

The Impossible Revolution

Pursuing Liberation, Peace, and Spatial Equity in
Syria



Content

1. Problem
2. Outcomes
3. Conclusions

Content

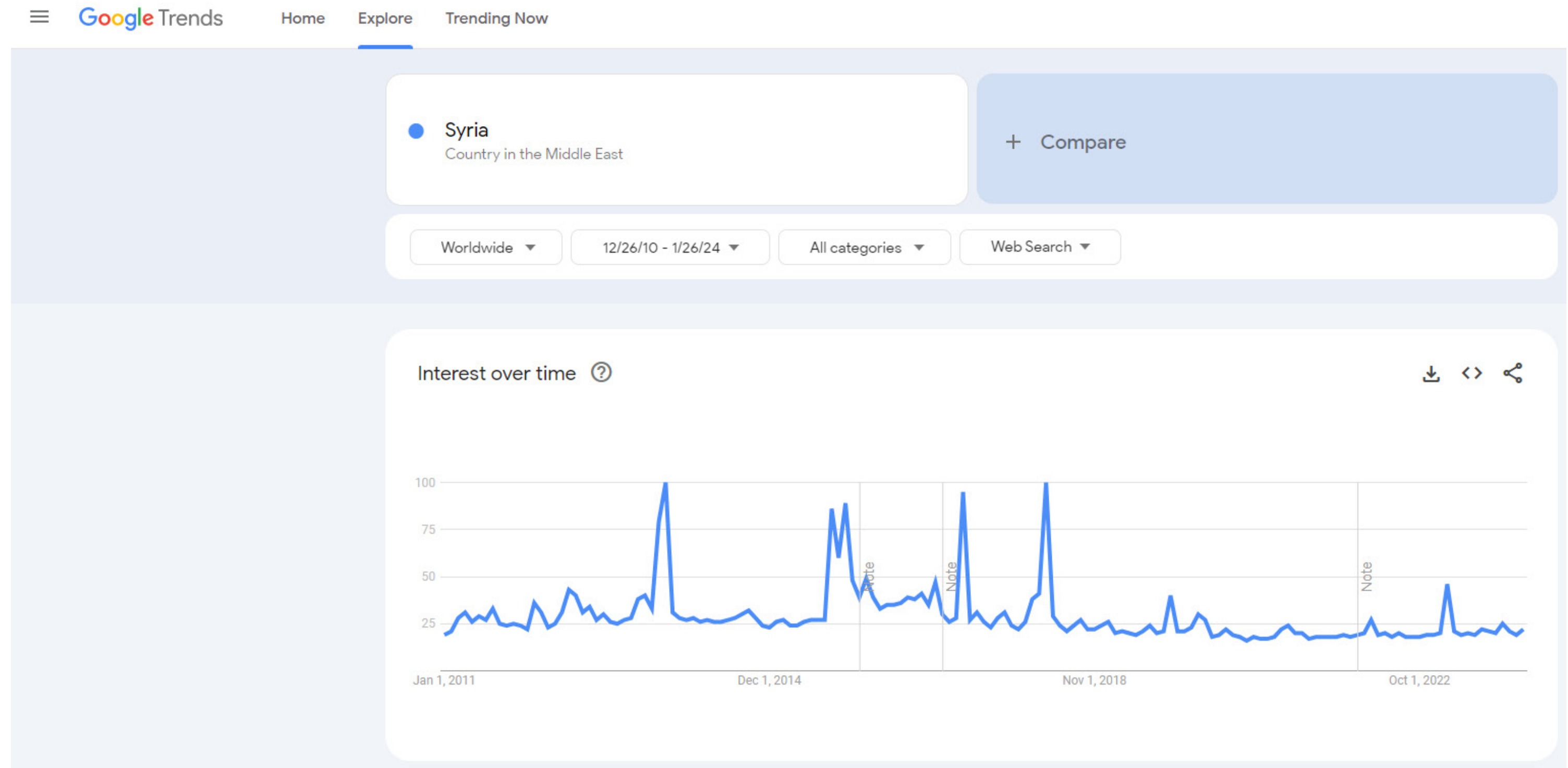
1. Problem

The Syrian Conflict



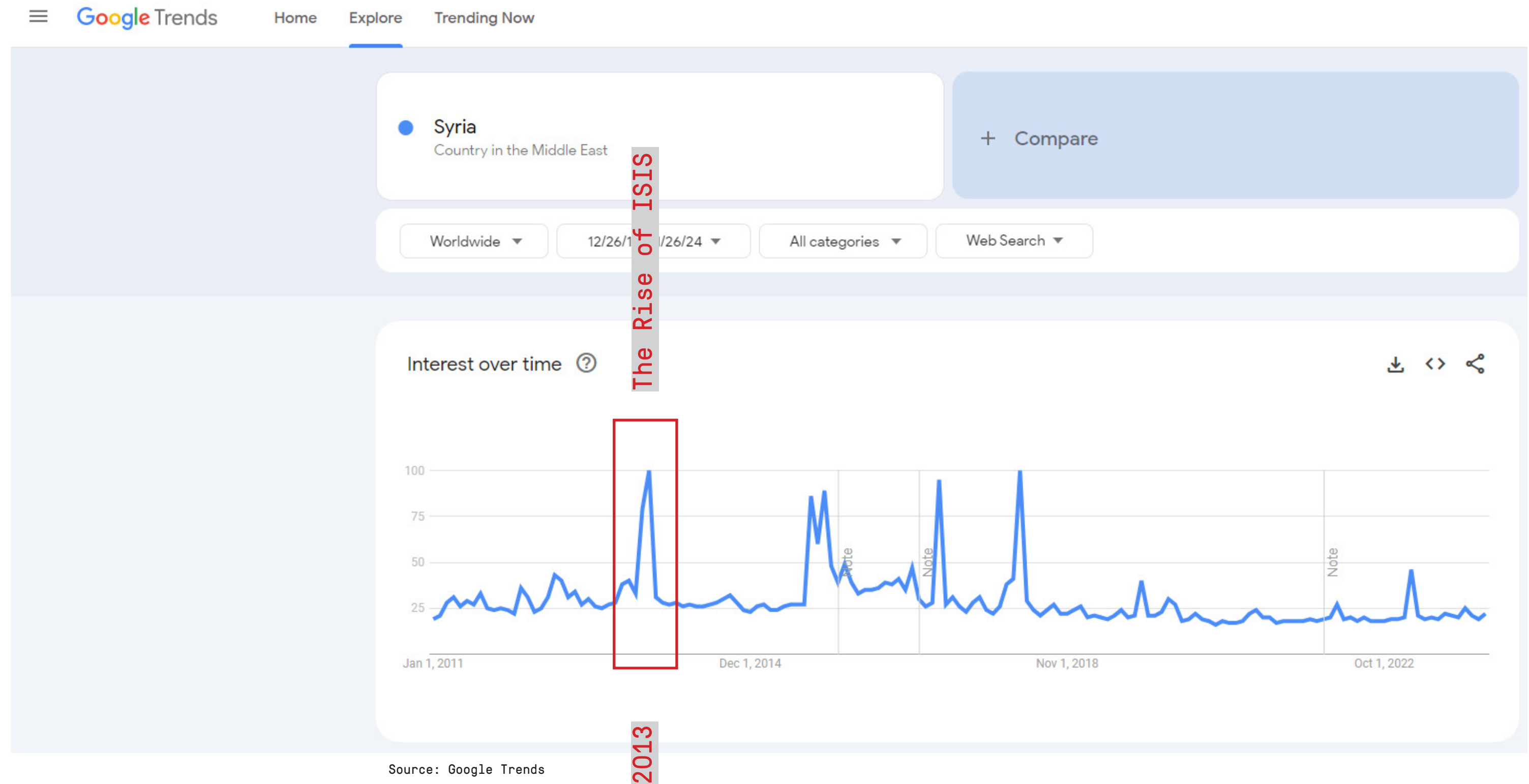
Source: CBC News

Multi-Media Coverage

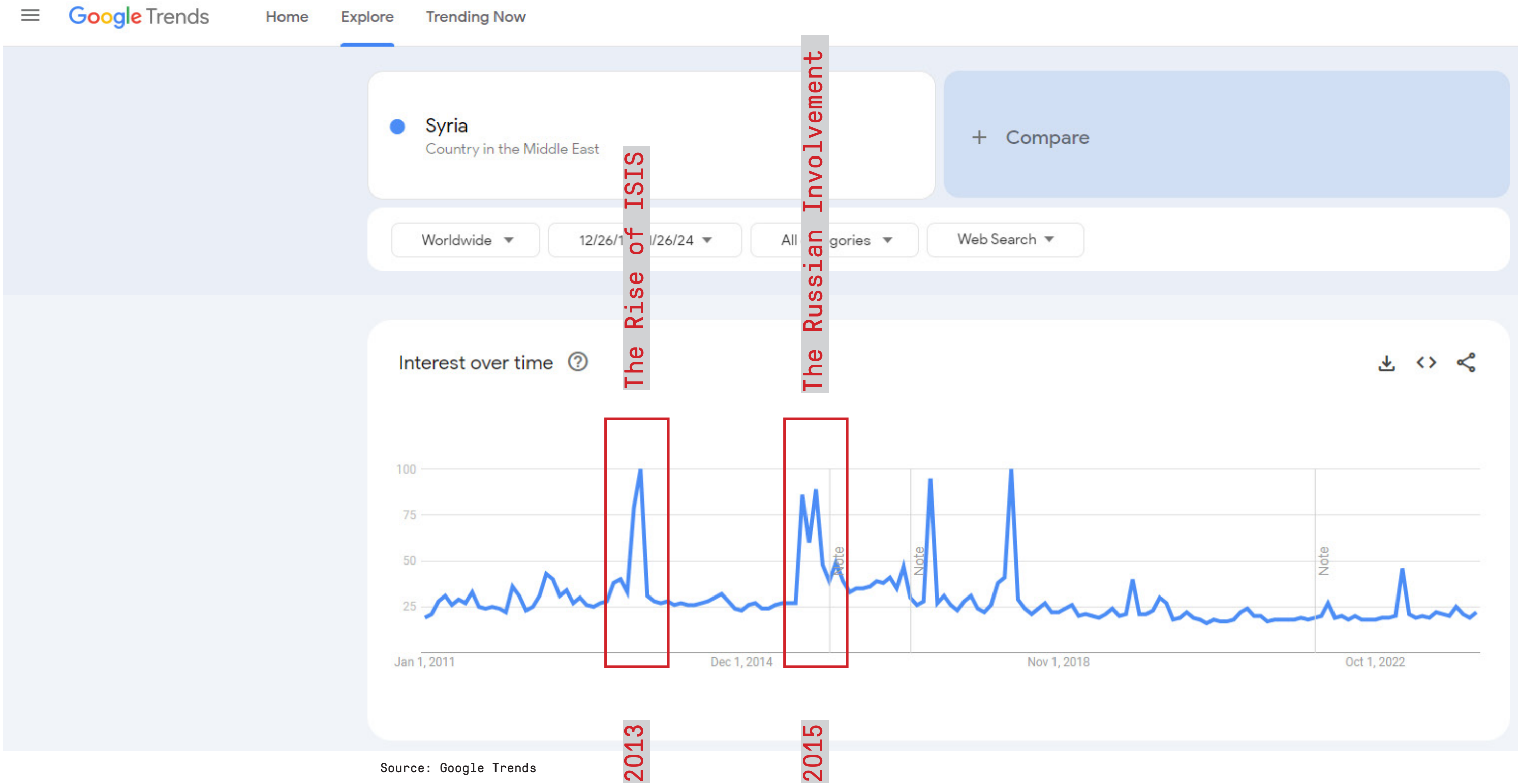


Source: Google Trends

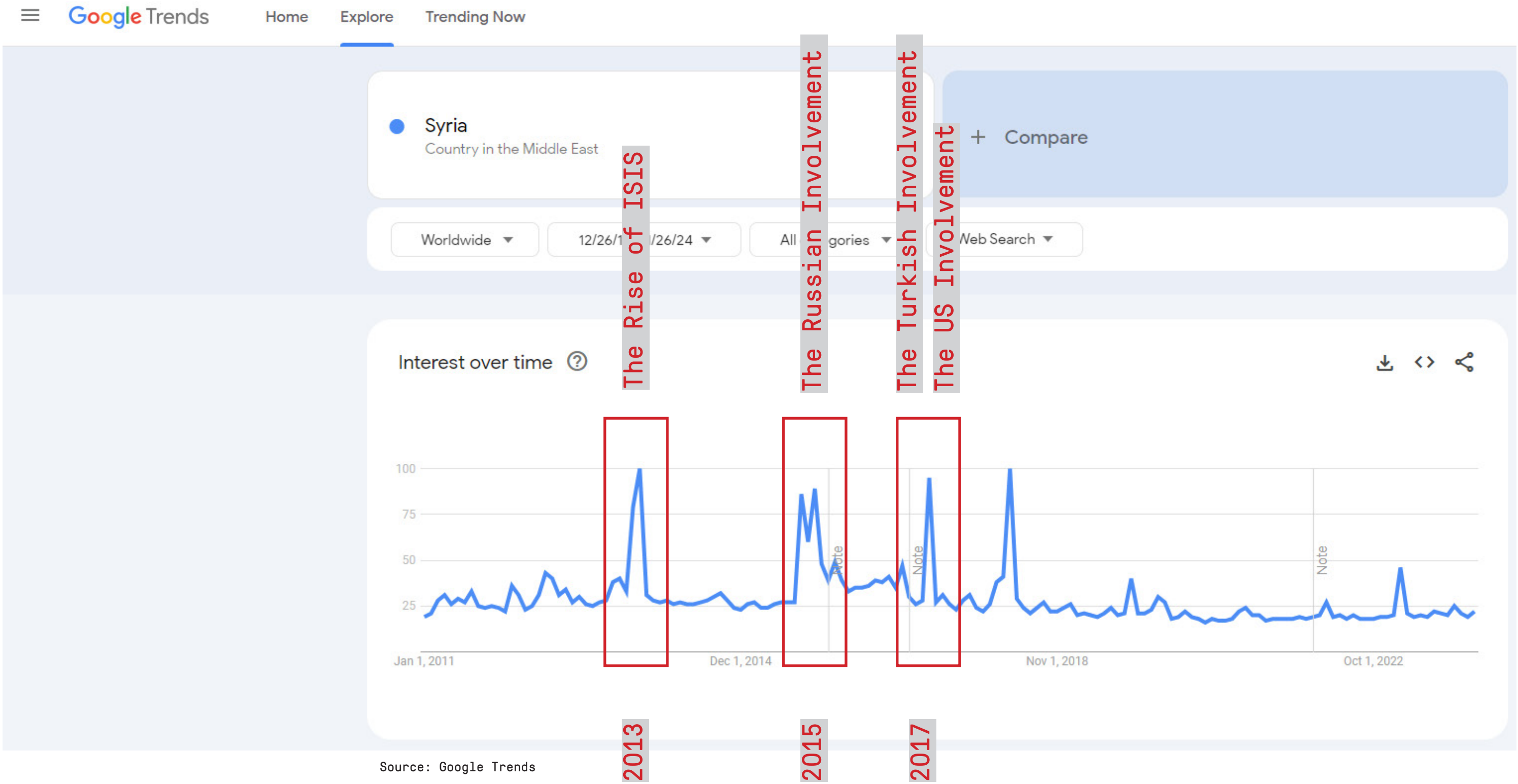
Multi-Media Coverage



Multi-Media Coverage



Multi-Media Coverage



Multi-Media Coverage

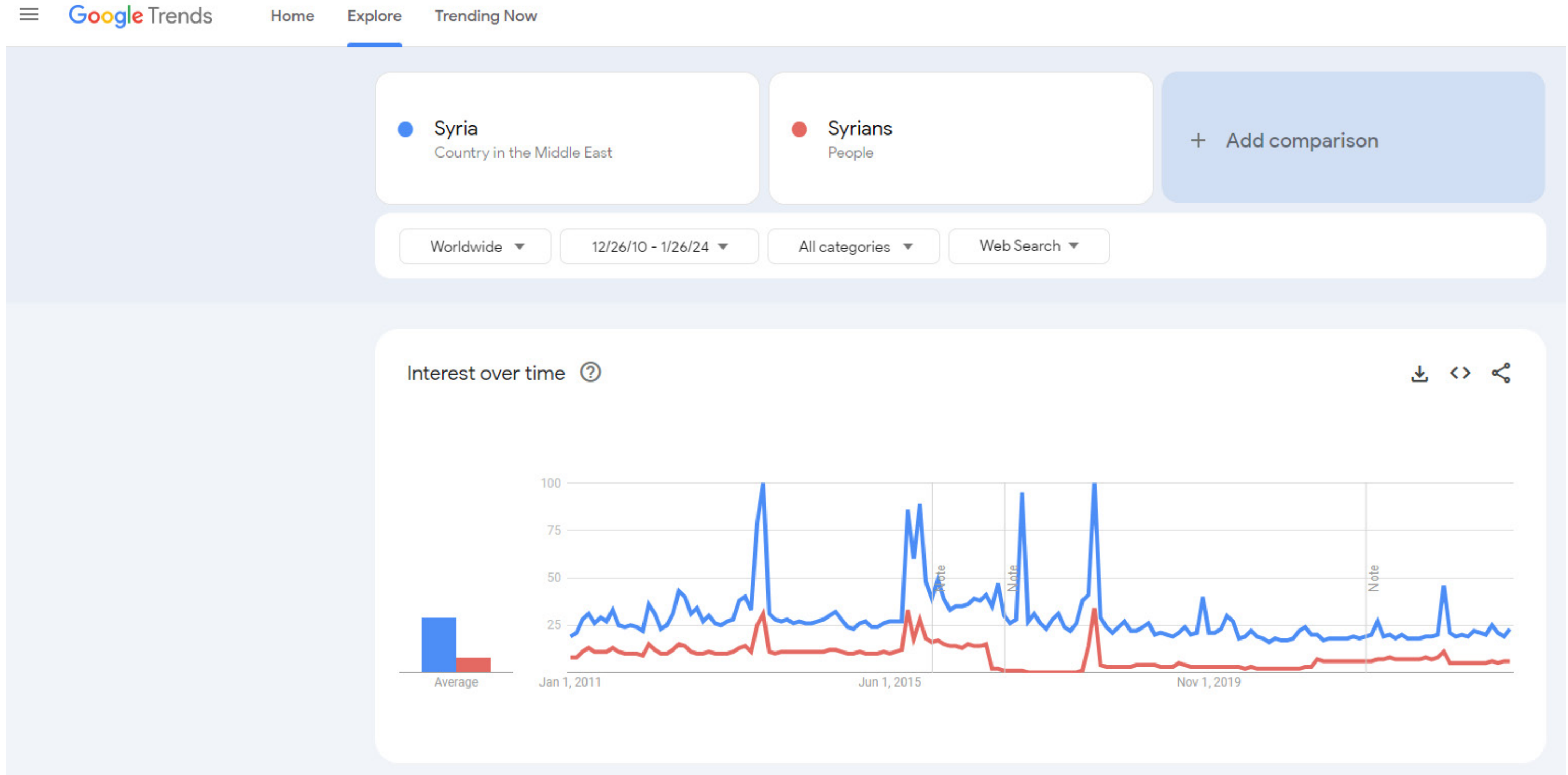


Multi-Media Coverage



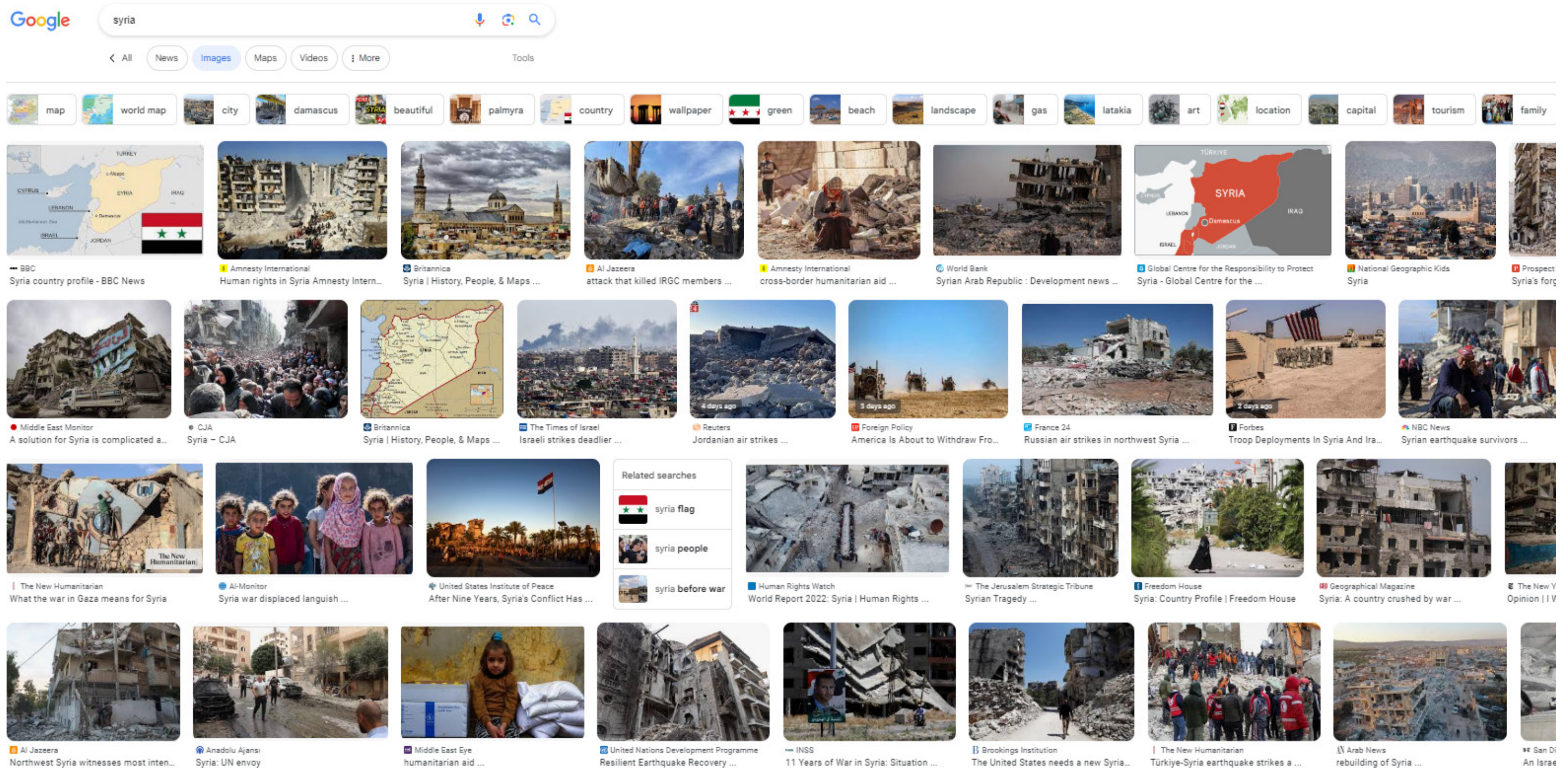
What about the Syrian People?

Multi-Media Coverage



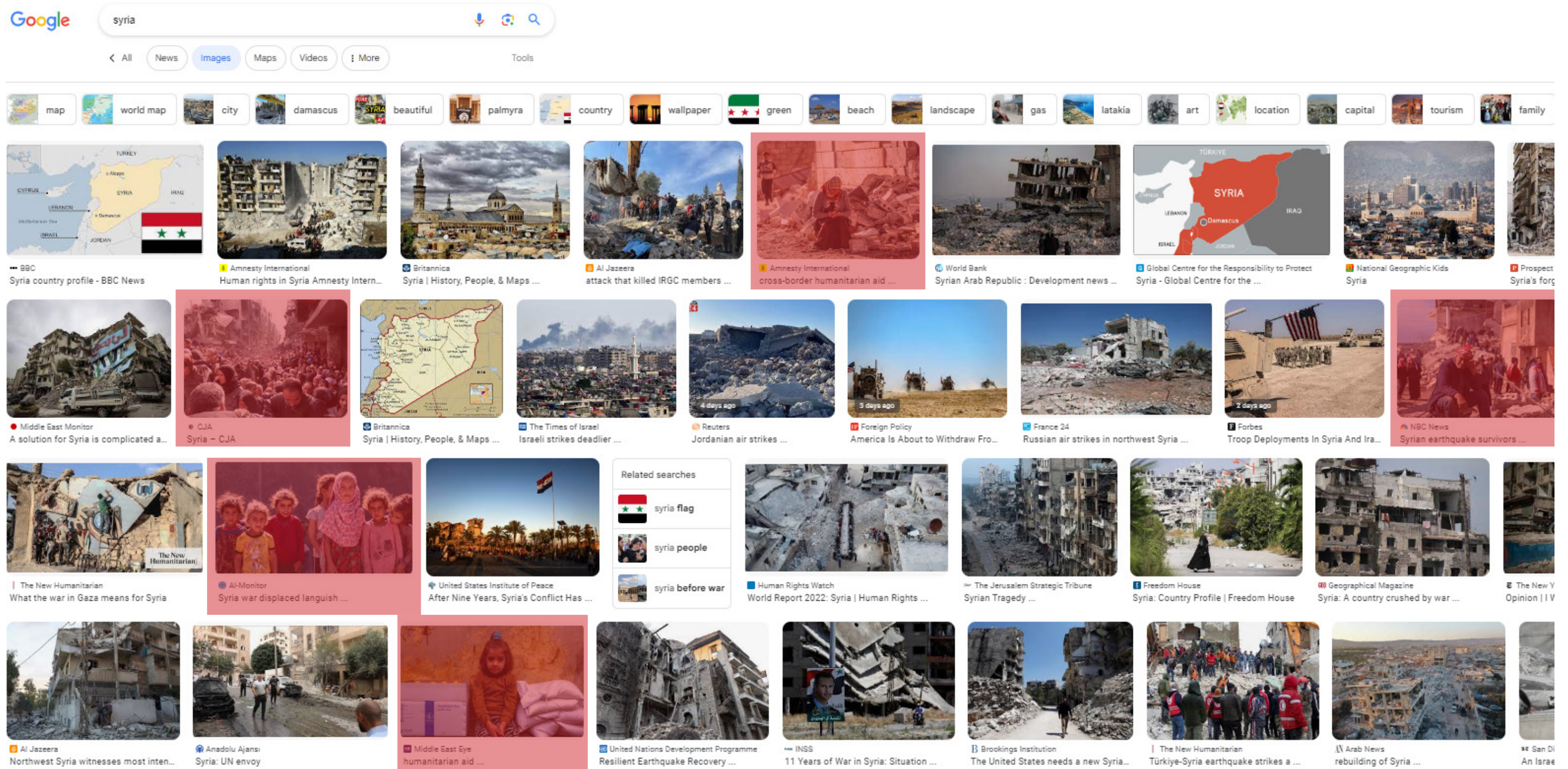
Source: Google Trends

Multi-Media Coverage



Source: Google Images

Multi-Media Coverage



Multi-Media Coverage



Multi-Media Coverage



Source: AFP



Selective Compassion and Media Bias

What about Academia?

What about Academia?

Research Gap in Conflict Zones

Western Narrative and Misrepresentation



Commodification of research

The Stolen Narrative

‘The narrative about Syria has been damaged and redirected. We have to preserve the narrative, to tell the story. We have to fight to remember.’

(Ammar Azzouz, 2023)

The Research Aim

This research aims to reclaim the Syrian narrative by challenging the reductionist narratives and uncover the nuanced realities of the Syrian conflict by engaging directly with impacted communities and adopting a comprehensive approach that embraces the complexities of urban landscapes in conflict contexts.

Comprehensive Analysis

Multifaceted Problem | Synthesis Map

Jordan
68.554
22

Turkey
173.883

Iraq
54.994

Lebanon
84.985

Al Qunaitra

Daraa

Damascus

Homs

Hama

Daraa

Deir azzour

Ar Raqqa

Al Hasakah

Latakia

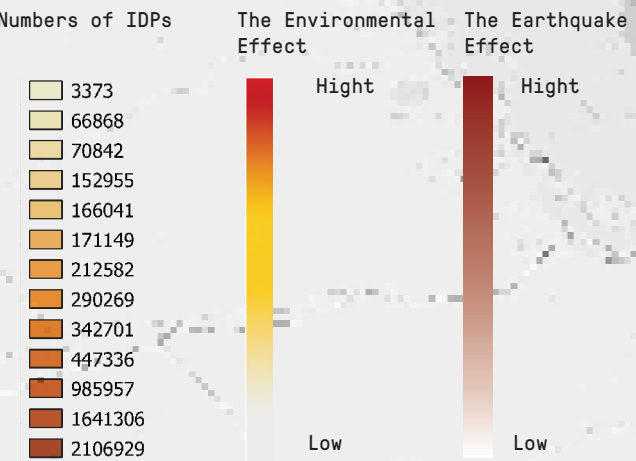
Tartus

Idlib

Aleppo

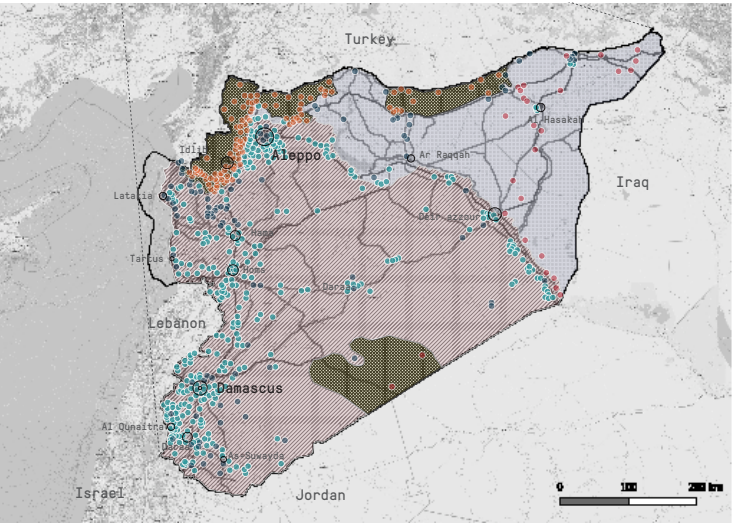
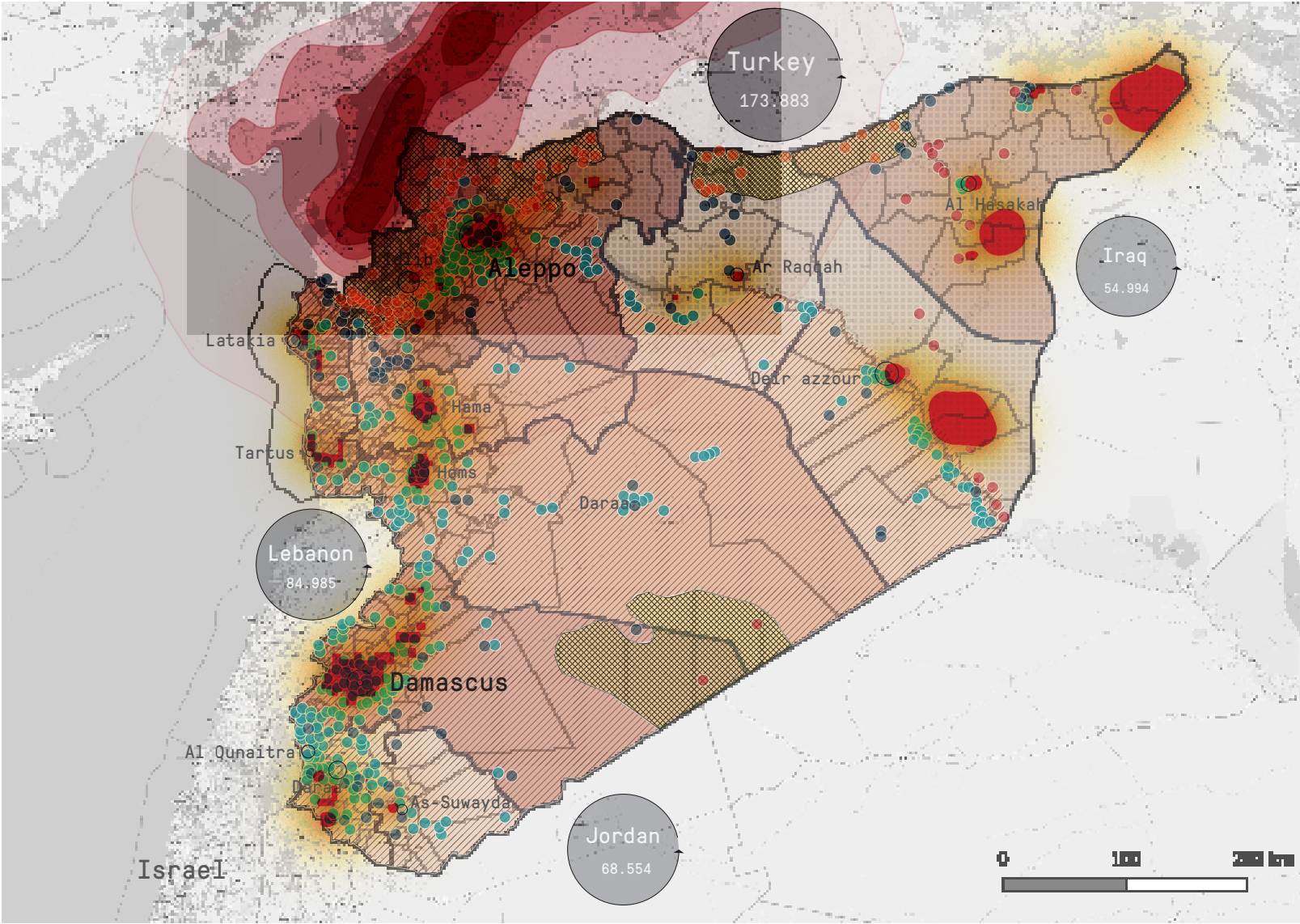
Figure 11: A synthesis map of the multifaceted problem.
Source: The author. Adopted from different sources.

- Legend:
- Syrian Regime Controlled Area
 - Kurds Controlled Area
 - Syrian Opposition Controlled Area
 - Russian Military Base
 - Iranian Military Base
 - Turkish Military Base
 - American Military Base

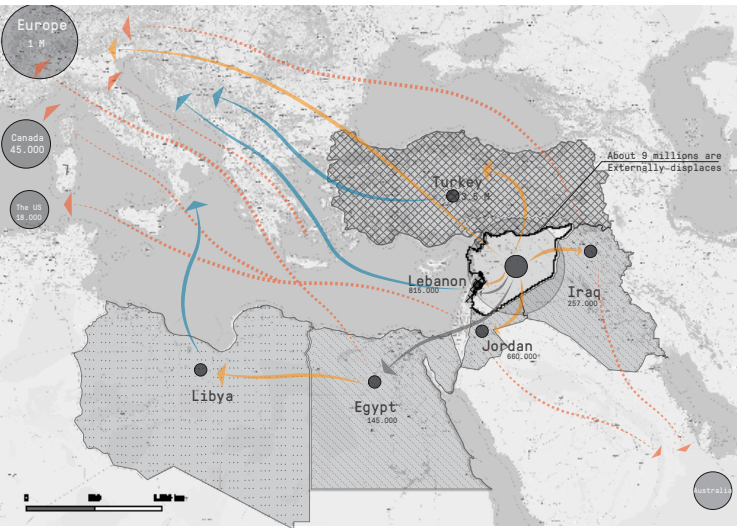
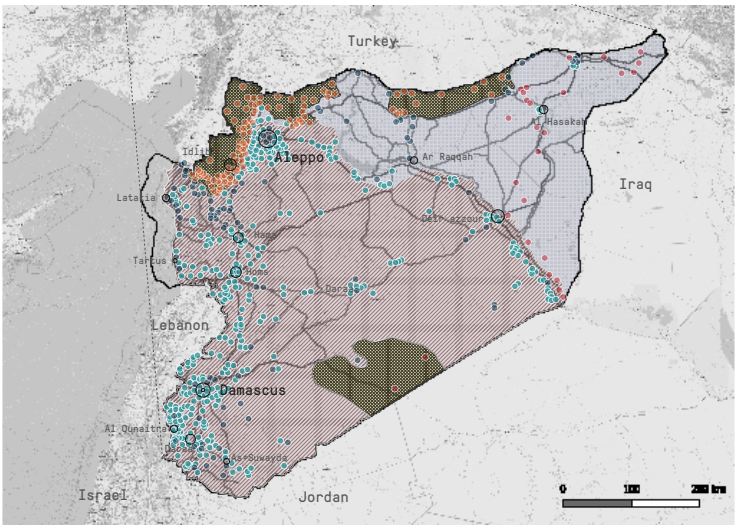
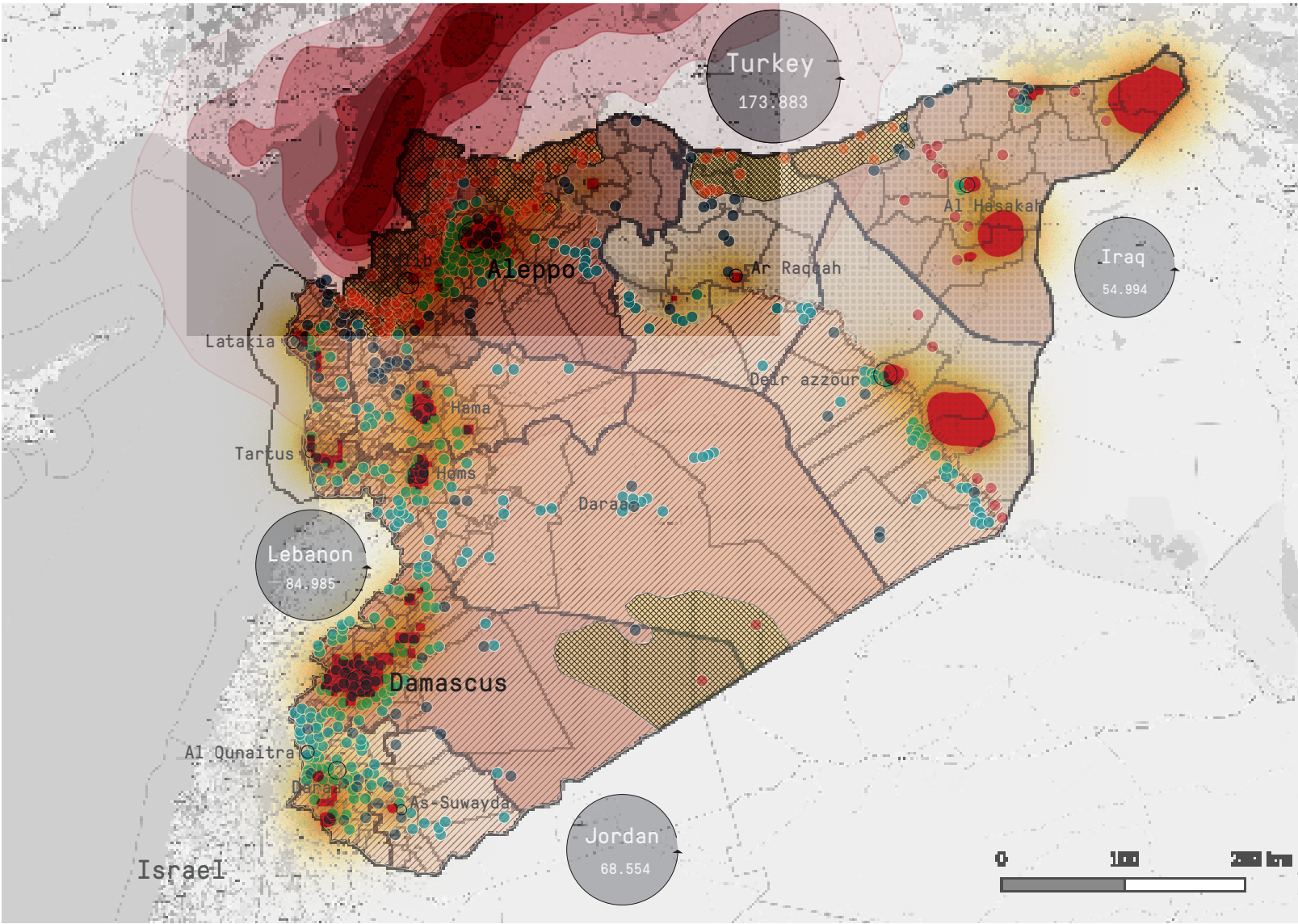


Numbers of Retunees

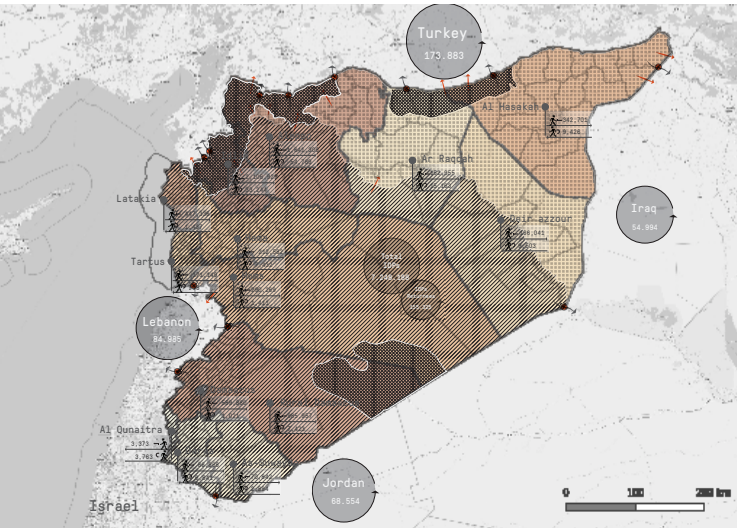
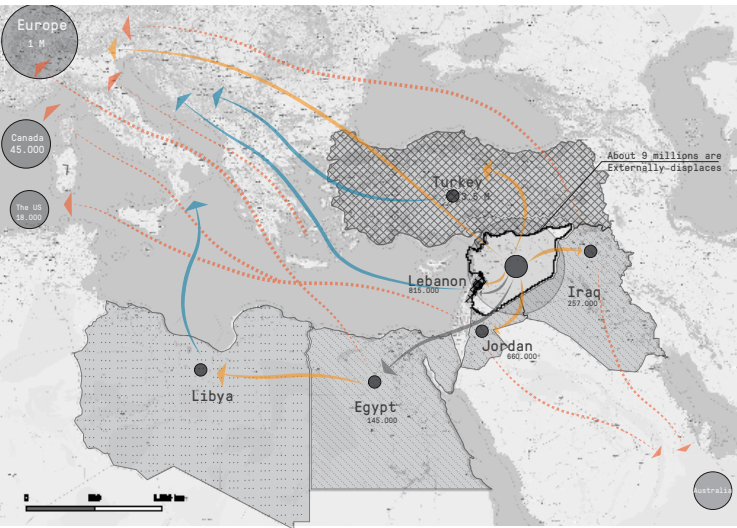
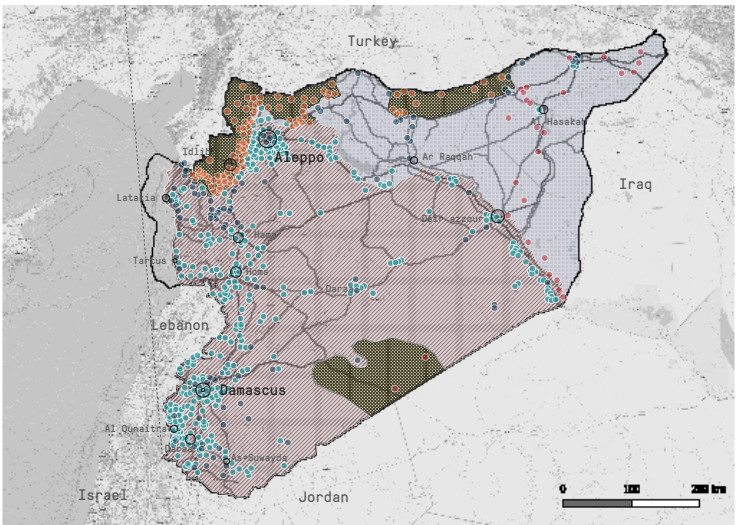
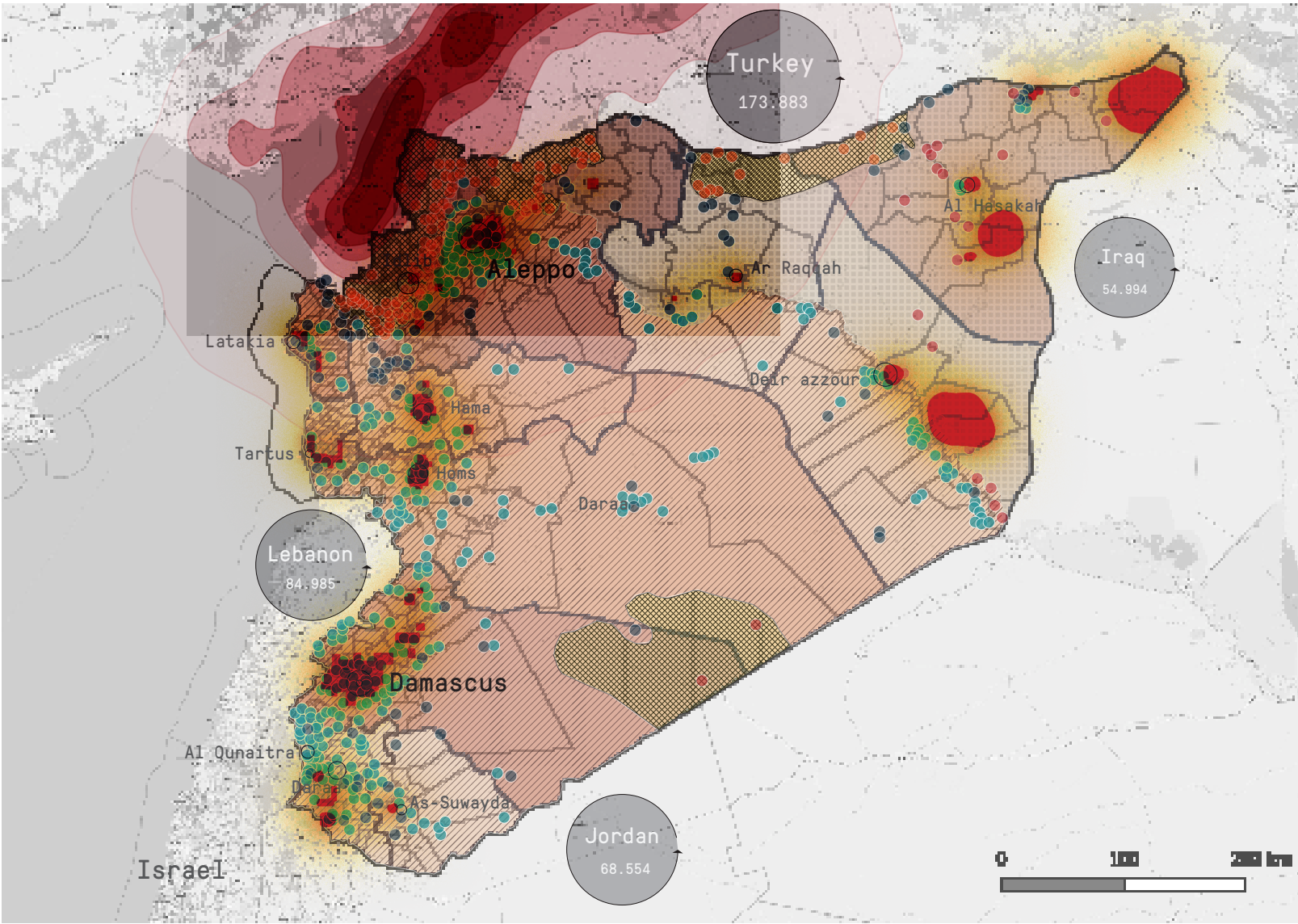
Multifaceted Problem | Proxy War



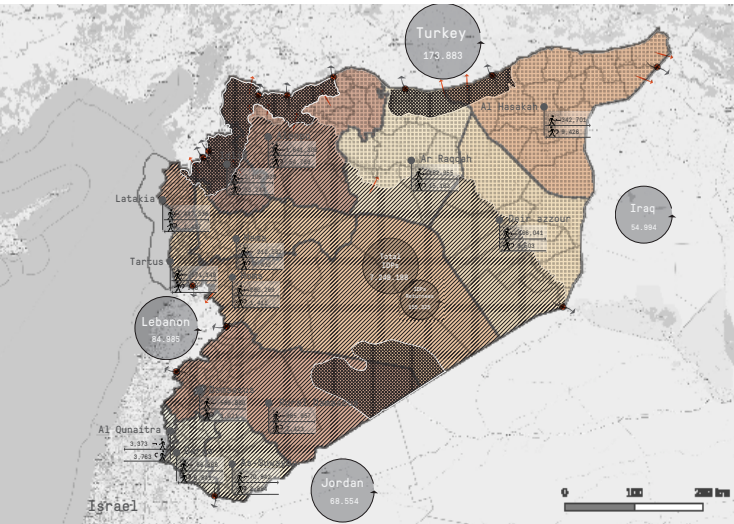
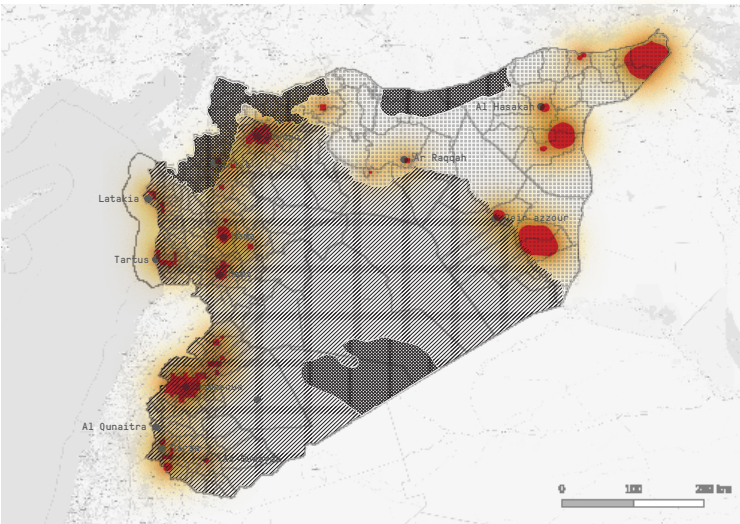
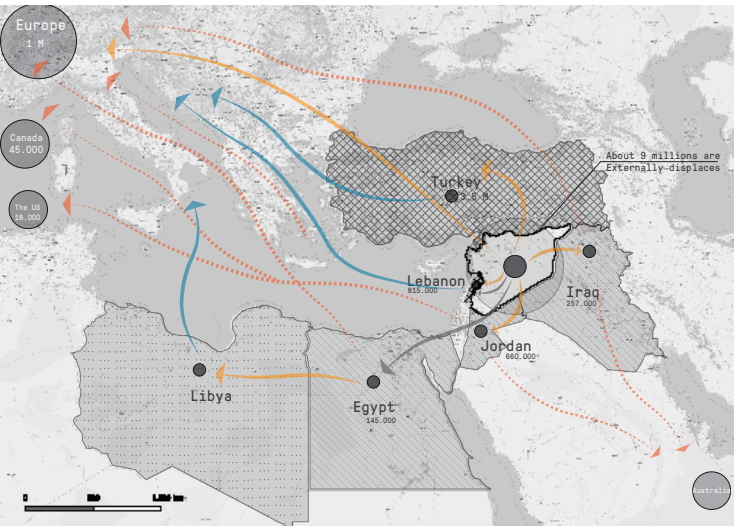
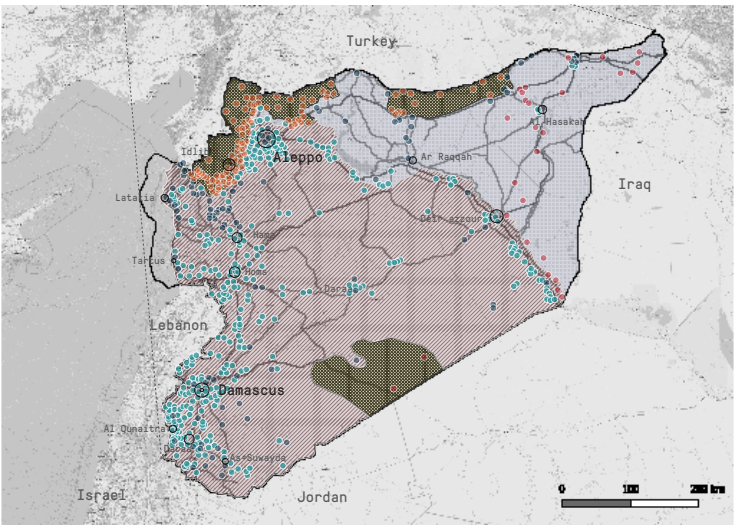
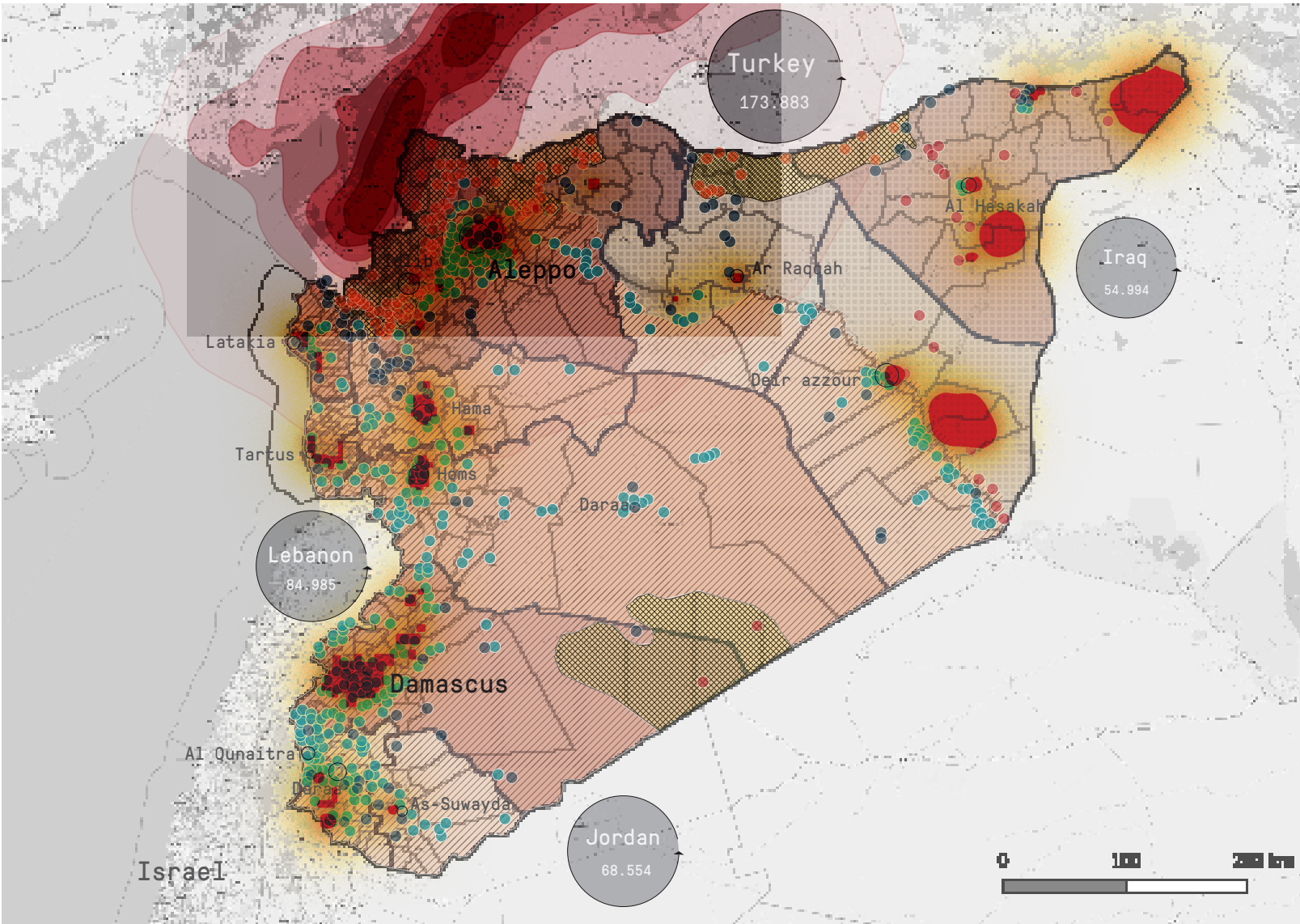
Multifaceted Problem | External Displacement



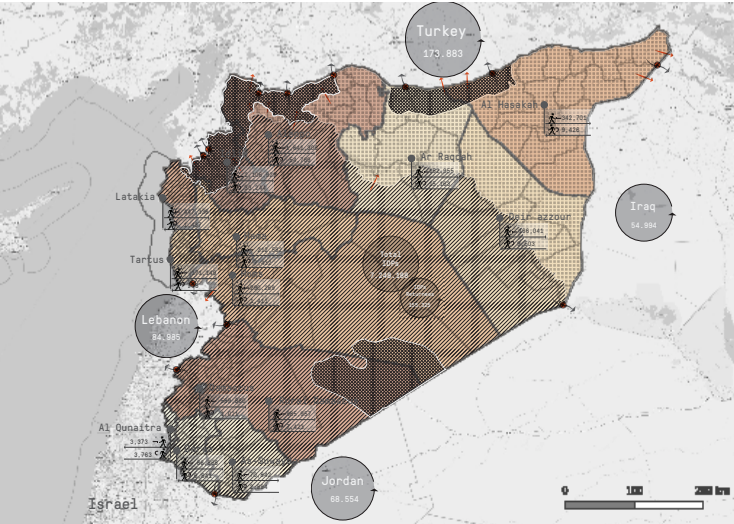
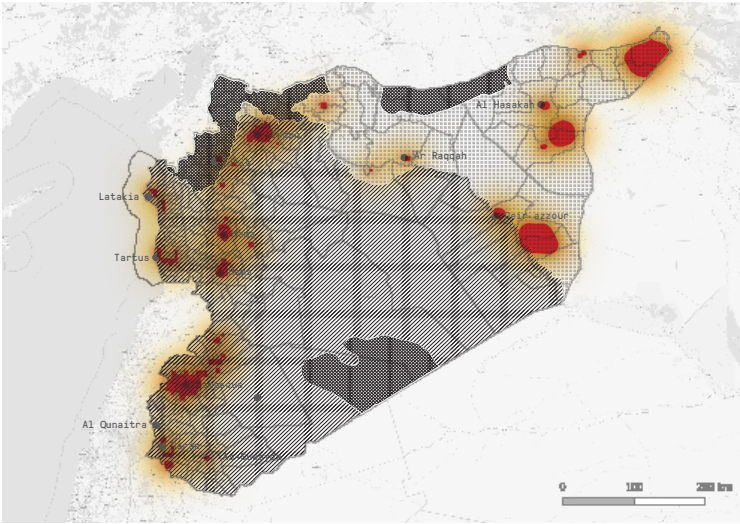
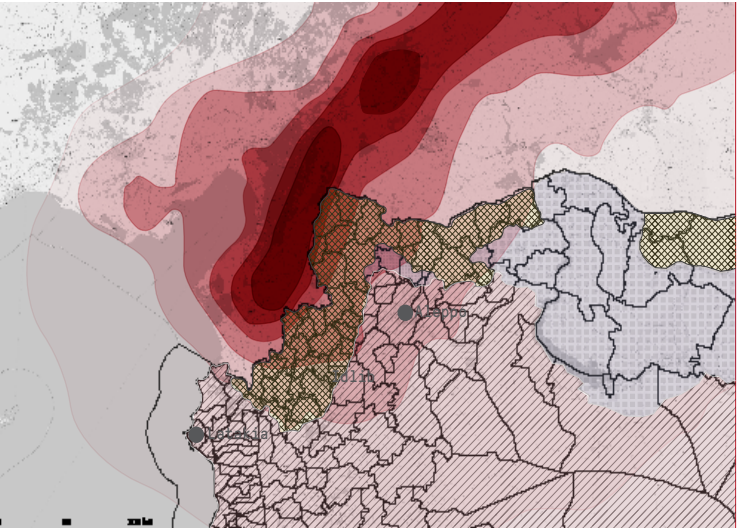
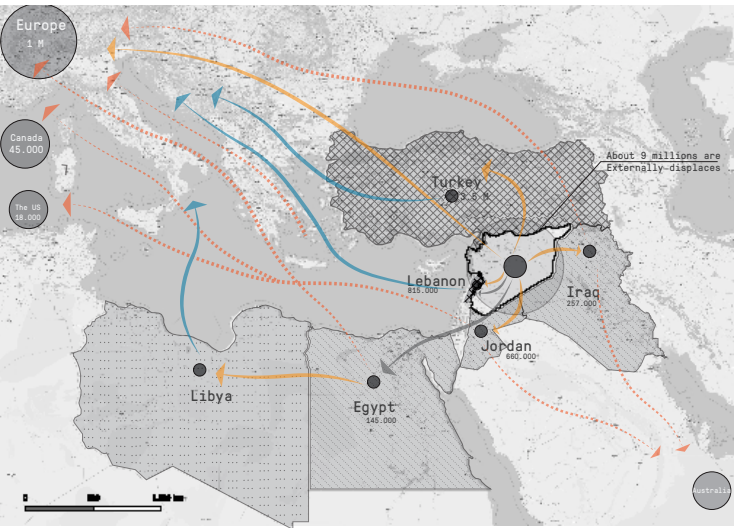
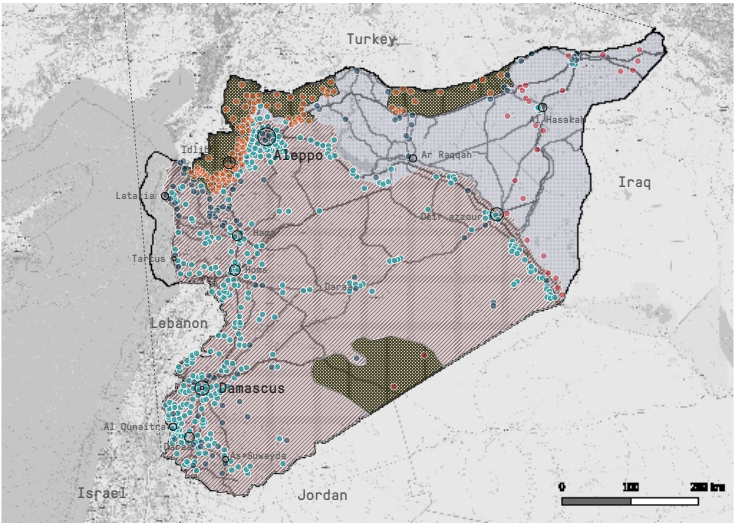
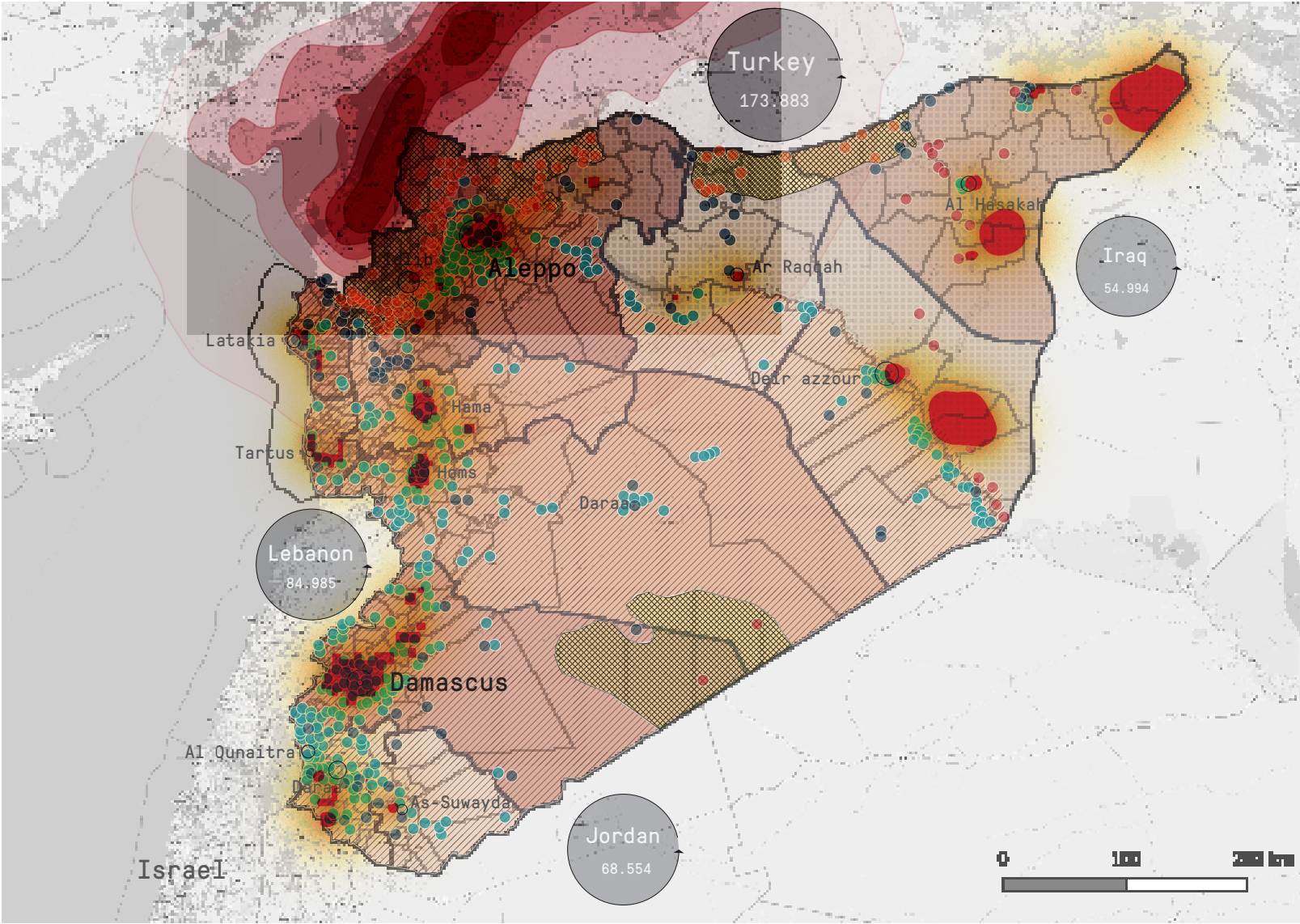
Multifaceted Problem | Internal Displacement



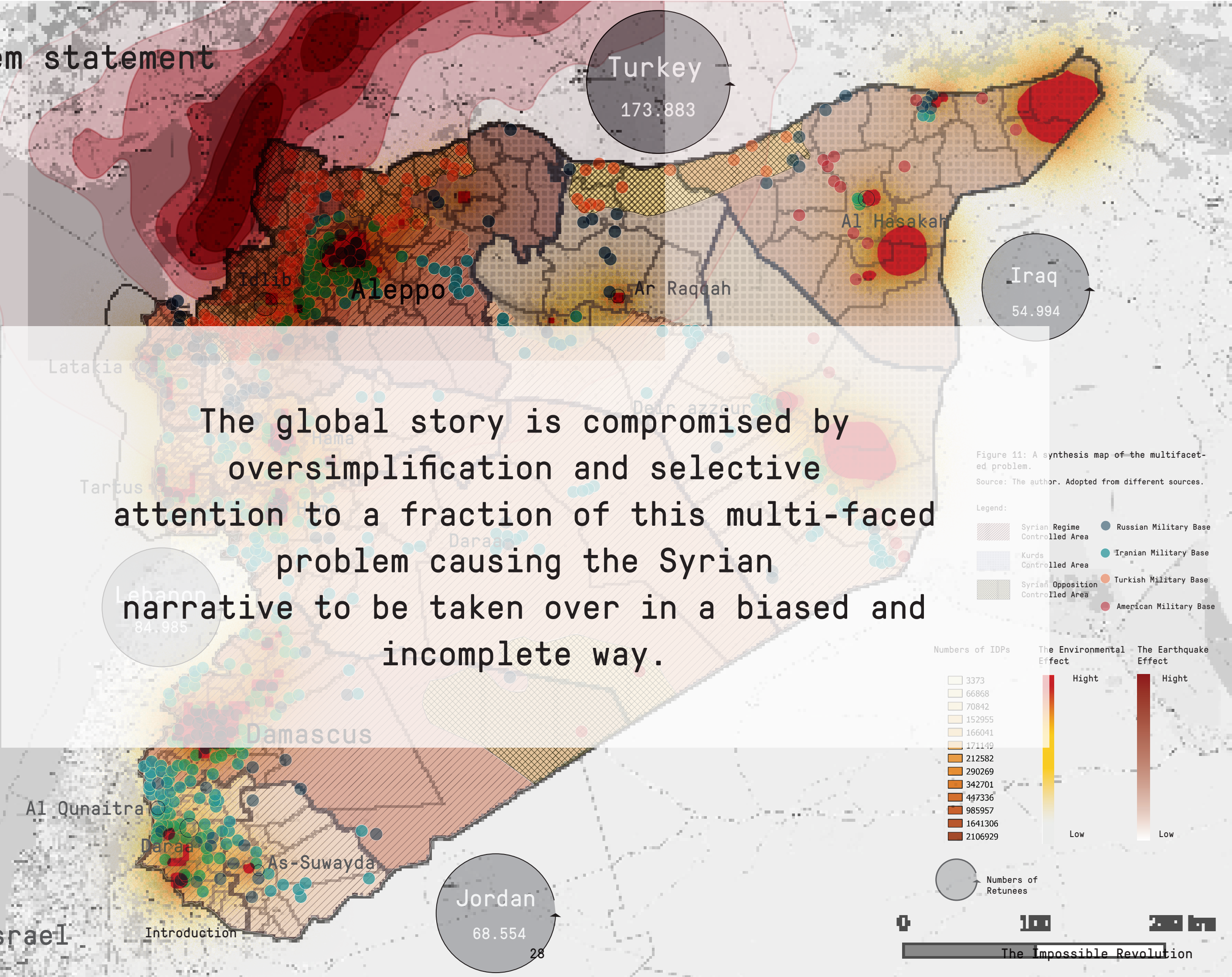
Multifaceted Problem | Environmental Crisis



Multifaceted Problem | The Earthquake



Problem statement

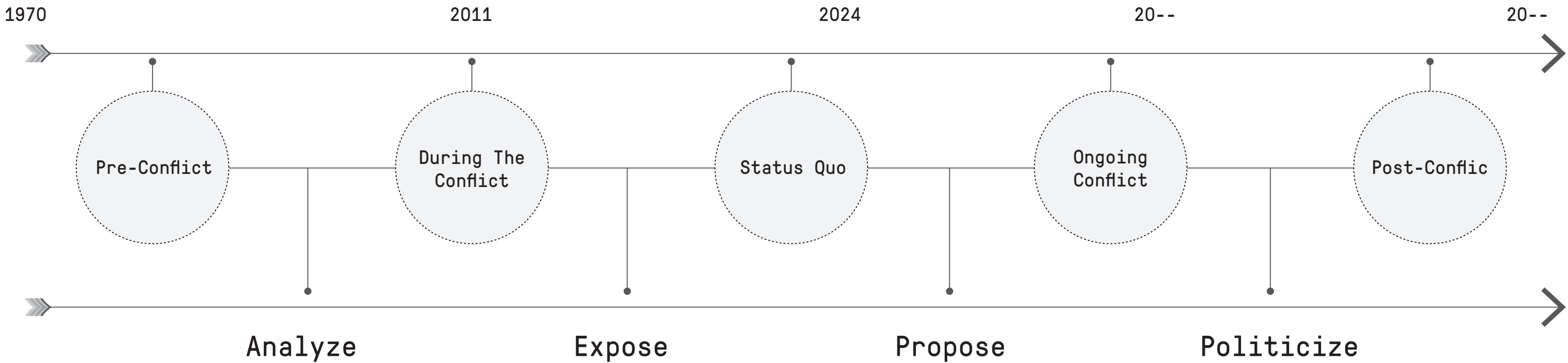


The Research Question

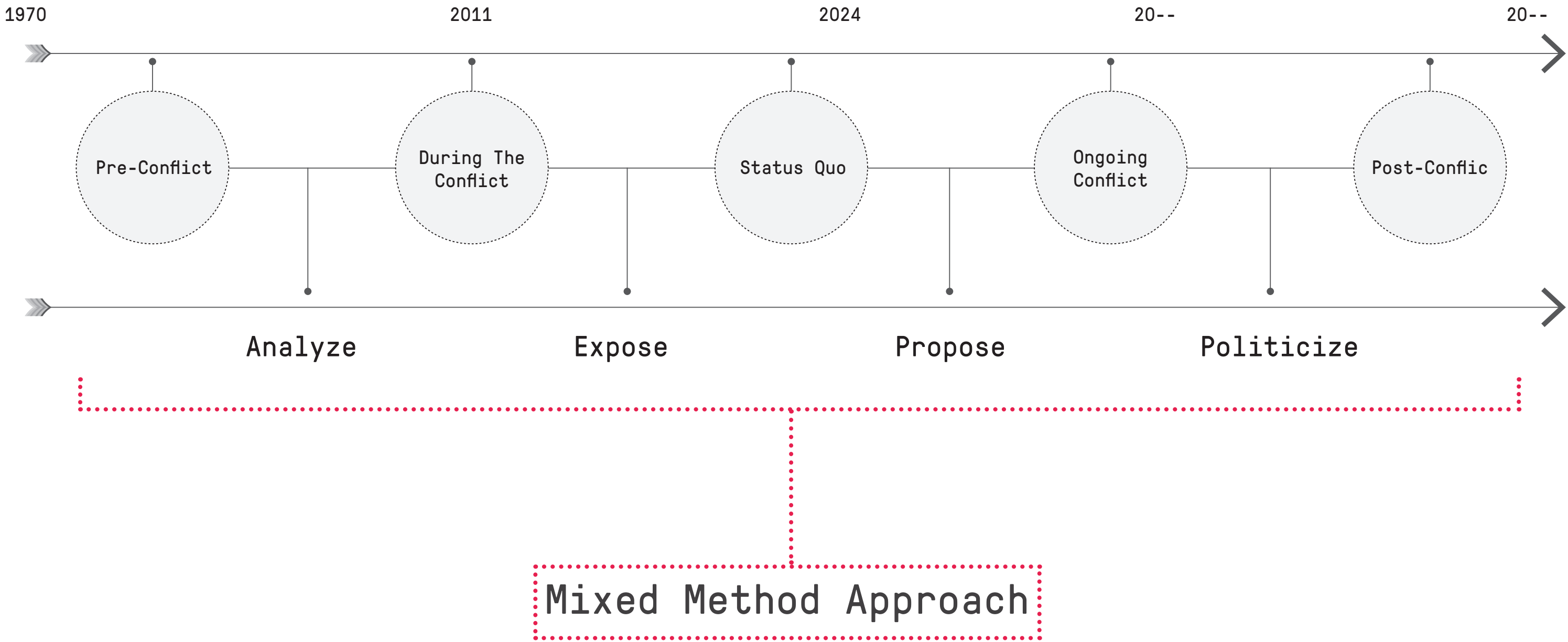
How can spatial planning be a narrating tool to provoke change, provide alternative spatial realities, and improve the social cohesion of war-torn societies in Syria?

2. Outcomes

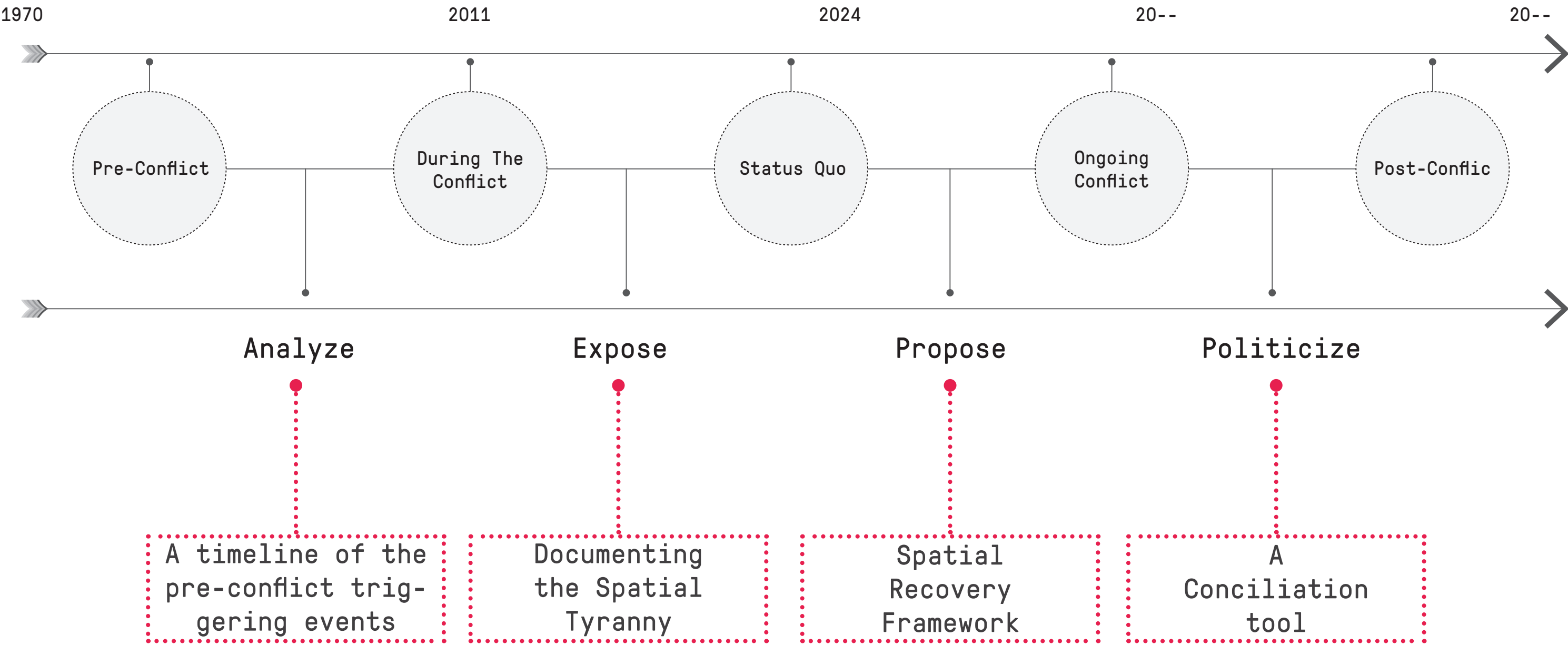
Methodology

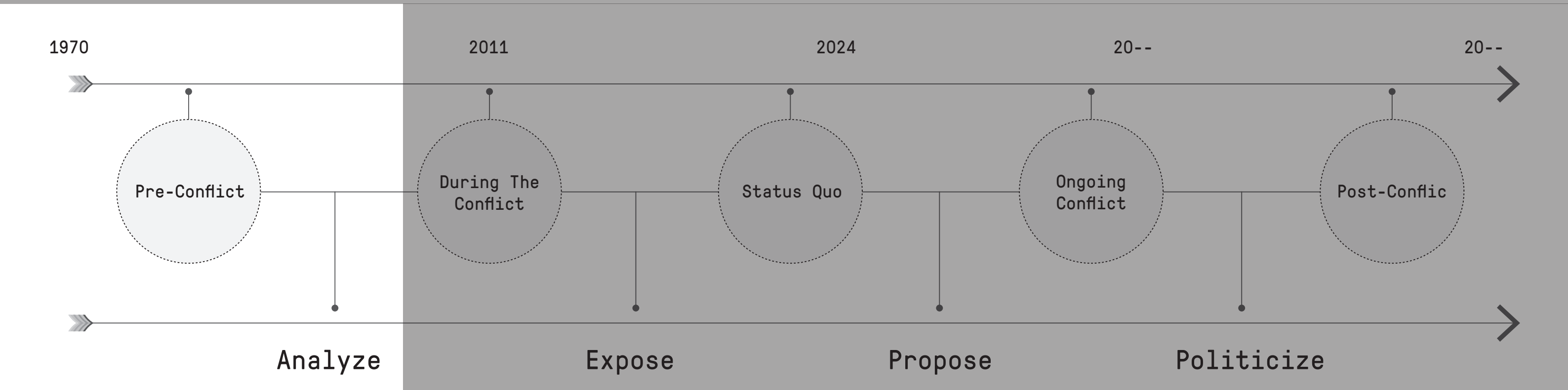


Methodology

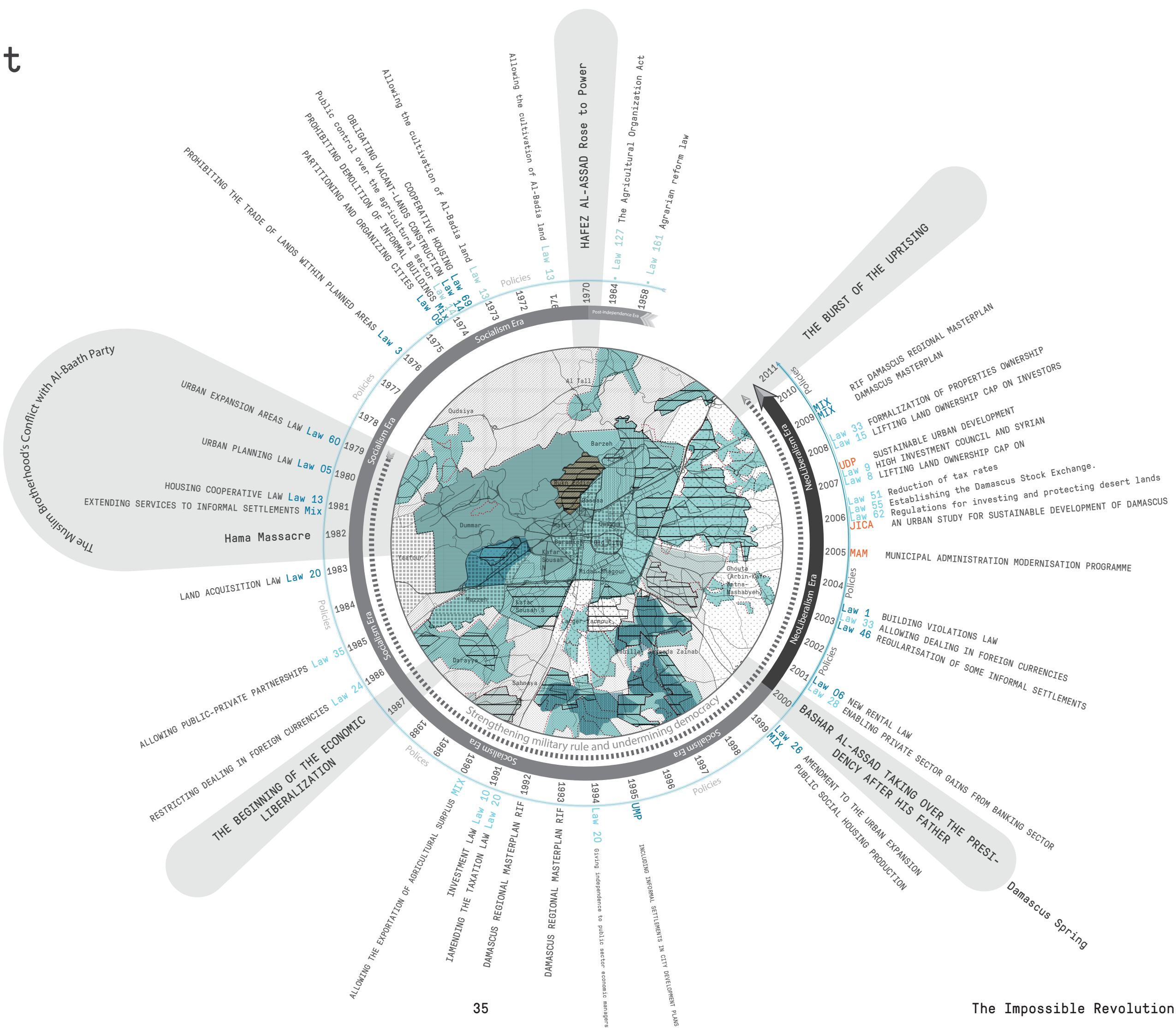


Outcomes





Pre-Conflict





Pre-Conflict

- The political milestones that have directly affected the three dimensions.

- A timeline of the different policies that have contributed to the unjust living conditions.



Pre-Conflict

- The political milestones that have directly affected the three dimensions.

- A timeline of the different policies that have contributed to the unjust living conditions.

- A timeline indicates the beginning of military rule, in which democracy was undermined.



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- A timeline indicates the beginning of military rule, in which democracy was undermined.

- A timeline indicates the different types of political rules.



Pre-Conflict

- The political milestones that have directly affected the three dimensions.

- A timeline of the different policies that have contributed to the unjust living conditions.

- A timeline indicates the beginning of military rule, in which democracy was undermined.

- A timeline indicates the different types of political rules.

- A synthesis map indicating social and religious segregation in relation to the informal settlements.



Pre-Conflict | The Arab Spring

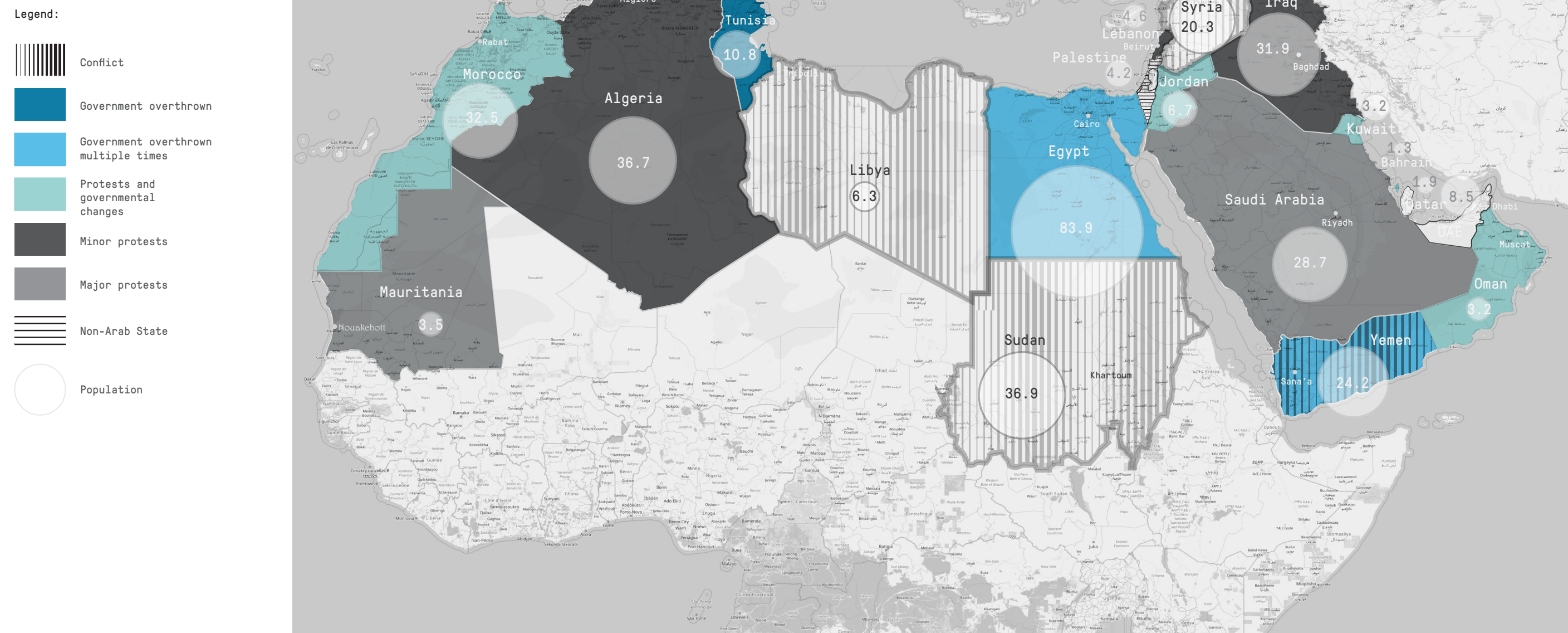


Figure 49: A map of the Arab States after the Arab Spring
Source: The Author

Pre-Conflict | The Syrian Spring



Source: AFP. URL: <https://t.ly/9WCD2>



Source: Marxism . URL: <https://t.ly/RHZt1>



Source: Al Jazeera. URL: <https://t.ly/ys1LJ>

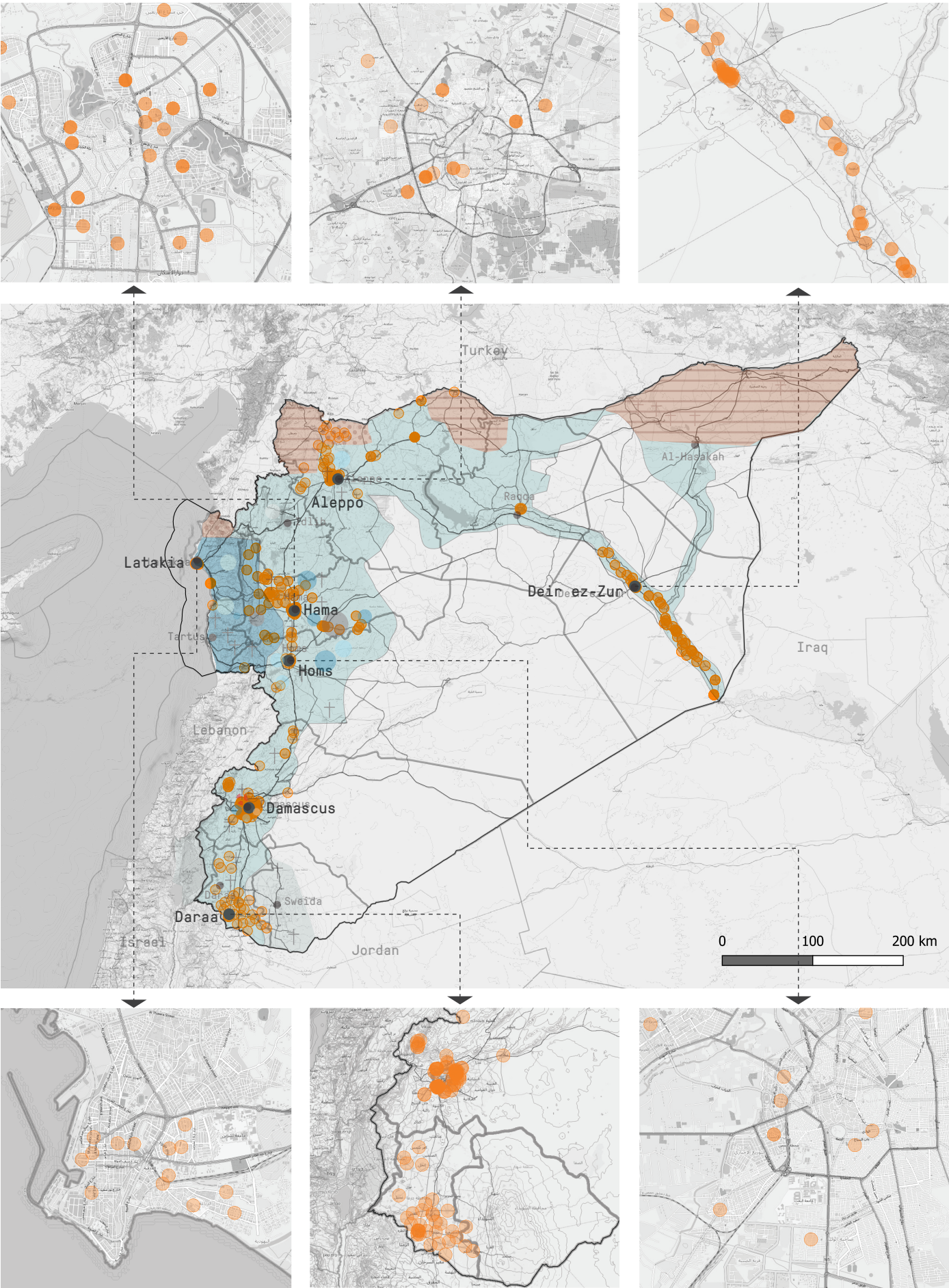


Source: Agence France Presse. URL: <https://shorturl.at/j1F10>

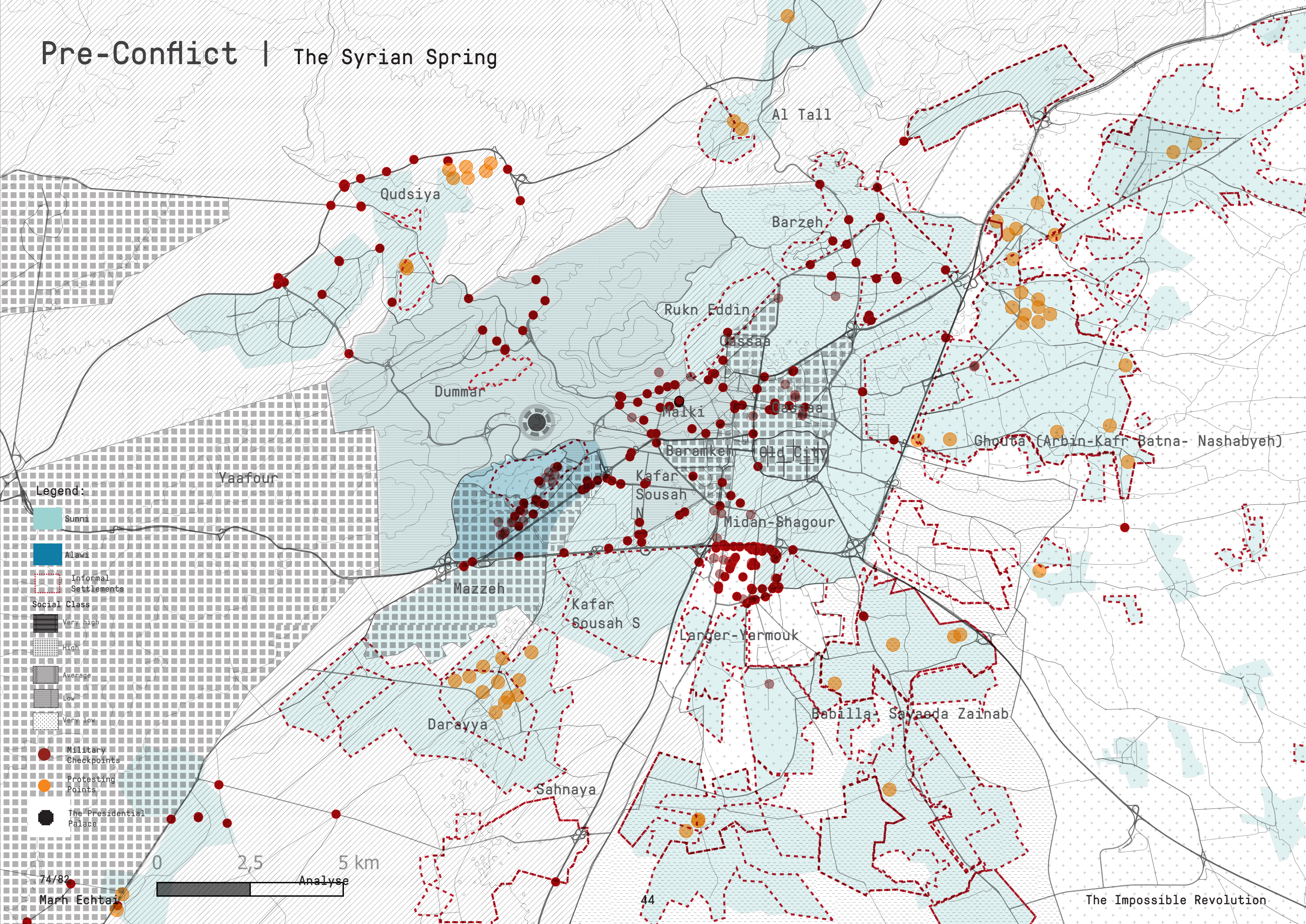
Pre-Conflict | The Syrian Spring

Legend:

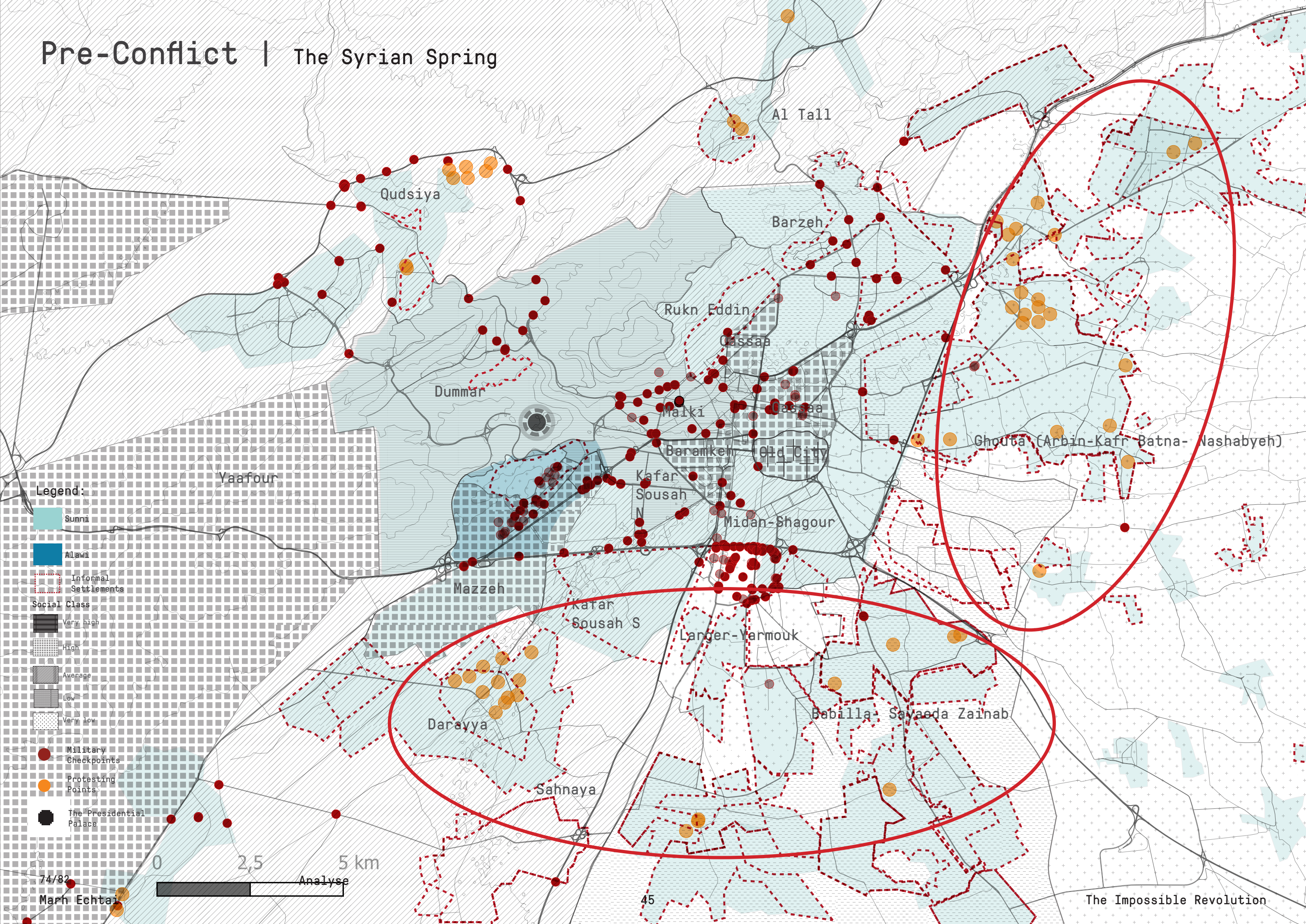
- Sunni
- Alawi
- Shia'a
- Druze
- Christian
- Ismaili
- Ethnicity
- Kurds
- Turkman
- Protest point



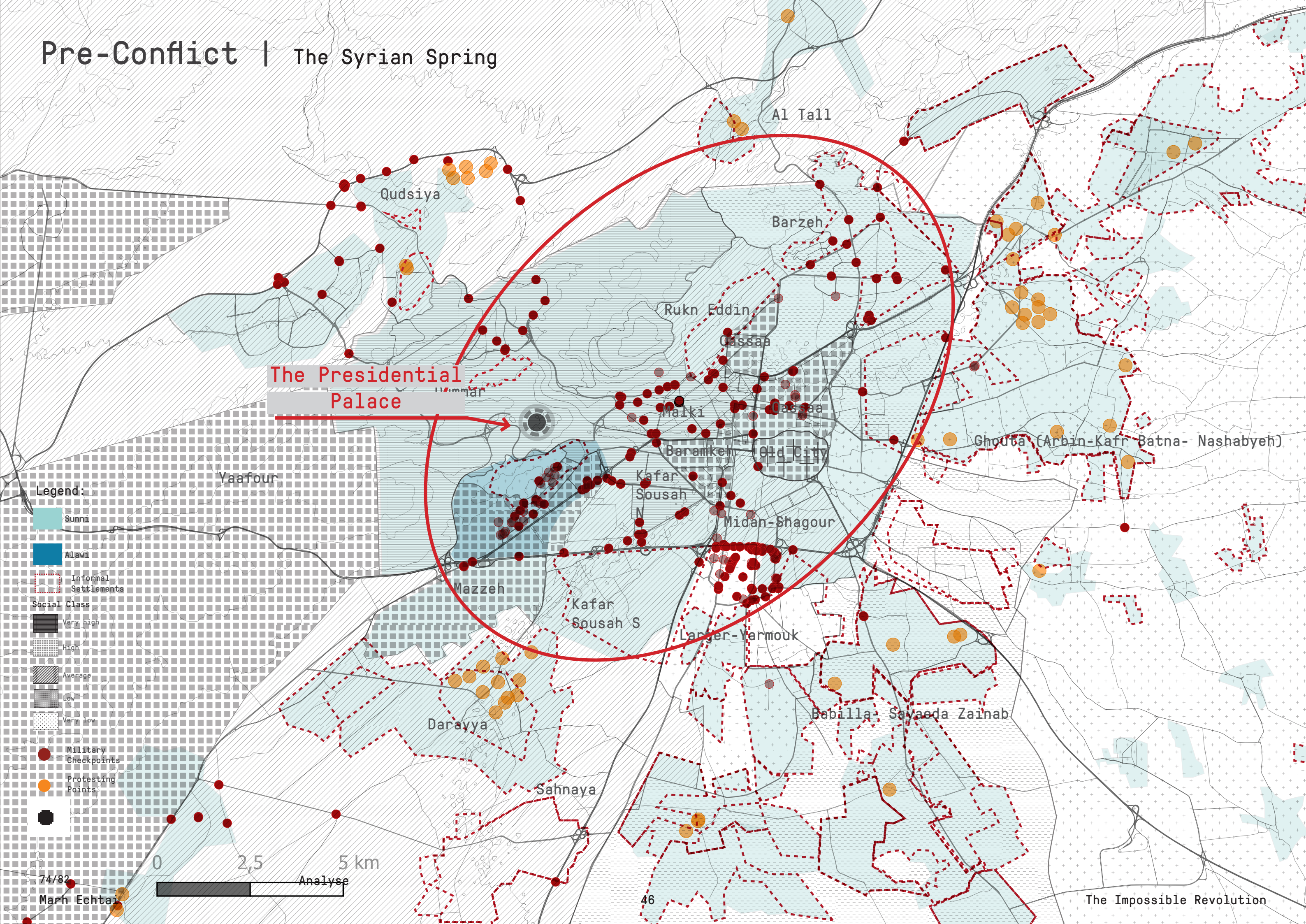
Pre-Conflict | The Syrian Spring

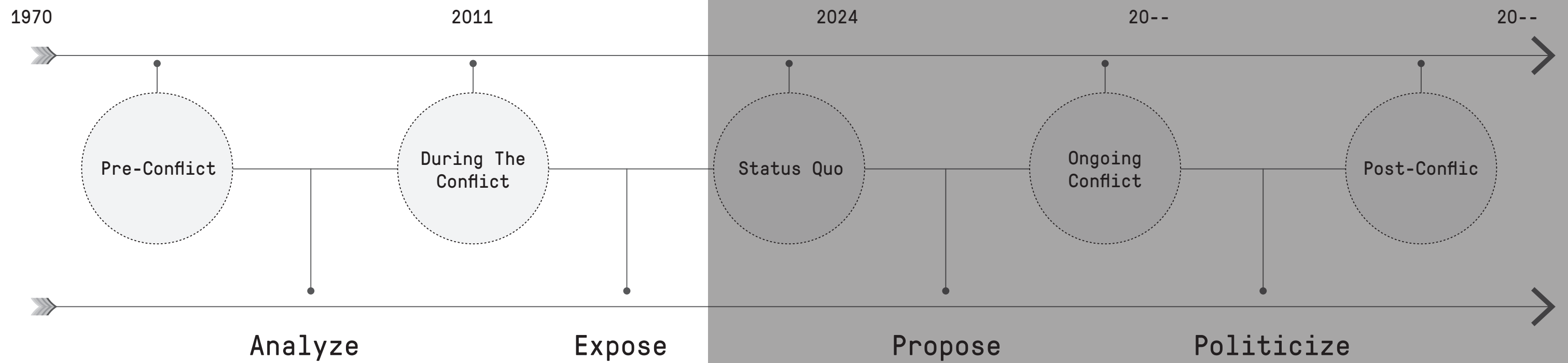


Pre-Conflict | The Syrian Spring

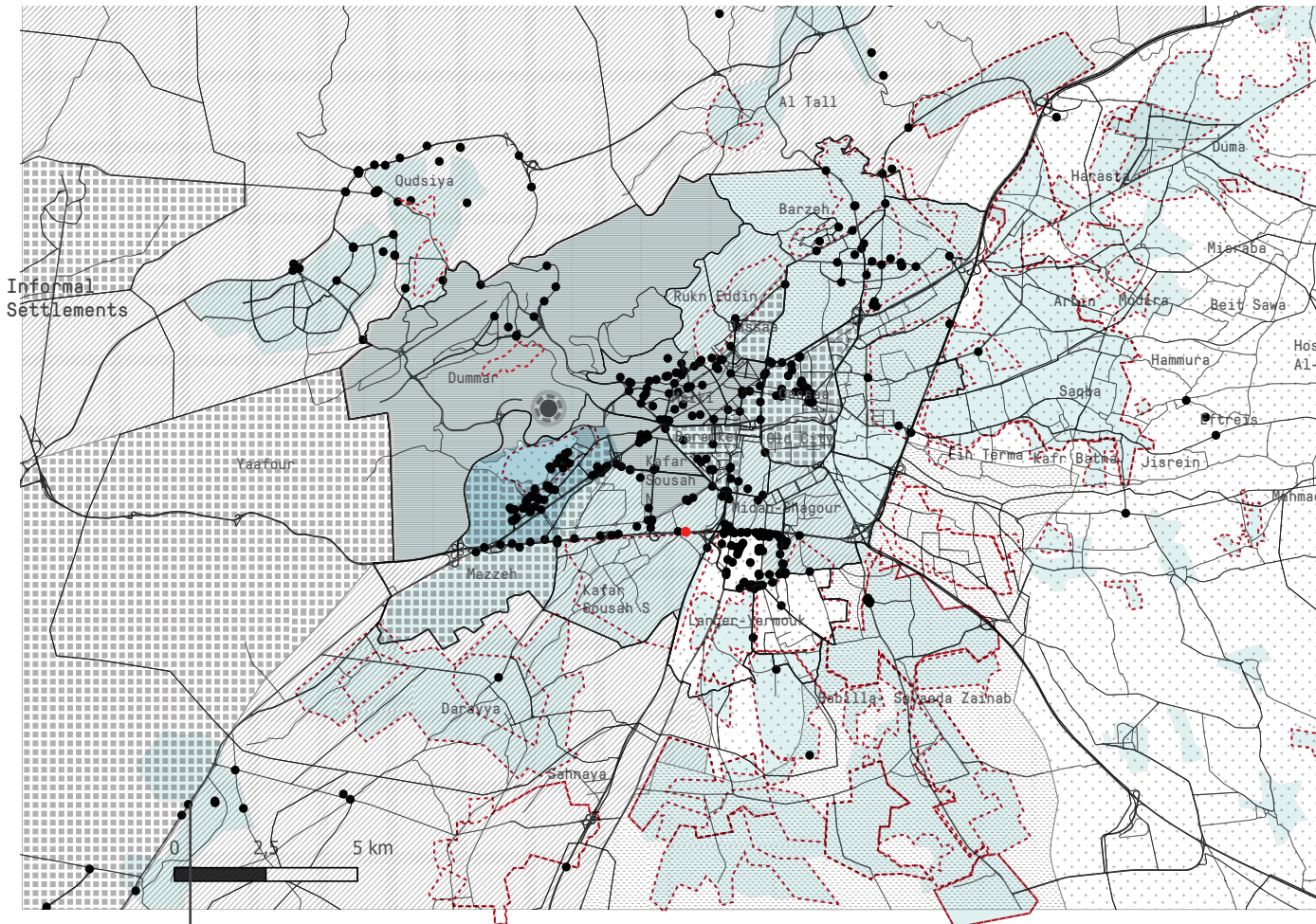


Pre-Conflict | The Syrian Spring





During The Conflict | Militarizing the Built Environment



During The Conflict | Urban Siege

Legend :

Sunni

Alawi

Social Class

Very high

High

Average

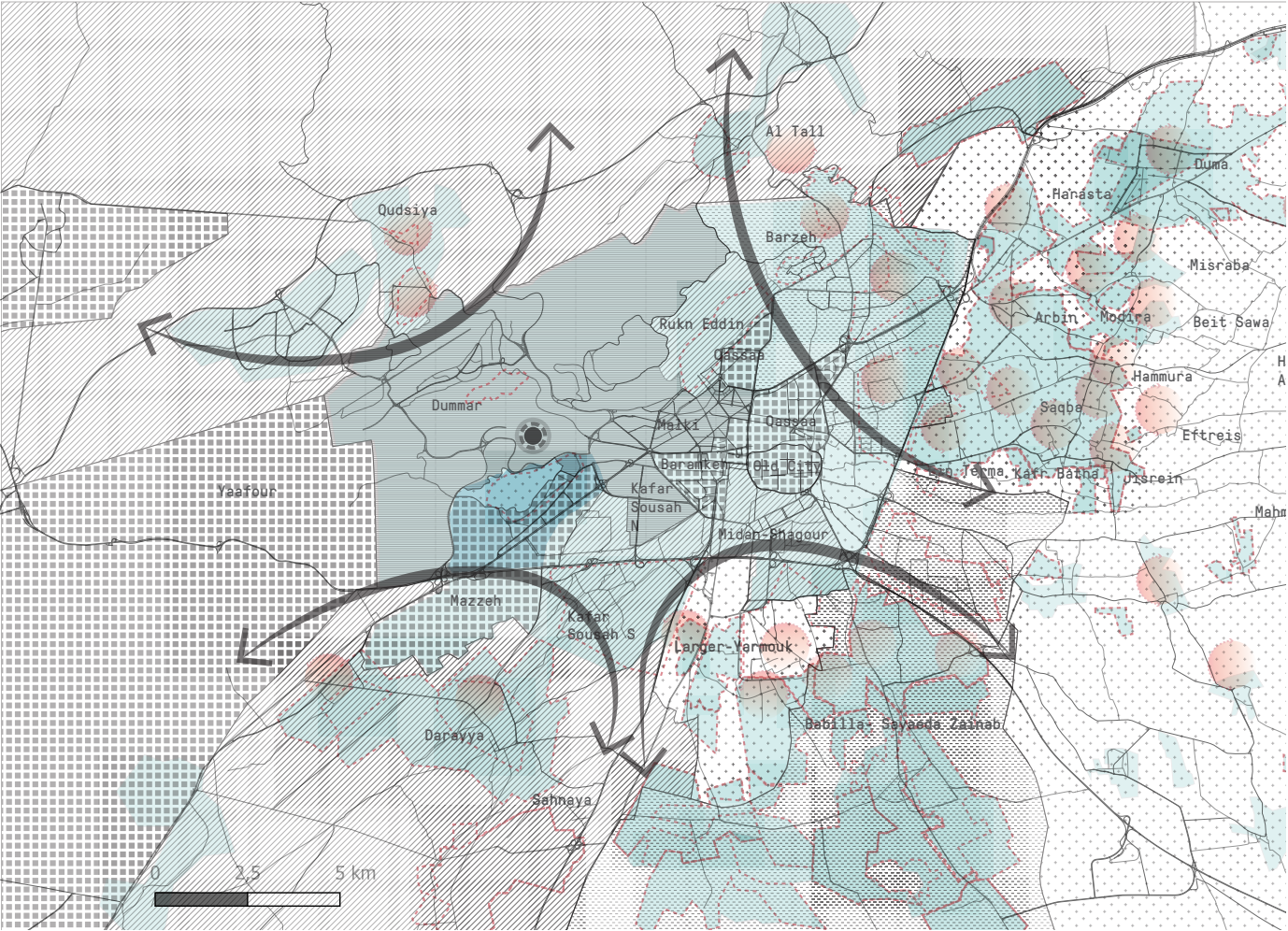
Low

Very low

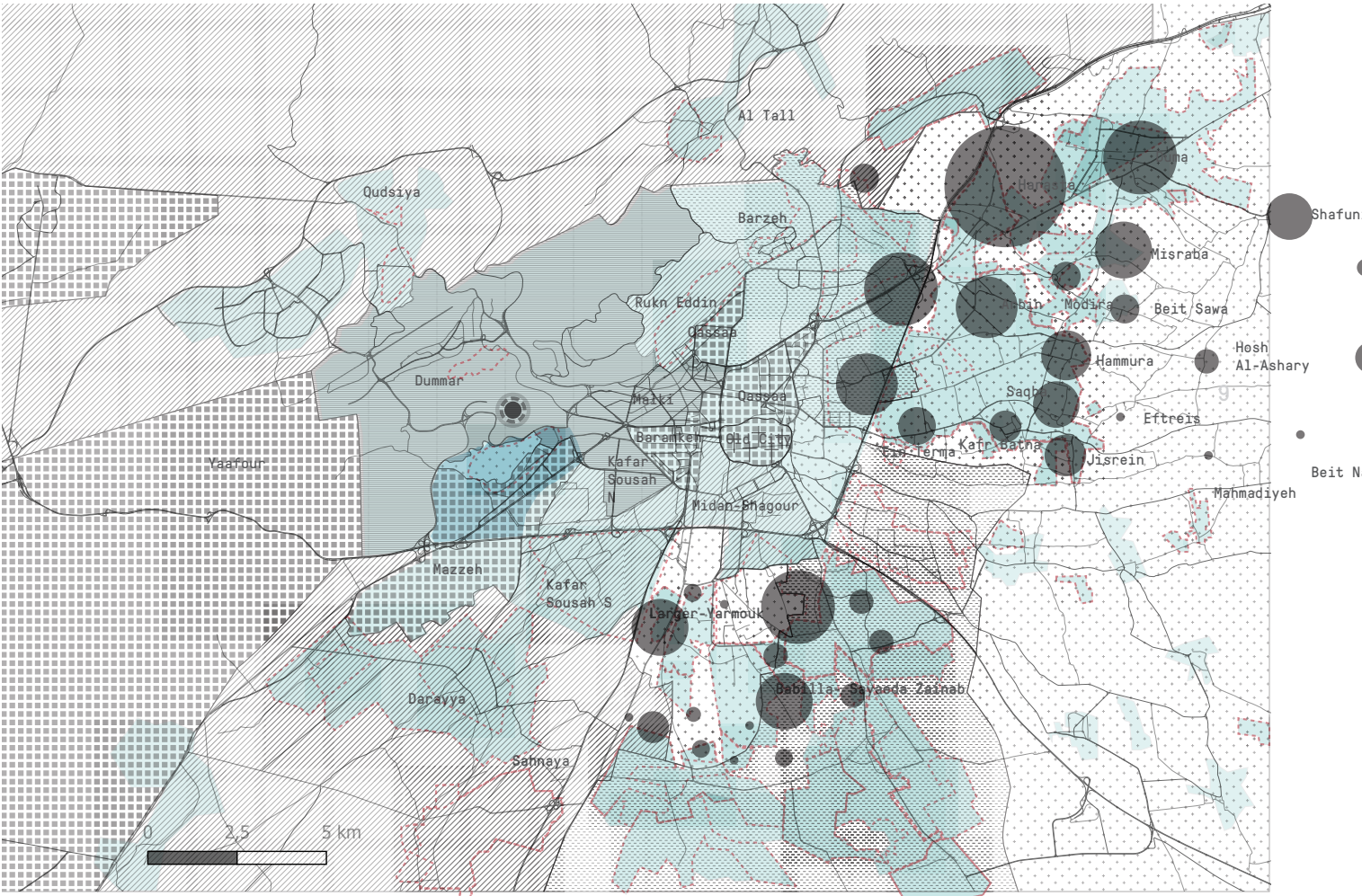
Sieged Town

Sieged Territory

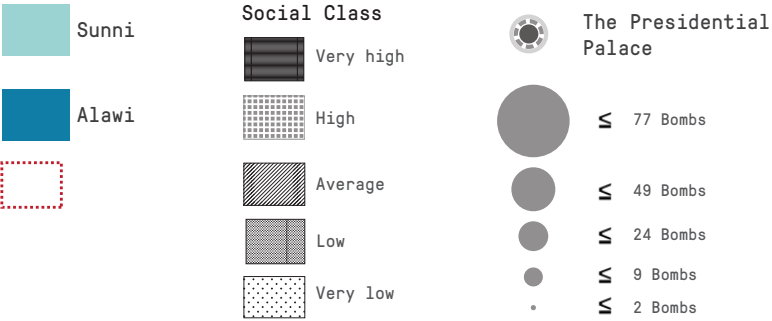
The Presidential Palace



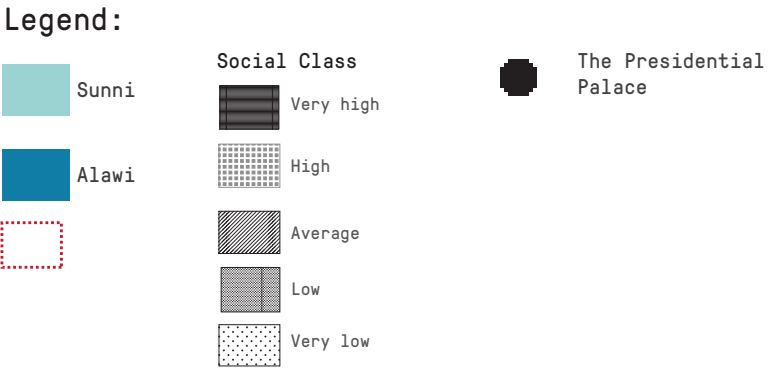
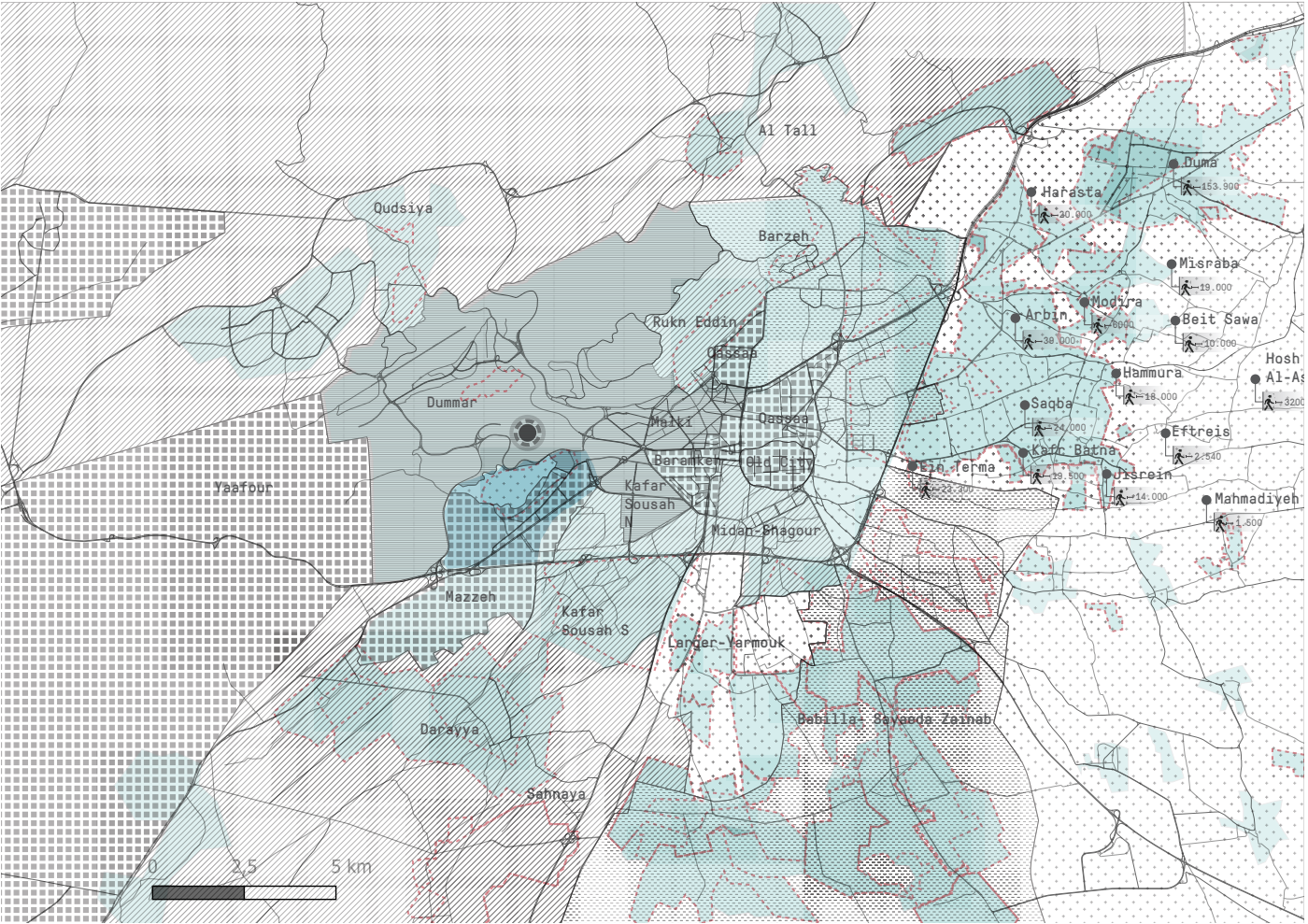
During The Conflict | Mass Bombardment



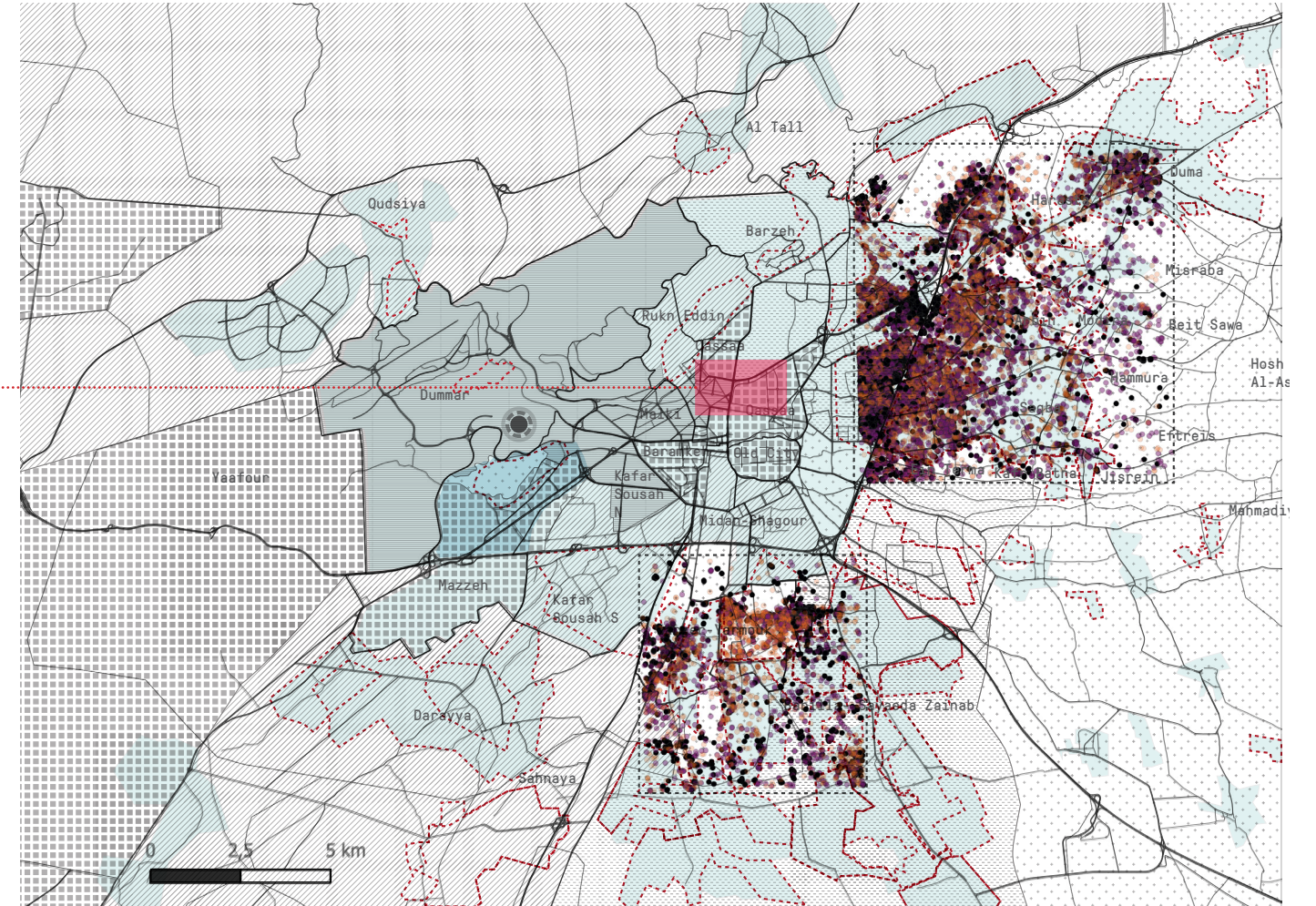
Legend:



During The Conflict | Mass Displacement



During The Conflict | Mass Destruction



Legend:

 Sunni


Alawi

Social Class

 Very high High

 Average

Low

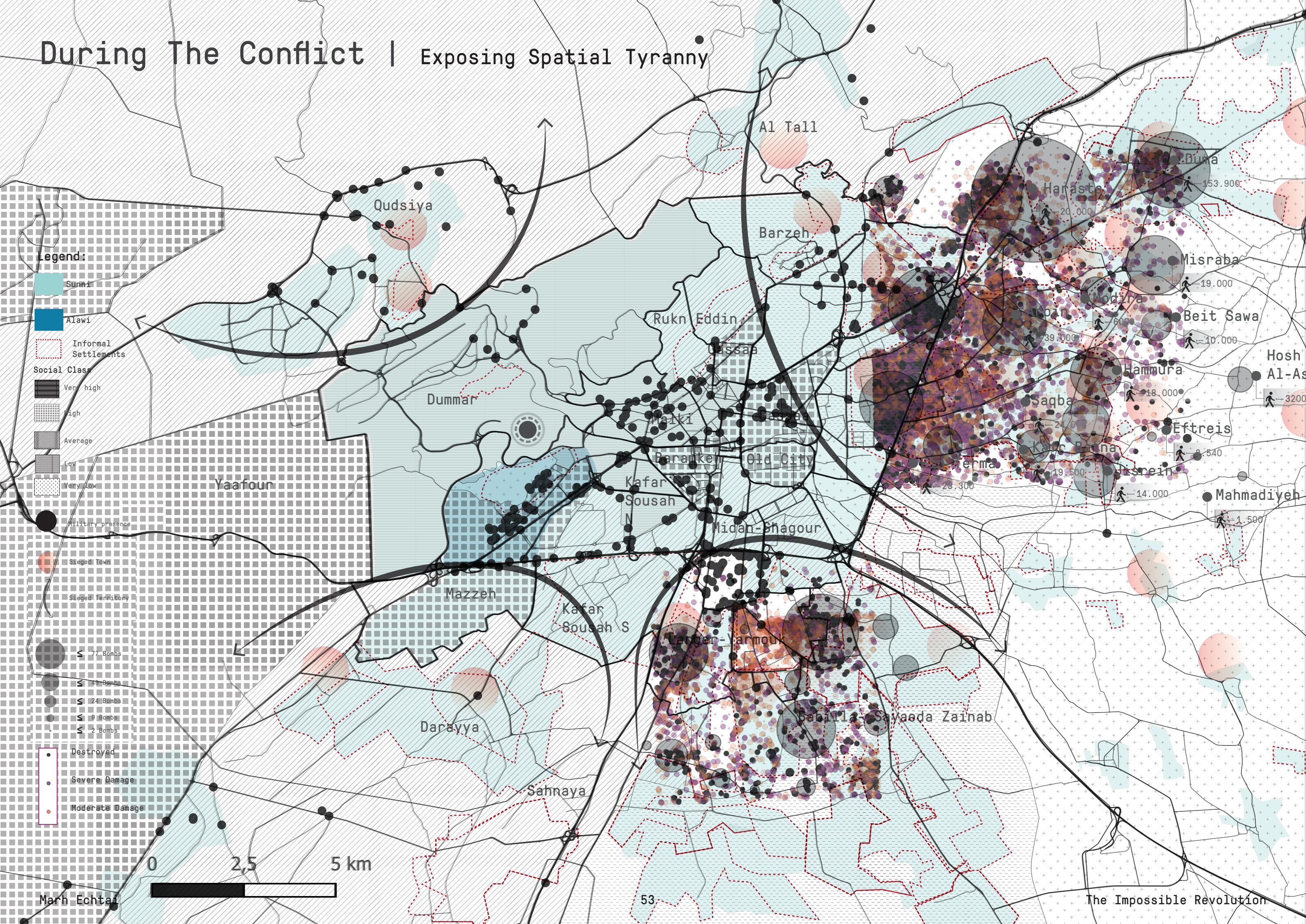
 The Presidential
Palace

- Destroyed

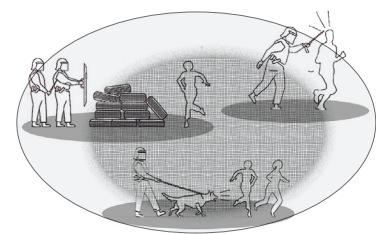
- Severe Damage

- Moderate Damage

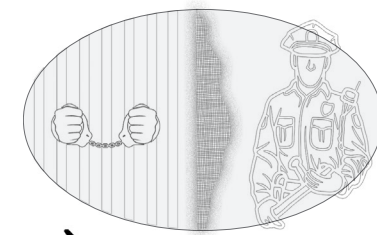
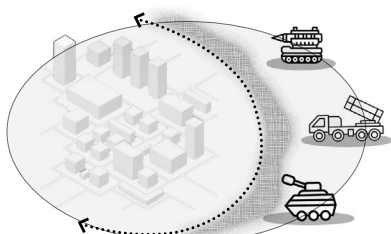
During The Conflict | Exposing Spatial Tyranny



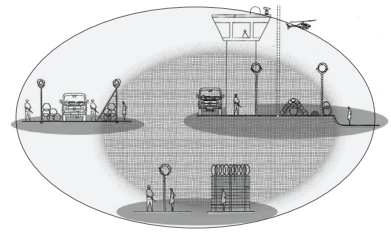
During The Conflict | Exposing Spatial Tyranny



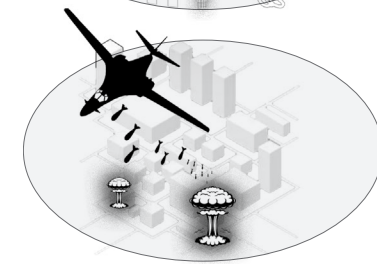
Dispelling
Protests with
force



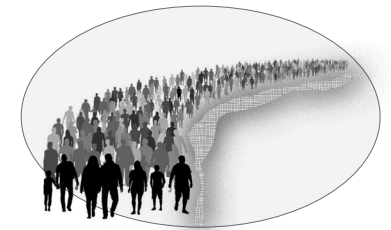
Arbitrary Arrests
and Force
Disappearance



Militarizing the
Built Environment



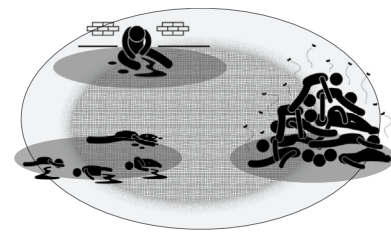
Mass Bombardment



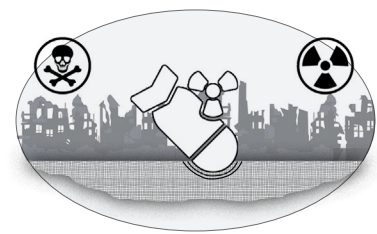
Mass Displacement



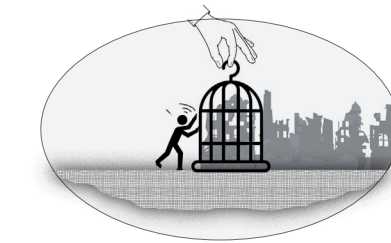
Mass Destruction



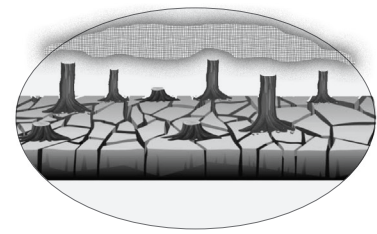
Urban Massacres



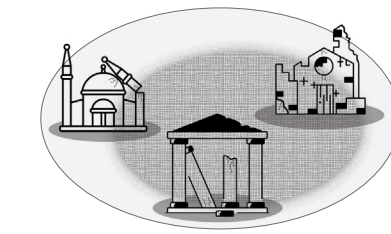
The use of
Chemical Weapons



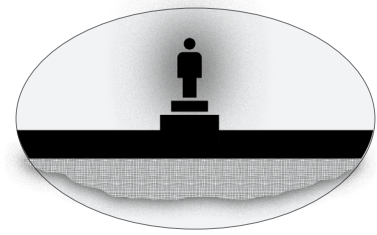
Ownership
expropriation



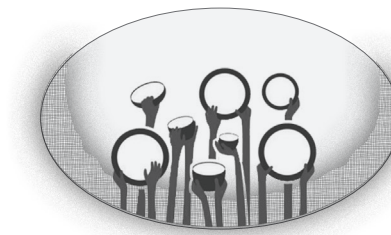
Environmental
degradation



Heritage Damage

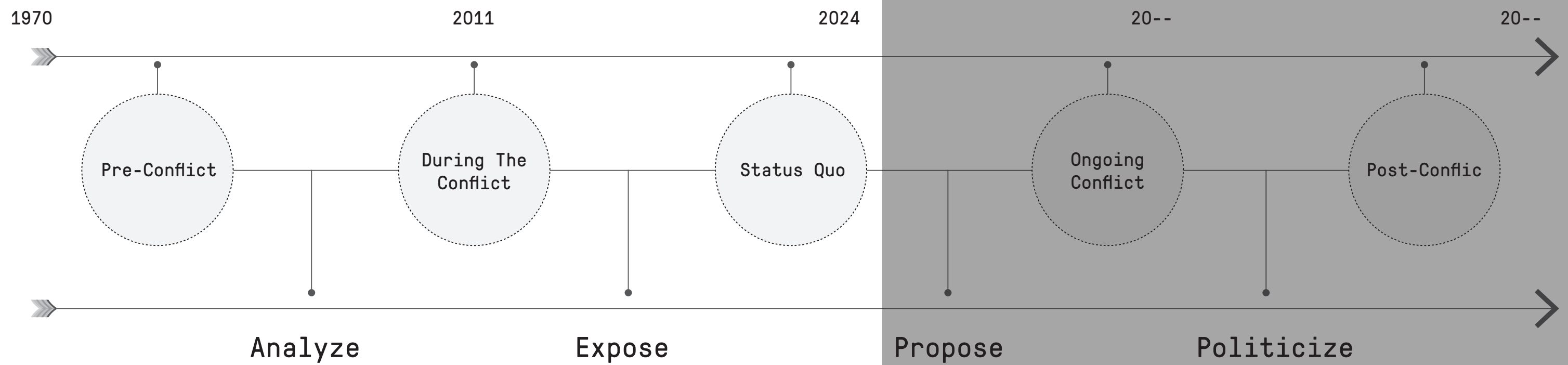


Authoritarian
Symbols for
claiming the place

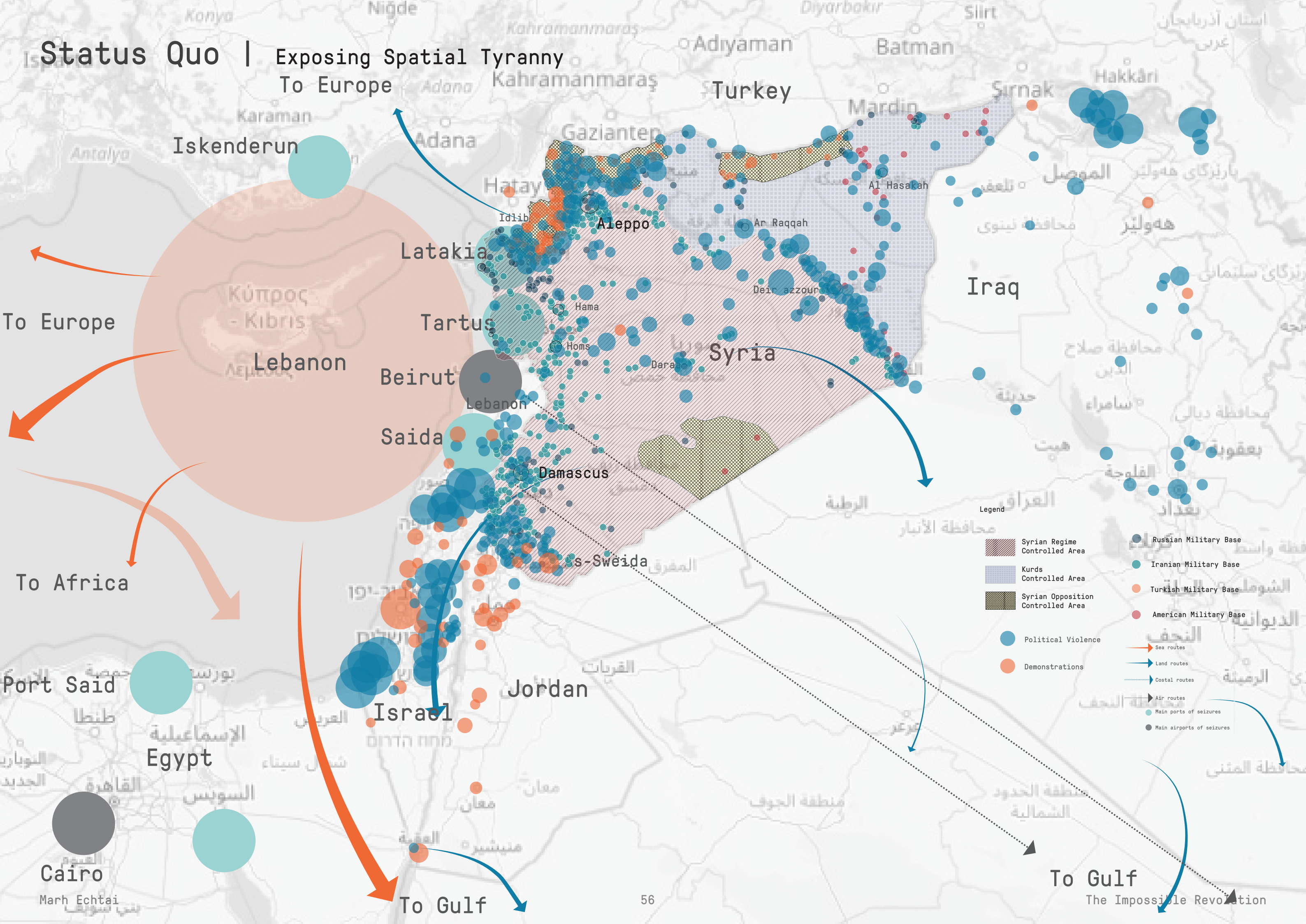


Hunger Policies

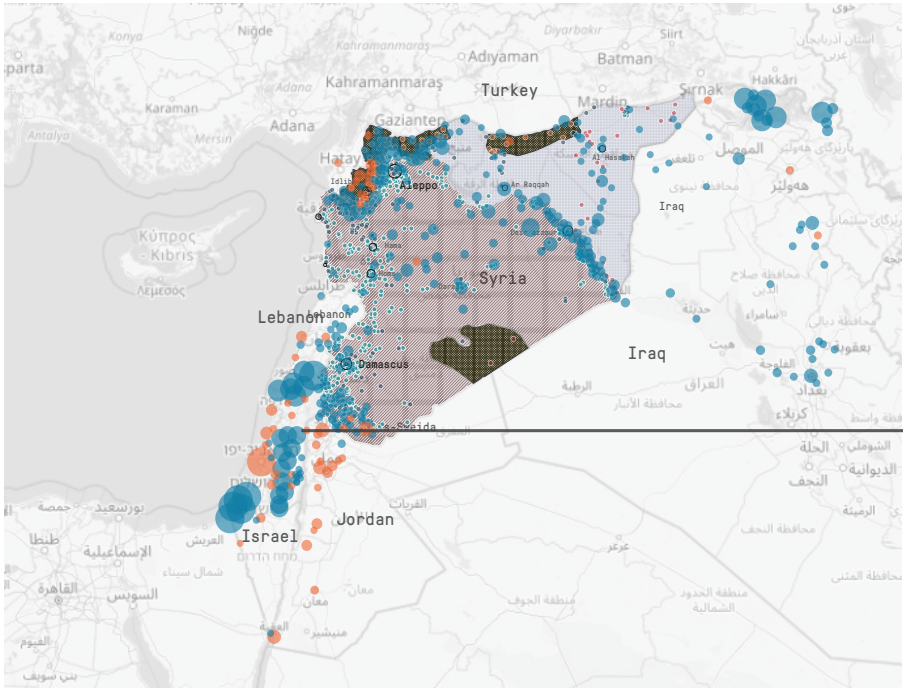
Patterns of Oppression



Status Quo | Exposing Spatial Tyranny To Europe



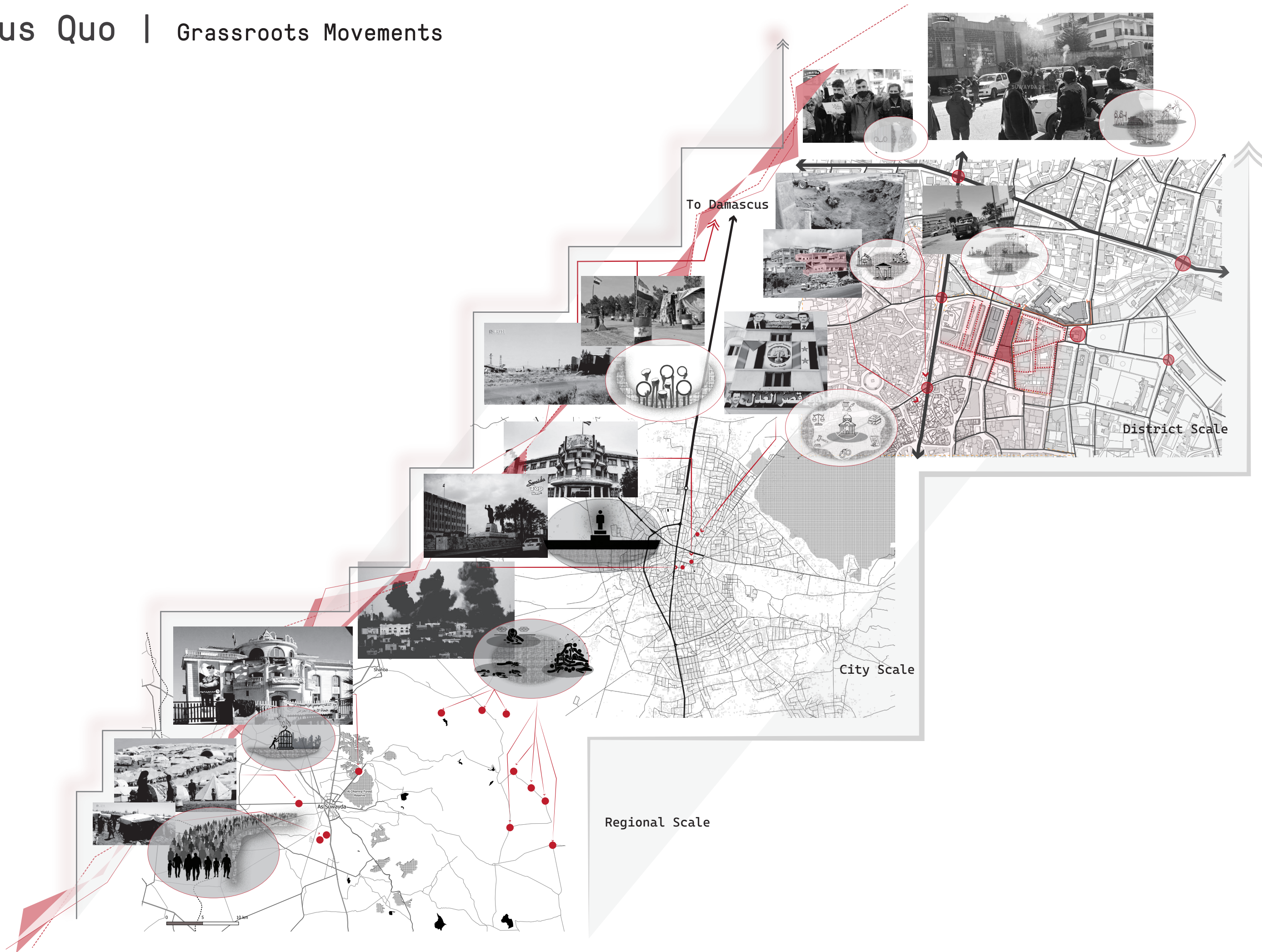
Status Quo | Grassroots Movements



Status Quo | Grassroots Movements



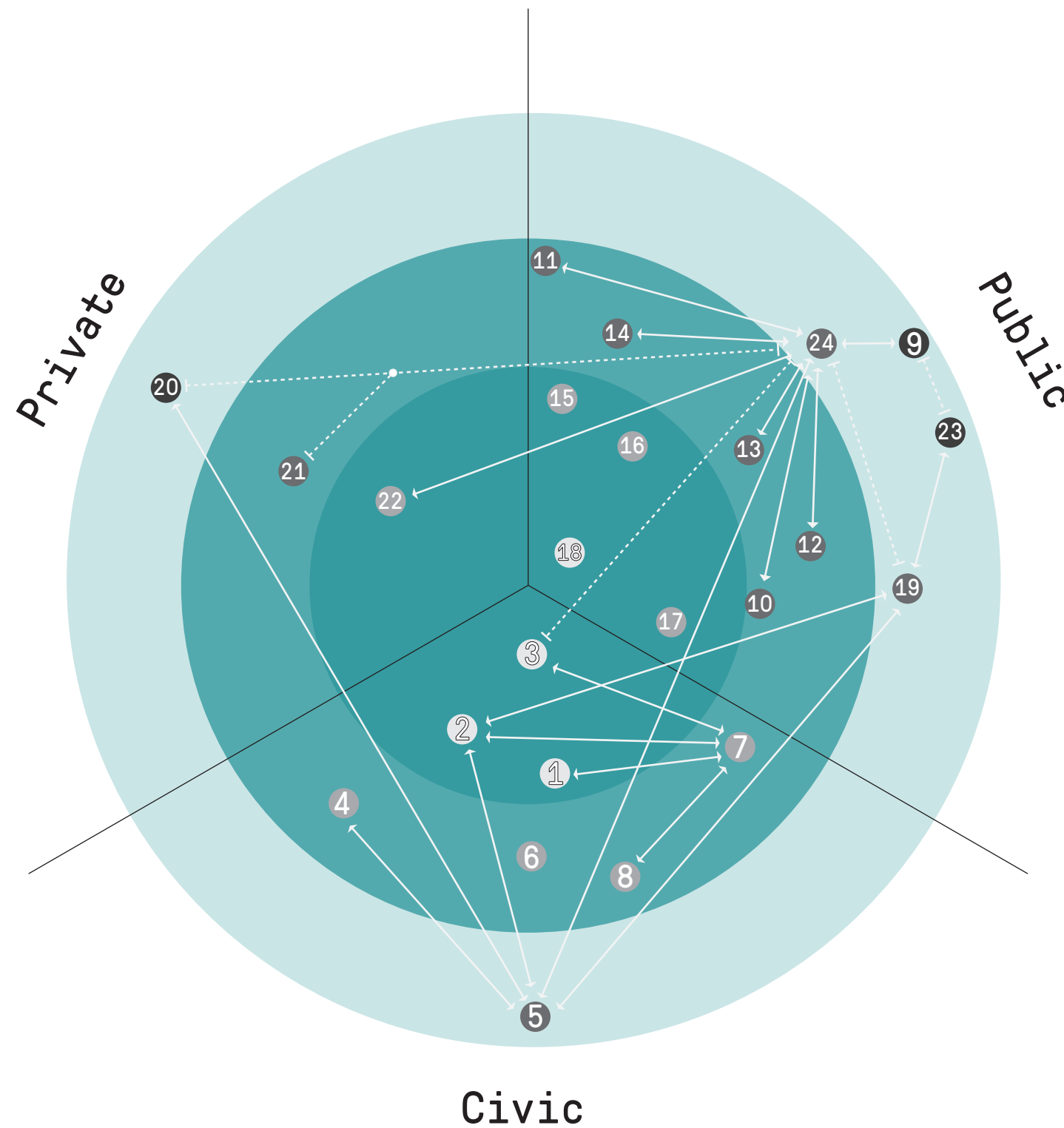
Status Quo | Grassroots Movements





Do People Have the Agency to make a Difference?

Stakeholders Analysis



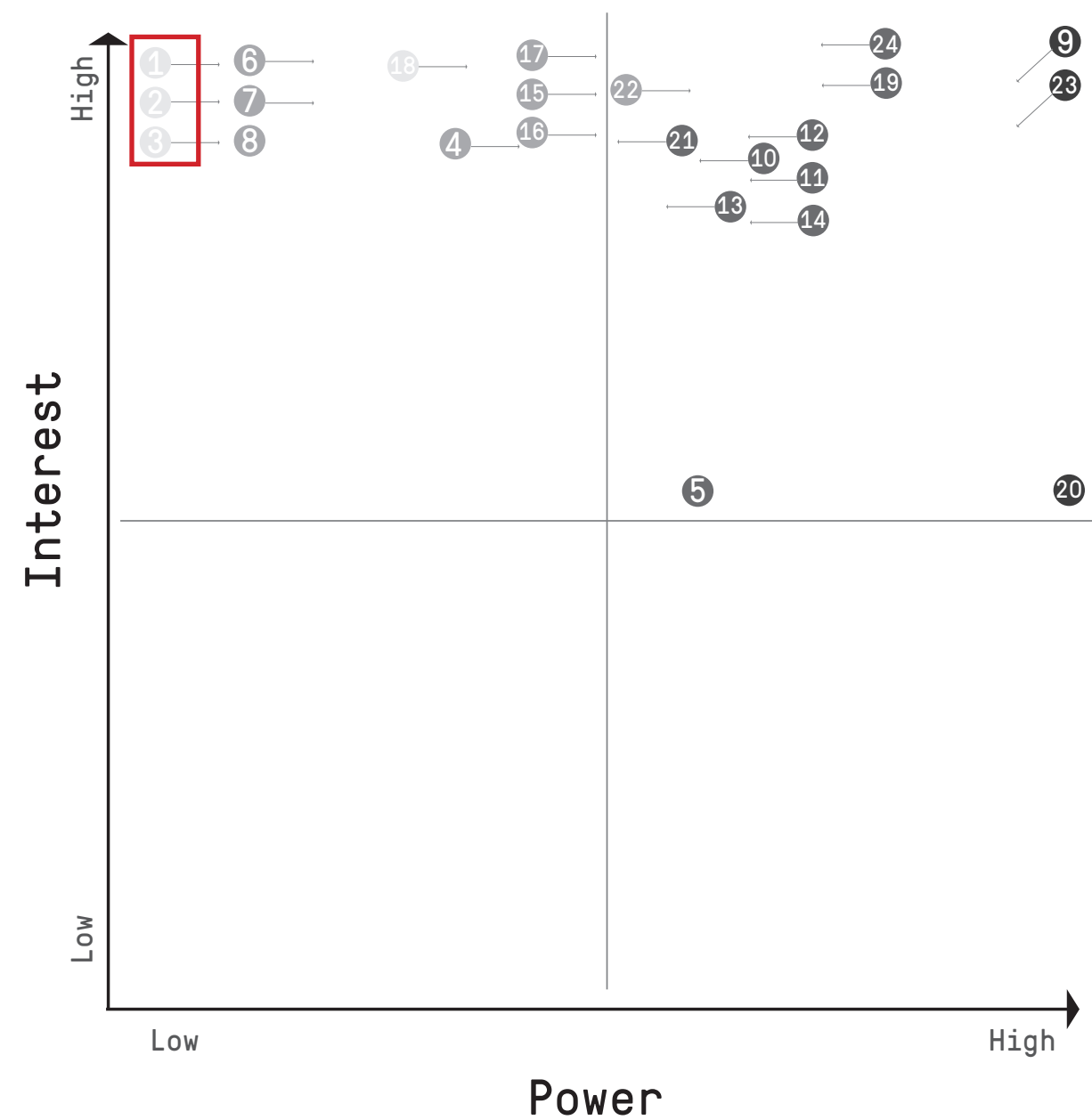
- ① Local community
- ② IDPs (internally displaced people)
- ③ Refugees
- ④ Local NGOs
- ⑤ International NGOs
- ⑥ Damascus university
- ⑦ Local leaders
- ⑧ Religious Entities

- Extreme Power
- High Power
- Moderate Power
- No Power

- ⑨ Foreigner parties Pro-Assad[Russia/Iran]
- ⑩ Foreigner parties Anti-Assad[US/Turkey]
- ⑪ Presidency | Al-Assad
- ⑫ Ministry of Defense
- ⑬ Ministry of Local Administration
- ⑭ Ministry of Housing and Construction
- ⑮ Ministry of Finance
- ⑯ Ministry of Transportation
- ⑰ Regional Planning Commission
- ⑱ Environment General Commission
- ⑲ Damascus Governorate
- ⑳ Damascus Municipality
- ㉑ The Fact Authorities

- ㉒ World Bank [financial related international bodies]
- ㉓ Local Banks
- ㉔ The Market|Construction Companies

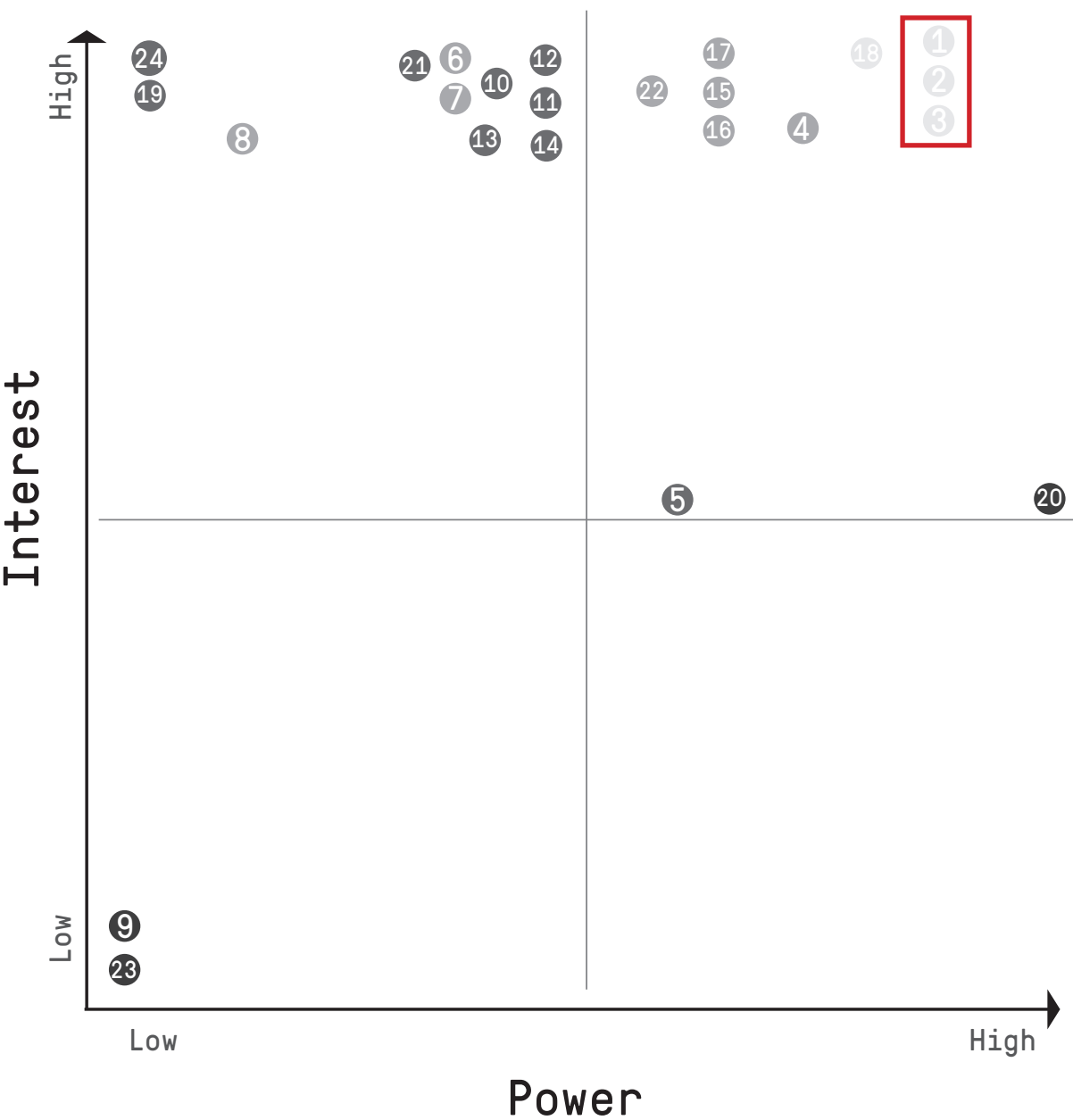
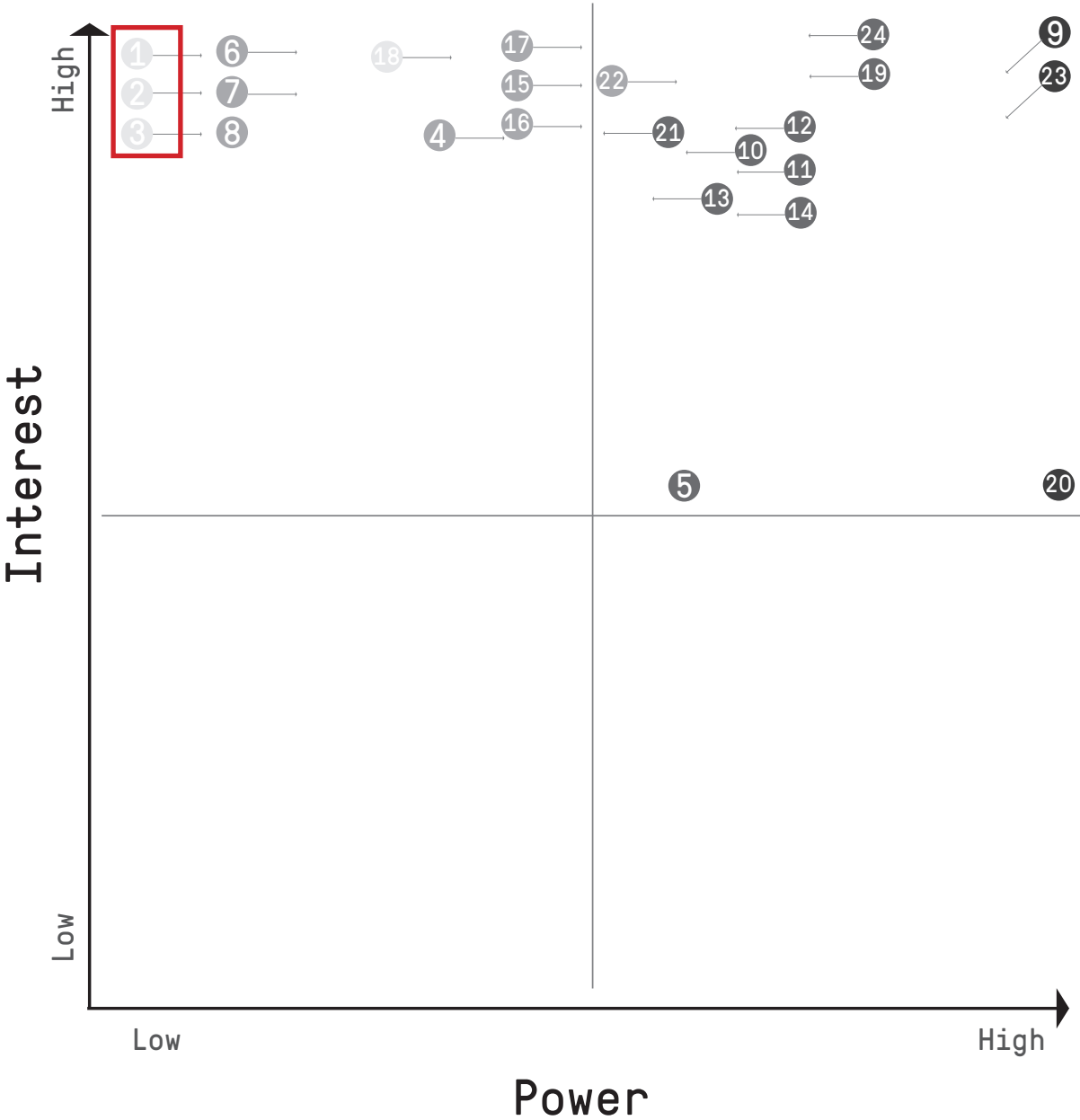
Stakeholders Analysis



- 1 Local community
 - 2 IDPs (internally displaced people)
 - 3 Refugees
 - 4 Local NGOs
 - 5 International NGOs
 - 6 Damascus university
 - 7 Local leaders
 - 8 Religious Entities
 - 9 Foreigner parties Pro-Assad[Russia/Iran]
 - 23 Foreigner parties Anti-Assad[US/Turkey]
 - 24 Presidency | Al-Assad
 - 10 Ministry of Defense
 - 11 Ministry of Local Administration
 - 12 Ministry of Housing and Construction
 - 13 Ministry of Finance
 - 14 Ministry of Transportation
 - 15 Regional Planning Commission
 - 16 Environment General Commission
 - 17 Damascus Governorate
 - 18 Damascus Municipality
 - 19 The Fact Authorities
 - 20 World Bank [financial related international bodies]
 - 21 Local Banks
 - 22 The Market|Construction Companies
- Extreme Power
● High Power
● Moderate Power
● No Power

Stakeholders Analysis

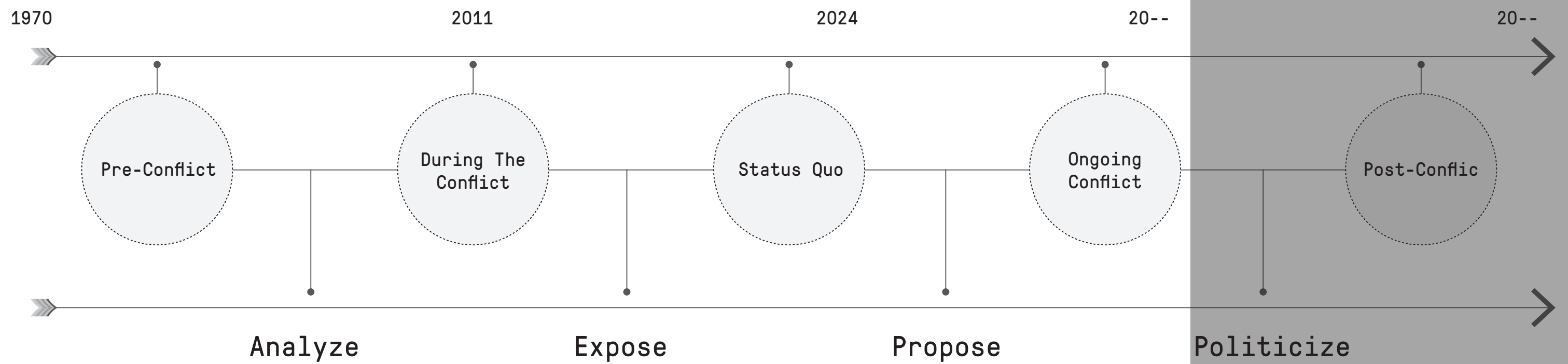
Shifting →







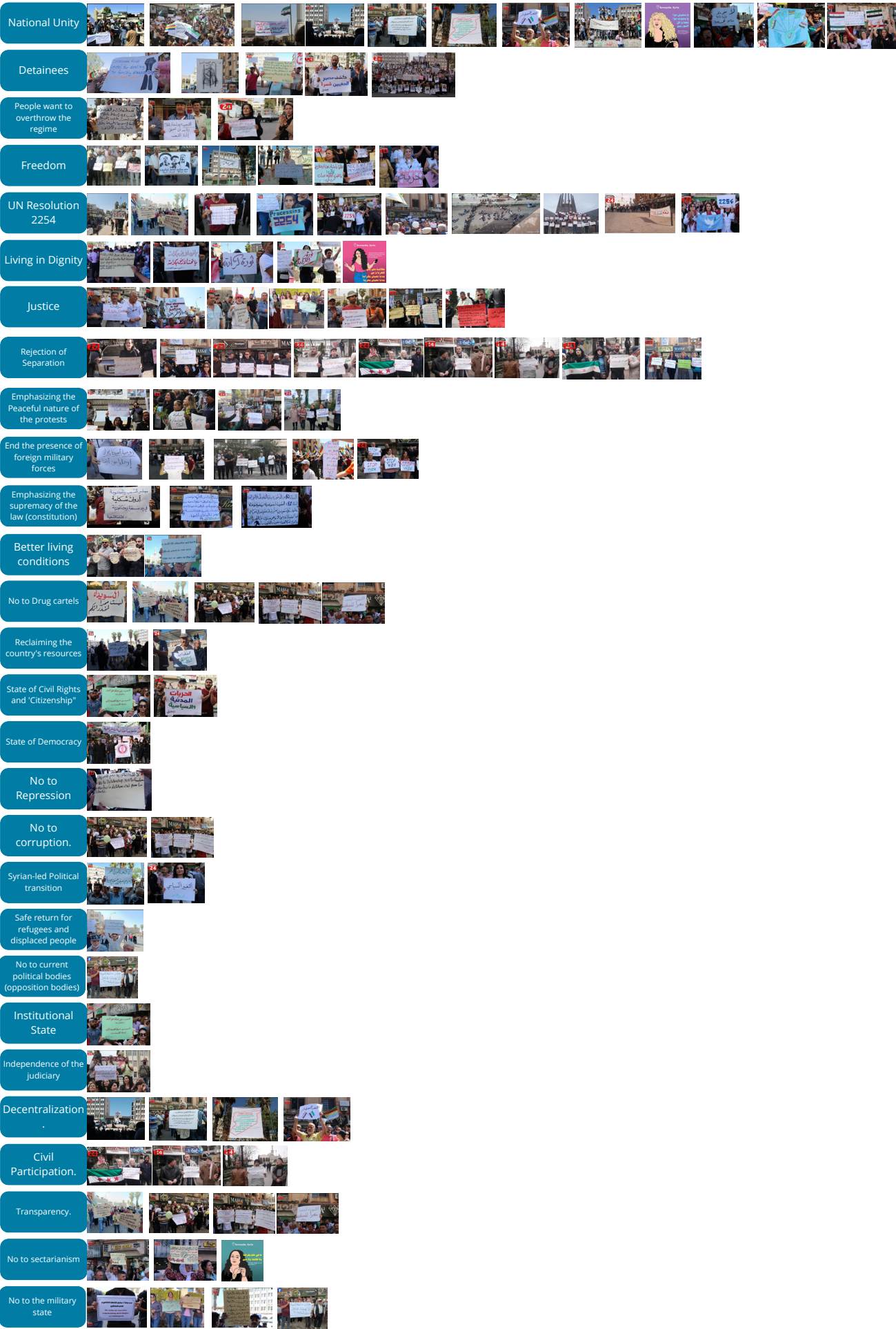
By adopting the grassroots movement as a way of moving forward. This approach challenges top-down power structures, promotes social cohesion and contributes to a sustainable local-based peace-building. By empowering those marginalized voices and embracing this collective action towards a just future.







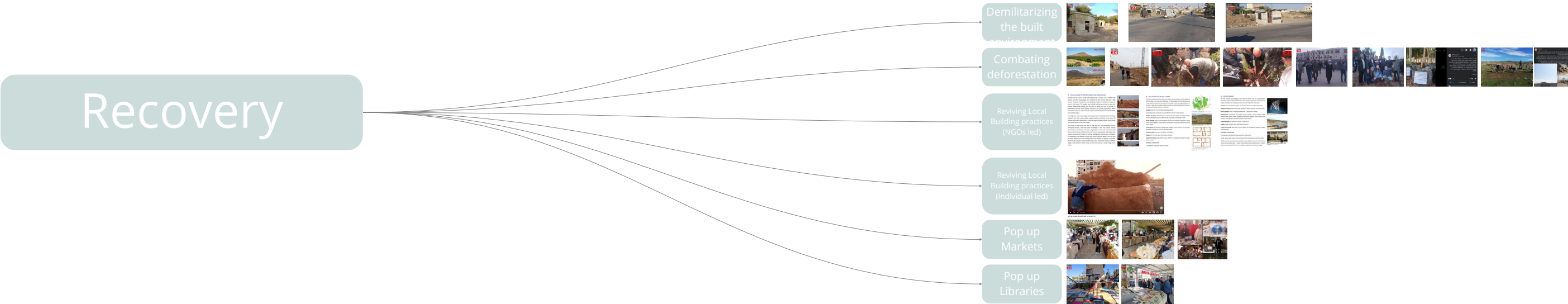
Demands



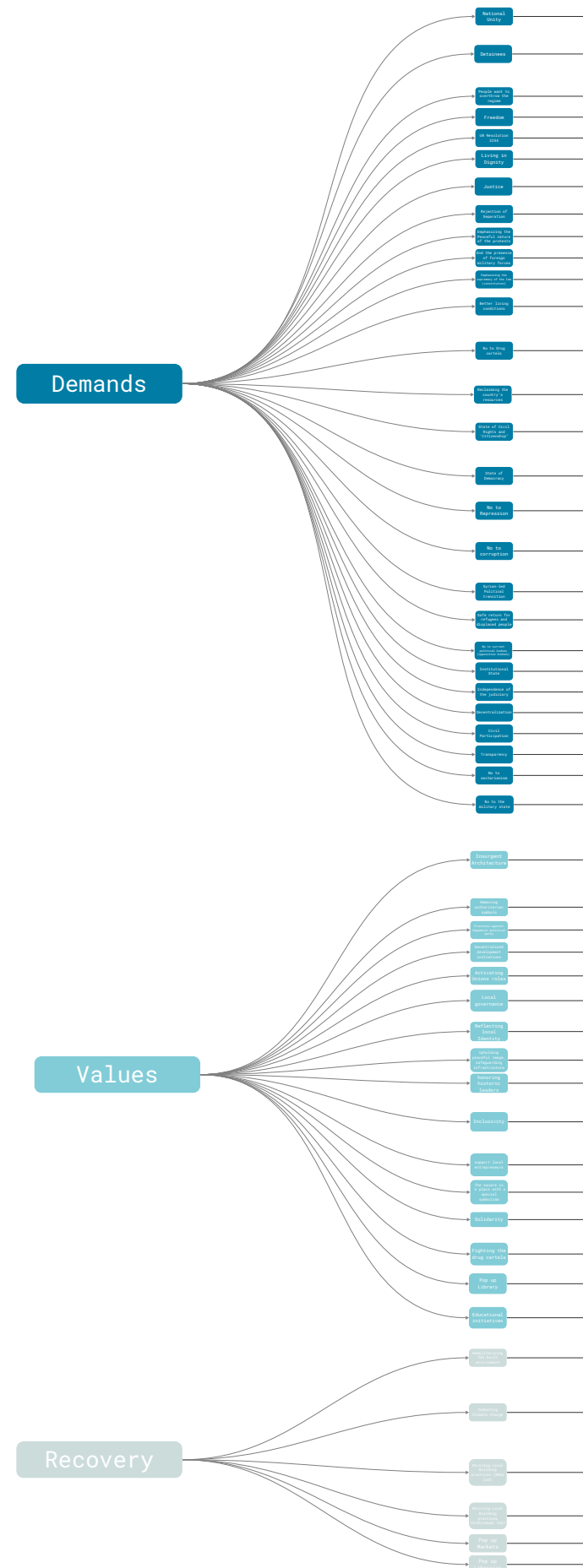
Ongoing Conflict

Values



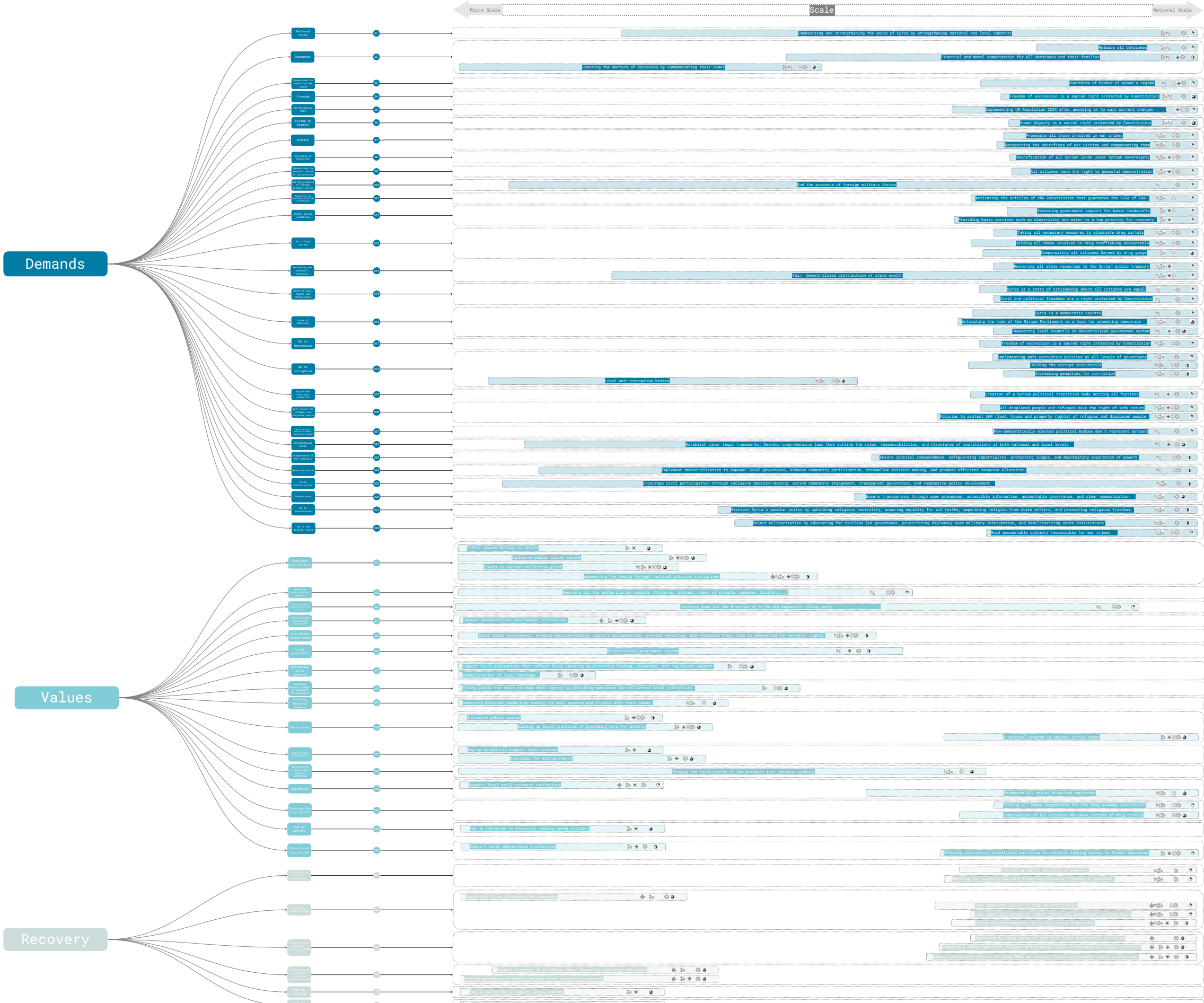


Ongoing Conflict



Ongoing Conflict

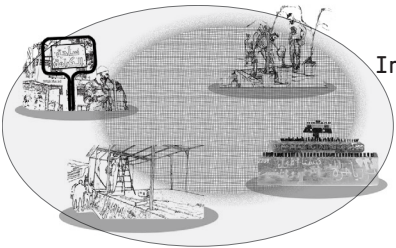
Co-Constructing Narratives of Change



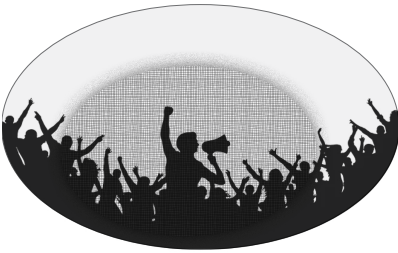
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Co-constructing Narratives of change

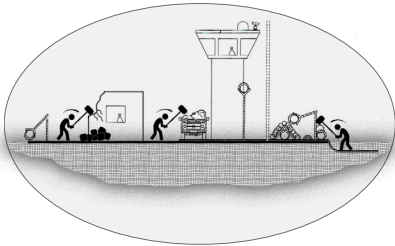
Ongoing Conflict



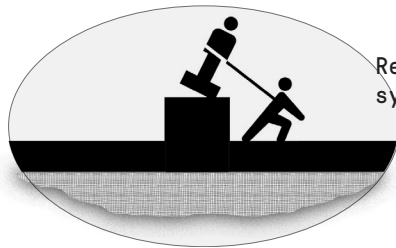
Insurgent Architecture



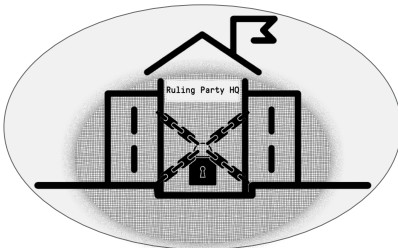
Reclaiming the right to protest



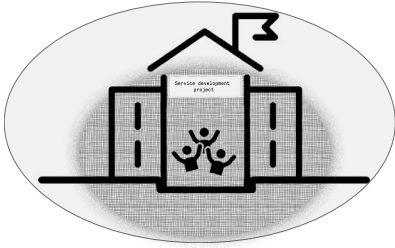
Demilitarizing the built environment



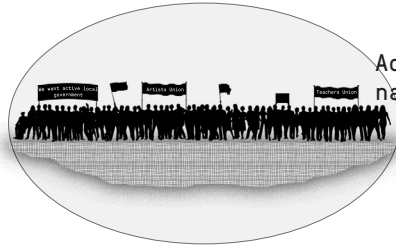
Removing authoritarian symbols



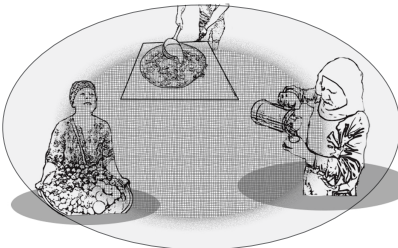
Practices against Hegemonic political party



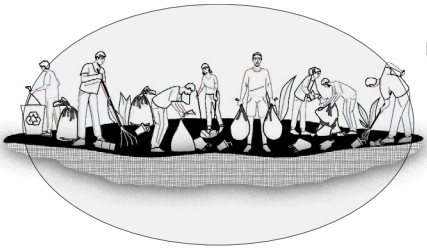
Decentralized development initiatives



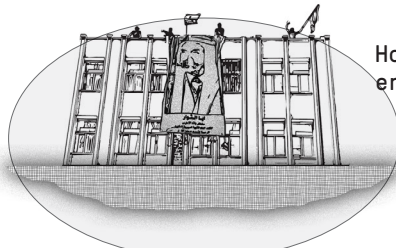
Activating Local Governance



Insurgent care



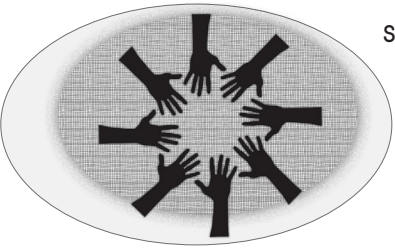
Upholding peaceful image, safeguarding infrastructure



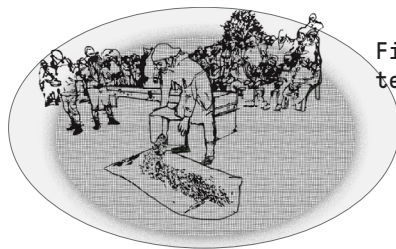
Honoring historic leaders



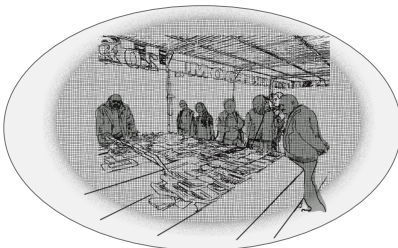
Inclusivity



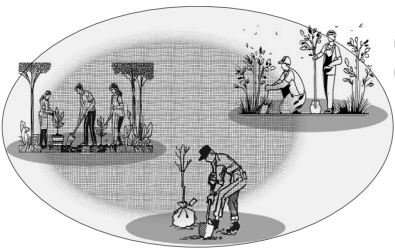
Solidarity



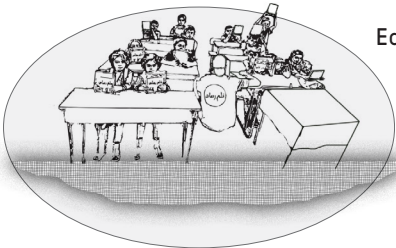
Fighting the drug cartels



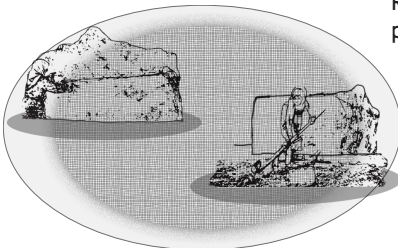
Pop up Library



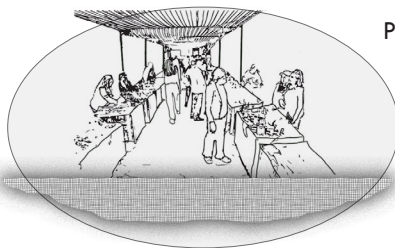
Combating Climate Change



Educational initiatives



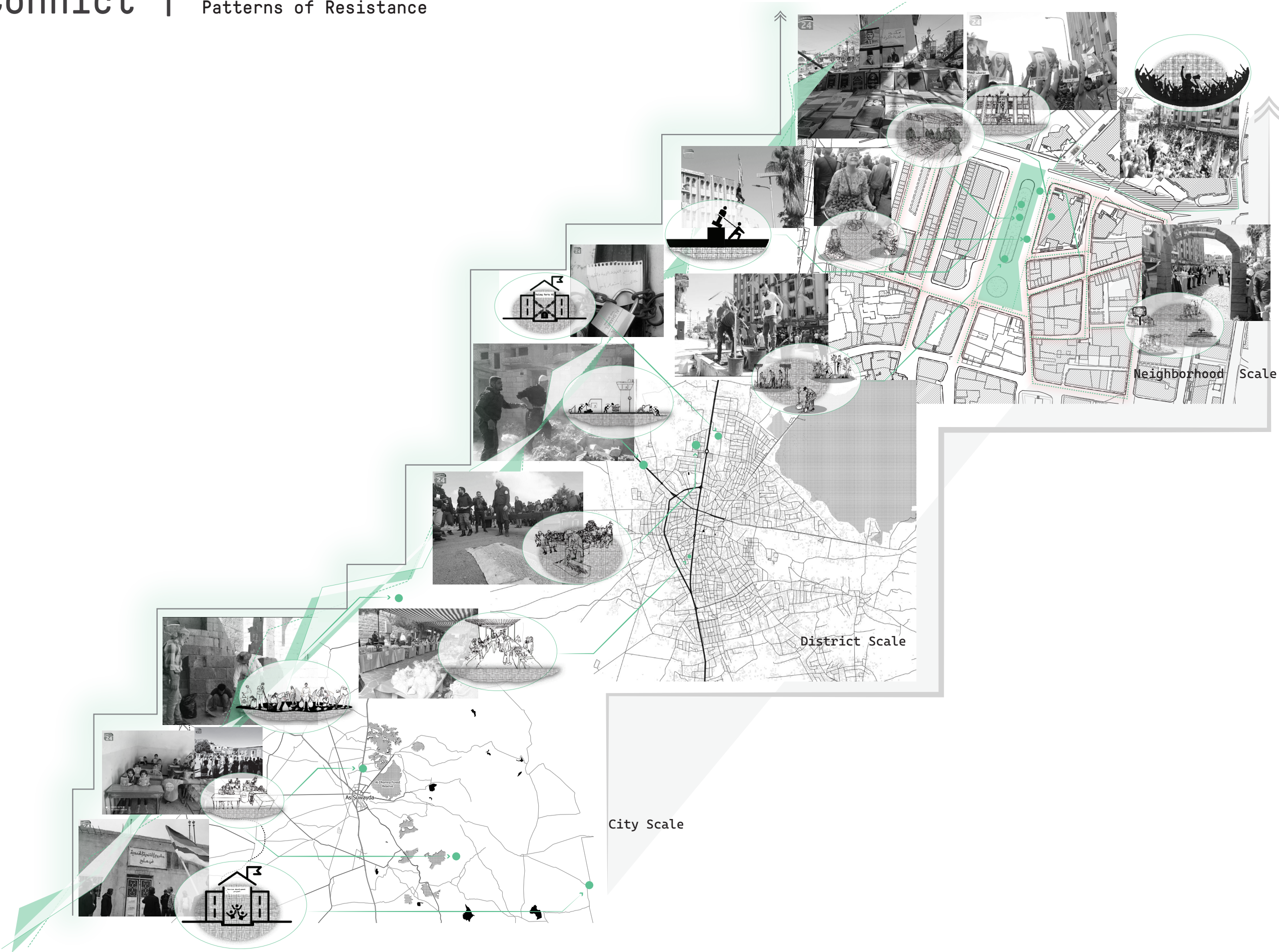
Reviving Local Building practices



Pop up Markets

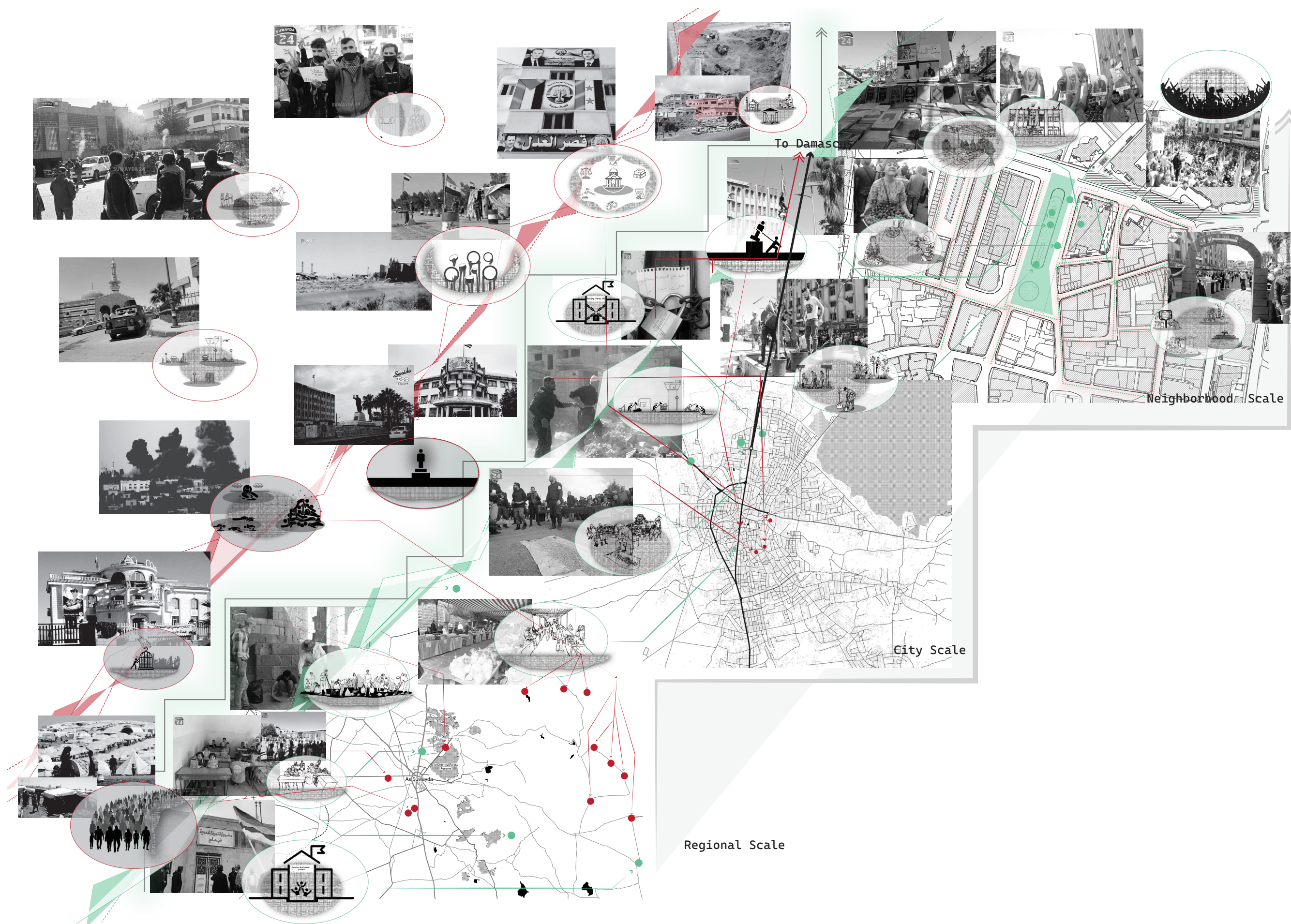
Patterns of Resistance

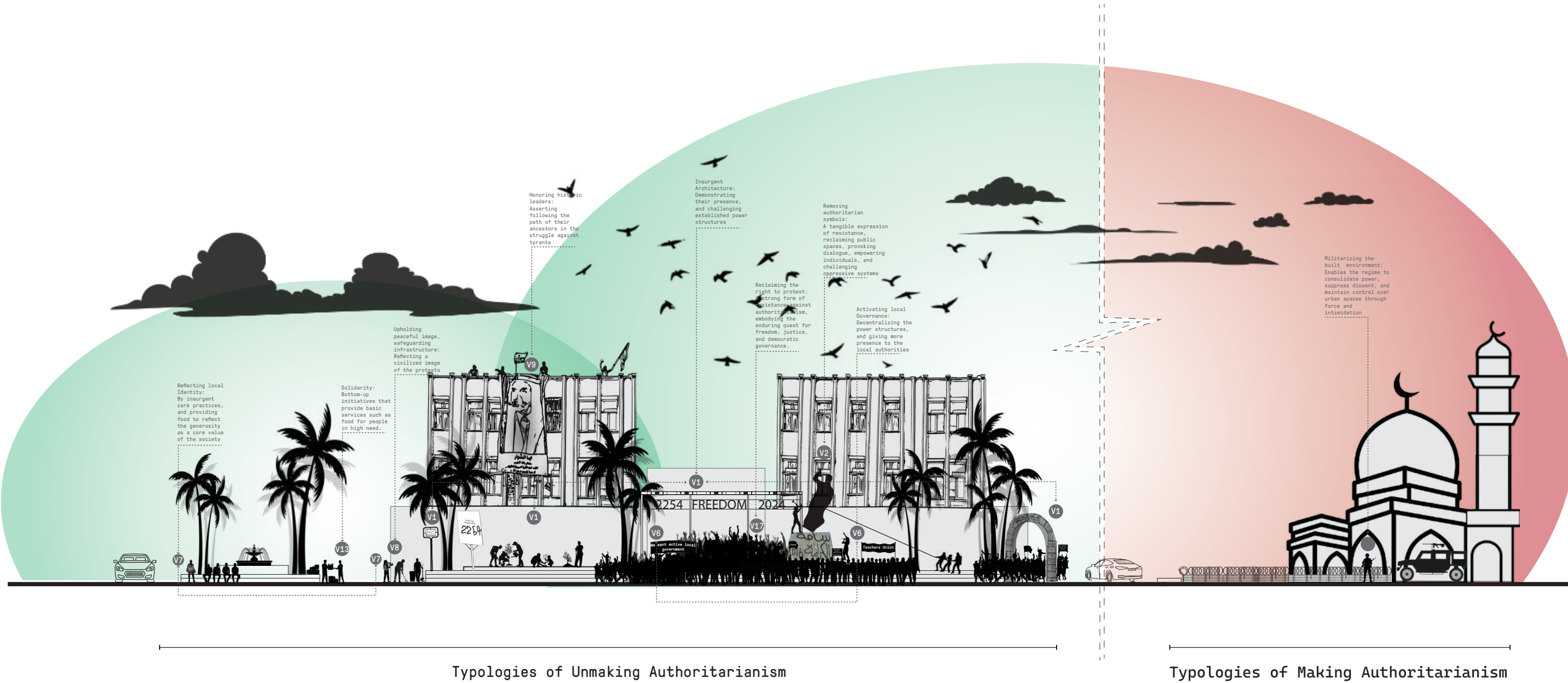
Ongoing Conflict | Patterns of Resistance



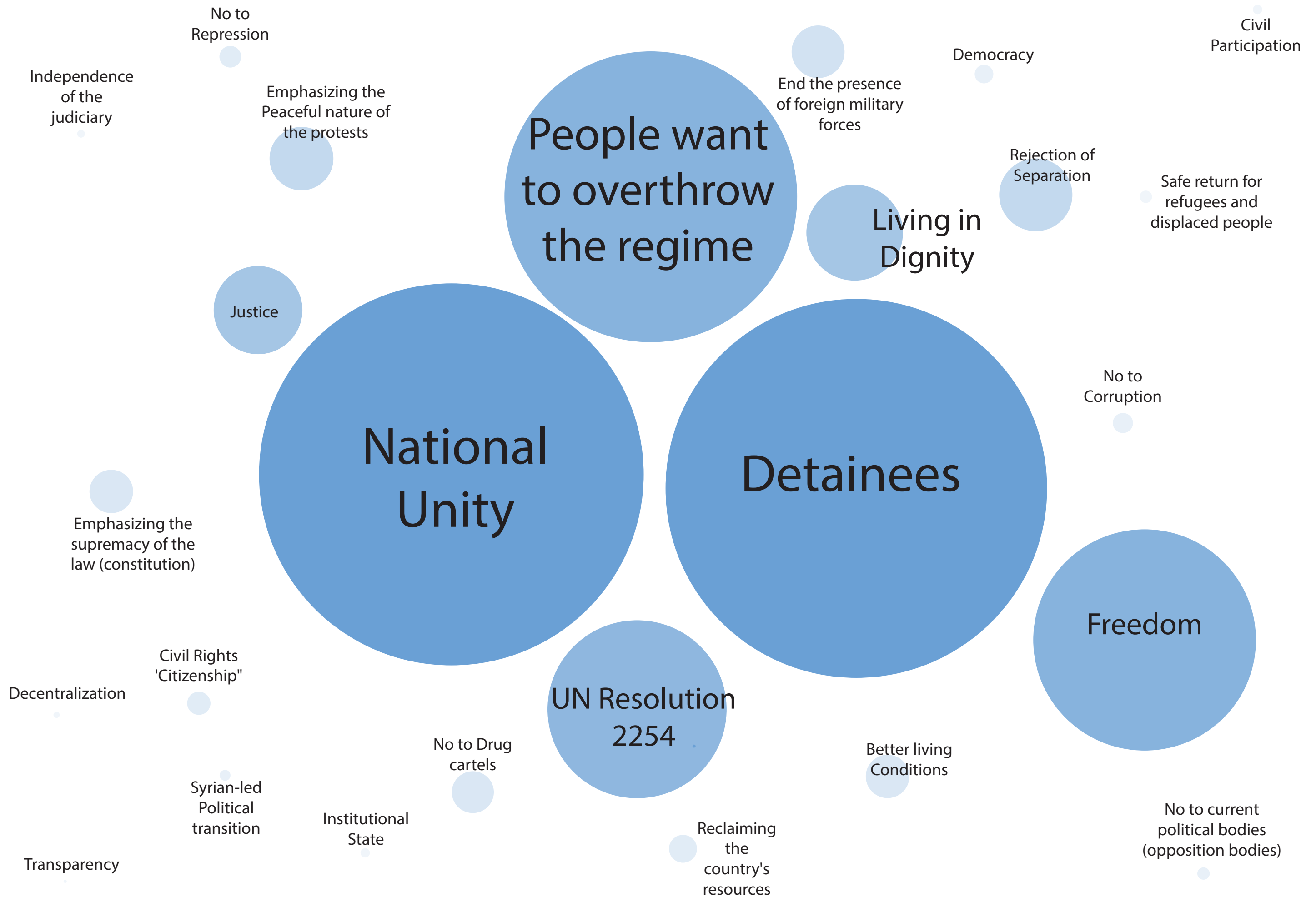
Ongoing Conflict

Patterns of Oppression VS Patterns of Resistance



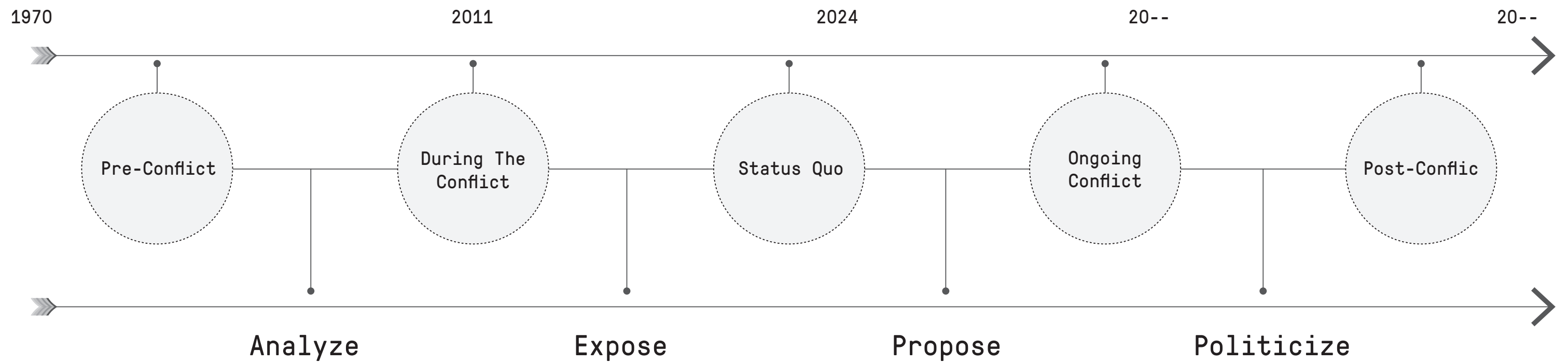








How to Bring War-torn Societies Back Together?

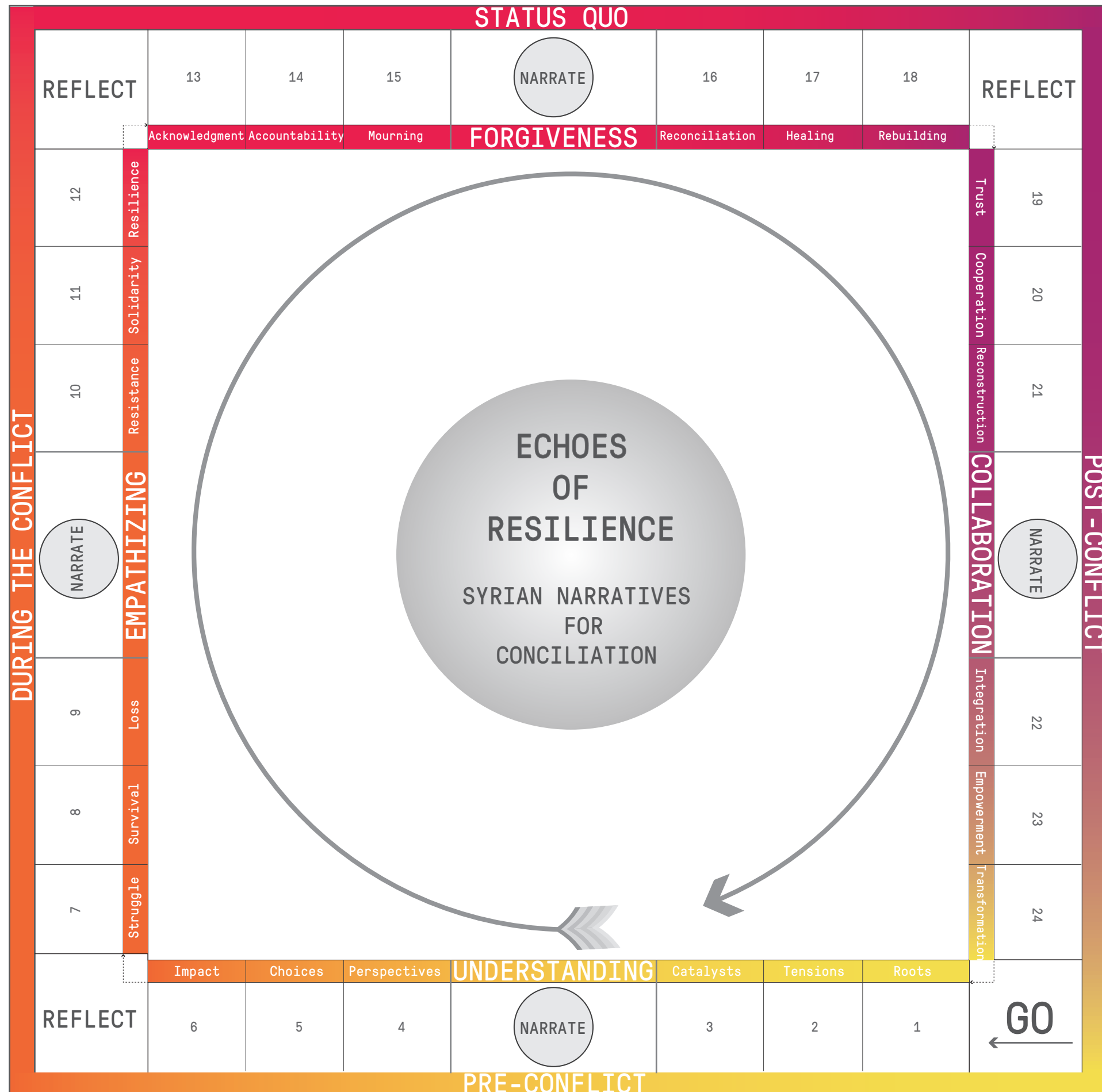


الشعب السوري واحد



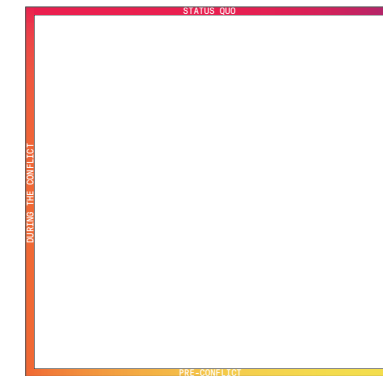
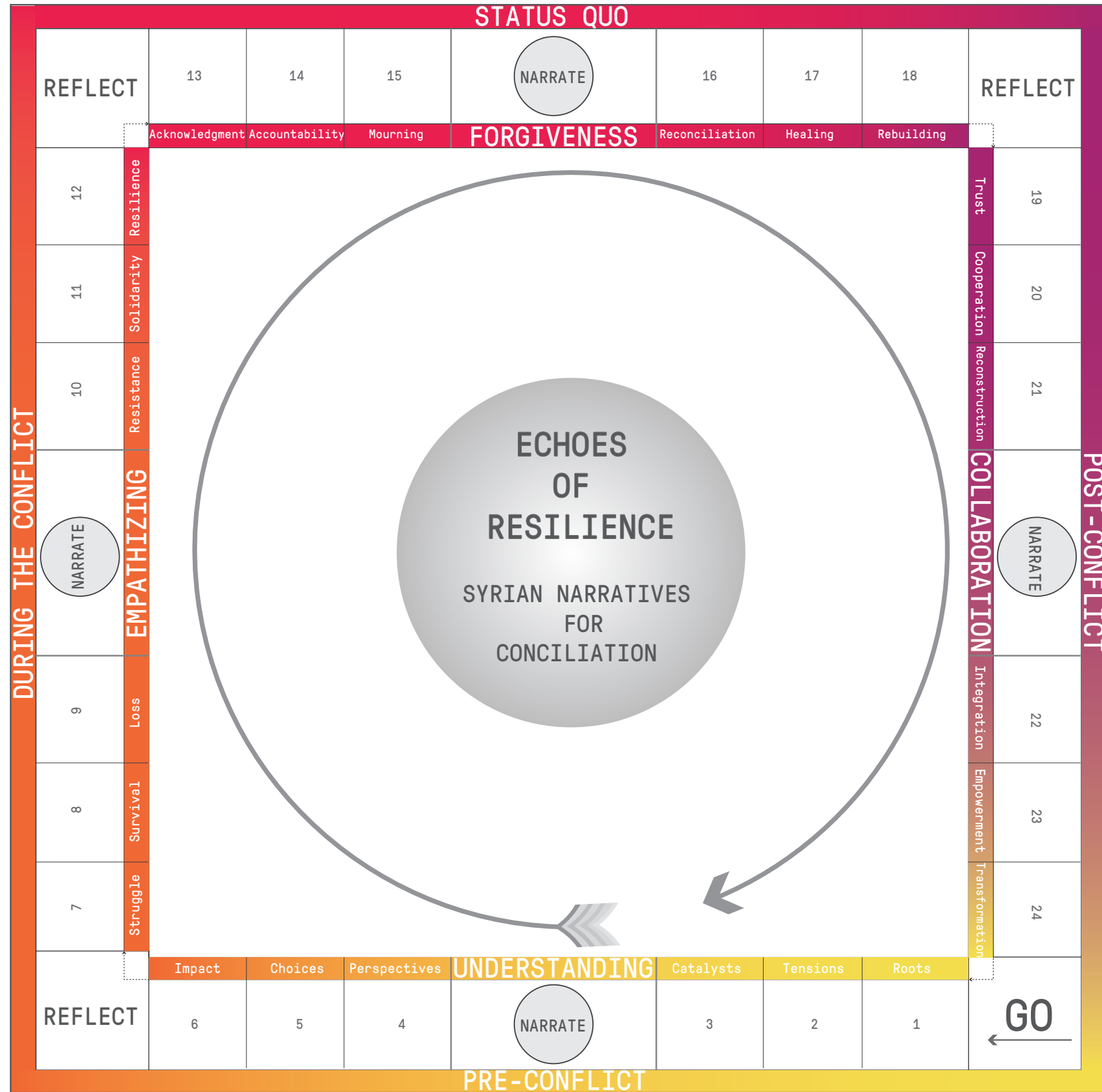
Storytelling was used as a tool of conciliation by integrating perspectives from anthropology, sociology and conflict resolution. Fostering sustainable solutions from local knowledge and community participation

Post-Conflict

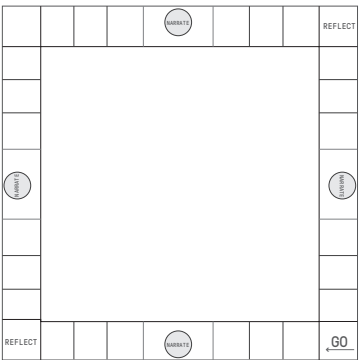
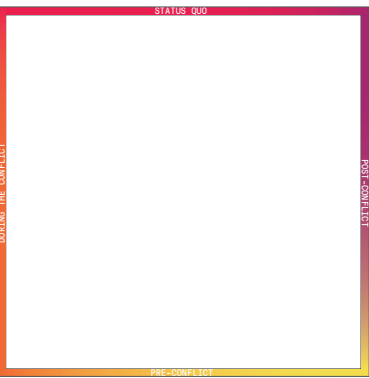
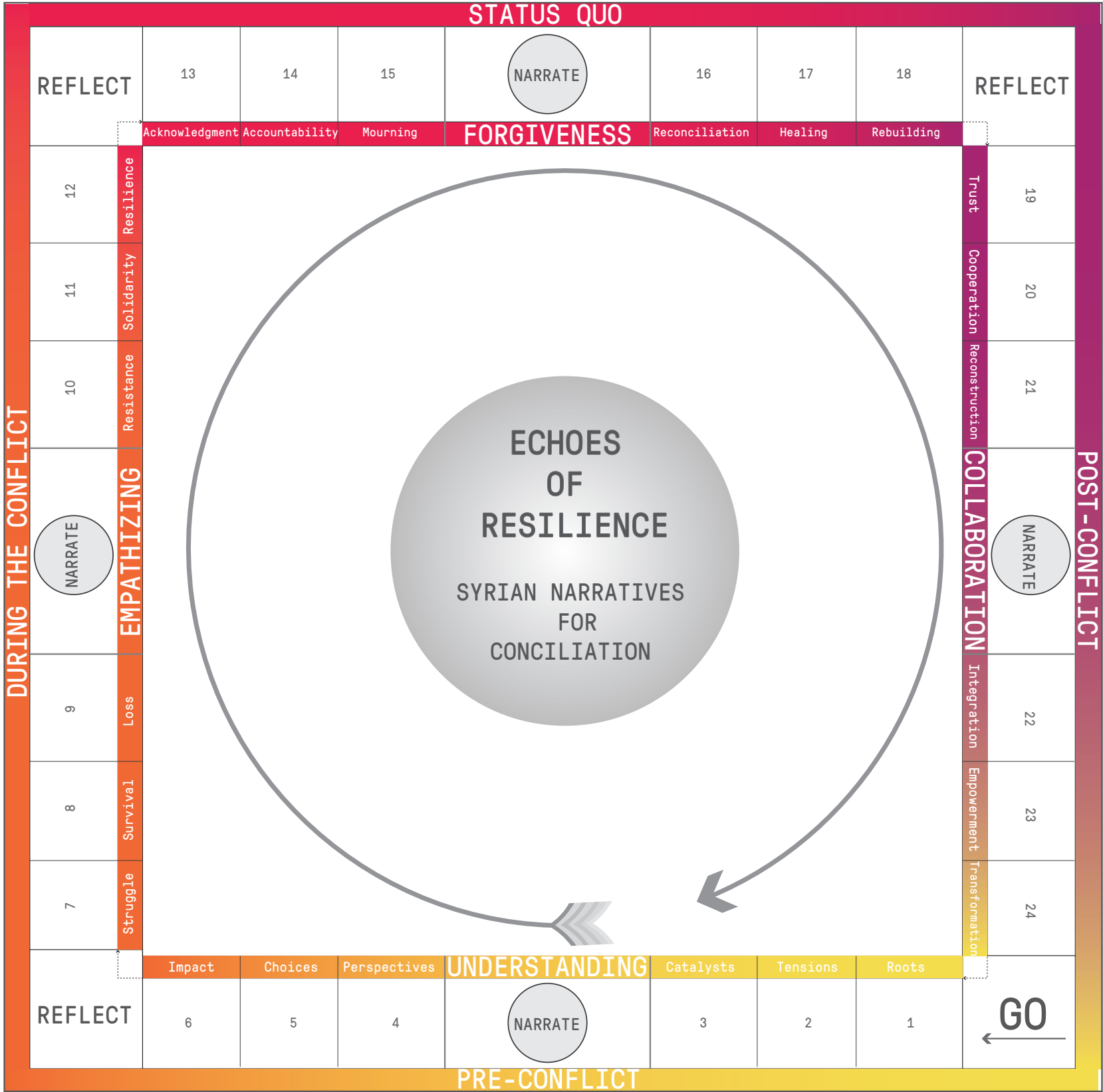


The tool uses storytelling to help people heal and reconcile after the conflict. Participants share and explore personal stories, revealing the resilience of individuals and communities. This fosters understanding, empathy, and dialogue, paving the way for collective healing and preserving the oral history of the Syrian narrative.

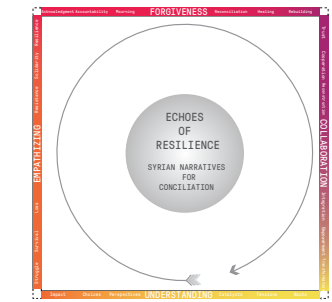
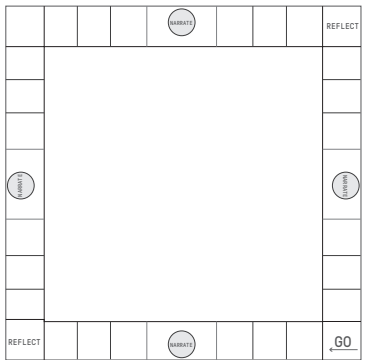
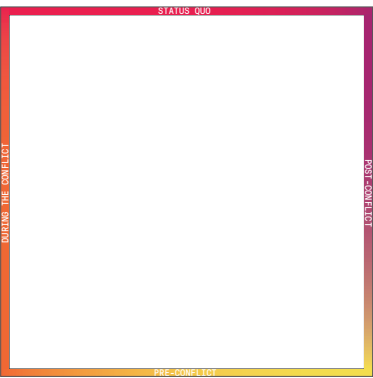
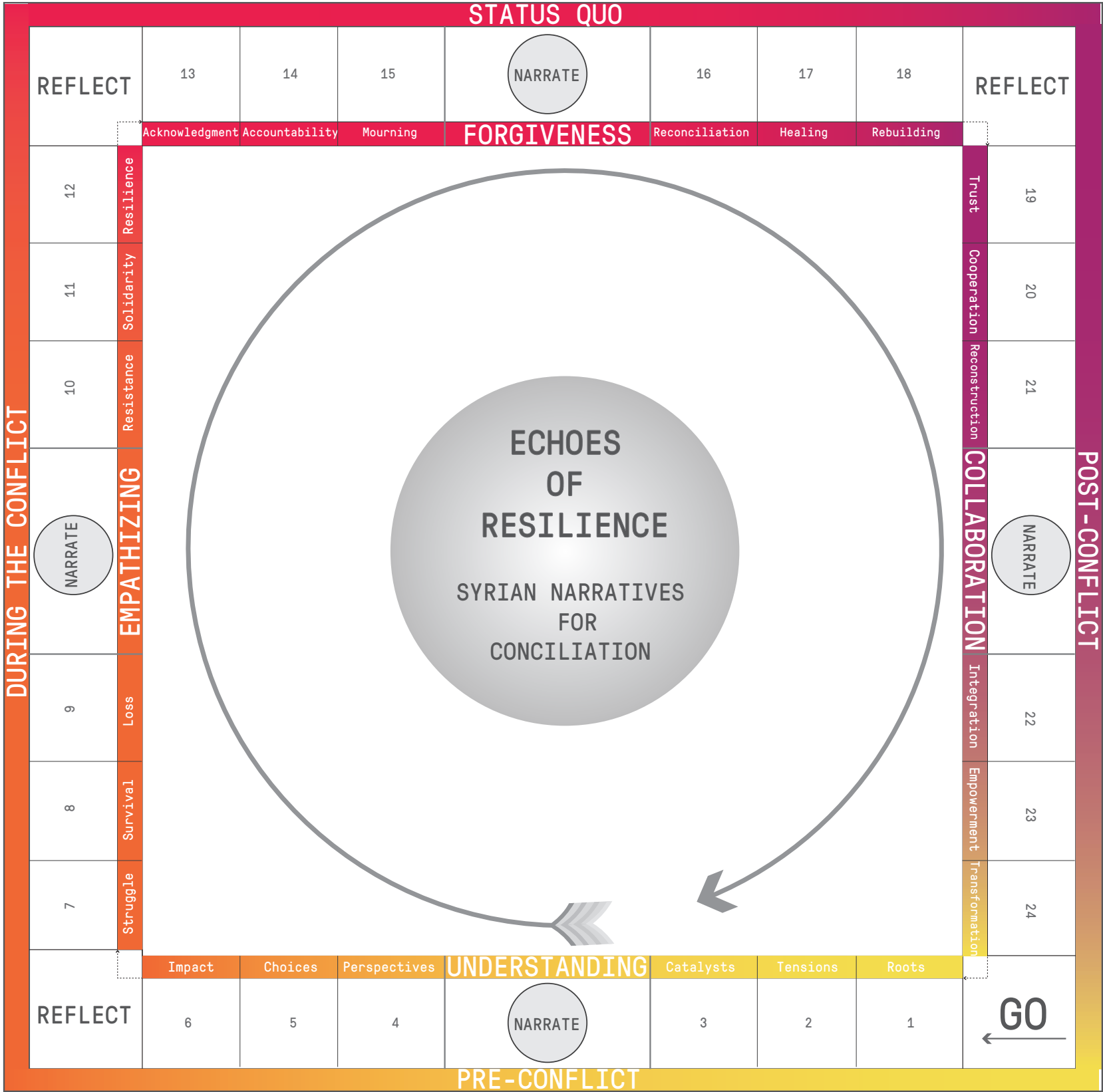
Post-Conflict



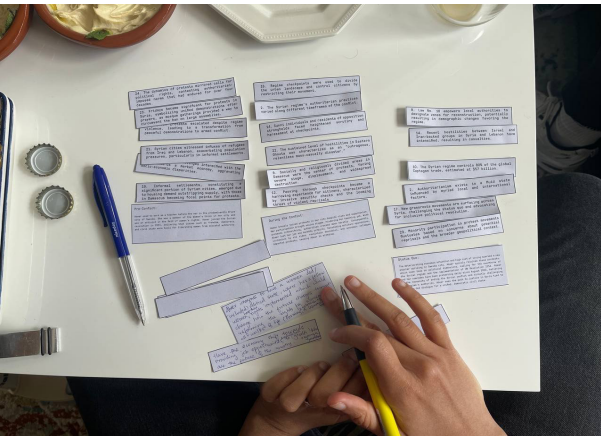
Post-Conflict

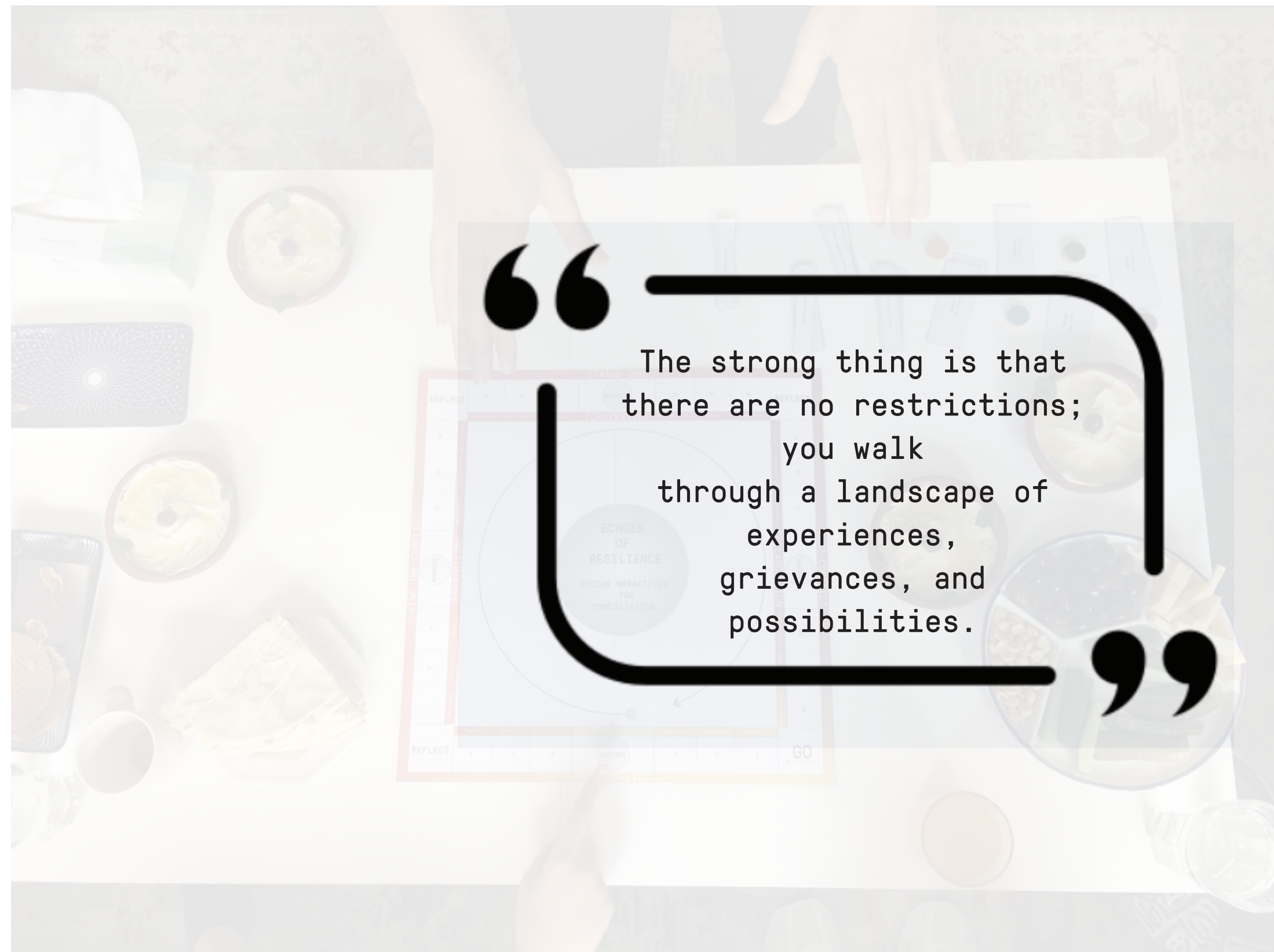


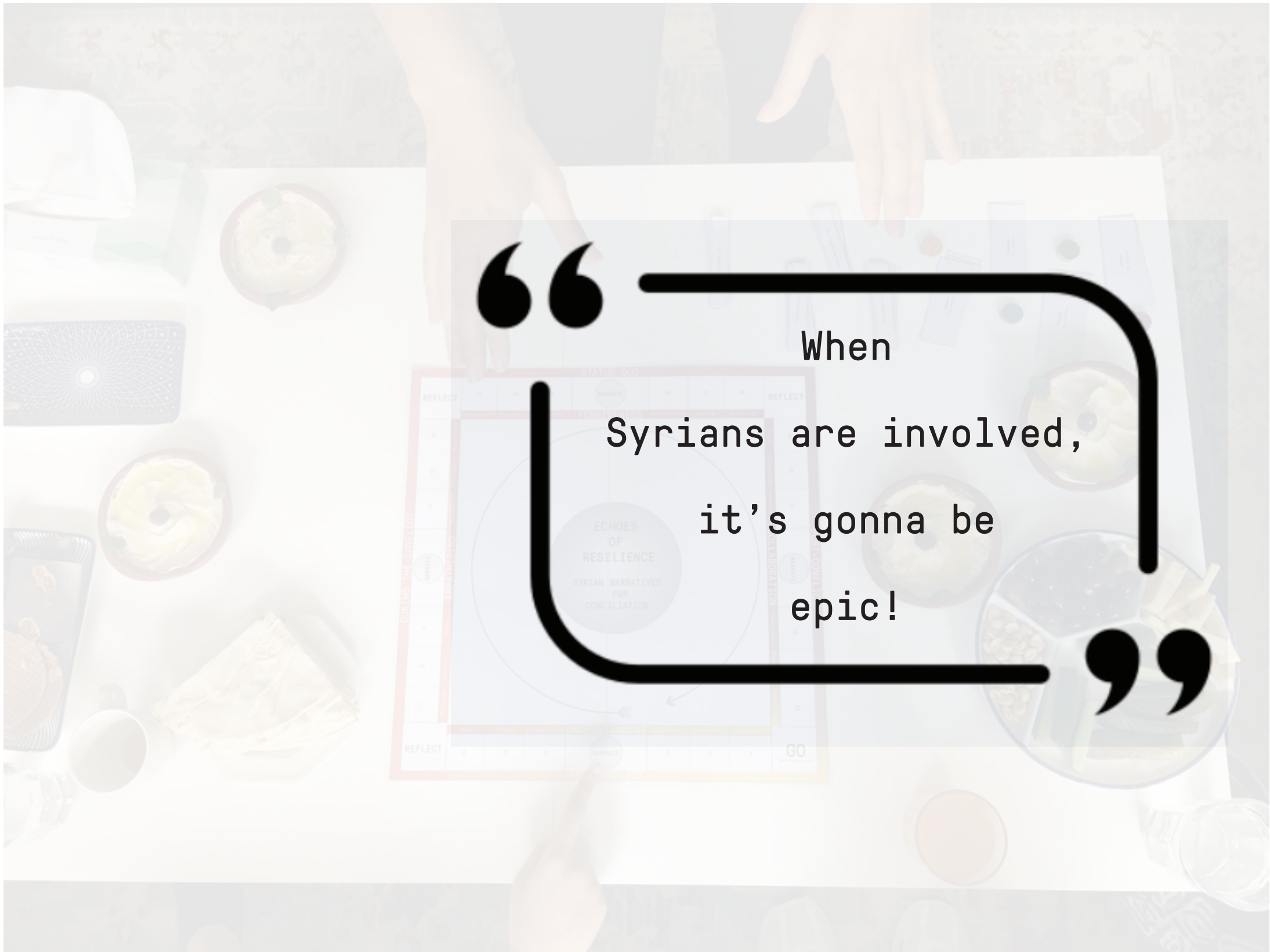
Post-Conflict



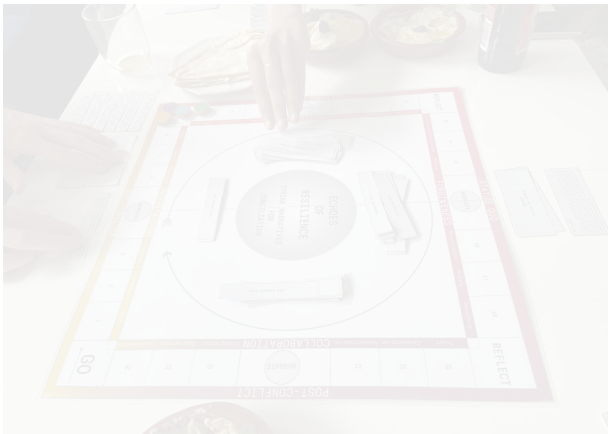
Post-Conflict | Tool Testing

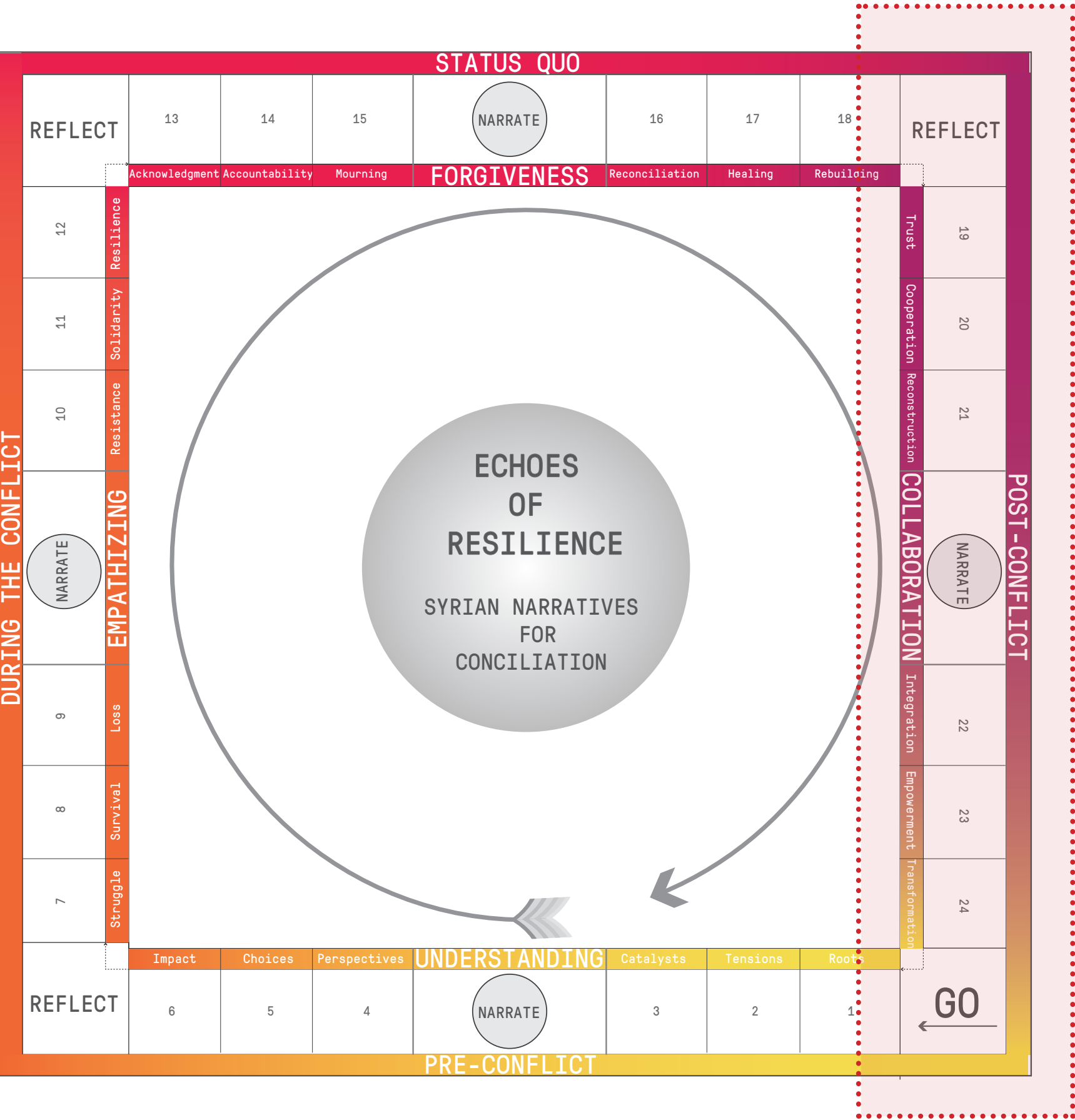






“ When
Syrians are involved,
it’s gonna be
epic! ”





Who
Tells
The
Future
Narrative?

Post-Conflict | Tool Testing

Ali wants the post to be ^{see your basket} back to "pre": stable / prosperous? secured / proud, but with an embrace of the new economical and political situation. "During" disrupted the pre, and Status Quo ensured kind of -.

Post-Conflict
Ghada continues to fight for empowerment and has had some breakthroughs to get women equality by creating women social groups. They are grassroots institutions that help support other women & children to have a safe space.

Abeer imagines to have a women led / included political state, where her & fellow women ^{have their} rights implemented which could change how the future changes through reforming the rights for women of all walks of life (forming a community led by women).

A place to live in happiness wherever he chooses, Berlin, synagog, any other place.
#NO BORDERS

Civilians having the right to choose their governing body and voice their opinions.

3. Grassroot initiatives are cooperating with local government councils to collaborate with locals.

Grassroot initiatives become local institutions for empowering human rights.

2. The state prioritizes activating economic development plans and reconstructs efforts.

Abeer also tries to form social networks with women from different communities to help them have a voice of their own.

Western Reparations for the middle east

Have the economy shift towards providing job opportunities, ^{education} to (youth) who are the future of the country. ^{rejuvenation}

1. Justice requires cooperation between government and local comm.

Content

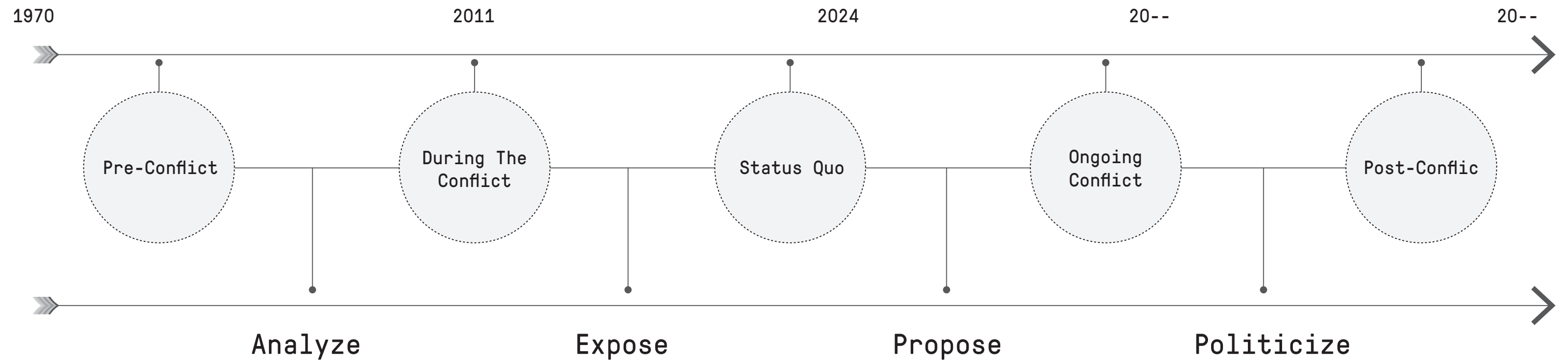
3. Conclusions

Conclusion

How can spatial planning be a narrating tool to provoke change, provide alternative spatial realities, and improve the social cohesion of war-torn societies in Syria?

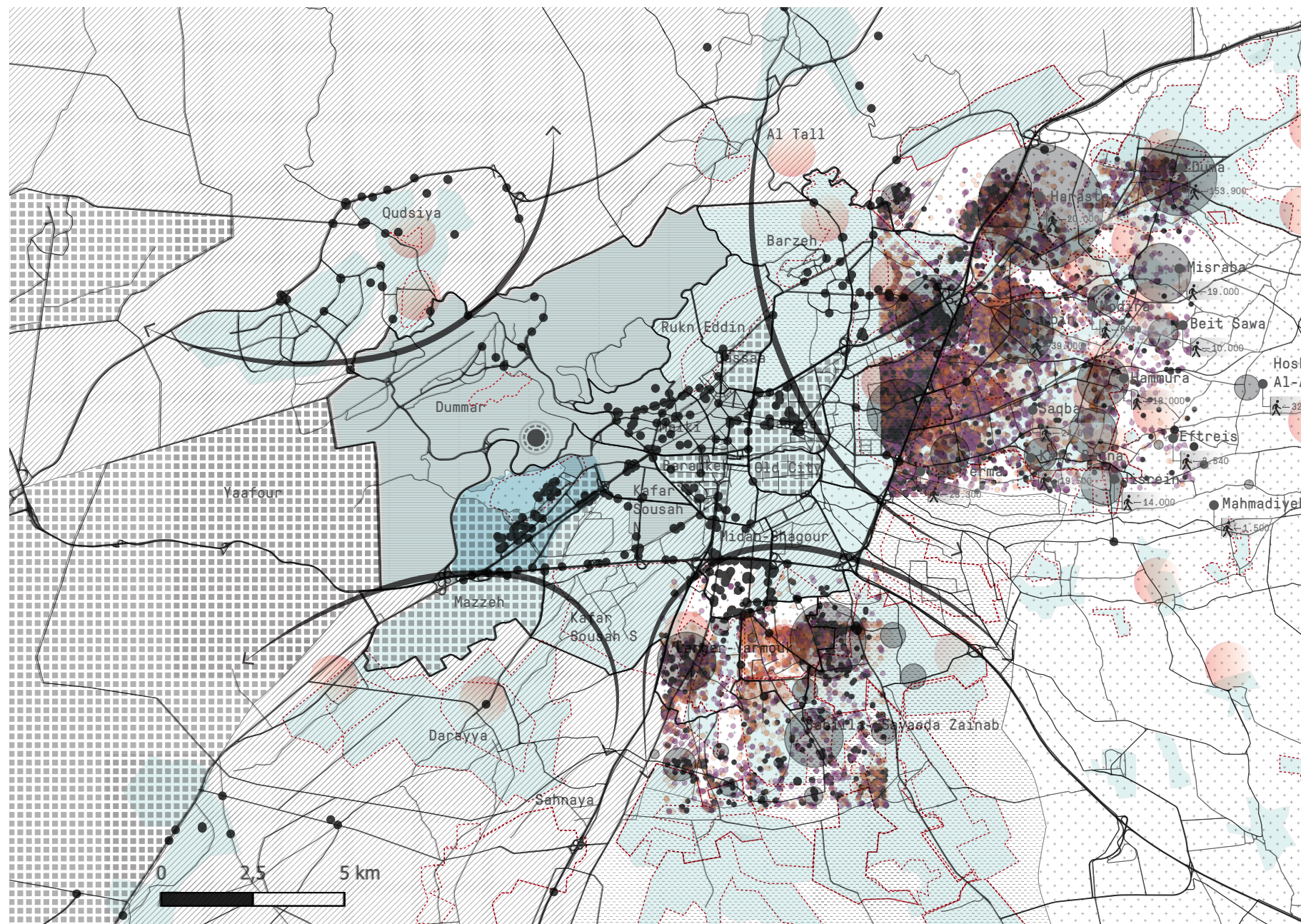
Conclusion

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Conclusion

How can spatial planning be a narrating tool to provoke change, provide alternative spatial realities, and **improve the social cohesion of war-torn societies in Syria?**



Conclusion

The implications of the findings

In Theory

In Practice

Conclusion

Future Research Directions

THANK YOU.

The Impossible Revolution

Pursuing Liberation, Peace, and Spatial Equity in
Syria

