



EDWARD AZAR'S THEORY OF
PROTRACTED SOCIAL CONFLICT:
THE CASE OF YEMEN AFTER 1990

BY

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ABSTRACT

The study investigates the causes of protracted conflicts in Yemen since the unification of the two Yemeni Republics in 1990 in relation to Edward Azar's theory of Protracted Social Conflict. The study verifies Azar's genesis factors of the protracted social conflict, namely a) communal content, b) human needs, c) governance and the state's role and d) international linkages and if they correlate with the protracted conflicts in Yemen after 1990. It also investigates if there are additional causes too. Irrespective of the fact that causes of conflicts in Yemen have been thoroughly discussed in literature, this study is the first of its type which provides a theoretical basis for an in-depth analysis of root-causes of protracted conflicts in Yemen since unification until today. Open-ended questionnaires were distributed to ten informants who were selected through a purposive/judgment sampling. Another eight mass media messages were selected through the same purposive/judgment sampling. This method of sampling was selected because of two reasons; 1) to obtain quality feedback, especially with the difficulty of accessing a wider range of experts due to war circumstances in Yemen and 2) to select relevant mass media messages that validate the theory of Azar, especially as the study is qualitative rather than quantitative. The study proposed two research questions: RQ1: 1. Why do conflicts keep conflagrating in Yemen since the unification of the two Yemeni Republics in 1990? RQ2: How well do Edward Azar's genesis variables of Protracted Social Conflict theory: a) communal content, b) human needs, c) governance and the state's role and d) international linkages, correlate with the protracted social conflicts in Yemen, especially since the 1990 unification? The findings of the study affirm that the genesis factors of Azar's theory of Protracted Social Conflict strongly prevail as the main causes for the protracted social conflicts in Yemen since 1990. Governance and the state's role is the most prevailing cause, both human needs and international linkages come second and then communal content as third. The study reveals new causes of the protracted social conflict in Yemen since 1990 which are not mentioned in the literature. The partisanship and party politics in Yemen, which were enhanced by the sudden application of political pluralism in Yemen after 1990, is one of the new causes revealed by this study. The American strategy of 'War on Terror' has played a major role in creating additional militant groups in Yemen other than AQAP and has also led to a nation-wide political unrest. Furthermore, the continuous involvement of regional countries including Saudi Arabia in Yemen's internal affairs is one of the causes for escalating conflicts in Yemen since 1990. The study suggests the need for further studies to verify and quantify the findings of this study.

ملخص البحث

هذه الدراسة هي دراسة استقصائية تبحث في عوامل اندلاع الصراعات في اليمن، وخصوصاً في فترة ما بعد توحيد اليمن بشطريه الشمالي والجنوبي في عام ١٩٩٠، وعلاقتها بعوامل نشوء الصراعات في نظرية إدوارد عازار "الصراع الاجتماعي طويل الأمد". تهدف الدراسة إلى التأكد من أن عوامل نشوء الصراعات التي حددتها نظرية عازار وهي المكون الاجتماعي، والاحتياجات الإنسانية، والحوكمة ودور الدولة، والروابط الدولية لها علاقة بأسباب نشوء الصراعات طويلة الأمد في اليمن بعد عام ١٩٩٠. كما أن الدراسة تستقصي وجود أية أسباب أخرى. على الرغم من أن أسباب نشوء الصراعات في اليمن قد تم مناقشتها باستفاضة في أدبيات الصراعات في اليمن، إلا أن هذه الدراسة هي الأولى من نوعها التي تقدم تحليلاً مركزاً وعلى أسس نظرية للأسباب الجذرية التي تساعد على نشوء الصراعات واستمرارها في اليمن في فترة ما بعد الوحدة اليمنية وحتى اليوم. تم توزيع استبيانات ذات سؤال مفتوح لعشرة مشاركين تم اختيارهم على أساس التصنيف الهديفي/ الحكمي للعينات، كما تم اختيار ثمان رسائل إعلامية بالطريقة نفسها لسببين: الحصول على ردود ذات جودة، وخصوصاً بسبب صعوبة الوصول إلى قطاع أوسع من الخبراء بسبب ظروف الحرب في اليمن ولتسهيل اختيار رسائل الإعلام ذات الصلة بموضوع الدراسة والتي تساعد على التحقق من صحة نظرية عازار خصوصاً أن الدراسة نوعية وليست كمية. قدمت الدراسة سؤالين: لماذا تستمر النزاعات في الاندلاع في اليمن منذ توحيده بشطريه في عام ١٩٩٠؟ هل لعوامل نظرية إدوارد عازار النشوئية السابق ذكرها دور في نشوء الصراعات طويلة الأمد في اليمن منذ عام ١٩٩٠؟ تؤكد نتائج الدراسة أن جميع عوامل نظرية إدوارد عازار "الصراع الاجتماعي طويل الأمد" حاضرة بقوة في اليمن منذ العام ١٩٩٠. في حين كانت الحوكمة ودور الدولة هي أكثر العوامل السائدة والمسببة للصراعات في اليمن منذ العام ١٩٩٠، جاءت الاحتياجات الإنسانية والروابط الدولية في المركز الثاني ومن بعدها المكونات الاجتماعية في المركز الثالث. كما كشفت الدراسة عن عوامل جديدة للصراع الاجتماعي طويل الأمد في اليمن منذ العام ١٩٩٠ والتي لم يرد ذكرها في أدبيات الرسالة بوصفها عوامل للصراعات في اليمن. أكدت الدراسة أن السياسة الحزبية والتحزب والتي تعززت من خلال التطبيق المفاجئ للتعديدية السياسية في اليمن بعد عام ١٩٩٠، كانت من أهم الأسباب لنشوء الصراعات طويلة الأمد في اليمن منذ الوحدة. كما كان للاستراتيجية الأمريكية "الحرب على الإرهاب" دور رئيسي في خلق جماعات مسلحة أخرى في اليمن بخلاف جماعة القاعدة في جزيرة العرب (عقاب)، وأدت أيضاً إلى نشوء الاضطرابات السياسية في جميع أنحاء البلاد ضد الدولة. وعلاوة على ذلك، فإن التدخل المستمر في شؤون اليمن الداخلية من قبل دول المنطقة بما فيها المملكة العربية السعودية هي أيضاً إحدى أسباب تصاعد حدة الصراعات في اليمن وخصوصاً منذ العام ١٩٩٠. كما تدعو الدراسة إلى إجراء المزيد من الدراسات لتأكيد نتائج هذه الدراسة.

APPROVAL PAGE

I certify that I have supervised and read this study and that in my opinion; it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Master of Political Science.

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own investigation, except where otherwise stated. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as a whole for any other degrees at IIUM or other institutions.

Amel Mohammed Abdulmajead Alariki

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This work is dedicated to my country Yemen and to the innocent people, who lost their lives, injured and emotionally or mentally affected by the protracted conflicts in their beloved homeland. By dedicating it to them I ask Allah, Al-Qadeer (the most capable) and Al-Raheem (the most merciful) to save Yemen and the People of Yemen, all Muslims all over the world and all innocent people around the world from the merchants of war

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Conflict as defined by Ross Stagner (1967) is a “situation in which two or more human beings desire goals which they perceived as being obtained by one or the other but not both” and each one “perceives the other as a barrier or threat to that goal” (Mitchell, 1981, p.15). Furthermore, Christopher Roger Mitchell links conflict situations with “parties come to possess mutually incompatible goals” (Mitchell, 1981, p.18). Thus, he characterises conflicts by performing coercive and violent behaviours that aim to prevent the opponent from achieving own objectives (Mitchell, 1981, p.15). He argues that the root causes of conflicts lie in the “emotional states of fear, hostility, anger or aggression shared by large and small groups of individuals” and sometimes “prejudices and assumptions inculcated into people” (Mitchell, 1981, p.25). He further upholds that the major cause for incompatible goals among conflicting parties is the “mis-match between social values and social structure”, the “conditions of scarcity and the value”, and incompatibilities regarding “the distribution of resources” or “the beliefs and behaviour of others” (Mitchell, 1981, p.18).

Yemen is located in the south of the Arabic Peninsula, borders Saudi Arabia and Oman and is surrounded by the Red Sea from the west and the Arabian Sea from the south. It has many important harbours including al-Hodaidah, al-Makha, al-Mukalla, and Aden as well as Bab al-Mandab strategic straight. The country has been going through many internal conflicts during recent decades including deadly civil

wars between the North and the South (before and after unification), between the state and al-Qaeda -arguably present in some southern governorates, between the state and the Zaydiya leaders (based in Sada'a and have supporters in many northern governorates), and between the state and the citizens over various reasons including cuts in fuel subsidies, food price increases, municipal polls and referendum and eventually led to the 2011 Yemen crisis and uprising. Yemen also faced external conflicts and disputes over its borders' demarcation and over its natural resources with some neighbouring countries including Saudi Arabia and Eritrea. Many argue that the 2015 crisis of the international and regional military intervention in Yemen is primarily a rivalry over the country's natural resources and strategic location.

The conflicts between the states of the North and the South were temporarily resolved in 1990 through the unification of the two Yemens. However, the communal differences between the Northern and Southern communities and the dominant and aggressive approaches taken by the after-unification regime (Northern dominant) towards the grievances of the people particularly from the South, all have led to the rise of a Southern secessionist movement. On the other hand, the long lasting confrontations supported by the United States in the so-called 'War on Terror' between the Yemeni forces and al-Qaeda members in Yemen have created increasing internal dissatisfaction and concerns of Yemen losing its sovereignty. American pilotless aircrafts killing Yemenis on their homeland (and internationals as well) were always a heated debate on different media outlets and led to the arrest and sometimes disappearance of journalists. Furthermore, the six civil wars launched against some prominent leaders of the Zaydiya- Shiite sect- the closest Shiite sect to the Sunni sect- in Sa'adda (capital of Zaydiya) by the state forces (occasionally supported by Saudi air forces) left dozens of destroyed villages and hundreds of deaths among civilians

and strengthened the legitimacy of the militant Huthi movement. Moreover, the lack of justice and equality and the increasing grievances of citizens led to occasional confrontations between the state and citizens over their basic human needs including better economic opportunities and more inclusive political participation and eventually led to the 2011-Uprising.

“Impoverished but strategically important, the tussle for power in Yemen has serious implications for the region and the security of the West,” (BBC, 2015) is a headline made by the British media corporation on the same day of launching the so-called ‘Firmness Storm’, a Saudi-led-coalition’s military intervention in Yemen launched on 26th March 2015. This headline and many similar ones have been broadcast by regional and international media outlets during the last few decades and considerably assisted in setting the platform for continuous intervention in the internal politics of Yemen at various stages of its modern history. Indeed, most (if not all) of the important political benchmarks of Yemen’s modern history and the deadly conflicts the country faced are correlated with external factors and influenced by regional or international interferences or interventions. Conflicts such as the 1918 war (British intervention), the 1934 war (Saudi intervention), the 1962 and 1963 revolutions (Egyptian and Saudi interferences), the ‘the Siege of the Seventy Days’ in 1968 (Egyptian and Saudi interventions), the 1978 civil war (Saudi, Syrian and Iraqi interventions), the 1986 civil war (British interference), the 1994 civil war (Saudi and Gulf countries interference) and the 2015 Saudi-led coalition intervention in Yemen (on-going); are some examples for regional and international intervention.

The 2015 military intervention of Saudi Arabia and (supported by twelve-country coalition, the United States and the UK) is the first of its kind as a massive scale military intervention in Yemen. The brutality of the intervention is evident

through the heavy airstrikes, through the use of illegal weapons and cluster missiles against many cities and villages and through the high statistics of deaths and injuries among civilians. It is also evident through targeting the country's infrastructures including different governmental authorities' buildings, roads, universities, schools and hospitals overlooking international laws of Just Wars. Food convoys, internal displaced people's (IDPs) camps and inhabited neighbourhoods were also targets of heavy use of weaponry. As at 2015 and according to Yemen Ministry of Health's spokesman, the number of recorded deaths reached over five thousand (5299) and those injured reached over thirteen thousand (13440) (Al-Haqiqa, 2015). Bearing in mind, these statistics include the results of the coalition's airstrikes only while records of the victims of violent fights among the Yemeni conflicting factions have not been revealed yet. Records also show that coalition's airstrikes are mostly concentrated on the Zaydi prominent states such as Sana'a, Sa'ada and Haja and those most civilian casualties and deaths are from these states in an indication of possible ethnic cleansing of this sect in Yemen.

Therefore, this study is an attempt to analyse the root causes that led conflicts to conflagrate in Yemen particularly since the unification of the Northern and Southern republics of Yemen in 1990. It also attempts to investigate how international linkages and interventions influence internal conflicts in Yemen. The study utilises Edward Azar's theory of Protracted Social Conflict for the purpose of a better understanding of the protracted social conflict's root causes in Yemen. Key literature notions such as communal content, communal identity, human needs, state, governance, partisanship, polarization, colonial legacy, historical rivalry, security, autonomy, economic dependency and international and domestic capital will be investigated.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The on-going conflict in Yemen is reaching a critical juncture and leading to the death of hundreds of Yemeni civilians every day and involving a serious military regional and international intervention. There is some analysis in the literature about the root causes of conflicts in Yemen; however, there are limited studies which analyse the causes that make conflicts in Yemen easy to conflagrate. The analysis of the communal content of the North and the South, the history of division among rival factions, the dynamics of the regime alliances, the military rivalry, the tribal structure, the religious influence and the possible causes behind the emergence of militant insurgency have been neglected in the analysis.

There are also limited studies that investigate the international and the regional interference and linkages and their roles in instigating conflicts in Yemen. Yemen's economic dependency on international and regional donors and its dependency on the international economy and markets, and how they influence Yemen's autonomy and risks the basic security needs of Yemeni citizens, have been neglected in the literature. Furthermore, the political and military relations of Yemen with regional states and international powers and how these relations instigate internal as well as external conflicts in Yemen and threaten its stability is almost absent in the literature.

Although, various measures to mitigate the conflicts in Yemen (particularly the very recent ones) were initiated and supported by international, regional, and internal actors, the conflicts kept on growing without a resolution until it reached deadly military confrontations involving regional and international powers. Therefore, this study aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the social, economic and political root causes that assist conflicts to conflagrate in Yemen.

1.3 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

- 1) Conflicts keep conflagrating in Yemen especially since the unification of the two republics of Yemen in 1990, a fact that requires an in-depth conflict analysis in order to reach a close-to-reality understanding of the root causes of the protracted social conflict in Yemen and in order to mitigate them in the future.
- 2) The on-going regional and international military intervention in Yemen is an evidence of how international linkages influence internal conflicts in Yemen, therefore, it is important to attempt to analyse the nature of international linkages in Yemen.
- 3) This study can assist post-conflict authorities, civil society and grass-root organisations in Yemen in drafting policies that work towards conflict transformation and peace education and to select the most appropriate and most conflict-sensitive transformation responses.

1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This study has two main objectives as follows:

1. To investigate why conflicts keep conflagrate in Yemen since the unification of the North and the South of Yemen in 1990.
2. To analyse the root causes of conflicts in Yemen in relation to Edward Azar's theory of "Protracted Social Conflict" and his genesis variables; communal contents, human needs, governance and the state's role and the international linkages.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study aims to find answers to the following questions:

1. Why conflicts keep conflagrate in Yemen since the unification of the two Yemeni republics in 1990?
2. How well do Edward Azar's genesis variables of Protracted Social Conflict theory: a) communal content, b) human needs, c) governance and the state's role and d) international linkages, correlate to the protracted social conflict in Yemen especially since the 1990 unification?

1.6 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study will focus on the root causes that assist social conflicts to conflagrate in Yemen and why it always attracts external intervention. Further analysis of conflict theories suggests that not only the lack of psychosocial and political as well as moral and spiritual conditions for peace (theory of integrative peace) leads to possible conflicts in any society, but also the ruling class versus working class and the instrumentation of the legal and political systems by the dominant ruling class (Marxist theory). And if not a heightened sense of social identity and self-image that make groups divide the world into "them" and "us" in a process of social categorisation (theory of social identity), then the "negative identity" that distinguishes an "enemy" from an "ally" (enemy system theory). Let alone the elite competition over natural resources that leads into relative deprivation and polarization (theory of greed and grievance), and the inequalities to access the range of social services (health, education, care and housing), the inequalities in distributing political opportunities and power, and the inequalities in recognising different groups of the society (horizontal inequalities theory). What theory, then, is most relevant to the

conflict in Yemen? And why it is so? Part of the answer, it seems, is the Edward Azar's 1990's theory of "Protracted Social Conflict".

The study will utilise Edward Azar's theory of "Protracted Social Conflict (PSC)" for the following reasons:

- a) PSC theory is a result of extensive conflict management and international relations researches for almost of two decades. Edward Azar, a professor of government and politics at Stanford University, developed this theory in 1990 after a thorough analysis to the recurrent conflicts in the Arab region where Yemen is located.
- b) PSC theory is one of very few which points out the international linkage and its role as one of the causes for protracted social conflict in countries especially those with colonial history such as Yemen.

Protracted social conflict as defined by Azar "originate when communal groups (defined by shared ethnic, religious, linguistic, or other cultural characteristics) are denied their distinct identity or collective development needs" (Azar, 1990: viii). He further argues that "these conflicts have a propensity for involving neighbouring communities and states, and even the superpowers" (Azar, 1990: viii). Furthermore, he associates protracted social conflict with terrorism and the use of destructive weapons (Azar, 1990, p.2). According to Azar, "every conflict goes through a cycle of genesis, maturity, reduction and termination" (Azar, 1990, p.6) and every stage of them need systematic analysis. Genesis is the circumstances that transform a conflict to a violent one and followed by process dynamics and outcome analysis. The process dynamics; according to Azar contains three clusters of variables: 1) communal actions and strategies, 2) state actions and strategies and 3) built-in mechanisms of conflict (Azar, 1990, pp.12-15). The outcome analysis of Azar contains the analysis of the four

following conditions generated by conflicts; 1) deterioration of physical security, 2) institutional deformity, 3) psychological ossification, and 4) increased dependency and cliency (Azar, 1990, pp.15-17). During the course of this study, the researcher will only focus on the genesis of the conflict which (in the opinion of the researcher) will lead to the suggestion of more appropriate recommendations for conflict transformation in Yemen. Edward Azar's genesis includes:

1.6.1 Communal Content

Azar's hypothesis postulates that "if society is multi-communal in composition, conflicts are most likely to arise" (Azar, 1990, p.7). For him, the "colonial legacy 'divide and rule'" in a country and the "historical pattern of rivalry among communal groups" are two important factors that cause the multi-communal composition in any society (Azar, 1990, p.7).

1.6.2 Human Needs

Azar argues that "individual and communal physical survival and well-being" are essential human needs (Azar, 1990, p.7). Fulfilment of material needs in a just and evenly manner, and meeting grievances by the authorities are crucial to avoid a niche for a protracted social conflict (Azar, 1990, p.9). Azar's hypothesis is that the denial of access to human needs is rooted in the denial of accepting other communal identities which increases the possibility of protracted conflicts to persist and arise (Azar, 1990, p.9). He further suggests that an "unbalanced rapid-growth development strategy distorts traditional allocation of resources and cause sectorial and regional imbalances" (Azar, 1990, p.9).

1.6.3 Governance and the State's Role

Fulfillment of basic human needs requires a competent and strong state and studying the communal content of the state itself is important for analysing protracted social conflict (PSC). For Azar, political authority is usually controlled by a hegemonic group/coalition or by a dominant identity group (Azar, 1990, p.10). He further argues that these hegemonic groups “limit access to social institutions by other identity groups, thus, creating crises of legitimacy” (Azar, 1990, p.11). And policy capacity, the authority structure and the pattern of decision-making are essential for formulating, evaluating and implementing policies and determining the effectiveness of the state (Azar, 1990, p.11). Therefore, Azar’s hypothesis is that most states which experience protracted social conflict tend to be characterised by incompetent, parochial, fragile and authoritarian governments (Azar, 1990, p.11).

1.6.4 International Linkages

Azar contends that formation of political institutions is greatly influenced by patterns of linkage with the international system (Azar, 1990, p.11). His hypothesis identifies two patterns for this linkage; the first is economic dependency that limits the autonomy of the state and impedes the fulfillment of security needs especially for certain communal groups (Azar, 1990, p.11). This economic dependency “distorts the domestic political and economic systems through the realignment of subtle coalitions of international capital, domestic capital and the state” (Azar, 1990, p.11). The second is the political and military client relationships with strong states where protection for the PSC state is provided in return for loyalty which involves some sacrifices in autonomy and independence (Azar, 1990, p.11). As a result; the persuasion of

domestic and foreign policies disjoined from, or contradictory to the needs of the state's own public (Azar, 1990, p.11).

1.7 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1.7.1 Research Design and Methods

Due to the war conditions in Yemen and the difficulty in accessing the relevant actors of the conflicts there as well as the limitation of time and funds for this study, other research methods were not used. Therefore, the study employed the 'qualitative content analysis' approach a term employed by Altheide in 1996 (Bryman, 2008, p.276). The study is mainly a 'directed' content analysis where it is believed that the use of the theory helped to "guide the initial codes and predict the relationships among variables" (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p.1281) and made "replicable and valid inferences from data into context" (Elo and Kyngas, 2007, p.108). This method also helped to validate Azar's theory through "descriptively report the percent of supporting versus non-supporting codes for each participant" (Hsieh, Shannon, 2005, p.1283).

The advantage of the qualitative content analysis is that it is "highly flexible and can be applied to a wide variety of different kinds of unstructured information including mass media outputs" and, furthermore, "can allow information to be generated about social groups to which it is difficult to gain access including elite groups, senior clergy, company directors and military personnel" (Bryman, 2008, p.289). The qualitative content analysis was used to analyse primary first-hand data collected by the researcher as well as secondary materials that are related to the conflict in Yemen (i.e. T.V. interviews, documentary films, speeches, press conferences, etc...). Themes, concepts, words and semantics were analysed in what is

called ‘thematic analyses’ and an index of central themes and subthemes were constructed before collecting data as a framework for the analyses and the collection of data.

1.7.2 Data Collection and Analysis

The study from one hand depends on a thorough analysis of the available general academic literature on the causes of protracted social conflict in Yemen since 1990, an analysis of open-ended questionnaire written by ten respondents and an analysis of eight messages communicated via mass media. The researcher minutely conducted an analysis of observations obtained from primary and secondary data including personal documents, official documents derived from the state as well as private sources, Mass media outputs and virtual documents. Participants in the study were asked to write letters about their opinions on why social conflicts keep conflagrating in Yemen since 1990. Responses of ten participants were targeted by the researcher; however, sixty four were asked to increase the probability of getting answers. The people who were asked to participate were selected based on their reputation of well knowledge of Yemeni history and politics. The list of participants included ambassadors, academicians, PhD students, union activists, journalists, political analysts and governmental officials. Only ten people replied though many reminders were sent as they should more interest to verbally respond to specific questions. However, the purpose of the study is to test and prop Edward Azar’s ‘Protracted Social Conflict’ theory, therefore, an open-ended question followed with targeted questions was the best technique to validate the theory (Hsieh, Shannon, 2005, p.1281). Representativeness of the selection of participants as well as other types of materials will remain a concern for whether they are typical evidences or not. And in order to

minimise this concern, the researcher tried to include participants from the different conflicting parties and academicians who might provide in-depth insights to the analysis and tried to analyse the credibility of the information provided by them.

As the study attempts to answer very specific questions about the causes of the protracted social conflict in Yemen since 1990, a set of eight messages that are intended for unidentified audience and were mediated via T.V. and internet were identified and selected for critical and qualitative content analysis. The Purposive/Judgment sampling was used where the researcher made “the decision as to what units she deems appropriate to include in the sample” (Neuendorf, 2002, p.88) of both the participants in the study and the selected messages. The researcher selected the messages from the videos available online, which are relevant to the topic of the conflicts in Yemen since 1990, and can assist to answer the study’s questions. Both manifest and latent content analysis were used as themes which are clear and present were analysed as well as between the lines and hidden ones. As there is no agreed-upon universal criteria for the size of the sample (Neuendorf, 2002, p.88), therefore, the researcher felt free to select a small sample of eight videos due to the limited scope of this study. The documents were examined in terms of the context in which they were produced, what they were supposed to accomplish and who they are written for. They also were viewed as linked to other documents in what is called inter-textuality and inter-connectedness. However, as advised by Atkinson and Coffey (2004, p.72) these documents should not be treated as a reflection of reality rather as texts written for a specific purpose. A list of the interviews, documentaries and videos that were selected for the analysis is enclosed with the study.

Peter Mohler & Cornelia Zull asserts that “both human and computer coding may be applied to the analysis of open-ended responses” (2001, p.61), therefore, the

researcher decided to do the coding and the analysis manually without the use of the software application due to the limited time of the study “Atlas TI 7”. Both pre-set coding schemes as well as emergent coding scheme were used in order to give flexibility when analysing the collected data to cover the causes of the protracted social conflict identified by Azar and any new causes suggested by the respondents or in the mass messages. Anselm Strauss and Juliet Corbin suggest that paying attention to word repetition, key words-in-context, compare and contrast, searching for missing information, metaphors and analogies, transitions, connectors, unmarked text, pawing and cutting and sorting is important for qualitative content analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). A combination of the semiotics and hermeneutics approaches were used in which the former was an attempt to analyse and “uncover the hidden meanings of symbols and signs” and the later was to “analyse the text and the context it was produced within” (Bryman, 2008, p.533). As findings of variables can also be judged based on subjective and broad assessment (Moore, 1999); therefore, the researcher judged the value and the quality of the collected data in comparison to realities on the ground and data reviewed in literature and vice-versa. During the coding, the researcher worked to reduce the raw data to the ones relevant to the research’s questions and develop them into themes. While reviewing the academic literature as well as the primary collected data, she kept writing reflective notes in order to remember first reactions and thoughts to data and to improve the validity of developed themes. Different stages of classifying, comparing, labelling, translating and transliterating, and defining and describing of the themes were conducted during the analysis of the academic literature and the primary collected data by the researcher and as identified by Mojtaba Vaismoradi and others (2016, pp.105-106). When analysing the causes of the protracted social conflict in Yemen as themes and their