

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Problem

A Proxy War is an armed conflict involving two or more actors, whether state or non-state entities, who participate either directly or indirectly.¹ However, the actors involved in a proxy war are often not directly present on the battlefield with military forces. Instead, they typically engage through the provision of financial aid, weapons, or involvement in intelligence operations within a country's conflict.² In a proxy war, there are both soft power and hard power. Soft power is a strategy to undermine a country through culture, ideology, and institutions. In short, soft power aims to influence others using attraction, rather than through coercion or force.³ In contrast, hard power focuses on military intervention, coercive diplomacy, and economic sanctions to enforce national interests.⁴

One example of a Middle Eastern country involved in a proxy war is Yemen. History states that the civil war in Yemen began in 1994. The conflict lasted for years, until finally in 2014, the Houthi group, a Zaidi Shia rebel faction from Northern Yemen, managed to take control of the capital, Sana'a,

¹ Habib Akbar Nurhakim, "PROXY WAR DALAM KONFLIK YAMAN," *Jurnal Pendidikan dan Sejarah* Vol.18, No.1 (2022): 1.

² Sri Widaningsih, "PENGEMBANGAN MATERI PROXY WAR DALAM MENANAMKAN CINTA TANAH AIR," *ATRABIS: Jurnal Administrasi Bisnis (e-Journal)* 5, no. 2 (December 20, 2019): 126, <https://doi.org/10.38204/atrabis.v5i2.261>.

³ Yanyan Mochamad Yani and Elnovani Lusiana, "SOFT POWER DAN SOFT DIPLOMACY," *Jurnal Tapis: Jurnal Teropong Aspirasi Politik Islam* 14, no. 2 (October 29, 2018): 49, <https://doi.org/10.24042/tps.v14i2.3165>.

⁴ Ernest J. Wilson, "Hard Power, Soft Power, Smart Power," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 616 (2008): 114.

from the legitimate government led by President Abdu Rabbu Mansour Hadi.⁵ In the same year, Iran was declared to be a third party involved in the conflict, using its ability to supply several derivative weapons, including 3 drones and 3 ballistic missiles, to the Houthi group as a form of defense against the Yemeni government.⁶

In 2015, when President Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi was overthrown by the Houthis and fled to the city of Aden, he sent a letter requesting Saudi Arabia's assistance in restoring his authority in Yemen.⁷ Finally, Saudi Arabia intervened, along with the United Arab Emirates and several other Gulf countries, by forming a military coalition known as the "Arab Coalition" or the "Coalition to Support Legitimacy in Yemen," which included Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Morocco, Qatar, Sudan, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE).⁸ The purpose of forming this coalition was to counter Iran's influence as the Houthis ally and to secure regional stability in the country. The intervention of external countries, such as Iran and Saudi Arabia, in the Yemeni conflict is driven by interests related to security, territorial expansion, exploitation of natural resources, and geopolitical factors.⁹

⁵ Asriyana, Hasanudin, and Daryanti, "Dinamika Konflik Yaman, Dampak dan Resolusinya," *Jurnal Teknologi Pendidikan Madrasah* Vol.7, No.1 (2024): 47–52.

⁶ Jeff Seldin, "US Intelligence Warns of Growing Iranian-Houthi Weapons Cooperation," *Voice of America*, February 7, 2024, <https://www.voanews.com/a/us-intelligence-warns-of-growing-iranian-houthi-weapons-cooperation-/7478387.html>.

⁷ "Presiden Yaman Tinggalkan Istana di Kota Aden," *VOA Indonesia*, March 26, 2015, <https://www.voaindonesia.com/a/presiden-yaman-tinggalkan-istana-di-aden/2694296.html>.

⁸ Andi Purwono and Ahmad Sholihul, "FAKTOR PENDORONG INTERVENSI MILITER ARAB SAUDI DALAM KONFLIK YAMAN," *Interdependence Journal of International Studies* 4, no. 1 (June 1, 2023), <https://doi.org/10.54144/ijis.v4i1.59>.

⁹ Fahrudin Habib Akbar, "Proxy War Dalam Konflik Yaman," *Jurnal Pendidikan dan Sejarah* Vol.18 No.1 (March 2022): 2.

Since the formation of the coalition led by Saudi Arabia in 2015, the conflict has intensified, leading to airstrikes launched by Saudi Arabia against the Houthis.¹⁰ Between 2016 and 2022, various attacks were launched by both sides, using ballistic missiles and drones. In Yemen, an estimated 17,062 civilians were reported as casualties, with 6,592 killed and 10,470 injured. On the other hand, nearly 50 members of the Houthi armed group were killed during the airstrikes.¹¹

Ali Musa Harahap *et al* (2022) argue that in the Qur'an, Allah SWT has emphasized the purpose of creating the world, which is to establish perfect international relations with three key concepts: *Amanah* (trust), *Falah* (success), and *Hayyah Tayyibah* (good life). For a Muslim, both the world and the hereafter are places to "produce" and "multiply." The meaning of "produce" implies that a country must be active in creating favorable conditions, such as maintaining peace, regional stability, and the well-being of its people. *Falah* and *Hayyah Tayyibah* represent the creation of an ideal relationship, with a balance between material and spiritual conditions. Therefore, a country can be considered ideal when it is secure, peaceful in spirit, experiences moral improvement in its society, upholds justice, and eliminates forms of oppression between nations, whether in the form of disputes or armed conflicts.¹²

¹⁰ "Saudi gempur terus pemberontak Houthi di Yaman," BBC News Indonesia, April 23, 2015, https://www.bbc.com/indonesia/dunia/2015/04/150423_saudi_yaman_houthi.

¹¹ "Serangan Udara Saudi Tewaskan Pasukan Khusus Houthi - BBC News Indonesia," accessed February 1, 2025, https://www.bbc.com/indonesia/dunia/2015/05/150527_dunia_yaman_serangan.

¹² Ali Musa Harahap et al., *Mengenal Hubungan Internasional Madani*, 1st ed. (Siman, Ponorogo: UNIDA Gontor Press, 2022).

Islam does not command warfare except for the defense of its territory, not for expansion or occupation. This is in accordance with the teachings of Rasulullah Saw, who never engaged in war except after the migration to Yathrib (after establishing his own government and sovereignty). Therefore, Yemen cannot be considered an ideal country as it is still plagued by conflict, which reflects regional instability, a loss of security, and a lack of harmonious social and spiritual conditions in accordance with the principles of *Amanah*, *Falah*, and *Hayyah Tayyibah*.

From an Islamic perspective, the involvement of society in the political process is very important. However, in prolonged conflict situations, such as the one in Yemen, public participation is often hindered by external forces trying to exploit instability for their own interests. This aligns with the views of Ali Musa Harahap and Agur Lybeshari (2021) in their book *Review On Globalization From An Islamic Perspective*, which states that the Qur'an teaches, as indicated by Sayyid Mawdudi, that Islam is not merely about "informing" but about "taking action, spreading it, and truly implementing it." Therefore, societal involvement, in whatever form or definition, is an inseparable part of any conflict.¹³

The conflict between the Yemeni government, the Houthis, Saudi Arabia, and Iran refers to a type of proxy war, as the intervention of foreign countries is primarily aimed at achieving their national interests. Saudi Arabia's interest in supporting the Yemeni government is to secure its border regions such as Jizan, Najran, and Asir. Meanwhile, Iran exploits this conflict to expand its influence,

¹³ Ali Musa Harahap et al., *Review On Globalization From an Islamic Perspective*, 1st ed. (Siman, Ponorogo: UNIDA Gontor Press, 2021).

spread Shia ideology, and promote its revolutionary ideas across the Middle East, as the dominant ideology in the region plays a significant role in shaping societal attitudes, including in Yemen. This prolonged conflict in Yemen is bound to have consequences that will affect the dynamics of geopolitical change in the Middle East.¹⁴ Therefore, the urgency of this research is that the author aims to further analyze “how the impact of the Yemeni proxy war has affected the geopolitics of the Middle East from 2015 to 2023.”

1.2 Problem Statement

Referring to the background and problem identification outlined above regarding the proxy war between the Yemeni government, the Houthis, Iran, and Saudi Arabia, the main issue examined in this thesis is how the impact of the Yemeni Proxy War has affected the geopolitics of the Middle East from 2015 to 2023?

1.3 Research Objectives

The purpose of this research is to analyze the “Impact of the Yemeni Proxy War on Geopolitics in the Middle East from 2015 to 2023.”

1.4 Research Benefits

The benefits of this research are as follows:

¹⁴ “The Conflict in Yemen Is More Than a Proxy War | Crisis Group,” July 21, 2023, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/yemen/conflict-yemen-more-proxy-war-peace-process?utm_medium=promo_email&utm_source=lo_flows&utm_campaign=registered_user_welcome&utm_term=email_1&utm_content=20230724.

1.4.1 Academic Benefits

- a. As an additional insight and information in the study of international relations related to the “Impact of the Yemeni Proxy War on Geopolitics in the Middle East from 2015 to 2023”.
- b. As a study material for students and other researchers.

1.4.2 Practical Benefits

- a. As a final project for students in completing their education at the university.
- b. It can provide knowledge about the “Impact of the Yemeni Proxy War on Geopolitics in the Middle East from 2015 to 2023”.

1.5 Literature Review

Studies on the conflict between the Yemeni government, the Houthis, Iran, and Saudi Arabia have been extensively conducted with various approaches. Some of the previous studies include:

1. Sigit Priambodo (2017) with the title **Motif Intervensi Arab Saudi Terhadap Perang Saudara di Yaman** in the journal *Analisis Hubungan Internasional* Vol.6 No.1. This journal analyzes the motives behind Saudi Arabia's intervention in Yemen. The findings state that several reasons prompted Saudi Arabia to carry out military intervention in Yemen, primarily related to Saudi Arabia's national security interests, driven by concerns over the influence of the Houthis, who controlled much of Yemen and occupied northern Yemen, directly bordering Saudi Arabia.¹⁵ The

¹⁵ Sigit Priambodo, “Motif Intervensi Arab Saudi Terhadap Perang Saudara di Yaman,” *Jurnal Analisis Hubungan Internasional* 6, no. 1 (2017): 207–208.

similarity between the research topic and this journal lies in the initial intervention of Saudi Arabia in Yemen's civil war, which helps the author analyze the relationship between Saudi Arabia and Yemen that led the Houthi military group to attack Saudi Arabia. The difference lies in the perspective of the research actors. The journal focuses solely on the motives behind Saudi Arabia's intervention in the Yemeni civil war, while the research topic at hand focuses on the impacts that occurred after the Yemeni proxy war on the geopolitics of the Middle East from 2015 to 2023. Therefore, the journal written by Sigit Priambodo (2017) is used as an additional reference to better understand the motives behind Saudi Arabia's intervention in the Yemeni civil war and helps in analyzing the sequence of impacts that followed the occurrence of the proxy war.

2. Mahjoob Zweiri (2016) with the title **Iran and Political Dynamism in the Arab World: the Case of Yemen** in *Digest of Middle East Studies* Volume 25, No.1. This journal analyzes the sequence of Iran's national interests in the Yemeni conflict. The findings state that Iran's objective in intervening in the Yemeni conflict is to spread Shia ideology and to rival the dominance of the United States as the major power in the Middle East, behind Saudi Arabia. As an initial step to realize this, Iran seeks to challenge Saudi Arabia's position and status as a regional power in the Middle East.¹⁶ The similarity between the research topic and this journal lies in the reasons behind Iran's intervention in the Yemeni conflict. The difference, however, lies in the level of detail, as the journal focuses solely on the reasons for

¹⁶ Mahjoob Zweiri, "Iran and Political Dynamism in the Arab World: The Case of Yemen," *Digest of Middle East Studies* 25, no. 1 (March 2016): 10–14, <https://doi.org/10.1111/dome.12078>.

Iran's intervention in the Yemeni conflict, while this research will discuss the impacts of the Yemeni proxy war on Middle Eastern geopolitics from 2015 to 2023. Therefore, the journal written by Mahjoob Zweiri (2016) is used as an additional reference to understand the reasons behind Iran's intervention in the Yemeni conflict and to help analyze the sequence of impacts that followed the occurrence of the proxy war.

3. Deby Setiawati, Hesti Rika and Yuni Arbakafin (2023) with the title **Kondisi Umum dan Pemicu Terjadinya Pergolakan Yaman** in journal Ilmu Sosial, Humaniora dan Seni (JISHS) Vol.2 No.1. This journal analyzes the countries involved in the turmoil in Yemen and the impacts that followed the outbreak of the Yemeni crisis. The findings state that in the civil conflict between Yemen and the Houthi armed group, many foreign countries have directly intervened to address the conflict, turning it into a proxy war. Saudi Arabia's intervention, as an ally of Yemen, helped Yemen retake territories and attack the Houthis. Saudi Arabia, in its attacks on the Houthis, did not act alone; it was also involved with the United States, which provided military assistance and fuel for aircraft used in the attacks on the Houthis. Meanwhile, Iran, as an ally of the Houthis, sent aid in the form of ballistic missiles and drones. The journal also discusses the impacts that occurred after Saudi Arabia launched its attacks on the Houthis in Yemen.¹⁷ The similarity between the research topic and this journal lies in the form of assistance provided by foreign countries as a means of intervention. The

¹⁷ Debi Setiawati, Hesti Rika Rahayu, and Yuni Arbakafin, "Kondisi Umum dan Pemicu Terjadinya Pergolakan Yaman," *Jurnal Ilmu Sosial, Humaniora dan Seni* 1, no. 2 (January 12, 2023): 11–18, <https://doi.org/10.62379/jishs.v1i2.473>.

difference, however, is that the journal focuses on the countries involved in the Yemeni conflict and the impacts that resulted, while this research will focus more on the impacts of the Yemeni proxy war on Middle Eastern geopolitics from 2015 to 2023. Therefore, the journal written by Deby Setiawati, Hesti Rika, and Yuni Arbakafin (2023) is used as a reference to further analyze how the Yemeni proxy war has impacted the geopolitics of the Middle East from 2015 to 2023.

4. Kementerian Pertahanan RI Badan Pendidikan dan Pelatihan (2020) in their book with the title **Bahan Pembelajaran Proxy War**. This book discusses everything related to proxy wars. The findings state that the definition of a proxy war is a confrontation between two major powers using a third party or substitute actor to avoid direct confrontation, in order to reduce the risks of direct and fatal conflict.¹⁸ The similarity between the discussion in this book and this research lies in the explanation of proxy war. The difference lies in the perspective of the actors, where the book provides a general overview of proxy war, while this research focuses on the impacts that occurred after the Yemeni proxy war on Middle Eastern geopolitics from 2015 to 2023. Therefore, the journal written by Kementerian Pertahanan RI Badan Pendidikan dan Pelatihan (2020) is used as an additional reference to understand proxy war.

5. Bassel F. Salloukh (2023) with the title **The Arab Uprisings and The Geopolitics of The Middle East** in journal *The International Spectator* Vol.48 No.2. This journal discusses the geopolitical dynamics in the Middle

¹⁸ Kementerian Pertahanan RI Badan Pendidikan dan Pelatihan, *Bahan Pembelajaran Proxy War* (Jakarta: Kementerian Pertahanan, 2020).

East post-U.S. invasion of Iraq, focusing on the rivalry between Saudi Arabia and Iran. The journal also explains how Arab countries have sought to fill the power vacuum left by countries experiencing crises.¹⁹ The similarity between the journal and this research lies in the discussion of the impact of proxy wars on Middle Eastern geopolitics. The difference is that the journal has a broader focus on the geopolitical rivalry across the entire Middle East post-Iraq invasion, while this research specifically addresses the impact of the proxy conflict in Yemen and how it influences the geopolitical dynamics of the Middle East. Therefore, the journal written by Bassel F. Salloukh (2023) is used as an additional reference in the research I am discussing.

6. Diane M. Zorri (2023) with the title **Saudi Arabia and Iran in a Multipolar Global World Order: Scenarios for the Future of the Middle East** in *Journal of Peace and War Studies*. This journal explains that the proxy war occurring in Yemen is considered the main arena for the rivalry between Saudi Arabia and Iran, reflecting the sectarian (Sunni vs Shia) and political differences.²⁰ The similarity between this journal and the research lies in the explanation of how Yemen became the main battleground for the proxy war between Saudi Arabia and Iran. The difference, however, is that the journal connects the Yemeni proxy war with the shift in global multipolarity and the regional instability caused by the war, while this research focuses more specifically on how the Yemeni proxy

¹⁹ Basel F. Salloukh, "The Arab Uprisings and the Geopolitics of the Middle East," *The International Spectator* 48, no. 2 (June 2013): 1–2, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03932729.2013.787830>.

²⁰ Diane M Zorri, "Saudi Arabia and Iran in a Multipolar Global World Order: Scenarios for the Future of the Middle East," *Journal of Peace and War Studies*, 2023, 60–79.

war impacts the geopolitical dynamics of the Middle East. Therefore, the journal written by Diane M. Zorri (2023) is used as an additional reference in the research I am discussing.

After reviewing various previous studies that discuss topics similar to this research, the author asserts that the topic raised in this study has never been the focus of prior researchers. The scope of some previous studies has only discussed the reasons behind Saudi Arabia's and Iran's intervention in the Yemeni civil war, the definition of proxy war, the escalation of the conflict from civil war to proxy war, as well as why Yemen became a proxy battleground between Saudi Arabia and Iran. This shows that the research titled “The Impact of the Yemeni Proxy War on Middle Eastern Geopolitics from 2015 to 2023” presents novelty and is important for further study. This research is expected to contribute significantly to understanding the impacts that followed the Yemeni proxy war and how it influenced Middle Eastern geopolitics from 2015 to 2023.

1.6 Conceptual Framework

1.6.1 The Concept of Proxy War

In the journal titled “**Strategic Relationships, Risk and Proxy War**”, *Amos C. Fox* explains that a proxy war is a situation where two or more actors fight against an enemy and try to achieve a shared goal. In a proxy war, there is a term called *The Principal*, or commonly referred to as the “main state,” which holds interests, and *The Agent*, which carries out the commands of the main state. In this case study, Iran acts as *The Principal*, while the Houthi are *The Agent*. In short, Iran does not directly engage in combat, but rather provides

guidance and assists in supplying weapons to the Houthi to attack Saudi Arabia.²¹

Proxy wars, in essence, will continue to hold a dominant position in warfare both today and in the future.²² The use of proxies signifies an advancement in warfare methods for several reasons. First, actors can deny involvement because proxies obscure the connection, helping the main players avoid international condemnation. Second, committing atrocities on behalf of others is seen as more acceptable than doing so on one's own behalf. With proxies, the public will assume that the war being fought will escalate into brutal and ruthless battles. Finally, superpowers like the United States seek to deter enemies through superior firepower, logistics, and military mobilization capabilities, thus prompting adversaries to continue using proxies to achieve their national interests.²³

Gregory Gause III also defines that what is happening in the Middle East as a cold war that revolves around political policies in the region. According to *Gause III*, it is called a "cold war" because the main actors are not directly involved in military confrontation but instead compete to dominate enemy countries through weaker allies or proxies in the region. This definition aligns with the argument by *Amos C. Fox*, who refers to it as a proxy war. *Gause III* explains the "paradox of power," where ideology and political capital are more

²¹ United States Army and Amos Fox, "Conflict and the Need for a Theory of Proxy Warfare," *Journal of Strategic Security* 12, no. 1 (April 2019): 1-3, <https://doi.org/10.5038/1944-0472.12.1.1701>.

²² "Proxy War | Definition, History, Examples, & Risks | Britannica," accessed February 1, 2025, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/proxy-war>.

²³ Amos Fox, "Exploitative, Transactional, Coercive, Cultural, and Contractual Toward a Better Theory of Proxy War," *Modern War Institute*, 2020.

important and influential than military power. This is one of the characteristics of the Cold War in the Middle East.²⁴

In the context of the case study “The Impact of Proxy War in Yemen on Middle Eastern Geopolitics from 2015 to 2023”, the use of the proxy war concept is highly relevant because Iran supports the Houthi rebels to fight against the Yemeni government, which is backed by Saudi Arabia, allowing Iran to wage war without direct involvement. This makes the conflict more complex, intensifies the rivalry between Iran and Saudi Arabia, and exacerbates sectarian tensions as each side seeks to spread its own ideology, Iran with its Shia beliefs, while Saudi Arabia advocates Sunni ideology.

1.6.2 Geopolitical Theory

Geopolitics comes from two words *Geo*, which means “earth”, and *Politeia*, which means “a self-sustaining society”. Geopolitics is the study of how geographical factors influence international politics and relations between countries. Geopolitics is not a science, but rather a discipline that studies the relationship between space and politics (human interaction).²⁵ Geopolitics is also defined as the knowledge that studies the potential of a nation, which is used as a consideration in determining alternative national policy strategies to achieve specific goals. It also examines the strategic significance of a geographical area, including its location, size, and natural resources.

²⁴ Sumaya Almajdoub, “Saudi Arabia and the Regionalization of Yemen’s Conflict,” *International Relations*, 2016.

²⁵ Kris Wijoyo Soepandji, “Geopolitik, Negara, dan Bangsa Masa Kini,” *Jurnal Lemhannas RI* 7, no. 1 (July 28, 2020): 42, <https://doi.org/10.55960/jlri.v7i1.50>.

Geopolitical theory is considered very important because it is used to deepen the understanding of how a country's geographical position can influence its foreign policy and international relations. For example, Middle Eastern countries, which possess abundant natural resources and are strategically located near trade routes, often have a greater influence in global politics. However, geographical location can also determine a country's vulnerability to external threats and how the country responds to these threats.²⁶

According *Karl Haushofer* in his book titled **Bausteine zur Geopolitik**, geopolitical theory is the science of political life within societies, in their natural habitat, influenced by the conditions of the earth, while also encompassing resources, economy, trade, and transportation. In this book, *Haushofer* states “*Handels, Verkehrs, Wehr und Wirtschaftsgeographie*” which discusses the important role of land and sea in the geopolitical power of a country. This variable is also adopted from *Sir Halford Mackinder's* concept of the ‘Heartland’, which emphasizes the importance of control over both land and sea (a land and sea power). According to *Haushofer*, the land and sea areas of a country are inseparable and serve as crucial spaces for trade. Therefore, any threat to either of these regions will impact the geopolitics of a given area. From *Rudolf Kjellen*, *Haushofer* adopted the term *Autarky*, or self-sufficient economy, which means a great power must be capable of producing everything it needs. In this book, *Haushofer* states “*Geopolitik gibt Aufschluss darüber, ob das staatliche Gefüge, mit dem er zu tun hat, Dauer verheißt oder mit den ird gegebenen Daseins Bedingungen des betreffenden*

²⁶ Sören Scholvin, *Geopolitics: An Overview of Concepts and Empirical Examples from International Relations*, UPI Working Papers 91 (Helsinki: Ulkopoliittinen Instituutti, 2016).

Wirtschaftsraumes im Widerspruch steht, also dem Verfall oder Umformungen entgegengeht, auf die er sich einrichten kann und muß". The sentence indicates that autarky (economic self-sufficiency) is an important element in ensuring a country can survive amid changes in geopolitical and global economic conditions. *Haushofer* also warns whether a particular country is capable of maintaining its independence or is facing the risk of economic decline influenced by the geographical space of the country. *Haushofer* also adopted the idea from *Ratzel* about *Lebensraum* (Living Space). In his book **Bausteine Zur Geopolitik**, *Haushofer* states "*Geopolitik die Wissenschaft von der politischen Lebensform der Völker in ihrem natürlichen Lebensraum...*" which explains how the political life of a nation is related to their "natural living space," which refers to the area where the society resides. This space also includes natural resources that influence how a country survives.²⁷ This explanation is further clarified by *Dr. Holger H. Herwig*, a history professor and Chair of Research in Canadian Military and Strategic Studies at the University of Calgary, in an article titled "**Geopolitik: Haushofer, Hitler dan Lebensraum**".²⁸

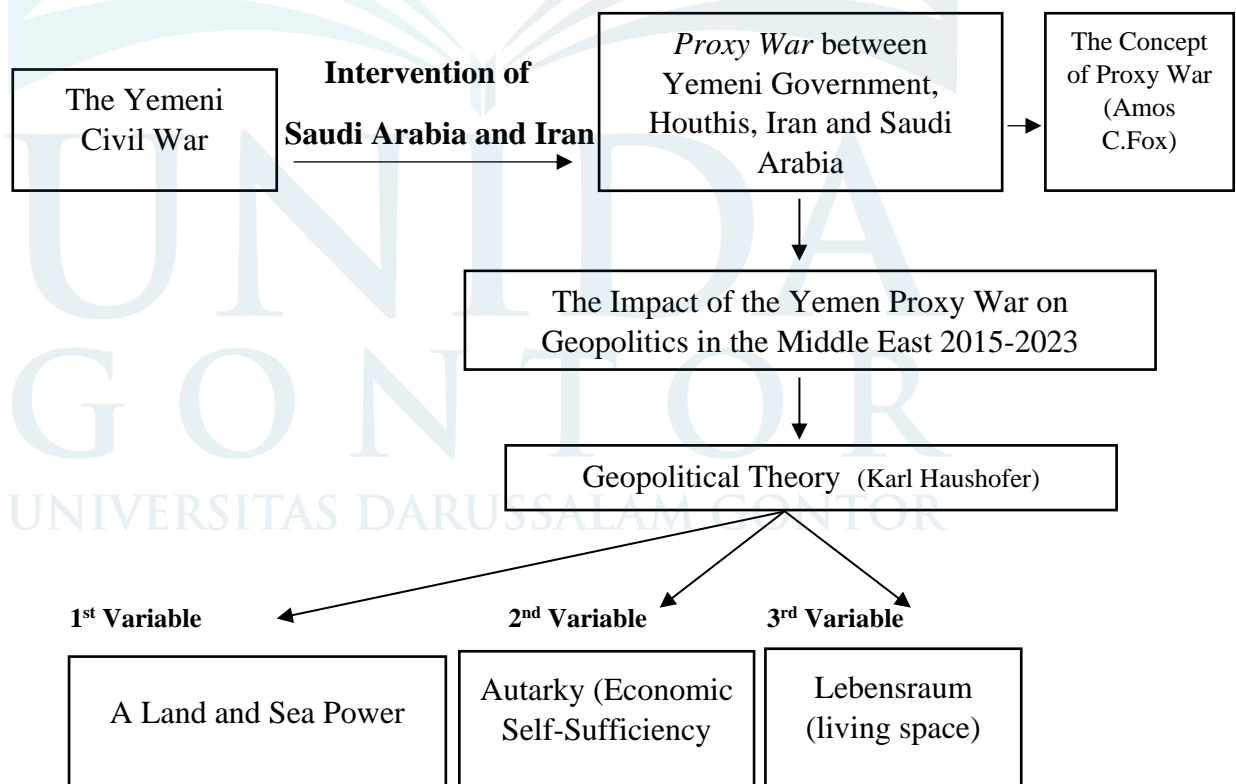
The relevance between the variables in *Karl Haushofer's* geopolitical theory and the impact of the Yemen Proxy War on the geopolitics of the Middle East includes the following; From the perspective of "A Land and Sea Power", the Yemen conflict highlights the importance of controlling strategic areas, such as the Bab-el-Mandeb Strait and the Red Sea, which serve as vital trade

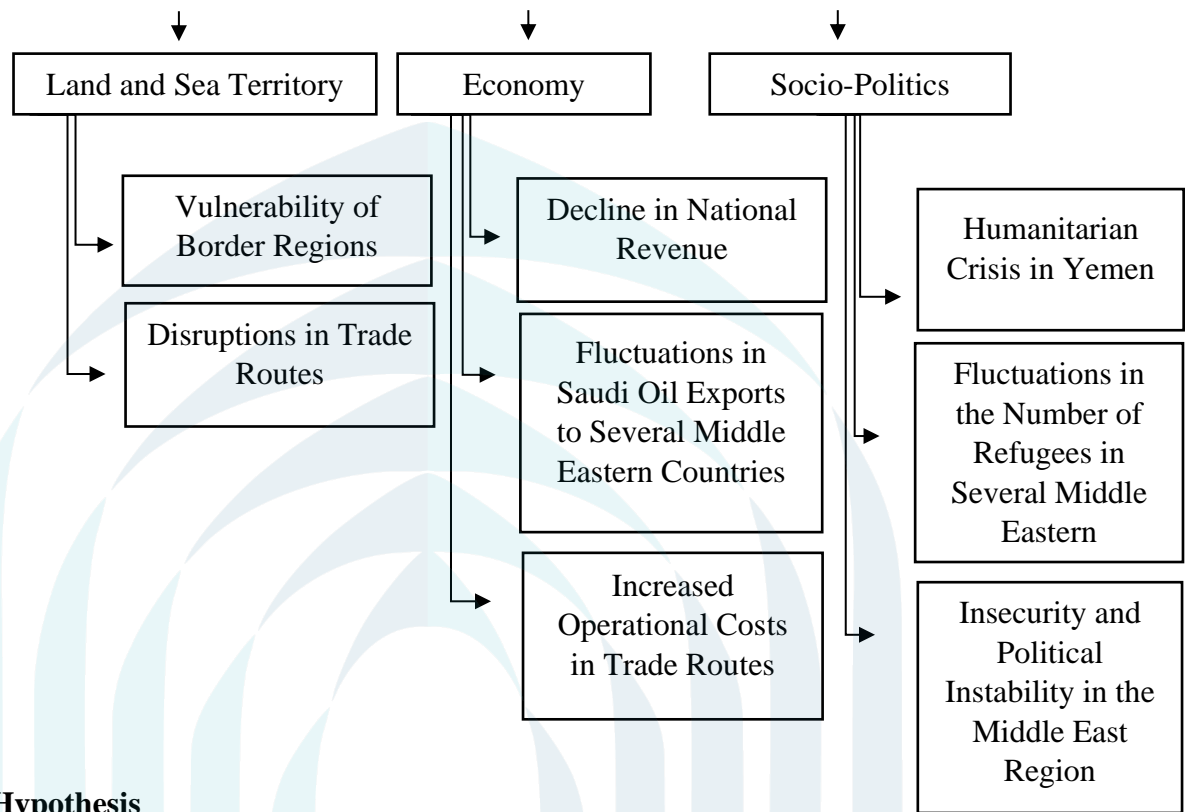
²⁷ Karl Haushofer et al., *Bausteine Zur Geopolitik* (Berlin: Kurt Vowinckel Verlag, 1928).

²⁸ Holger H. Herwig, "Geopolitik: Haushofer, Hitler and Lebensraum," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 22, no. 2–3 (June 1999): 226–29, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01402399908437762>.

routes for global oil. The attacks on the Bab-el-Mandeb Strait and the Red Sea affect maritime power (sea power) by disrupting these critical trade routes and creating vulnerabilities in border regions (land power). From the perspective of “Autarky”, the economic impact of the Yemen proxy war is reflected in Saudi Arabia's declining ability to meet its economic needs independently. Meanwhile, the “Lebensraum” variable is demonstrated by the humanitarian crisis and refugees, which reflect the need for better living space and resources for a country. The increasing number of refugees also disrupts demographic balance and political stability, creating instability that spreads to neighboring countries in the Middle East region. Thus, the Yemen Proxy War becomes a real representation of the geopolitical rivalry between the two countries in their struggle for control over territory, resources, and regional security.

1.6.3 Operationalization of Concepts





1.7 Hypothesis

The proxy war that has been ongoing in Yemen from 2015 to 2023 has had a significant impact on the geopolitics of the Middle East. Using *Karl Haushofer's* geopolitical theory, which involves the concepts of “A Land and Sea Power”, “Autarky”, and “Lebensraum”, we can observe how this conflict has affected the stability of various crucial regions. First, the tensions arising from this war threaten key trade routes, such as the Bab-el-Mandeb Strait and the Red Sea, which are vital for international connectivity. Additionally, the attacks carried out by the Houthi group have worsened the economic self-sufficiency of countries in the Middle East, slowing down economic recovery. This war has also led to a large-scale humanitarian crisis, forcing many Yemenis to seek refuge in neighboring countries, altering demographic compositions, and adding to the socio-political tensions in the region. Therefore, this study aims to prove that the

Yemen Proxy War has had widespread effects on the geopolitical, economic, social, and political stability of the Middle East.

1.8 Research Method

1.8.1 Research Design

The research to be used in the title “The Impact of the Yemen Proxy War on Geopolitics in the Middle East from 2015-2023” is a type of qualitative research with an analytical descriptive approach. According to Sugiyono in "Qualitative, Quantitative, and R&D," the analytical descriptive approach functions to guide researchers in exploring and capturing the social situation to be studied in a comprehensive, broad, and in-depth manner.²⁹ According to Robert Yin, the descriptive approach is also an empirical research method that investigates contemporary phenomena in-depth and within the context of real-life situations, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context are not clear. Case study research can provide a level of detail and understanding of a phenomenon and can be used for descriptive, explanatory, and exploratory purposes.³⁰ With this concept, the researcher seeks to identify how Iran uses the Houthis as proxies to fight against the Yemeni government supported by Saudi Arabia, as well as how this conflict impacts the political and security dynamics in the Middle East region.

Meanwhile, geopolitical theory is used to understand how geographic factors such as strategic location and natural resources can influence a country's

²⁹ Prof.Dr. Sugiyono, *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif, Kualitatif dan R&D*, 1st ed. (Bandung: ALFABETA BANDUNG, 2019).

³⁰ Umar Suryadi Bakry, *Metode Penelitian Hubungan Internasional* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2019).

geopolitical changes. This research analyzes Yemen's strategic position, located near the Bab El-Mandeb Strait and the Red Sea, making this region a critical point in international trade routes. Thus, if security instability occurs, the global economy will also be threatened. The Yemen proxy war also causes social instability, evidenced by the humanitarian crisis and tensions in several Middle Eastern countries. Through this approach, the researcher aims to identify and analyze the impact of the Yemen proxy war on the geopolitics of the Middle East from 2015 to 2023. The researcher hopes to provide a broader understanding of the dynamics of the conflict, the strategies used by the involved actors, and their impact on the geopolitics of the region.

1.8.2 Object and Scope Research

The object of the research will focus on “The Impact of the Yemen Proxy War on Geopolitics in the Middle East from 2015-2023”.

1.8.3 Data Collection Techniques

In this research, the author uses the technique of library research and secondary sources. Data collection is carried out to gather and analyze various documents and written materials relevant to the research topic. The sources used include official documents such as government reports, academic literature in the form of scientific journals, articles, and news reports. By using this technique, the researcher is able to obtain additional comprehensive information regarding the phenomenon being studied.

1.8.4 Data Analysis Techniques

The data analysis techniques used by the author include data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. Data is collected from secondary sources such as official documents, academic literature, and mass media. After the data is collected, it is reduced by categorizing and filtering the data to identify key themes relevant to the research. The reduced data is then presented systematically in the form of a descriptive narrative to facilitate further analysis. Finally, conclusions are drawn by interpreting the presented data to answer the research questions and objectives of the study.

1.9 Writing Systematics

The systematics of this research is divided into four chapters of discussion. This is done to ensure that the research problems are addressed thoroughly and in detail.

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

It includes the introduction, which discusses the background, problem formulation, research objectives, research benefits, previous studies as a foundation, and additional references to strengthen the author's research, conceptual framework, hypothesis, research methods, and writing systematics.

CHAPTER II: ESCALATION OF NON-INTERNATIONAL ARMED CONFLICT INTO PROXY WAR YEMEN

It includes the dynamics of the conflict between the Yemeni Government, the Houthis, Iran, and Saudi Arabia, leading to significant escalation and transforming into a proxy war. It will also explain the Sunni-Shia political tensions

in the history of Islamic civilization, reflected in the rivalry between Iran and Saudi Arabia.

CHAPTER III: THE IMPACT OF THE YEMEN PROXY WAR ON GEOPOLITICS IN THE MIDDLE EAST FROM 2015-2023

It covers the impacts arising in various aspects, such as land and sea territories, the economy, and socio-political changes, following the proxy war between the Yemeni Government, the Houthis, Iran, and Saudi Arabia on the geopolitics of the Middle East.

CHAPTER IV: CONCLUSION

It is the concluding chapter, which contains the answers to the research problem formulation, the conclusions, and recommendations for future researchers.

