite figures just as Iran acquired impressive force in Saudi Arabia.

2.4. The Religion and Geopolitics in Iranian and Saudi Foreign Policy

Iran's obligation to the central progressive domains of justice, opposition, and the change of Shia networks drive to a persistent thread in its international strategy since the eruption of political upheaval in The Middle East. While the undeniable high level of discretion categorizing Tehran is commonly projected as far as its elected President and their universal geostrategic outlooks,⁹³ this solitary tells part of the story with the strict organizations and social effort to cultivate diplomatically ideological connections with the outside world. Under the sphere of the Supreme Leader, the Islamic Republic of Iran is strong-minded in profits abroad. The capacity of Tehran to exploit its transnational associations with Shia people and their inhabitants group have been helped by regional

⁹³ Shahram Akbarzadeh and Dara Conduit, *Iran in the World: President Rouhani's Foreign Polic* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).

turns of events, most blatantly Saddam Hussein and coming to force of an amicable rule in Iraq. The situation of Iran as the Shia majority enabled it to utilize its intercontinental strict organizations especially when they assist its public advantages. The Islamic Republic of Iran looks at itself as a strong Shia group and it has conferred with the survivor of denominationalism in regional politics. Tehran has devoted this battle to its longstanding hindrance story and consequently doing its private clash on terror despite the threat from the Sunni takfiri side. The struggle to Israeli and Western themes in the area is attached to the backing of the Palestinian origin. Moreover, the security of the Shia draws on views of impartiality which structured some serving of the Tehran unavoidably characterized worldwide strategy objectives, which attempt to offer some help to the victimized.⁹⁴

Soon after the Arab Upheavals, struggle crossways the Middle Eastern region has engaged in undeniably partisan nature, apparently setting Sunni in opposition to Shia in a 21st Century's revising of an early-stage battle. As history has shown, there isn't anything intrinsically brutal about the partisan distinction, yet as such personalities become conveyors of politics which means, contrasts can turn out to be progressively violent.⁹⁵ Speaking prior to the WTC incident in 2001, the Riyadh Ambassador to Washington, Prince Bandar bin Sultan Al Saud expressed that the time isn't too distant in the Middle East when it will be in a real sense God help the Shia. Additionally, a billion Sunnis have essentially had adequate of them.⁹⁶

The statement by the ambassador strongly enlightens a profound situated string in the political idea of Riyadh which uncovers considerable about its political attributes, whereas their associations with more chiefly Shia regimes. It also shows how they and others comparatively decide to utilize the ideological partisan as an apparatus for contemporary Political closures. Yet, these political marks cover immense regional and social attributes of the ideological confrontations between Saudi and Iranian nations. Philosophy matters, truly, however, a battle for authority, and political pre-distinction is

⁹⁴ Dr. Edward Wastnidge, "Religion and geopolitics in Iranian foreign policy," *The Foreign Policy Centre*, (November 2018): 3.

⁹⁵ Simon Mabon and Stephen Royle, *The Origins of ISIS: The Collapse of Nation and Revolution in the Middle East*, (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2017): 149-162.

⁹⁶ Patrick Cockburn, *The Age of Jihad: Islamic State and the Great war for the Middle East*, (Verso Publishers, 2016):350.

the main driver of challenge between KSA and IRI and it shapes contemporary Sunni Shia relations in the Middle Eastern region. Besides this position, it is studied internationally from a Western perspective too as per the Iranian stance. The political pressure between reformist social development and political traditionalism is a more extensive hole to oversee different traditionalisms of Saudi Arabia. The Shia regime considers the Sunna, as the idea capable of adjusting and changing the messages of the ideological disclosures to every age.⁹⁷

In contrast to Saudi beliefs, the Shia custom was kept open. There is a philosophical what's more, political self-motivated in Iran's Shia terms with the world that is invaluable and self-threatening. It considers a more noteworthy and frequently continually certain trial of the consultant of the Council of Guardians inside Tehran at the governmental level. Iranian personality is for sure wrapped firmly in the Shia material, though with Iranian patriot slender. In KSA, there is a pressure that crashes profound into what means Riyadh recognizes the subject that is more testing than the basic devotion of being the Caretaker of the Two Holy Places. Geology has its impact, as well. Most of late the Second Gulf Confrontation in 2003 came about in a tremendous transformation in the neighborhood scene of the Arab domains where the Shia regime is in the government of an Arab country, Iraq. Riyadh is effectively worried at the magnetic fascination of Hezbollah and Iran as the consequence of the 2006 conflict in Lebanon which perceives as an underestimating of Sunnism. It is currently attempting to reaffirm its Sunni authority and overwhelming influence on the Syrian regime. Crosswise the location, collusions have been shaped that have generally occurred sideways partisan lines. In Lebanon, Iraq, Bahrain, Syria and Yemen, the significance of partisan character generally gets the help of partisan families in the Gulf. However, the instance of Hamas ends up being an anomaly. As an individual from the supposed Hub of Resistance, a gathering involved Iran, Syria what's more, Hezbollah, Hamas's dismissal of Israel and the local business as usual sees international contemplations besting partisan ideological characters.

2.5. Period of sectarian peace.

⁹⁷ Rola El-Husseini, "Hezbollah and the Axis of Refusal: Hamas, Iran and ^{سورية}Syria, Third World Quarterly," *Taylor and Francis Online*, Vol. 31, No. 5, (2010):803-815.

The contrasts between Sunnism and Shiaism convictions can't be left without, however truly, Sunni besides, Shia has regularly existed calmly between one another. Media and state authority regularly makes claims about the "long term battle" between Sunnis and Shias, yet the fact of the matter is undeniably less unbending. The two parties involved in the sectarian conflict have cohabitated for longer than a thousand years. Like any key conflict, this one isn't without struggle however it has occurred in stretched times of heterogeneity on convenience than in hostility and bitterness. Soon after the establishment of the religion Islam, the Islamic realm conflicted with European Champions and Mongol winners, yet the religious conviction had the option to blow out generally all about the planet. This augmentation of the Islamic belief sideways with its versatility couldn't have happened if fighting partisan struggle was reliable from the beginning. Struggle, between Sunnis and Shias, is a generally later event, the reappearance lining up with the Revolution and the ensuing dogmatic changes in the Middle East, especially the political upheavals during the Arab Spring in 2011. A few researchers contend that the pioneer oppression of neighborhood populaces and the conception or revitalization of conscious, counterfeit traditional divisions, as found in Belgian and English principles over the Republic of India. It has additionally irritated the Sunni-Shia terms. This hypothesis attests that the Super forces have intensified these partitions to keep up with the norm in the Middle Eastern region, where the locale is partitioned along religious lines. In this view, the foundations of partisan contentions are propagated by incorrect progressions that reference a consistent struggle between Sunnis and Shias that has endured to introduce various levels of politics.

Although there is by all accounts a great deal of partisan clash in many years, this doesn't mean sectarianism has been an issue since the beginning. Non-Muslims and Muslims have utilized misrepresented partisans in contrast to prepare explicit gatherings and to make disunity inside Muslim people group. This methodology of gap and vanquish is certifiably not a one-of-a-kind strategy making disunity inside bunches apparent to be dangerous to make infighting and redirect endeavors from outer entertainers have for some time been a political methodology. Such stories propose that partisan battling is innate in Islam and ignores how denominationalism on a social basis is made and intensified by entertainers trying to keep up with control over a partitioned Muslim people group. Contemporary participation between nations in the region and

comprehensive rules have occurred and keep on existing in the locale, regardless of expanded provincial contentions outlined around sectarianism. Prior to the Syrian war, Syria was identified as the beating heart of Arabism, with its assortment populace of Sunni, Druze, and Christian networks. Likewise, Lebanon has made a legislative design dependent on comprehensive authority allotment. These two models show how in ongoing antiquity, before the stalemate in Syria in 2011 and after Lebanese freedom in 1948, separately, Sunnism and Shiism were not the driving character powers in the Middle Eastern region. The pioneers stressed Arab public character that worked with quiet relations between Arabs, all things considered later. The Middle Easterner solidarity about Palestine during the Arab Israeli Confrontation in 1948 and the Six-Day War in 1967 additionally shows how Arab nations defeated partisans in contrast to cooperating against Israeli aggression. Authentic accounts and media normally center revolve around clashes, which address real factors for a few, yet not real factors for some. Such records don't give an exact portrayal of regular day to day existence for normal Muslims. This slanted openness recommends that the struggle between Sunni-Shia is boundless, inescapable, and lasting. A more comprehensive examination offerings an authentic account of these ideological struggles.⁹⁸

2.6. Arab Cold war

Riyadh and Tehran are rivals for centuries, with a lot of involvements in clashes and forceful battles being protracted via way of means of the turning effect of those Middle Eastern giants. Their tensions and the status quo were named to be an innovative bloodless conflict because the waves of the anger of KSA and IRI matched the ones of the U.S and the USSR at some point in the preceding Cold War. A bloodless conflict is a territory of the battle between international locations that don't contain direct navy action which means the two international locations in battle have now no longer sincerely declared a conflict with every other. As came about at some point in the 20th era's Cold War between the US and the USSR, domains of effect and targets for governance are valuable to Tehran and Riyadh Relations. An important factor of the Cold War had been the usage of proxy wars. This is relatively applicable withinside the

⁹⁸ Rola El-Husseini, "Hezbollah and the Axis of Refusal: Hamas, Iran and ^[1]_[SEP]Syria, Third World Quarterly," Taylor and Francis Online, Vol. 31, No. 5, (2010):803-815.

Middle Eastern region, as deputation war is dominant, with KSA and IRI conflicting blocs in Lebanon, Yemen, and Syria.

The interposition, from Saudi's front into the Yemeni conflict to Iran's transfer of extra troops and navy counsellors into Syria, become supposed via way of means of the regimes as accurately extreme actions in reaction to high-pole safety fears. Thus far up to now, it has simplest ended in discriminating common worries and struggling in conflict-torn international locations? The last likeness between the m is the topic of nuclear weapons. It is unsure in what manner lengthy Tehran will live devoted to the non-improvement of atomic armaments, in the attention of the fierce up of the 2015 Tehran Agreement via way of means of President Trump a settlement that become critical protect towards Iran growing risky nuclear capacities.⁹⁹

2.7. Alliances in the Middle Eastern region

The Middle Eastern region is a risky political surrounding, due to local and external political combinations employing impact on affairs of the region. Every participant inside the location has matching pursuits that frequently ignited emergencies and impede war administration.¹⁰⁰ The increasing lack of confidence among regional actors has an immediate impact on their longing for groupings and overseas policymaking. A mixture of features for a risky rapid-time period destiny inside the Middle East, in which today's unions can change suddenly and where one needs to be organized to count on the unpredicted. For decades, the nations in the region have made unique alliances, and been the goal of more than one fear and agonized severe overlying battles. These approaches appear to have turned out to be a good deal extra complicated in current years. There are three features to be handled far ahead subsidize to this developing complication: the assault of Iraq in 2003 and the results of getting disillusioned inner and local equilibriums; the Arab Emerging and the social-political ameliorations skilled in the vicinity in view that 2011; and the overseas coverage of the Obama management toward the area, in component conditioned via way of means of the two preceding factors. There are three blocs identified: the bloc underneath Iran's Shiasm headship which incorporates the regime of Bashar al-Assad, the regime of Nuri al-Maliki,

⁹⁹ Dayna Santana, "A comparative look at the 'new Cold War' of the Middle east," *Australian Institute of International Affairs*, (2018).

¹⁰⁰ Flavius Caba-Maria, "Strategic Alliances and their Impact on the Middle East. The Influence of the American and the Russian Factor," *ECPR*, (2017).

Hezbollah and, in a greater or much less recurrent way, the Palestinian reservists: Hamas or the Islamic Jihad, the Saudi-Sunni union on which the Egyptian management depends, controlled with the aid of using Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, and declining bloc made especially with the aid of Qatar and some institutions related to the Muslim Society. The armed or civilian rebellion in opposition to Egypt's authorities of Morsi in July 2013 powerfully exaggerated the conformation of those coalitions, as those authorities turned into near Qatar and Turkey. For its part, even though Israel has now no longer acknowledged itself to be a fellow of any of the leagues, it is a de facto best friend withinside the Saudi Egyptian axis.¹⁰¹

2.7.1. Kenneth Waltz's view of making Alliances

Kenneth Waltz, a theorist of constructivist neorealism emphasizes that alliances are a result of the safety achievements of governments, keeping that during an anarchic system, governments now no longer cooperate with every different, however, create stability to confront every different. Alliances, then, shape due to the fact vulnerable governments must unify to counter large powers on the way to live on inside an anarchic global system. From Waltz's viewpoint, such alliances additionally alternate the version of energy distribution. Therefore, alliances are taken into consideration as a brief phenomenon, which without difficulty modifications while threats are repelled or the energy distribution version modifications. Walt, a theorist of neoclassical realism, keeps that alliance is a professional configuration for protection cooperation between or extra impartial governments. He is based on the idea of hazard stability instead of energy stability, believing that inside an anarchic system, the government's best friend towards threats instead of developing stability with the dominant energy or balancing their personal financial and army capabilities. Therefore, the state's best friend comes across different states that pose a threat to them, particularly while there are fundamentals which include geographical propinquity, competitive army energy, competitive goals, and competitive ideology. Walt believes that even though precise preparations in any alliance are exclusive from others, in general, alliances are a few shapes of dedication to the mutual army safety in their contributors towards a few outside actors under conditions, and this trouble can embody each professional and unofficial commitments.

¹⁰¹ Haizam Amirah-Fernández, "Middle East: alliances in times of turmoil," *Strategic and International Studies*, (November 2014).

He then introduces his idea of the alliance by asking whether governments pick a bandwagon approach once they come upon threatening powers, or they opt to create stability towards them.

He stated that the balancing behavior is a good deal extra not rare place than the bandwagon approach, due to the fact those international locations bandwagon handiest under sure conditions, this is while the vulnerability of the goal authorities will increase because of its country wide energy weak point and shortage of getting right of entry to alliances. Under such conditions, the authorities might also additionally determine that the hazard stability is extra feasible than the bandwagon approach. Walt believes that ideology does now no longer play a figuring out position in forming alliances, and as hazard will increase, ideological variations lose their importance. From his viewpoint, a not unusual place ideology can handily function as a facilitator, now no longer the author of alliances.¹⁰²

2.7.2. Saudi-Iran's Initiatives behind making the alliances

In the Middle East, historic conflicts have constantly highlighted neighboring Arab nations' perceptions regarding Iran. On some occasions peacefully coexisting, at different instances in bad conflict. North African nations have good relations because of the restrained historic connection between the m and Iran. There isn't any doubt that Saudi Arabia influences the regulations of the Arab nations and Iran's terms with countries in the region suffered from its terms with Saudi Arabia.¹⁰³

The goal of Saudi Arabia is to target collaboration with the Gulf States that export oil, the Arab world cohesion, Islamic energy and harmony, and guide for UN.

Whereas the primary issues in the latest years had been terms with America, a conflict between Israel and Palestine, Iraq, the supposed hazard from the Islamic Republic of Iran, the impact of oil rating, and the use of its oil capital to boom the effect of Islam. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia subsidizes huge quantities of improvement resources to Muslim states. From 1986 till 2006, it bestowed forty-nine billion dollars in financial support.¹⁰⁴ The basic and only purpose behind making the alliances was to counter each

¹⁰²Elham Rasouli Saniabadi, "The Nature of Alliances in the Middle East: Power or Identity?" *Strategic Studies Quarterly* 17, no. 65 (2014): 171-196.

¹⁰³"Washington, Riyadh Tango in Front of Iran", *Iranian Diplomacy*. <http://irdiplomacy.ir/en>

¹⁰⁴ John Lawton, "Arab Aid," *Saudi Aramco World*, 13 January 2010. <https://archive.aramcoworld.com/issue/197906/arab.aid-who.gives.it.htm>

other in the region and achieve its goals and to use sectarianism as a tool to gain hegemony as this was the key factor to fulfil own's dream.

2.8. Conclusion

Saudi Arabia and Iran adopted religion as a political tool and debilitated political organizations of the Muslim countries. It affected the security, dependability, and financial development of the Muslim world. The international battle between KSA and IRI grants an undeniably unpredictable customary difficulty for the Middle Eastern region. These strict and philosophical pressures incorporated a contest between Riyadh, addressing Sunni Islam; Wahhabi versions, and Tehran, addressing Shiite Islam describing the teachings of Khomeini. This Sunni Shia personality and the public aggregate have taken care of it the unpleasant hostility that occurs between KSA and IRI. It is impacting the international strategies and reciprocal relationships of these countries. Thus, this competition is characterizing the essential scene of Middle Eastern politics. The contemporary Riyadh-Tehran terms are described by the absence of hope and kindness. This commonly regrettable methodology should prompt errors and eventually genuine strains between the two states. Also, their different philosophical perspectives should have brought about questions just as intermediary battles in the area. The continuous military struggles in the Yemen regime and Syrian regime are presumably the best models.

Chapter no 3
Political divisions of the Muslim World and political
traits of states post 9/11 scenario and under the Arab
Spring

The events that occurred before Arab Spring, have altered the political environment and geopolitics between the Muslim countries, an extensive territory comprising a series of nations with most of the Muslim population that stretches from West Africa to the southern Philippines. The outcome of 9/11, in particular Operation Enduring Freedom and elevated U.S. counterterrorism operations about the Muslim regions in the world, introduced a strategic realignment, whereas some nations withinside the Muslim region cooperate with the US in promoting the war on terrorism or quietly elevated their counterterrorism cooperation.¹⁰⁵

The conflict in Iraq and its aftermath is the most significant activity that had affected the Middle Eastern region. A Western-led coalition assumed responsibility for the first time for the governance and political reconstruction of a Muslim country after the withdrawal of the European colonial powers from the Middle East. The danger to Iraq's politics occurred due to an increasing number of Sunni-primarily based insurgencies. The war on terrorism additionally affected the domestic politics of Muslim nations, enhancing the division between moderate and radical Muslims and generating new political dangers and possibilities for governments and political actors alike. Some governments noticed the war on terrorism as a possibility to discredit the Islamist competition.

The war on terrorism radicalized a few Muslim sectors and activated Islamic militants. In Saudi Arabia, some of the scholars have been targeted to support U.S. navy operations in Afghanistan. Sheikhs Hamud alShu'aybi and Abdullah bin Jibrin issued fatwas in which they stated that they now no longer justified the assault at the World Trade Center, also condemned as apostates Muslims collaborating with America, it is a class that contains the Saudi royal family. The incident of 9/11 introduced Saudi Arabia to a tremendous deal of scrutiny. Because 15 of the nineteen hijackers were Saudi nationals, many withinside the West hoped that the Saudi authorities could provoke a primary

¹⁰⁵Angel M. Rabasa, and Cheryl Benard, "The Muslim World after 9/11," *RAND*, 2004. https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monographs/2004/RAND_MG246.pdf

attempt to root out inner extremism and to clamp down on the investment of terrorist corporations from Saudi reasserts. Saudi cooperation within the war on terror changed gradually to materialize and changed into accompanied by denials that Saudi Arabia or its export of Wahhabism have been key elements in fomenting jihadist corporations like Al Qaeda. The Saudis replied quite defensively to expenses of complicity within the improvement and nurturing of Islamic extremism and violence perpetrated within the call of Islam. An unusual reaction to those expenses changed the view that some super authorities and media is involved and have been engaged in marketing to tarnish the photo of Islam. Crown Prince Abdullah was quoted as proclaiming that “we’re all targeted now no longer Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Sudan, and others the only significant and the primary goal is Islam.”¹⁰⁶

Since Al Qaeda’s assaults on 9/11, the Egyptian regime has endured its techniques towards Islamist actions. Egypt has used the war on terrorism and the approaching conflict with Iraq to stifle dissent by arresting radicalistic figures. Many supporters of the Muslim Brotherhood have been arrested in Alexandria for the duration of runoff legislative elections in September 2002, allegedly for rioting, unlawful gathering, and trying to preclude public balloting, amongst different things. They declare they have been obstructed from going to the polls to vote.¹⁰⁷ The latest instance of such authorities’ exercise changed into its preemptive arrest in early 2003 of scores of leaders within the weeks took up to the expected assault on Iraq to weaken or manage protests towards U.S. navy movement in Iraq.¹⁰⁸

The destruction of the Ba’ath Iraqi nation caused a sizeable boom in Shia and Iranian influence and ferocious warfare between Shia and Sunni. The Increased tension with Iran led Saudi Arabia and various Sunni Arab states into a de-facto alliance with Israel, with risky results for domestic legitimacy. The first step of al-Qaeda in Iraq and then ISIS due to the American invasion of Iraq fed into the Syrian civil war, which introduced

¹⁰⁶ Saddam’s Unholy Allies,” Newsweek, Vol. 121, No. 24; and Peyman Pejman, “Saudi Hand Makes US Uneasy,” Asia Times Online, July 15, 2003, at http://atimes01.atimes.com/atimes/Middle_East/EG15Ak02.html.

¹⁰⁷ Jason Athanasiadis, “101 Saad Eddins?” *Cairo Times*, November 9, 2002.

¹⁰⁸ Omayma Abdel-Latif, “Preemptive Containment,” Al-Ahram Weekly Online, Issue No. 620, January 9–15, 2003, at <http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2003/620/eg7.htm>.

Russia again into the Middle East. The US alliance with the Kurds to combat ISIS contributed substantially to the alienation of Turkey from the Western alliance.¹⁰⁹

The religious rift in the region and the Muslim countries is driving the revival of the clash. The ancient issue between Sunni forces and Shiite forces has fueled the Syrian civil combat that hovers to amend the plot of the Middle Eastern region and fuel the ferocity that is breaking up Iraq and widening rifts in the several Gulf States. The increasing sectarian clashes have triggered a resurgence of jihadist webs that stance a threat outside the region.¹¹⁰

The Islamic Republic of Iran began a trial in Islamic rule under the tenure of Khomeini. He had the wish to stimulate Islamic restoration by preaching Muslim unity, but reinforced groups in Lebanon, Iraq, Afghanistan, Bahrain, and its neighbor country Islami Jamhuri Pakistan that had a specific Shiite goal line. The Sunni Islamists groups such as Muslim Association and Hamas well-regarded Khomeini's victory but they didn't accept the leadership of Khomeini, which underscores the deepness of the sectional distrust.¹¹¹ The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has a generous Shiite minority of around 10 % and masses of followers of a Puritan form of Sunni Islam that is called Wahhabism which opposes Shiite Islam. Many groups were accountable for the sectarian ferocity that has raged in the region and the Muslim biosphere.

IRI financed Shiite collections that have recently won important political achievements. The tenure of Bashar al-Assad, which has been administered since 1970, is based on the Alawis that is the Shiite group that makes up around 13 percent of the Syrian inhabitants. The country's military and security services control the upper echelons by the Alawis and they supported the forces in the favor of the Assad regime during the Syrian civil war.¹¹²

Riyadh and Tehran have allocated significant funds to indirect fighting, particularly in Syria where the element of danger is higher. KSA is closely monitoring possible unrest in its oil-rich provinces, where its Shiite marginal lives, and is sending its armed forces

¹⁰⁹Anatol Lieven, "Limited Impacts On Global Geopolitics," *Lowy Institute*, September 1, 2020. <https://interactives.lowyinstitute.org/features/9-11/essays/limited-impacts/>

¹¹⁰Geneive Abdo, "The <https://www.cfr.org/sunni-shia-divide/> - /Sunni-Shia <https://www.cfr.org/sunni-shia-divide/> - /Divide." Fellow, Middle East Program, Stimson Center.

¹¹¹Deborah Amos <http://www.deborahamos.net/about/>, Middle East Correspondent, "National Public Radio."

¹¹²Bruce Hoffman <http://explore.georgetown.edu/people/brh6/>, Director, Center for Security Studies, Georgetown University, *Middle East Program*, <https://www.stimson.org/ppl/abdo/>.

to other Gulf states. It put down a chiefly Shiite revolution in Bahrain. It also gathered an alliance of ten Sunni countries, financed by the United States, to contest the Houthi protesters in Yemen's Civilian population while banning cash streams to al-Qaeda and rebel jihadist groups against the Assad regime.¹¹³

IRI and KSA, which have constantly postponed their efforts to create a diplomatic dispute settlement discussion, discussed the struggle in Syria at the request of the US in October 2015, which, however, is noteworthy due to the collapse of relations in 2016.¹¹⁴

3.1. Post 9/11 Iran and Saudi Arabia Split

The 9/11 assault on the US began a brand-new section of invasion in the Middle Eastern region. The US invaded Iraq and Afghanistan consequently, which mounted new dimensions in the political area of the Middle East. Since the expulsion of Saddam Hussein, there has been a vacuum created as Iraq took into consideration, Saddam Hussein. A new race began after the Iraq invasion and this phenomenon gave the Iran-Saudi split a new dimension.¹¹⁵ There turned into a serious scenario created between Sunni and Shia growing after the death of Saddam Hussein and they began viewing themselves as an emerging power.¹¹⁶ As indicated with the aid of using the records survey, Tehran remains a huge individual to choose up effect in Iraq. It is featured because of the speedy ascent of United States army capability and impact on the outskirts of Afghanistan and Iraq. These endeavors include discretion reserve funds and advancing Iranian clients in the Iraqi political framework which likewise contain the authority of supplied civilian armies. This technique has been powerful incredibly and Iran had the choice to show right into a substantial energy Iraqi governmental issue. Therefore, different demanding situations have been there for Saudi Arabia as a prime exporter of oil and the leader of the Muslim world. It is one of the principal oil providers to the United States and serves US interests and aims in the Middle East. To hold oil expenses in the global marketplace may be a prime assignment for Saudi Arabs if it

¹¹³ Ed Husain, *Adjunct Senior Fellow for Middle Eastern Studies*, CFR, <https://www.worldaffairs.org/event-calendar/speaker-directory/deborah-amos>.

¹¹⁴ Vali R. Nasr <http://www.sais-jhu.edu/vali-nasr>, "The <https://www.cfr.org/sunni-shia-divide/> - !/Sunni-Shia <https://www.cfr.org/sunni-shia-divide/> - !/Divide", *Council on Foreign Relations*, <https://www.cfr.org/sunnishia-divide/#/>

¹¹⁵ Gwenn Okruhlik, "Saudi Arabian-Iranian relations: External rapprochement and internal consolidation," *Middle East Policy* 10, no. 2 (2003): 113-125.

¹¹⁶ Henner Fürtig, "Conflict and cooperation in the Persian Gulf: the interregional order and US policy," *The Middle East Journal* 61, no. 4 (2007): 627-640.

begins involved in a conflict with Iran. Be that because it may, step by step with the development of time and the destabilization of Iraq, those international locations have been now no longer in agreement. The Iraq conflict with the United States and the fall of Saddam created a possibility for Iran to set up terms with Iraq. It turned out good for Iran to affect sixty-five percentage the Shia populace of Iraq which bolstered the terms of each government. Consequently, Iraq proved any other battlefield for the Iran-Saudi strategy as each has been seeking to enhance its influence in Iraq. As a result of a lot of these efforts, different states of the Middle East have been additionally badly affected like Syria. Palestine. Lebanon. Yemen additionally became a battlefield for rivalry. The existed situation in respective states turned worst due to interference with the aid of using each state.¹¹⁷

3.2. Saudi-Iran identity politics

The determination of pressures in the relationship of IRI and KSA is the consequence of harmful enthusiastic inclinations that shaped the personalities of Tehran and Riyadh versus one another. The public part of the Iranian character authorizes hesitance towards Saudi Arabia, while its strict segment is buried in a sensation of torment acquired from abuse that the Shia have endured since the beginning. This aggravation converts into hatred in contrast to Saudi Arabia, a government perceived as mistreating Shia populaces. The personality of the Saudi government likewise acquires the phenomena of Arabism's hesitance to acknowledge Tehran. Accordingly, the two nations live in an environment of shared doubt and dread that clarifies the ingenuity of pressures in their relations.¹¹⁸

3.3. Sectarian Relationships between Iran and Saudi Arabia

Analyzing the historical backdrop of terms between IRI and KSA illustrates two Muslim larger countries separated by strict convictions, focused on patriotism and forceful arrangements. This division starts with the two important groups of the Islamic community, Shiaism and Sunnism.

¹¹⁷ Frederic Wehrey, Theodore W. Karasik, Alireza Nader, Jeremy Ghez, Lydia Hansell, Robert A. Guffey, Saudi-Iranian relations since the fall of Saddam: Rivalry, cooperation, and implications for US policy, (Rand Corporation, 2009).

¹¹⁸ Mohammad Soltaninejad, "Iran and Saudi Arabia: Emotionally Constructed Identities and the Question of Persistent Tensions," *Wiley Online Library*, (2019).

The Shia community and Sunni community have consistently conflicted over the legislative issues of the Muslim world. This reasonable faction between the IRI and KSA embodies sectarianism as a set of cultural thoughts, frequently connected nearby, provincial, and surprisingly more extensive sorts of reliability and association. Any increment in the partisan clash is to a great extent the consequence of the battle for authority by financial and dogmatic force and over which understanding of Islam should impact social orders and new initiatives.¹¹⁹

Sectarianism is a thought for the terms between Iran and Saudi Arabia, that has its foundations in the inner dogmatic elements of the two nations, which streams ostensibly to worldwide terms. This situation can be perceived from the contention and contest that has been shaped encompassing who makes a case for the holiest destinations in Islam has been disclosed, with KSA endearing such substandard competition. Riyadh has the authority of the two holiest communities in Islam i.e., Makkah Mukarma and Madina Munawara which has given the Empire unparalleled force and eminence in the view of the Islamic world, alongside an equivalent assurance to safeguard it. This idea is tested by Tehran, for it expects to safeguard its heavenly locales for the worldwide Shia populace and fill in as where such Shias can discover comfort yet none of them faces the strict holiness that will be that of Makkah Mukarma and Madina Munawara.¹²⁰ Thus far in a period wherein Tehran battles to contend contrasted with that of Saudi Arabia, any little triumph will do. Even though this thought of strict competition over sacred destinations is significant, the obtaining of any edge of impact by one of the opposite situations can fill into progressing political objectives in a district where the political environment is frequently questionable.

3.4. Sectarianism as a causing factor during Arab spring

The Arab Spring set off various contentions and provincial strains in the Middle East, which over recent years, have obtained an inexorably partisan hint. At the bleeding edge of what a few investigators have distinguished as a Sunni-Shia struggle has been Riyadh and Tehran. Encouraged by the discontinuity of nations across the area, KSA and IRI have detected a casual increase in their residual in the Middle East and have crossed the

¹¹⁹Geneive Abdo, "The New Sectarianism: The Arab Uprisings and the Rebirth of the Shi'a-Sunni Divide." *Brookings*, (April 2013), <https://www.brookings.edu/research/the-new-sectarianism-the-arabuprisings-and-the-rebirth-of-the-shia-sunni-divide/>.

¹²⁰ Simon Mabon, *Saudi Arabia, and Iran: Friends or Foes?* (State University Press, 2016):38-53.

threshold of a violent rivalry for territorial impression. The continuous utilization of a strict way of talking and loyalties in intermediary clashes has driven a few eyewitnesses to infer that this opposition is predominantly partisan and stems from a recorded Sunni-Shia battle.

As of late, both Tehran and Riyadh have effectively utilized strict language in their unfriendly way of talking toward one another. They have additionally tried to channel their impact by intermediaries, apparently along partisan lines, provoking some to discuss a "resurrection of the Shia-Sunni partition".

However, to take a gander at the pressures between the two nations exclusively by the crystal of sectarianism would yield defective ends. The stroke between Sunni and Shia Islam has been verifiably and philosophically covered on the event and has not generally been a particularly worrying factor.¹²¹

In Saudi Arabia, the suppression of the tentative uprisings in the east of the country was portrayed by those in power as a fight against Shiite incitement. A parallel strategy of public international relations was followed in Bahrain, where the violence spread on a larger scale. The sectarian pressures have reached disturbing stages in Syria, where unrest turned into violence between the Sunni community and the Shia community. The Syrian authorities exercised severe domination and vindicated its movements with the hazard of an overseas conspiracy.¹²²

3.5. Saudi-Iran Sectarianism and Arab Spring

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Islamic Republic of Iran have sent impressive assets to intermediary fights, particularly in Syria, where the risk factor is most elevated. Riyadh intently screens likely fretfulness in its oil-rich territories, considered home to its Shia community, and sent its powers, alongside other nations, to smother a Shia unrest in Bahrain. It likewise gathered an alliance of ten Sunni-larger part nations, sponsored by the United States of America, to battle Houthi protesters in Yemen. The conflict battled for the most part from the air and has demanded a high nonmilitary personnel cost. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia gives countless dollars in help to the

¹²¹Mustafa Menshawy, https://www.aljazeera.com/author/simon_mabon_200310141357804 Simon Mabon, "Saudi Arabia and Iran have not always been foes," *Aljazeera*, March 2021.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2021/3/13/sectarianism-and-saudi-iranian-relations>

¹²² Barah Mikail, "Sectarianism after the Arab Spring an Exaggerated Spectre," *APSJ*, 2014.

https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/Portals/10/ASPJ_French/journals_E/Volume-08_Issue-2/mikail_e.pdf

transcendently Sunni protesters in Syria, whereas at the similar time prohibiting income to the protestors of Al Qaeda and jihadis battling the Assad system.

Whereas IRI has apportioned billions of dollars in aid and money upfront to set up Syria's authorities and has prepared Shia antagonists from Afghanistan, Lebanon, and Iraq to combat the Syrian regime. The Islamic Republic of Iran and Saudi Arabia, which have over and over overdue happenings to build up a discussion for resolving questions strategically, examined the situation in Syria with U.S. encouragement.

Other underlying changes in the locale presently make released partisan interests a lot harder to control than they may have been previously. Youthful Arabs happening to political phase since the United States' intrusion of Iraq in 2003 have considered nothing other than the day-by-day pictures or the lived truth of vicious partisan clash. The partisan surface of the area's present conflicts, most importantly in Syria, has profoundly penetrated the character legislative issues and civic talk ensuing the disappointment of the Arab unrest in the region.

The Arab Spring in 2011 uncovered a significant shortcoming as Bassel Salloukh has resisted, behind schedule the savage front of the locale's nations. The totalitarian systems might have crushed back, switched or co-picked well known requests for popularity-based change, yet mastery lacking successful administration or wide-based authenticity stays slim and precarious. Most systems have tangled along, enduring, and adjusting however definitely mindful of their weakness. Sectarianism has consistently been a valuable card for such frail yet vicious systems to play to partition likely adversaries and create excitement between allies.

Local media has enthusiastically elevated partisan accounts to fabricate support for battles in Syria and Yemen. In the interim, web-based media with its inclination to drive individuals into shut networks of similar and its capacity to quickly circle incendiary recordings and thoughts exacerbates this opposition. The active media and web-based media will just become more compelling as the data innovation unrest proceeds to unfurl; and, as of now, there are not many powers in the current Arab open arena standing up against partisan detachments.¹²³

¹²³ March <https://carnegieendowment.org/experts/1082Lynch>, "Why Saudi Arabia Escalated the Middle East's Sectarian Conflict," *Washington Post*, 2016. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2016/01/04/why-saudi-arabia-escalated-the-middle-east-s-sectarian-conflict/>

The Western European pioneers would do well with possibilities for a local clash developing, to find striking ways to stop the circumstance. The organization's work to put to death the JCPOA might give the stimulus to European pioneers to oppose the US approach of contention increase. Nearer to home-based, pioneers particularly in Congress should likewise perceive that empowering a Sunni-Shia combat, or an immediate Tehran-Riyadh conflict, isn't probably going to improve the refuge of the United States or its partners in the Middle Eastern region. Undoubtedly, US interests in Iranian rule might be real, yet Tehran's impact is reasonable just to develop with the appearing float toward combat.¹²⁴

3.6. Riyadh-Tehran politics and the struggle to shape the Middle Eastern region

The US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003 had created an area for the intensification of the contention following the elimination of the Ba'ath regime of Saddam Hussein. Whereas, after the Arab Spring, the contention escalated as terms between regimes and societies started to fragment, developing new arenas of opposition immediately by proxy wars. The contention isn't constantly about time and area. Indeed, attention of the contention famous 5 distinct periods i.e., pre-revolution era, characterized with the aid of using mutual suspicion however an ability to work together 1979-1991, a duration of extreme enmity pushed with the aid of using the revolution and Iran-Iraq war from 1991-2003, a duration of rapprochement in which protection become visible in a collectively useful way after Khomeini's death and the emergence of greater reform in Iran, alongside shared fears of Iraqi belligerence from 2003- 2011, and the re-emergence of hostilities pushed with the aid of using the War on Terror and belligerence of Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad from 2005-2013. The contention is formed with the aid of using US guidelines in the direction of the Gulf States. During the presidency of Barak Obama, diplomatic overtures to Iran induced a remarkable deal of consternation between many in Saudi Arabia, prompting a greater pro-lively overseas policy. These fears had been exacerbated with the aid of using the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, the 2015 nuclear deal agreed with the aid of using the everlasting 5 individuals of the UN Security Council, Germany, and Iran.¹⁰ Under Obama's successor, the vehemently anti-Iranian Donald Trump, terms with the Saudi Kingdom and the Crown Prince Mohammad Bin

¹²⁴ Daniel Brumberg, "Saudi Iranian Conflict in an Age of Sectarianization," *Arab Centre Washington DC*, 2018. <https://arabcenterdc.org/resource/saudi-iranian-conflict-in-an-age-of-sectarianization/>

Salman in particular dramatically improved, in no small component because of the selection to withdraw from the nuclear deal and the belligerent stance is taken towards Iran. Arguably, the Saudi Arabian Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman decided to perpetuate four decades of contention and struggle with Iran. The prince has been suffering in a home context that is useful for perpetuating this struggle. He has used the contention with Tehran to deflect from the complexity of his very own home uncertainties. As Iran has become the Islamic Republic, Saudi Arabia become threatened with the aid of using the excessive expectancies of its very own Islamists, who ought to stimulate with the aid of using the Iranian fulfilment and intensified their activism to set up their very own model of the Islamic state. Riyadh launched into an undertaking to unfold its Wahhabi model of Islam and its clerics elevated the frequency of their anti-Shi'a theology.¹²⁵

3.7. Conclusion

The tragedies of the Middle Eastern region are not partisan ones, both IRI and KSA need the threatening region. The eventual fate of Saudi Iranian relations is at last indistinct. The two states are as of now at a worrying point, as Tehran fights approvals from worldwide over its failure to deal with its atomic program and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia fights to progress inner pressures and modernization rehearse initiated by Crown Prince Mohammad Salman. History has eventually intensified Tehran-Riyadh relations into what they are now loaded up with the anxiety of political activity and system commotion because of strict contrasts, unmistakably the dogmatic sectarianism that is set up between nations.

¹²⁵ Dr Simon Mabon, "Saudi Arabia and Iran: The struggle to shape the Middle East," *The Foreign Policy Centre*, (2022).

Chapter no 4

Impact of Saudi Iranian Rivalry on the Middle Eastern Countries

The role of the Middle Eastern countries under the influence of Tehran and Riyadh will be discussed. It will highlight the movement of preliminary revolutions diminished by mid-2012. These assaults had been responded to with violence from protesters in a few scenarios in the region. The Syrian Civil War, insurgency in Iraq and the civil war, the Egyptian Crisis, the Libyan Civil War, the Yemeni Crisis and various proxy wars are the consequences of upheavals. An energy battle persisted after the instantaneous reaction to the political upheavals.

The famous passages could cease corruption, growth political participation, and result in extra monetary fairness fast collapsed withinside the wake of the counter-modern actions with the aid of using overseas nation players in Yemen, the local and worldwide army involvements in the civil wars in Syria, Iraq, Libya, and Yemen. In this below mentioned heading will be points of discussion.

The Middle Eastern countries switched to some external powers after the incident of 9/11 to stay safe from the war on terror. This was an alarming situation in the region when all the countries were making alliances this was an opportunity for Tehran and Riyadh to specify their dimension to gain hegemony.

The Arab is witnessing a situation of turbulence and instability put up 2011 Arab Spring crisis, especially with the regression of the activity of some powerful states, an issue that produced a strategic vacuum in the area. These outcomes conflict with the local powers that aspire for an extra influential local function inclusive of Iran, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Israel in addition to the improved efforts for the go back of the Egyptian function. The absence of the country caused extended possibilities that pave the manner for local intervention in revolutions states to keep away from dangers and advantage of the opportunity.¹²⁶

¹²⁶ Aboubakr Fathy Awaad, "Iranian Saudi rivalry over the regional role: Syria as a model," *Review of Economics and Political Science* (2020).

4.1. Regional Dynamics.

The competition between Saudi Arabia and Iran is partisan Sunni versus Shiite, Arab versus Persian, philosophical United States associated versus the United States gone against, and international. Every nation considers itself to be the normal head of the Middle East, yet in addition to the more extensive Muslim community. Both countries i.e., Iran and Saudi Arabia are bound to be contenders France and Germany in Europe or Brazil and Argentina in Latin America however that doesn't intend that they wanted to become enemies.

The rise of ISIS brings out the familiar motto that achievement has numerous dads, however, disappointment is a vagrant. Nobody needs to assume fault for ISIS, however, there is a lot to go around. In the beginning, ISIS joins remainders of Al-Qaeda and Saddam Hussein's Baathist military, two previous foes that united U.S intrusion and botch of Iraq. ISIS is additionally a side-effect of Iranian-supported restraint and Saudi's Wahhabi philosophy. The fierceness of Iran's partners especially the Assad rule in Syria just as the past Shiite government in Iraq has filled Sunni Arab disappointment and filled in as a basic selecting apparatus for jihadist bunches like ISIS. Simultaneously, to the degree that ISIS individuals are propelled by strict philosophy which isn't generally the situation their closed minded, bigoted perspective is a result of Wahhabi Islam.

In the fight against ISIS, Iran is both the incendiary and the fire detachment, yet ISIS must be completely stifled by the actual Sunnis. Iranian moved Shia civilian armies in Iraq and Syria might be compelling at killing Sunni fanatics however in doing so such them at the same time fuel Sunni radicalism. Numerous Sunnis Arabs in Syria and Iraq go against Iran and its Shiite population more than they go against ISIS. It's improbable that IRI and KSA will figure out how to team up straightforwardly against ISIS because their determination of the issue is on a very basic level unique. To Riyadh, ISIS's ascent is inferable from the constraint of Sunnis in Syria and Iraq on account of Iran and its Shiite customers. To Tehran, ISIS's rise is inferable from the monetary and philosophical help of Gulf Arab nations, specifically Saudi Arabia.

A significant KSA frustration with IRI is a similar disappointment felt by numerous nations, together with the United States. That is the way that Tehran's Supreme Leader

Khomeini and the Quds Groundbreaking Guard officer Soleimani are out of reach, while Tehran's most available authorities are not incredible.¹²⁷

4.2. Power Politics in The Middle East.

The main superpowers the United States, China and Russia are the main groups of actors' overdue extraordinary energy competition in the Middle Eastern region. The competition of extraordinary navies joined with the all-around current local breaks between IRI and KSA troop Sunni Arab states, Israel, and Turkey has placed an undesirable stain on the area's security.¹²⁸

At the start of the 20th century and the disclosure of oil furthermore, gaseous petrol the destiny of the area reformed drastically because in the Middle Eastern region it can track down the best single save of oil that specified other forces' longings. The district's huge supplies of unrefined petroleum added to its topographical, key, and monetary significance. Especially KSA was presently not the territorial backwoods that it had been until the 1940s', however, became one of the main provincial forces in the locale. Owing to continuous strains between IRI and KSA, especially after 1979, the Persian Gulf turned into a focal point of worldwide shakiness'. Large scale manufacturing of oil started in 1945, with Saudi Arabia, Iran, Kuwait, Iraq, and the United Arab Emirates having huge amounts of oil. In this manner, with progressing pressures between IRI and KSA as the main priority, it is significant that the oil stores of Riyadh and Tehran are the absolute most noteworthy on the planet and the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries is overwhelmed by Eastern nations. It isn't, along these lines, astonishing that the significance of The Middle East rises above its geological cutoff points and that the area has been a significant auditorium of worldwide legislative issues.¹²⁹

4.3. The Middle East Central Powers

Power isn't always a set characteristic and center energy repute shifts in this area greater often than possibly everywhere else withinside the world. Thus, the upward push and histrionic decline of local powers with an awesome diploma of occurrence. Like, Egypt evolved withinside the Fifties and Sixties however to say no to that of a marginal actor

¹²⁷ Karim Sadjadpour, "On Saudi-Iranian Dynamics," *Foreign Policy Association*, February 2015. <https://carnegieendowment.org/2015/02/16/on-saudi-iranian-dynamics-pub-59117>

¹²⁸ Wojciech Michnik, "Great power rivalry in the Middle east," *Expert Comment 7* (2021).

¹²⁹ Bettina Koch & Yannis A. Stivachtis, *Regional Security in the Middle East*, (E-International Relations, 2019). <https://www.e-ir.info/publication/regional-security-in-the-middle-east-sectors-variables-and-issues/>

in the life of the Mubarak presidency. Iraq evolved to relative pre-eminence within the 1980s however turned into lost certainly all its influences from the Nineties onwards. Syria has become the grasp of geopolitics, which is used as an endless supply of its local repute from the Fifties via the mid-2000s to peer it emerges as the supply of us of a's grave weak spot within the 2010s. Indeed, within the wake of its rebellion in 2011 the regime has been uncovered to significant inner and outside pressures that are proving to be properly past its cap potential to control. Syria is within the 2010s characterized by civil strife and fracturing of its frame politics into competing ideological, ethnic, and spiritual groups, appearing as a brand-new vortex for local opposition and energy rivalries. It could be very doubtful if the regime that President Hafez al-Assad so thoroughly crafted within the Seventies and Nineteen Eighties will live on his son's rule and with him will quit Syria's repute as an influential local actor. And finally, inside the context of converting energy fortunes, it was that visible Libya dropping its awesome missionary zeal and influence within the Maghreb and sub-Sahara Africa purveyed by Muammar Qaddafi to a susceptible nation with porous borders and no powerful valuable authority. Political turmoil has taken its toll on those international locations, and they will, eventually, get over the awful situations now prevailing. Indeed, they'll even get better as sturdy civic-led international locations with ethical authority, however, their location as gamers at the energy grid of the area might also additionally take generations to get better, if at all.¹³⁰

Being progressive and dynamic are extra attributes that have come to be counted even greater in a globalized world. Added to this type of listing ought to additionally be political management valid political management to be precise. From this characteristic follows smooth energy and additionally ethical authority, which has been deployed to awesome impact by each of the primary democracies and the zealous innovative regimes.

¹³⁰ Anoushiravan Ehteshami, "Middle East Powers: Regional Role," *International Impact*, 11 no. 42 (2014):29-49.

4.4. Overview of political unrest in The Middle Eastern Countries during Arab Spring

The Arab Spring induced the largest renovation of the Middle East because of decolonization.¹³¹ At the end of February 2012, some rulers were compelled from energy in Tunisia, Egypt,¹³² Libya, and Yemen, civil unrest had erupted in Bahrain and Syria, and main remonstrations had damaged out in Algeria, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Morocco, Oman, and Sudan, and minor protests had been felling in Mauritania, KSA, Djibouti, Western Sahara,¹³³ and Palestine. The Tunisian President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali escaped to KSA on 14 January 2011 succeeding the Tunisian Upheaval remonstrations. The Egyptian President Hosni resigned on eleven February 2011 after 18 days of huge demonstrations, finishing his 30 years of presidency. Muammar Gaddafi changed into overthrown on 23 August 2011, after the National Transitional Council took manage of Bab al-Azizia. Whereas the Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh contracted the GCC energy-switch deal wherein a presidential election changed into held, ensuing in his successor Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi officially changing him as president on 27 February 2012.¹³⁴

Numerous leaders during this period announced their intent to step down at the end of their contemporary terms. While Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir announced that he could now no longer are trying to find confirmation in 2015, in the end, withdrew his statement and ran anyway,¹³⁵ as did Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, whose time converted to lead to 2014.¹³⁶ Also, the demonstrations in Jordan additionally prompted the sacking of 4 successive governments by King Abdullah.¹³⁷ The famous conflict in

¹³¹ "Relations with Egypt, Israel," *Council on Foreign Affairs*, Vol.10, No.2, (2016): 223–235, https://www.cfr.org/middle-east-andnorthafrica/egypt?_wrapper_format=html&topics=All®ions=All&type=All&page=4.

¹³² Peterson, Scott, "Egypt's revolution redefines what's possible in the Arab world". *The Christian Science*, 11 February 2011, <https://www.csmonitor.com/World/Middle-East/2011/0211/Egypt-s-revolutionredefines-what-s-possible-in-the-Arab-world>

¹³³ "New clashes in occupied Western Sahara," *Afrol*, 27 February 2011. <http://www.afrol.com/articles/37450>

¹³⁴ Mali coup, "Arab Spring spreads to Africa," *United Press International*. 26 March 2012. https://www.upi.com/Top_News/Special/2012/03/26/Mali-coup-Arab-Spring-spreads-toAfrica/33131332791728/

¹³⁵ "Party: Bashir is not standing for re-election," https://web.archive.org/web/20110403205807/http://www.gulf-times.com/site/topics/article.asp?cu_no=2 *Gulf Times*, 22 February 2011. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-sudan-bashiridUSTRE71K16B20110221>

¹³⁶ "Iraq PM plans no re-election," *Voice of Russia*, 5 February 2011. https://p2k.unkris.ac.id/IT/en/3065-2962/ArabSpring_17264_p2k-unkris.html

¹³⁷ "Jordanians stage anti-gov't sit-in in Amman," *Xinhua News Agency*, 30 January 2011. http://www.china.org.cn/world/2011-01/30/content_21843744_3.htm

Kuwait resulted withinside the letter of resignation of Prime Minister Nasser Al-Sabah's cabinet.¹³⁸ The geopolitical allegations of the protests drew international attention.¹³⁹ Whereas some protesters had been selected for the 2011 Nobel Peace Prize.

Conclusion

Presently the Middle Eastern region is taken into consideration due to its global politics. It is one of the important regions in the world where no country survives without a rival. This situation describes the predicament that formed the Tehran and Riyadh competition for nearly a time. The Arabs are experiencing a chain of protests which cause the toppling down of many regimes e.g., Libya, Tunisia, and Egypt. The ancient evidence has presented that IRI and KSA created various scenarios collectively however there are numerous elements which include the Iranian revolution, and Iran's position for the giving up of monarchy in Saudi Arabia. While the two international locations are making development towards territorial power, Tehran's dependence on Saudi Arabia for economic motives and Riyadh's dread of Iranian atomic capacity might also additionally strike an energy figure withinside the region, as every gathering demonstrates a reluctance to get up to the subsequent directly.

¹³⁸ "Kuwait's prime minister resigns after protests," *BBC News*, 28 November 2011. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-15931526>

¹³⁹ Mounassar, Hammoud, "Thousands of Yemenis call on president to quit," <https://web.archive.org/web/20110206212614/http://www.abs-cbnnews.com/global-filipino/world/01/27/11/thousands-yemenis-call-president-quit> *ABS-CBN News*, 6 February 2011. <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2011-01-28/thousands-of-yemenis-call-on-president-to-quit/1920856>

Conclusion

The Saudi Arabia and Iran conflict is categorized by challenging legitimacies. Both used sectarianisms to obtain their goal, and both compete against contending beliefs. In the Middle Eastern region, there is no balance of power and there wouldn't be an impulsively grand harmony. This study emphasizes the political and socioeconomic upbringing of the Arab Spring by classifying the impact of political upheaval in the region. The era of Arab Spring caused the deteriorating economic condition and worse living standards and encourage people to think about religious beliefs as result to prevent financial and communal problems. Some countries in the region turned into minions to foreign political programs at the cost of their sovereignty, given their dependence on foreign support.

Geo-strategically, the condition has also changed for Tehran. The letdown of Egypt's authority has left the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to counter IRI. In this way, it has two allies, Turkey, and Israel. The Arab annotations of IRI have progressed to far-sighted it is taking the position of Israel as a foremost danger to the Arabs. They perceive Iran as a dominant state that is struggling with violently dominant and theoretically interventionist plans. These observations are replicated in surveys on Tehran's admiration in the region which enumerated a dreadful drop. Another variation is the enthusiasm of KSA to counter IRI straight and of the GCC to close levels on this issue. This may reproduce the Sunnis increasing assurance, somewhat as a result of the Arab Spring in 2011, in their role representations and in the fact that they are endearing the global challenge with the Shia community.

Moreover, this research discovers that the security circumstances of the Middle Eastern region would have been well if Riyadh and Tehran will collaborate on plentiful stuff such as Yemen and Syrian disasters. The superpowers got platform due to feebleness of the region with IRI and KSA planned detestation to intervene which caused serious conflicts in the region. There is an absence of trust between Saudi Arabia and Iran. Their undesirable approach leads to confusion and severe ideological determinants of the rivalry. Moreover, their divergent ideological arrogances must have given rise to clashes and the deputation crisis in the region. Military confrontation in Yemen and Syria are the best cases. Both Riyadh and Tehran have questioned for political impact on other

countries in the region i.e., Bahrain, Lebanon, Iraq, and Egypt. The upheaval in Bahrain and Yemen was a chance for IRI and KSA to achieve their objective. The Saudis instrumentalized the commotions to improve their position in the region. Whereas IRI even though acted bestowing to its roles, cannot achieve success in those scenarios. Finally, this research accomplishes that the firmness of the Middle Eastern problems lies in collaboration between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and this honor the contemporary settlement flanked by the two states is an encouraging change for the security of the Middle East.

Findings

- The safety of The Middle Eastern region relies on the attitude of both dominant countries i.e., the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and the Islamic Republic of Iran. When both countries would recompense attention on their combined welfare, neighboring countries will quickly follow this suit. This would support most of the flames in the region and allow nonviolent coexistence with Israel. Relations between both would not only carry out backings to the Middle East but to North and East Africa, which will let Muslim countries emphasize the reduction of poverty and terrorism and will promote autonomous modifications
- To tolerate the circumstances in the region, there is a need to be peace and harmony across the moral and religious lines. The region is facing lots of issues that have shaped the chief immigrant disaster since World War II and these residents of helpless individuals made a challenge for the region's countries who are endeavoring to help them. Human crisis issues intensified the apprehension in many ways, like the abuse of exposed inhabitants or the absence of capital.
- External factors need to support the community to continue its protective missions in the region. As acts of violence are progressively being committed against Muslims, the need for the OIC, despite its dimness, has never been so regrated. This organization is the only platform that can unite all Muslim rulers under one umbrella for dialogue.
- The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Islamic Republic of Iran don't have the power to overcome or overthrow the difficulties of the region, but it could only be spoken by fully running circumstances under the protection of a cooperative security command. Both are adequately well-furnished to continue this war by ambassadorial, economic, and even military traditions. It would be wrong to perceive their clash as rooted in sectarian animosities.
- As IRI has an authority of a nuclear bomb so the concept between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia could stance more threats if any of them could both attain nuclear weapons, then at that time the international powers could spectator a regional arms rivalry, but at this time with nuclear

armaments, as this scenario looks like the unforgettable war between the United States and the Soviet Union in the era of Cold War.

- A Westphalian treaty of peace must be recognized in the region, where no external or internal power could be allowed to interfere in other countries' affairs. Citizen faithfulness must only be toward a state and not toward any other authority. Loyalty to the state can be made laid-back if national governments become more demonstrative and imitate the motivation of their people. Democratic regimes are more agreeable to resolving issues and building collective security regimes. This would allow more funds to be allocated for economic development, without which democracy cannot survive and conflict cannot be ended.
- To develop a strong state, it is important to handle sectarian issues in the Middle East. A strong nation state does not mean a cruel state, which was accountable for this sectarian mess in the first place, but a state that salutes human rights and the rule of law. No armed groups could be allowed to encounter the state, which must be supreme in this respect.

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