

Saudi Arabian-Led Intervention in Yemen Conflicts

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ABSTRACT: *The conflict in Yemen started as a civil war, which was perpetuated by various conflicting groups' attempts to address and compete for political, economic, and social influence in Yemen (Byers & Stewart, n.d.). However, the Saudi Arabian-led intervention has escalated the local conflicts and transformed the conflicts in Yemen into a significant regional and global competition between different countries and regional sects (Byers & Stewart, n.d.). The main goals of this research are to protect children's rights and safety, as well as prevent armed conflicts in Yemen. The author will analyze the Saudi Arabian-led intervention in Yemeni conflicts by using social identity theory, the theory of structural violence, and the theory of offensive realism. Social identity theory provides a notion that conflicts between groups might be caused by favoritism towards in-group members and marginalization towards out-group members (Turner & Tajfel, 1986). The theory of structural violence explains the interrelationships among structural inequality, poverty, and violence in society (Galtung & Fischer, 2013). The theory of offensive realism illustrates the political, economic, and territorial factors that attracted different nations and sects to participate in the Saudi Arabian-led intervention of the Yemeni conflicts (Lobell, 2010). Moreover, the author will introduce interest-based mediation to conflicting parties to allow them to explore alternatives for making peace (Moore, 1987). The integrated analyses of theories and intervention practice will enhance the understanding of this conflicting case, as well as provide a comprehensive understanding about parties' interests and the importance of protecting children's rights in the conflicts.*

KEYWORDS: Saudi Arabian-Led Intervention, interest-based mediation, Social Identity Theory, Theory of Offensive Realism, Theory of Structural Violence

INTRODUCTION

Statement for the Conflict

Yemen is located on the Arabian Peninsula and borders Saudi Arabia and the Red Sea. It is one of the poorest Arab countries, and its economy is highly dependent on declining revenues from its oil and gas reserves (Index of Economic Freedom, 2019). The religious and political sects in Yemen

have largely divided the country's geography (ECFR, n.d.). Around 65% of Yemen's population is Sunni and 35% is Shia. Also, the Houthi armed forces are mainly composed of Shia tribal forces in northern Yemen (Du Shi Chen Bao, 2015). The Houthi armed forces cooperated with Iran with the goals of restraining Saudi Arabian influence and gaining regional power in Yemen (Du Shi Chen Bao, 2015). The Yemen armed conflict highlights the long-term instability in Yemen which led to the Saudi Arabian-led intervention. The competition of different groups to gain interests led the country to face a multi-dimensional crisis that represented the imbalance of tribal political power and international competition, which contributed to the armed conflicts (Byers & Stewart, n.d.).

Yemen has serious humanitarian crises, an economic crisis, and a shortage of medical resources. Yemen has a humanitarian crisis, with more than 22 million people, which is almost 75% of the population, in need of emergent humanitarian assistance (Ferdinando, 2018). Also, children have been displaced from their homes and families due to the fighting and airstrikes (OHCHR, n.d.). People experienced shortages of food and medical care. According to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR, n.d.), the Saudi Arabian-led intervention in Yemen led to the deaths of more than 20 million civilians, and over 10,000 people were wounded in the wars (Human Rights Watch, 2018).

The Houthi group, which was originally named the "Believing Youth Group," is an anti-government force in Yemen. The Houthis are also a Shia rebel sect, and were backed by Iran (Maktary & Smith, n.d.). The Houthi group is one of a branch of Shiite Islam groups in Yemen, and its goal is to decrease the power influence of the Sunnis in Yemen as well as gain more economic benefits from the import and export of oil resources (Index of Economic Freedom, 2019). The Houthis group continues to press against Sunni and Western influence, arguing that its actions were for the promotion of Shias' welfare and rights within the state; they also received significant support from Iran (Byers & Stewart, n.d.). Also, the Houthi movement was established as a religious-political movement in Northern Yemen in 1992 (Maktary & Smith, n.d.). Houthi also had another purpose, which was to rebel against Sunni influence in the Yemeni government (Maktary & Smith, n.d.). After the Houthi captured a strategic military base in northern Yemen in 2015, Saudi Arabia launched a military campaign against the Houthi. The Houthis subsequently initiated unceasing armed fighting against armed forces that were supported by the Saudi Arabian coalition (Maktary & Smith, n.d.). Also, there is a threat to Saudi Arabia because Yemen and Saudi Arabia share borders (Karam, 2019).

In 2018, the Saudi-led coalition launched a major offensive attack to the coastal region that was controlled by the Houthi group (Karam, 2019). In addition, Al-Qaeda, a militant Islamist multi-national organization, exploited the conflicts in order to develop a cooperating relationship with the anti-Houthi tribal militias (Index of Economic Freedom, n.d.). Extremist groups, such as jihadi fighters and al-Qaeda were actively involved in the Yemeni conflicts (ECFR, n.d.). The United

States felt threatened by the regional extremist groups' power expansion and deployed drones against local extremist groups (ECFR, n.d.).

Purpose of the Study

Parties involved in the conflicts include Yemeni President Hadi, Saudi Arabia, the Houthi group, local extremist groups such as Al-Qaeda and ISIS, Iran, the United States, the United Kingdom, and France. The conflicts in Yemen caused a catastrophic humanitarian crisis, which impacted the health, well-being, and safety of its people. Many children were forced to participate in the Yemeni conflicts (Al Jazeera, 2019). The goal of the author is to bring the attention of the international community to this crisis, so that they will work together to find conflict resolutions and strategic plans to aid the people, especially children, who continue to suffer physically and mentally in Yemen.

Social Identity Theory

Social identity theory was developed by Tajfel and Turner (1986). This theory can play an important role in analyzing the Saudi Arabian-led intervention in Yemen conflicts. This theory helps people understand the way different groups identify themselves and why they show favoritism to their group members or marginalize out-group members (Turner & Tajfel, 1986). Also, this theory explains why people put themselves into different categories and how people adapt when people from different groups live within the same environment (Turner & Tajfel, 1986). For example, people with different ethnicities, religions, and cultures will categorize themselves into different groups according to their shared beliefs (Turner & Tajfel, 1986). Moreover, social identity theory explains that people have a need to maintain their self-esteem. They like to categorize themselves into different groups and compare themselves with other group members (Tajfel et al., 1971). Tajfel et al. (1971) indicated that group members who have strong self-esteem and believe themselves to be better than another group will engage in prejudice and lead to miscommunication between diverse groups. In-group members will want to improve their self-esteem and compete against out-group members (Tajfel et al., 1971). In addition, conflicts might occur when people experience unfair treatment and marginalization. This theory helps illustrate why individuals have the need to protect their self-esteem and compare themselves with other group members (Turner & Tajfel, 1986).

The Shia group consists of 45% of the Yemen population, while the Sunnis consist of 53% (BBC News, 2013). The Houthi group is composed primarily of Shias. The Shias are currently controlling about 40% of the territory in Yemen (Maktary & Smith, n.d.). Social identity theory explains the relationship between different groups (Turner & Tajfel, 1986). For example, in the Middle East, the Sunni-led Saudi Arabian coalition and the Houthi-led Shia and Iran allies have intense conflicts in Yemen (Beauchamp, 2016). Members who share the same cultural background might feel isolated and discriminated against when encountering other group members that have different cultural backgrounds (Charles, 2014). Isolation and prejudice could simply be the cause of disagreements in certain values and political views (Tajfel et al., 1971). In addition, when

different groups have negative thoughts towards each other, they do not accept other groups' opinions, and they do not want to compromise and lose their interests, and the conflicts might occur. Shiites and Sunnis disagree about who should be selected to be the president of Yemen (Edroos, 2018). Both groups wanted to make sure that the Yemeni president would be one of their group members so that the president can protect the interests for his in-group members (Charles, 2014).

Exposure to differences can sometimes result in confusion that can escalate ill-feelings and negative thoughts towards the diverse group and vice versa (Tajfel et al., 1971). Intergroup bias and group-based prejudice could occur for people who live in environments that are multicultural (Hogg & Terry, 2000). Sunnis and Shias might compare with each other to heighten their self-esteem (Charles, 2014). The Houthis were fighting against the Yemeni government. The Yemeni government was supported by Sunnis, as well as Saudi Arabia and the United States (Charles, 2014). The competition between Sunnis and Shias and the participation of their international coalition have escalated the conflicts in Yemen (Al-Hamdani, 2019).

Tribal culture plays an important role in Yemen. Sunnis and Shias have their unique belief systems (Pu & Tang, 2016). Shias are more orthodox, and they are more restricted to their rules according to Islam (Charles, 2014). Compared to Shias, Sunnis share different beliefs and customs when they practice Islam (Pu & Tang, 2016). People will put themselves into different categories and compare themselves with a contrasting group that shares a culture; people's upbringing correlates with their own cultures, so it is difficult to understand the behaviors of other groups (Hogg & Terry, 2000). Shias believe that former President Ali was a Muslim Prophet's first cousin and blood relative, and his wife is the Prophet Muhammad's youngest daughter (Charles, 2014). Shias believed that President Ali should be selected as the Yemeni president and urged regional wars against former President Hadi, who was supported by Sunnis (Hogg & Terry, 2000).

Tajfel and Turner's social identity theory (1986) also posits that when there is competition of multiple groups, the in-group members will compete for the rights and interests of their own group members. Also, when two groups have different political views, people will defend their own political views and protect their positions. For example, Iran and the Houthi group mostly consist of Shias, and they worked together to gain common interests, such as allowing fuel to be shipped from Iran to Houthi Shiite rebels in Yemen to support them in the war (Lederer, 2019). Common interests and goals also brought the United States and Saudi Arabia together (Ross, 2019). They have helped each other when Saudi Arabia was in the Yemen wars. The United States supported Saudi Arabia's domestic policies in Yemen and in return, Saudi Arabia provided the United States with guarantees of sharing interests (Ross, 2019). The United States and Saudi Arabia are strong allies as they have worked together to fight the Houthi group, anti-government forces, and local extremist groups in Yemen (Oil & Gas 360, 2019).

The Theory of Structural Violence

The theory of structural violence explains that when people live in poverty, the competition over rare resources will cause conflicts between different groups (Galtung & Fischer, 2013). According to sociologist Johan Galtung, structural violence emphasizes poverty, social exclusion, and marginalization of the poor (Galtung & Fischer, 2013). Structural violence explains that injustice in a social system can generate poverty (Galtung & Fischer, 2013). In addition, the theory of structural violence enhances people's understanding of social problems and causes of conflicts within the social structure; Structural violence could occur when people are disadvantaged and isolated because of political, economic, and cultural factors (Galtung & Fischer, 2013).

The theory of structural violence highlights the historical and cultural roots that might cause social inequality (Barbara et al., 2017). This theory posits that when the nation is not politically stable, multiple intersecting forces can create inequality and lead to conflict between different groups (Galtung & Fischer, 2013). This theory explains why people, especially vulnerable groups such as children, experience poverty, hunger, and lack of medical care when armed groups, such as Houthi fighters, took their rights of free choice and rights of living away (Galtung & Fischer, 2013). The Houthi group holds activities such as prayers, sermons, and lectures that aim to bring young men to join in the front-line battles to fight with Saudi Arabia (Amnesty International, 2017).

In a dysfunctional structure, people might have feelings of oppression and being ignored. When people cannot achieve their basic needs such as survival in a difficult environment, they might experience pressure, sadness, stress, and insecurity (Galtung & Fischer, 2013). Yemen is one of the poorest countries of the Middle East. The healthcare facilities are not enough and the healthcare workers for child soldiers are insufficient in Yemen (BBC News, 2019). There were only approximately 3,500 medical facilities functioning in Yemen, and over 20 million people were lacking access to adequate medical care. Due to this shortage, many children suffered from malnutrition (BBC News, 2019).

Many people are living in poverty in Yemen. For example, the World Bank sets the international poverty line at the expenditure level of approximately \$1.25 per person, per day (Salvage et al., 2012). According to the World Health Organization (WHO) in 2018, Yemen suffered the worst cholera outbreak in history, with an estimated 10,000 cases a week. Cholera and diphtheria killed over 100,000 people per year in Yemen, and 80% of the victims were children (World Health Organization, 2015).

Poverty and the shortage of recourses were the factors that led to the Yemen conflicts, with different groups competing over territory and other resources (Farmer, 2005). The dysfunctional structure resulted in the structural violence, and conflicts inflicted by the dysfunctional social

structure, which prevented people from meeting their basic needs (Farmer, 2005). Structural violence is the outcome of long-term economic, political, and social struggle (Farmer, 2005). The lack of access to resources, such as food and medical care for people including children, was caused by structural violence (Al Jazeera, 2019). Many Yemeni child soldiers were recruited by the Houthi and Saudi Arabia, and these children were forced to participate in the war for their own group interests (Al Jazeera, 2019).

Intergroup competition could be motivated to maximize group members' needs and interests. Yemen's central government collapsed, which resulted in a failed state that was separated into several territories that were controlled by the anti-government groups, such as Houthis and the extremist groups (Al-Hamdani, 2019). A humanitarian crisis and the violation of children's rights emerged during the country's wars, along with a famine that led to approximately 14,000 civilian deaths (Byers & Stewart, n.d.).

Unequal power and domination towards vulnerable people can lead to conflicts where people with less power have unequal opportunities to pursue their needs (Galtung & Fischer, 2013). In order to fight against Saudi Arabia and its coalition, the Houthi arrested children and forced them into armed sects (Al-Hamdani, 2019). The medical needs of children were hard to achieve because of the poor medical conditions in Yemen; Many parents were unable to meet their children's basic needs for survival, and the families were suffering from deprivation and oppression (Al-Mujahed & Naylor, 2015).

The theory of structural violence explains that injustice in a social system can generate poverty and conflicts; The group that is relatively poorer and lacks access to resources might be dominated by another group that has more power and resources (Galtung & Fischer, 2013). In 2014, the Houthis took control of the capital Sana. Afterwards, Houthi armed forces arrested many people; many children were forced to leave their homes to be trained as fighters for the Houthi (REFWORLD, 2017). Additionally, many Yemeni schools were closed, and teachers could not receive their salaries on time (Amnesty International, 2017).

Poverty is a form of structural violence. It indicates that people live in a system that is unequal and those who are wealthy are getting wealthier, while the people who are not wealthy are reaching poverty level (Kathleen, 2007). A group that is relatively poorer could be dominated by another group that has more power and access to more resources (Galtung & Fischer, 2013). According to a report, the private oil resource companies were monopolized by the Yemeni state-owned oil companies (GAN Integrity, 2016). Unfair trade is common in natural resource sectors in Yemen (GAN Integrity, 2016). Foreign investors have to face unfair competition with state-owned resource enterprises; Competition over exploitation and utilization of oil resources among different political and religious sects and countries cause ongoing conflicts (GAN Integrity, 2016). In addition, corruption could be a problem in Yemen, and it might have caused the conflicts between

the Yemen people and the government. If the Yemen civilians were not satisfied with the government, they could have joined in the anti-government sects in order to achieve their rights and gain basic needs (GAN Integrity, 2016).

The Saudi Arabian-led intervention is seen as a result of a regional power struggle between Shia-ruled Iran and Sunni-ruled Saudi Arabia (BBC News, 2019). Group members have a shared knowledge of common interests. Diverse groups might take actions to protect their benefits by allowing group members to fight together for their interests (Galtung & Fischer, 2013). The conflicting groups were competing over territory and natural resources in Yemen. Al-Qaeda and ISIS were highly active in Yemen (Clausen, 2011). Ongoing wars and conflicts have destroyed the country's economy and people's well-being. In addition, the Saudi Arabian-led Yemeni conflicts pitted the U.S. allies against militias supported by Iran and Al-Qaeda (Mullen, 2015). The United States took great effort to defeat the terrorist groups in Yemen (Mullen, 2015). Additionally, Britain and France also helped Saudi Arabia in their fight with the Houthi armed forces (Maktary & Smith, n.d.).

The Theory of Offensive Realism

The theory of offensive realism can illustrate the economic and political relationship between Saudi Arabia and Yemen, as well as explain the conflicts between Saudi Arabia and the anti-government forces in Yemen (Lobell, 2010). In July 2018, the Houthis attacked two Saudi tankers in the Red Sea; The Houthis were showing Saudi Arabia that they needed to consider the Houthis' interests and respect its power over the Red Sea (Reuters, 2019). The theory of offensive realism can explain why different countries tried to gain hegemony in Yemen and why they competed for power and interests for their group members (Lobell, 2010). The theory of offensive realism explains that when security is scarce, the stronger state will maximize power to seek superiority, rather than pursue public equality (Lobell, 2010).

A political scientist, John Mearsheimer, proposed the theory of offensive realism and it illustrates that a powerful state can achieve regional hegemony through territorial control and political influence (Lobell, 2010). The Houthi and Shia sects were cooperating in order to achieve regional power and control natural resources, such as land and oil (Zhang, 2015). However, Saudi Arabia was threatened by the ambition of the anti-government rebel forces in Yemen because of its close geographical location with Yemen (Zhang, 2015). Saudi Arabia tried to prevent the influence of Houthi and Shia sects and gain the control over the interests and resources in Yemen (Zhang, 2015). In addition, the theory of offensive realism explains why intensifying international interest in the Red Sea was driving military buildup (Lobell, 2010).

Yemen is located in the southern Arabian Peninsula and is the second-largest country in the region with a 2,000-kilometer coastline (World Population Review, 2019). Oil is an important natural resource that can benefit a country's economy. Oil accounts for about 85% of Yemen's total

exports and comprises 75% of the country's GDP (World Population Review, 2019). Around 4 million barrels of oil pass through the Yemeni strait each day, which makes up approximately a portion of the global oil trade (EIA, 2014). Hundreds of ships rely on the same strait, which lies on the Red Sea (EIA, 2014). However, the main oil export port, Ras Isa, was under the control of the Houthi group since the war started (EIA, 2014).

Compared to Yemen, Saudi Arabia has a stronger military and economic power due to its enormous population and financial resources (Bajpai, 2019). Specifically, when a powerful party plans to build up its armed forces and form a coalition, conflicts might occur between the dominant party and other parties (Mearsheimer, 2006). Saudi Arabia wanted to secure Red Sea ports and the strait for transporting oil and supplies (Yaakoubi & Ghobari, 2019). Also, Saudi Arabia is the world's largest oil exporter. Saudi Arabia and its allies have direct access to the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean (Ahmed, 2019). Yemen is close to Saudi Arabia; the Red Sea goes between Yemen and Saudi Arabia as an 18-mile strait (Ahmed, 2019). Yemen is located near the Arabian Peninsula, bordering the Red Sea, and across the Mandeb Strait to the African continent, which connects with Europe, Asia, and Africa (South China Morning Post, 2019). The geographic advantages made Yemen the center of the conflict, as all conflicting parties wanted to have influence in Yemen, as well as gain sovereignty over the Red Sea and Yemeni territory (South China Morning Post, 2019). Conflicting parties, such as Saudi Arabia, the Houthi group, extremist groups, and the Yemeni government were potentially protecting their political, security, and economic interests regarding the Red Sea (Land, 2018). Both Saudi Arabia and Yemen rely on the East West Pipelines that enable them to pump millions of barrels of oil from Red Sea ports per day (South China Morning Post, 2019).

Land and property rights were essential interests to all the conflicting parties. Shias and the Houthis were supporting each other to fight against Sunnis and the Yemeni government (Yaakoubi & Ghobari, 2019). Sunnis and Shias were fighting over interests and power in Yemen. Sunnis and Shias have debated over who should be given ownership of the territories (Yaakoubi & Ghobari, 2019). Saudi Arabia's regional tensions with the Houthis and Iran were related to the competition for the world's oil supply and alternative ports, as well as for building pipelines and other economic interests (Reuters, 2019).

Yemeni anti-government forces pressured the international community by cutting off crude oil transportation in the strait in order to disrupt the oil market in Saudi Arabia (Zhang, 2015). Saudi Arabia would not allow Yemeni anti-government forces to negatively impact its economy and sent armed forces to Yemen, which caused catastrophic conflicts and a humanitarian crisis (Zhang, 2015). The theory of offensive realism illustrates why both Saudi Arabia and the anti-government forces, such as Houthi and Shias pursued military power in order to achieve regional hegemony and security through domination (Lobell, 2010). According to the theory of offensive realism, Saudi Arabia might ensure its security by maximizing its power by expanding foreign policies and

military force in Yemen (Lobell, 2010). Since 2009, Houthi forces created a threat along Saudi Arabia's equipped airspace and missiles near the Saudi Arabian border in Yemen (Orkaby, 2019). Saudi Arabia took action in order to weaken the power of Yemeni anti-government forces (Zhang, 2015).

Moreover, the theory of offensive realism explains how Iran and Saudi Arabian-led coalition had significant influence in Yemeni conflicts (Zhang, 2015). Yemen's war would have benefited Iran as the country played an important role in the Yemeni conflicts. Drone attacks that were claimed by Iran-aligned Yemeni rebels shut down Saudi Arabia's major oil pipelines, which further intensified the conflicts between Saudi Arabia and Yemen (Zhang, 2015). In response, the United States sent B-52 bombers to the regions dominated by the Iranian and Houthi forces (South China Morning Post, 2019). The United States supported Saudi Arabia to intervene in Yemen by sending weapons and other assistance to weaken the Iranian forces (Zhang, 2015).

Hezbollah, as an Iranian proxy, provided military and technical support to the Houthis and helped them financially in the Saudi Arabian-led intervention, with an estimated \$30 million of fuel per month (Al-Hamdani, 2019). Hezbollah tried to improve its influence in Yemen. Also, ISIS claimed several terrorist attacks in Yemen (Gjoza & Friedman, n.d.). Since 2002, the United States carried out over two hundred strikes against extremist groups in Yemen (Council on Foreign Relations, 2019). The United States believed that terrorist organizations directly threatened its interests and regional safety in Yemen, and the United States would not allow the terrorist organizations to grow in Yemen (Ferdinando, 2018).

Furthermore, since the Saudi intervention in Yemen, the U.S. military has largely supported the Saudi-led coalition by sharing intelligence, weapons, and supplies (Gjoza & Friedman, n.d.). Preventing regional hegemony in the Middle East is part of U.S. foreign strategy, because such hegemony might collect enough oil wealth to gain coercive leverage over consumer nations and it might challenge the U.S. interests and position in the Middle East (Gjoza & Friedman, n.d.). Also, Yemeni President Hadi needed Saudi Arabia's support in order to back his political campaign (Orkaby, 2019). The United States supported Saudi Arabia and the Yemeni government that was led by President Hadi by implementing strategic plans with Saudi Arabia and the coalition, such as France and the United Kingdom, to protect their common interests (Gjoza & Friedman, n.d.).

Interest-Based Mediation Conflicting Parties

Interest-based mediation will enhance people's understanding about their concerns and interests (Moore, 2003). Interest-based mediation will help parties to reach agreement and assist Yemen for its economic growth and regional peace. One of the goals of interest-based mediation is to bring conflicting parties together to open discussion on promoting children's rights (Moore, 2003). In interest-based mediation, the mediator's main task is to facilitate conversation between parties and

empower different parties to clarify their needs and interests, as well as help them evaluate alternatives (Moore, 2003). Conflicting parties who will be invited in the mediation include: the representative of the Saudi Arabian office of Ministry of Defense, the representative from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Yemen, the representative from the office of the U.S. Department of Defense, the representative from the French Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs Office, the representative from the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the representative of Houthis, the representative from the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs Office, the representative for the Yemen former President Mohammed Ali al-Houthi, and the representative of child soldiers that will be chosen among the Yemen civilians. As the third-party mediator, the representative from the United Nations' Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict will be invited in the mediation.

Definition of Interest-Based Mediation

Interest-based mediation will help conflicting parties gain an understanding about their needs, concerns, and interests (Branscomb & Allen, 2010). A mediator can ensure the effectiveness of meetings and help promote productive conversations (Moore, 2003). When the weaker party cannot fulfill their needs because the dominant party ignores their concerns, the weaker party's needs and interests will be addressed in the mediation (Branscomb & Allen, 2010). Interest-based mediation is the most effective intervention when there is a power imbalance between parties, and the mediator will be able to balance conflicting parties' powers as a third party (Stitt, 2016). In addition, interest-based mediation is suitable when multiple parties cannot trust each other and are only concerned about their own interests (Moore, 2003). The mediator can open a relative awareness for parties that can assist them to reach compromise and find common interest (Moore, 2003). Additionally, the mediator will help to eliminate bias when reaching an agreement (Moore, 2003). The mediator will facilitate discussions on how people's concerns will be identified (Moore, 2003). Lastly, the mediator will assist the parties to clarify the criteria that might guide choices (Moore, 2003).

The mediator, the representative from the United Nations' Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, can encourage the United Nations to enhance human rights in Yemen and provide possible assistance to Yemenis, especially children. As the representative from the United Nations, the authoritative mediator has reputation and authority over the parties, and the mediator can use his or her authority to enforce agreements between parties (Branscomb & Allen, 2010).

Steps of Undertaking the Interest-Based Mediation

The mediator will first initiate meetings with conflicting parties. The mediator will aim to provide a safe, friendly, and comfortable environment, which can be accepted by all parties (Moore, 2014). The mediator will bring the parties into the meeting room and introduce them to each other to enable them understanding their needs and interests, as well as to seek mutually acceptable

agreements (Moore, 2003). Parties would be informed about the topics and major issues that will be discussed in the mediation process.

The mediator can provide an opening statement to address the background of the Saudi Arabian-led intervention in Yemen's conflicts. The mediator can also allow parties to provide opening statements (Branscomb & Allen, 2010). Each party can be invited to dispute and describe their interests. All parties can create a list of their needs and demands, and the mediator will put their demands in writing (Branscomb & Allen, 2010). Also, parties will need to follow the ground rules and guidelines during the mediation process. Folger and Bush (2005) addressed that conflicting parties will have the responsibility to ensure that the ground rules are fulfilled; Parties will be asked to listen carefully, to put their cell phones on mute, and to avoid interrupting while either person is speaking.

Then, the mediator will collect and analyze the background information of each party in order to understand the roots of the conflict and the interests of each party (Moore, 2003). Cultural differences may play a significant role in the process of mediation. The mediator must understand that cultural differences can affect people's opinions and behaviors (Moore, 2003). The mediator should show respect to the parties and listen carefully to their concerns within the disputes. If the parties are from different countries and speak different languages, professional interpreters will be invited to the meeting (Moore, 2014).

The mediator will provide private meetings for each of the parties (Moore, 2003). For example, each party will be placed in a separate room, and the mediator will visit between different meeting rooms to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of alternatives with different parties (Moore, 2003). After the private meetings, the mediator will join parties together in a meeting. In addition, parties need to address how to eliminate conflicts and protect children's rights in Yemen. Parties should guarantee the safety of the Yemeni people and the stability of the country.

The mediator can design the meeting into two-sessions and set an agenda in advance. People will be able to take a break after the first session of the meeting, which can serve as an opportunity for parties to discuss realizations and commitments to be addressed in the second session (Moore, 2003). This opportunity will allow the parties to have free time to communicate and work on the same goal of finding a solution for the conflict (Moore, 2014). Also, the mediator will assist the parties in communicating with each other and engaging in collaboration to find the best alternatives. Parties will be invited to present their perceptions towards the conflicts and discuss their concerns in front of other parties (Moore, 2003). From the interest-based mediation, the people would understand the importance of investigating the continuing conflicts and human rights violations against children in Yemen. Parties can be invited to present a brief description of the issue and have an opportunity to express their ideas and interests (Moore, 2003). The mediator would emphasize why children's rights must be enhanced and respected. Children's interests and basic

needs will be considered in the planning of the mediation process. The mediator might not advise parties but will listen and allow parties to discuss the issues. Also, the topics of discussion will be flexibly dependent on the parties (Branscomb & Allen, 2010).

The goal of interest-based mediation is to allow parties to genuinely build a deal. The mediator could identify the needs and interests of each party in order to help them reach the agreement that would be accepted by both parties (Moore, 2014). During the mediation, parties can present their needs, goals, and interests, as well as their expectations for the other parties (Branscomb & Allen, 2010). Also, the mediator can assist the parties in dealing with their negative emotions, such as anger, and will prevent any violence during the meeting (Branscomb & Allen, 2010). Each party would have separate times to discuss their expectations, and the mediator will summarize their conversations and ask each party if they still have any questions, in order to clarify ideas in a timely manner as well as to avoid any misunderstandings (Moore, 2014). For example, the representative of child soldiers will ensure that children's voices will be heard and effective solutions that prevent child recruitment will be addressed in the mediation (Moore, 2014). Also, if a child lost his or her family, this child will need support from the NGO for building a shelter; or, if child soldiers were experiencing psychosocial and physical harm, they would need medical assistance from the United Nations.

Improving understanding and building trust are important within the mediation process (Branscomb & Allen, 2010). Promoting mutual understanding among conflicting parties is essential for building trust. The mediator will encourage active listening and help parties feel calm and comfortable during the mediation process (Moore, 2014). The interest-based mediation process will help parties to be able to identify the problems in the conflict and clarify their interests. For example, the discussion between the conflicting parties will provide the United Nations a comprehensive view of how to support children in Yemen and assist Yemen in developing its medical facilities (UNESCO, n.d.).

Parties will be encouraged to collaboratively generate options and discuss win-win solutions that are mutually understandable and acceptable for all the parties (Moore, 2014). For example, the United Nations' Office for Children and Armed Conflict Nations should design a plan for evaluating approaches, including the improvement of education, health, nutrition, sanitation and protection for children. The mediator will also need to evaluate alternatives (Moore, 2014). The suggestions for the Houthis will be de-escalating the conflicts and releasing child soldiers, as well as allowing humanitarian and commercial access to Yemen. The suggestion for President Hadi will be de-escalating the conflict by compromising and facilitating humanitarian aid to all parts of Yemen. Additionally, the suggestion for Saudi Arabia will encourage Saudi Arabia to cooperate with Houthi and Shias to strengthen national security and well-being. Moreover, the mediator can assist Saudi Arabia to find alternatives to compromise its interests in Yemen.

De-escalating tensions between Iran and the U.S. as well as between Saudi Arabia and Iran is essential. It is important to end the Yemen conflicts and to re-establish the official governance in Yemen in order to restore Yemeni economy. The mediator could cooperate with the United Nations by sending assistance to the people in Yemen so they will feel more secure. Most importantly, the international community should work together to create a fair and healthy environment for Yemeni people.

Social identity theory, the theory of structural violence, and the theory of offensive realism helped analyze the causes of the Saudi Arabian-led coalition in the Yemeni conflicts. These theories address the conflicts from cultural, social, political, and economic perspectives. The theory of structural violence explains that when the social structure was interrupted by multiple armed forces and political powers, conflicts over scarce resources will occur in a dysfunctional system (Galtung & Fischer, 2013). The stronger party might want to maximize power to seek superiority rather than pursue public equality (Lobell, 2010). Additionally, the theory of offensive realism explains why intensifying international interest in Yemen drove continuous armed conflicts there (Lobell, 2010). The theory of offensive realism illustrates why the Saudi Arabian-led coalition played significant roles in the Yemeni conflicts, and how structural violence was an important factor that brought conflicting parties into the competition (Lobell, 2010).

The powerful conflicting parties wanted to achieve their regional hegemony and have territorial control and political influence in Yemen, and they aimed to gain economic and political benefits in Yemen (Lobell, 2010). When there are wars and structural violence, people's rights cannot be guaranteed because they are severely impacted by the war (Galtung & Fischer, 2013). The wars would lead to the failure or dysfunction of society. The conflicts in Yemen gave different parties such as local religious sects and foreign countries, the excuse to intervene in the conflicts and gain their own interests.

Social identity theory explains the concept of in-group favoritism and out-group discrimination (Turner & Tajfel, 1986). Although both Sunnis and Shias belong to Islam, they have different values and regulations according to their religious sects (Charles, 2014). When people identify themselves differently from each other, because they have different values, interests, beliefs, or political views, they will categorize themselves into different groups (Turner & Tajfel, 1986). When structural violence appears, or in-group members are threatened by other groups, in-group members will gather to fight for their common interests (Galtung & Fischer, 2013), such as land and natural resources. However, when people do not want out-group members to gain interest in a region, they might call for help from their allies to fight out-group members in order to achieve common goals, interests, and regional hegemony (Turner & Tajfel, 1986).

Gaining knowledge and understanding from different theories would help parties understand each other and find common interests in interest-based mediation. Interest-based mediation could help

parties to gain an understanding of people's needs and interests (Branscomb & Allen, 2010). When parties cannot understand the concerns and interests of each other, and they are not willing to give up their interests, it might be hard for parties to cease fire and talk together. In this case, an authoritative mediator can ensure the effectiveness of the mediation meetings and help in promoting productive conversations (Moore, 2003). When the weaker party cannot fulfill their needs because the dominant party ignores their concerns, the weaker party's needs and interests might be ignored by the dominant groups (Branscomb & Allen, 2010). Additionally, interest-based mediation will help conflicting parties find realistic solutions. interest-based mediation provides an opportunity for parties to discuss relevant issues and to assist parties to reach an agreement (Branscomb & Allen, 2010). The mediator could help balance the power during the mediation and make sure all parties can discuss their concerns without being disturbed by fear and threats.

CONCLUSION

The author examines the interconnections between different theories and practice methods. The author illustrates the causes of the conflicts at local and global levels and analyzes the relationship between different groups. The integration of theories helps people understand the motivations behind violent behaviors. If a group of people grew up in an environment that lacked education, resources, and medical care, they will share a common feeling of compassion and depression towards each other. Their shared feelings will also bring parties together to fight against violence and poverty. Furthermore, the author analyzes the interest-based mediation approach in order to bring the parties to the mediation table and provide them a chance to interact with each other face to face (Moore, 2003). The mediator will assist parties in gaining mutual understanding on shared interests to solve urgent conflicts and violence (Moore, 2003). Understanding the conflicts and the consequences of war will raise all parties' awareness of communicating peacefully in order to find an agreement for peace. Compared to challenging powers and gaining regional hegemony, the goals of preserving peace and taking collaborative actions to prevent violence will help the country remain justice and economic prosperity.

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