

---

# A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF SOUTHERN MOVEMENT CRISIS IN YEMENI NEWSPAPERS

**Fatima Mohamed Al-Majdhoub**

University Malaya, Malaysia  
fatoomalmajdhoub@gmail.com

**Azizah Hamzah**

Universiti Malaya, Malaysia  
azizah@um.edu.my

**Mohd Yahya Mohamed Ariffin**

Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia, Malaysia  
mohdyma@usim.edu.my

---

## ABSTRACT

The stand of the Yemeni government and its failure to address the consequences of the 1994 Yemeni civil war in the south parts for many years made strongly the fractions of the southern movement/ *Al-Harak Al-Janubbiy* to call for secession and to restore the former South of Yemen, and moved from peaceful means to the armed struggle. By using framing as the theoretical framework of this study, the content of Yemeni newspapers was analyzed as the research method. Four newspapers were selected, one official, two opposition, and one independent newspaper. The four papers represented different political orientations. Conflict made the most prominent frame across the four newspapers in reporting on the southern movement. The representation of the southern cause expressed the future of the Yemeni national unity by putting it in either frame changing the political system or getting back to zero point when each part may retain its former state.

**Keywords:** *content analysis, framing theory, media coverage, news frames, Southern Separatist Movement.*

## INTRODUCTION

The Yemeni unity established on 22<sup>nd</sup> of May 1990 was based on agreement and acceptance between the leaderships of the two parts of Yemen “Yemen Arab Republic and People’s Republic of Yemen to be united into “The Republic of Yemen” with the extension of sovereignty all over the new country. Later, it has been discovered that the unity has only given benefits to certain groups and the North Part has taken the lion’s share of the unity project while the South Part has been marginalized politically and economically. These practices were rejected and resulted in the 1994 civil war and as a consequence of this war, a series of demonstrations demanding secession and restoring the South former independence

state by the Southern Movement (*Al-Harak Al-Janubbiy*) which took place in 2007 and led to what is now known as the southern cause.

Dresch (2000) in “Modern History of Yemen” argues that from the Yemeni political scene along with the history of the country, the unity issue was always negotiated regardless of the content due to the closeness and geographical unity. Alsufi (2009) and Abduh (2010) argue that the Yemeni National Unity has been taken for granted by most of the public and political leadership since 1994 until 2007 when the “Southern Movement” came to the surface demanding peace engagement of the southerners’ grievances. According to them, the unity project was based on improper planning and hastiness; that was proven when the civil war erupted three years after the declaration of the unification in 1991.

They also stated that the unity issue was forced on the political powers that were not qualified to complete the mission due to the crises engulfed in the two countries during that time. The Yemeni civil war resulted according to the Middle East Report 2011 in 5,000 to 7,000 casualties and exile for the southern leaders who were involved in the unity’s agreement and declared the demise of their state. Today, the southerners want their state back. Consequently, the war had left political and social wounds, on top of that the strong hand of the government had taken another level when they did not investigate the causes of the war and applying reforms in the system and resolving the problems; but with irresponsible policies and practices, the government suppressed the southern peaceful protests that were organized by southern military officers that generated more rage and drive for severing of ties with the north.

#### **THE SOUTHERN SEPARATIST MOVEMENT / AL-HARAK AL -ENFSALI AL -JANUBBIY**

South Yemen Movement, also known as the Peaceful Southern Movement, the Southern Separatist Movement or *Al-Harak Al-Enfsali Al-Janubbiy* is a term given to a popular movement active in the South of Yemen since 2007, which demands addressing the grievances in the south post-1994 Yemen civil war through peaceful means in the first place. Due to the use of oppressive means by the Yemeni regime such as track down and arrest the leaders of the South, responding to the peaceful sit-ins with various forms of violence. There were also cases of bribing some of the southern leaders with huge sums of money, lands, cars and granting privileges and high positions, the movement accelerated to the armed struggle demanding secession from the North. In 2010, the southern secessionist movement was shown to have the support of 70% of the southern population and it is predicted to be increasingly higher (*Yemen Times*, November 6, 2012).

According to Horton (2011) and Day (2010), the Southern Movement in the south of Yemen is an umbrella organization for many secessionist oriented groups in the south. These groups utilized the increasing weakness of Saleh’s regime and the heavy handedness of his government in responding to the anti-government demonstrations to provide the movement with both more political capital and more opportunities to assert their authority over the affairs of South Yemen. The southern movement and the southern cause are two faces to the same political crisis in Yemen. That is because the southern would not have been recognized without the rise of the southern movement in 2007 which launched their peaceful protests expressing the hardship of southerners. In the beginning, the media did not pay much attention to the southern crisis due to two reasons, first the regime denied it and promoted that these groups protested to increase their pensions; second the absence

of single leadership for the southern movement and the disagreement among its leaders in fundamental points that makes the movement to be in a weak position inside and outside Yemen. Later, the southern movement demand separation due to the way the government responded to the protests which started to attract media outlets to cover the events in the south which resulted in the banning of some newspapers in 2009 and arrests of journalists.

### OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

By comparing the coverage of the southern movement by four different newspapers the researchers of this study are able to identify the following objectives:

- The amount of coverage devoted to the Southern Movement Crisis by the official newspaper *Al-Thawrah*, the two opposition newspapers *Al-Sahwah* and *Al-Thwari* and the independent newspapers *Akhbar Al-youm*.
- The way the Southern Movement is reported by the media from different political orientation which in a way plays in either increasing or decreasing the popularity of the National Unity.
- The news frames used by official, opposition and independent newspapers to portray the Southern Movement which in a way reflect the political discourse in maintaining the National Unity.

### RESEARCH QUESTIONS

By analysing the content of the selected newspapers this research aims to answer the following questions:

- **RQ1.** What is the amount of coverage devoted on the Southern Movement Crisis by the official newspaper *Al-Thawrah*, two opposition newspapers *Al-Thawri*, *Al-Sahwah*, as well as the independent *Akhbar Al-youm* newspapers?
- **RQ2.** How the official newspaper *Al-Thawrah*, the two opposition newspapers *Al-Thawri*, *Al-Sahwah*, as well as the independent *Akhbar Al-youm* report on the Southern Movement Crisis?
- **RQ3.** What kinds of news frames have been used by the newspapers to portray the Southern Movement Crisis?

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The framing theory is widely used in media researches, therefore in this study framing theory is fruitful to be applied since the theoretical tradition of this theory in mass communication researches concerns with how the media cover different issues, what they emphasize, include and exclude, what tone and language they use, and also what effects these selections have on the audience. The origin of framing concept has been borrowed from the field of cognitive psychology and social psychology (Galander, 2008).

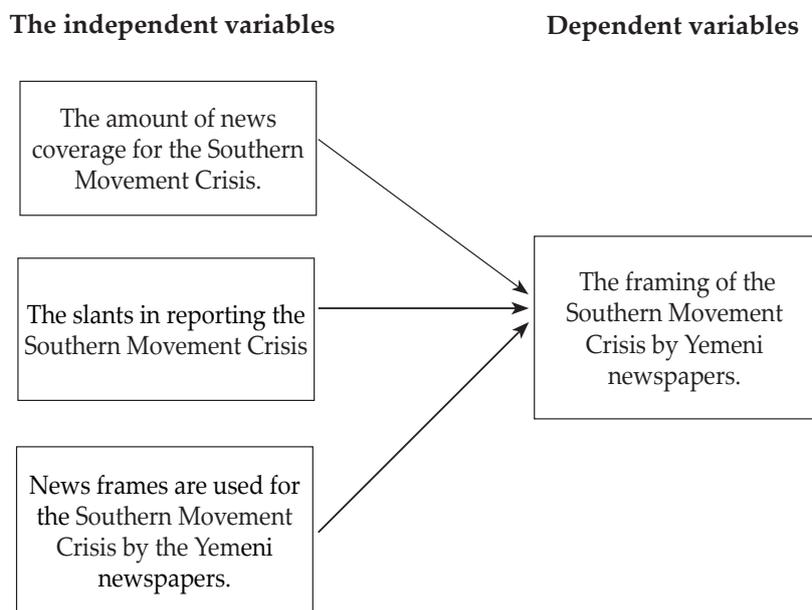
In the media context framing refers to the tendency of media to focus on certain ideas of news and to develop that idea as a prominent feature of the issue or event (Severin & Tankard, 2001; Cherkaoui, 2010). According to Entman to frame is "To select some aspects

of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communication text, in such a way as to prompt a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and or treatment recommendation for the item described" (1993). Through frames, the ultimate goal would be defining the public opinion and determining people's actions and perceptions, more specifically under certain circumstances when the public highly depends on media sources (Weaver 2007; Galander 2008).

In the study of social movement, Dardis (2007) defined frame alignment as an individual's acceptance of an agreement with at least some of the collection action frames advocated by a Social Movement Organization (SMO). He highlighted also that frame alignment is essential in extending an SMO's cause. Dardis remarked that sociopolitical actors can frame issues effectively through four functions: defining an issue as a problem, blaming a cause, suggesting solutions, and recall a moral appeal. It was believed that presenting a sociopolitical problem while also naming a specific source of the problem should appeal to the basic psychological impulses when persons try to understand the world around them. Besides offering a tenable solution's framing will inspire individuals to accept it as more value in combating a problem, while the inclusion of a moral appeal should elicit greater alignment with an SMO's viewpoint (Dardis 2007).

Tankard (2001) focus on the importance of media framing due to the powerful effects have on audiences to change the status quo as well as giving insights for media people on about how careful they should be in selecting frames for a news story.

**Figure 1: Research Framework of the study**



There are two approaches in this regard, one is *inductive* which is in nature restraint to be analysed in line with prior frames in mind, in other words means the frames emerge from the materials during the course of analysis however, it is criticized that it is relying on small samples and difficult to replicate (Matthes & Kohring, 2008; Neuman et al. 1992). *Deductive* is the second approach which investigates frames that are defined and operationalized prior to investigations.

Entman (1993) suggested that the frame can be identified and examined by “The presence or the absence of certain keywords, stock phrases, stereotyped images, source of information and sentences that provide thematically reinforcing cluster, facts or judgment” (p.52). Tankard (2001) offered the most comprehensive empirical approach when he suggested eleven framing mechanisms for identifying and measuring news frames: headlines, subheads, photos, photo captions, lead, source selection, quote selection, pull quotes, logos, statistics and charts, and concluding sentences and paragraphs (p. 101). In this study the following theoretical framework is suggested.

## METHODOLOGY

To investigate the research questions, the researchers examined articles in four major and different Yemeni newspapers (*Al-Thawrah*, *Al-Sahwah*, *Al-Thawri* and *Akhbar Al-youm*) over a time period of one year from January to December 2009. Examining the coverage of newspapers during the year 2009 was because of some reasons: (1) the year 2009 was described by the Yemeni Center for Strategic Studies as the year of political failure when the negotiations between the regime and the opposition coalition reached an impasse; (2) The southern movement shifted from demanding citizenship equality, addressing the grievances of the civil war in 1994 to championing the South independence which was inspired by the appearance of Ali Salem Albiedh the president of former South Yemen on TV officially calling for separation; (3) Influential figures joined the southern movement and give the movement political capital such as Sheikh Tareq al-Fadhli who was a former southern ally of the ruling party GPC ruled by Saleh.

The purposive choice of the newspapers services the objectives of the study. This analysis examined the coverage of the southern movement crisis within four different types of newspapers. The prestige of these newspapers is the fact that they are the mouthpiece of Yemeni political coverage, besides their commanding national circulation figures, these papers were: *Al-Thawrah (The Revolution)* daily newspaper is the most official popular widely circulation (110,000), the mouthpiece of the regime; *Al-Sahwah (The Awakening)* weekly newspaper with circulation (25,000) represents the Yemeni Congregation for Reform Party as Islamic Party which is considered the strongest opposition party beside the Yemeni Socialist Party; *Al Thawri (The Revolutionist)* weekly newspaper represents the voice of the Socialist Party which was the former party in the South of Yemen which its circulation paper increased during the southern movement from 20,000 to 35,000; and lastly *Akhbar Al-youm (The News Today)* is one of the respected independent daily newspapers in the country.

The unit of analysis for this study was articles which include straight news, editorial, column, opinion piece, interview and letter. The articles were collected manually from the newspapers' archives. The total number of articles were collocated was 1189 articles. The amount of coverage was measured in this study by: (1) the number of articles; (2) type of articles; and (3) size of the articles (by inches). There are at least two approaches to content analysis frames: inductive and deductive (Matthes & Kohring, 2008). This study adopts the deductive approach due to its easy ways to identify the kinds of frames in the news.

This study adopted the priori coding approach and modified the five news frames that are commonly used in media discourse known as “generic frames” or “Structural themes” (Semetko & Valkenburg 1999; Matthes & Kohring 2008). These news frames were operationalized as follows:

- Conflict: news emphasize on the conflict or the disagreement between two sides or among individuals, groups, parties, institutions; dichotomous or labels the good and bad; refer to two sides or more than two sides of the issue/problem; refer to winners or losers; disputes over the actions and the legitimacy of movements; and construct antagonism between opposing opinion or stances.
- Human interests: news that brings a human face or an emotional angle to the presentation of an issue/problem/event; refer to an effort to personalize the news, dramatize the news in order to capture and retain audience interest; employ adjectives or personal vignettes that generate feelings of outrage, sympathy or compassion; emphasize how individuals and groups are affected by the issue/problem/event; news items go into the private or personal lives of the actors.
- Responsibility: news that present an issue, problem or event to attribute responsibility for causing or solving it to the government, individuals or groups; suggest an urgent action for the issue, problem or event.
- Consequence: news items that present an event, problem, or issue in terms of the consequences on individual, group, institution, region or country; news that report damages, casualties or losses; report the steps taken to solve an issue/ problem by the actors; report warnings given by individuals, groups, or parties over action; report the arrests of individuals; report the steps taken by the security force; report the overall outcome of court trials; report interfere by outsiders.
- Morality: news that put the event, problem, or issue in the context of religious tenets or morals and social prescriptions; emphasizing on collaboration, brotherhood and integration.

The slants of the articles devoted for the southern movement crisis refers to political attitude expressed towards any individuals, group, party or issues by the users. This study uses the categories of favourable, unfavourable and neutral for the analysis of articles' slants. By using Cohen's Kappa as the ideal binary reliability, the inter-coder reliability for news frame was 0.88 while 0.83 was for the slant.

## FINDINGS

This study collected 1189 articles from the four newspapers which reported the southern crisis. It was found that *Al-Thawri* carried the largest coverage (435 articles), followed by *Al-Sahwah* (288 articles), *Al-Thawrah* (276 articles), and *Akhbar Al-youm* (190 articles).

**Table 1: Frequency of coverage for the Southern crisis**

Newspaper	Frequency	Percent
<i>Al-Thawrah</i>	276	23.3
<i>Al-Sahwah</i>	288	24.2
<i>Al-Thawri</i>	435	36.6
<i>Akhbar Al-youm</i>	190	16.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>1189</b>	<b>100.0</b>

### The Amount of Coverage

Table 2 indicated that the majority of the articles were straight news in the independent newspaper and the opposition paper, *Akhbar Al-youm* scored (46.8%) and *Al-Thawri* (46.4%) respectively, *Al-Sahwah* (45.8%), and *Al-Thawrah* (33.7%). The opposition newspaper *Al-Thawri* published most of the articles in the form of column (12.2%), followed by the opposition newspaper *Al-Sahwah* (9.0%), *Al-Thawrah* (6.5%) and *Akhbar Al-youm* (3.7%). The official paper *Al-Thawrah* scored the highest percentage of editorial (9.1%) followed by the independent newspaper *Akhbar Al-youm* (2.1%), *Al-Thawri* (1.6%), and *Al-Sahwah* (0.7%). Again *Al-Thawrah* ran most of the opinion piece in regard to the Southern crisis (29.7%), followed by *Akhbar Al-youm* (28.9%), *Al-Thawri* (21.4%) and *Al-Sahwah* (19.8%). Only *Al-Thawrah* and *Al-Thawri* published letters about the crisis, which was respectively (5.1%) and (0.5%).

The two newspapers *Al-Thawrah* and *Al-Sahwah* published the same percentage of interview news items (6.2%), followed by *Al-Thawri* (4.1%) and *Akhbar Al-youm* (2.1%). Most of the report news item on the southern crisis were published by *Al-Sahwah* (18.4%), followed by *Akhbar Al-youm* (16.3%), *Al-Thawri* (13.8%) and lastly *Al-Thawrah* (9.8%). According to Pearson Chi-square test, the value of chi-square is 120.256 and the *P* is less than 0.05, which means we confidently reject the null hypothesis of no differences, because there is significant difference between the type of news items and the newspapers from different political orientation ( $X^2=120.256, P < 0.05$ ).

**Table 2: Type of news item for the Southern crisis**

	<i>Al-Thawrah</i> N=276	<i>Al-Sahwah</i> N=288	<i>Al-Thawri</i> N=435	<i>Akhbar Al-youm</i> N=190
Straight news	33.7%	45.8%	46.4%	46.8%
Column	6.5%	9.0%	12.2%	3.7%
Editorial	9.1%	0.7%	1.6%	2.1%
Opinion piece	29.7%	19.8%	21.4%	28.9%
Letter	5.1%	0.00	0.5%	0.00
Interview	6.2%	6.2%	4.1%	2.1%
Report	9.8%	18.4%	13.8%	16.3%
Size by inch (mean) :	72.425 <sup>2</sup>	47.069 <sup>2</sup>	39.034 <sup>2</sup>	39.413 <sup>2</sup>

$X^2$  for type of news item=120.256,  $P < 0.05$

From Table 2 also we can see the mean size of articles by inch. On average, *Al-Thawrah* devoted most of space by inch (72.425<sup>2</sup> inches), followed by *Al-Sahwah* (47.069<sup>2</sup>), *Akhbar Al-youm* (39.4133<sup>2</sup>), and *Al-Thawri* (39.0345<sup>2</sup>).

### The Conflict Frame

Based on Table 3 it was found in this study that the most prominent frame across the four newspapers was conflict. It was reported that southern secessionist movement had had the conflict with the regime in Sana'a due to the way it treated the south after the victory in the civil war in 1994. Ali Naser Mohamed the president of the former South of Yemen said the southern cause and the southern movement is one of the political crises that has been created by the regime, and the military victory from the regime's perspective has put the Yemeni national unity in a debate of whether it is still legitimate or not.

Most of the articles reported by the four newspapers criticized the southern movement in calling for secession as well as criticizing policies of the regime. The leaders of the southern movement were described as “traitors” and seditious figures which will never succeed in splitting Yemen (*Al-Thawarh*, April 30, 2009). The former President Saleh was criticized in the way he addressed the southern leaders, his denial of the southern cause and the threats in his speeches such as “Yemen is fine and what is happening in the south is just storm in a teacup” (*Akhbar Al-youm*, May 22, 2009).

**Table 3: Type of News Item for the Southern Crisis**

	<i>Al-Thawarh</i> N=276	<i>Al-Sahwah</i> N=288	<i>Al-Thawri</i> N=435	<i>Akhbar Al-youm</i> N=190
Conflict frame	59.8%	35.8%	46.0%	46.8%
Consequences	10.5%	23.3%	25.1%	23.2%
Responsibility	4.7%	25.3%	17.7%	15.3%
Morality	23.2%	6.2%	3.2%	12.6%
Human interest	1.8%	9.4%	7.6%	2.1%
Others	0.0	0.0	0.5%	0.0

$X^2 = 171.661, P < 0.05$

Many articles criticized the ways that were used to silence the south. A writer of an opinion piece described the regime as having dry mind when the regime announced that the capital city would be transferred to the south (*Aden*) in order to silence the southern movement (*Al-Sahwah*, April 23, 2009). In regard to this, another writer of an opinion piece mentioned that the regime failed to recognize the demands and grievances, and the feelings of injustice felt by the southern people have to be brought out.

The disagreement between the fractions of the southern movement in finding single leadership was also debated since some fractions demanded only correcting the unity road but not separation. This division within the southern movement into two groups increased the conflict between them, besides blaming the opposition coalition in taking the south issue for granted and using it in their conflicts with the ruling party (*Akhbar Al-youm*, January 8, 2009).

The four newspapers through the conflict frame reflected some voices that justified the southern movement. It was reported that all the Socialist Organizations in the country praised the rise of the southern movement, especially the peaceful fractions in fighting against marginalizing and repression upon the south. An opinion piece described the north as “internal occupation” as the south since 1994 is militarized using power and repression to impose on the unity. He emphasized that using the national unity as a justification to crackdown the peaceful protests by the southern movement has proved the illegitimacy of the unity (*Al-Thawri*, April 16, 2009).

Except for *Al-Thawarh*, the other three newspapers criticized the ruling party and the government in their conflict frame. In a response to the presidential speech, a writer of an opinion piece article attacked Saleh by saying that he was using inappropriate words in describing the southern movement as secessionists and traitors. The writer had questioned Saleh by saying, “how can you accuse the south of being separatists while the fact is, there is

no legitimacy of the unity after it had been violated by the regime in 1994?" He added that the persons that should be blamed are the ruling party and its patronage who thought that the south part was valuable stolen goods or a piece of land must be attached to its origin in the North (*Al-Thawri*, January 1, 2009).

Within the conflict frame, the regime was accused of fighting the project of the national democracy through various means such as unilateral system, failure policies, looting, and marginalization. Since unity is a valuable goal, it is necessary to go back to the original transcript and true content of the unity agreement (*Al-Sahwah* 12 March 2009). The Joint Meeting Parties criticized the wrong and inappropriate policies and attitudes by the ruling party toward the south and the denial of the southern cause. In addition, the condemnation of the way the regime used their power as well as the fragile and superficial processes in solving the crisis which indicates the failure of the ruling party in running the country (*Al-Sahwah*, February 19, 2009).

The Yemeni government was criticized in banning six newspapers due to their coverage on the actions of southern movement and the chaos in the south parts. In this respect, the Committee to Protect Journalists warned the Yemeni government of being among the countries which abuse journalists and oppose the freedom of expression (*Al-Thawri*, May 14, 2009).

### Consequences Frame

By applying the consequences frame, the newspapers focused on the damages and losses during the demonstrations as well as the actions taken by the two sides. It was reported that during the protests hundreds of people were arrested among them members of the Yemeni Socialist Party as they are the leaders of *Al-Harak Al-Janubbiy*, clerics, students and youngsters (*Al-Thawri*, 7 May 2009). In addition, dead and injured people were reported as the victims of the riot act led by the southern movement, which urged the government and local authorities to form a committee to investigate the causes of the riot in the south. The government seriously warned the SM not to destabilize and provoke the public life, and disgrace the national unity by hoisting the flag of the former south of Yemen and chanted slogans against the unity (*Al-Thawarh*, April 16, 2009).

Some crimes were committed by elements of the southern movement/ *Al-Harak Al-Janubbiy* against the northerners who lived in the south such as attacking, killing, and destroying their properties. It was reported that these crimes were committed due to the incitement by some leaders of *Al-Harrak* not to allow or accept anything called northern. Al-Fadhli who was one of the most influential figures and the leader of one of the *Harak's* fractions said, "Northerners are no more welcome in the south" he also gave three days respite to the northerners to leave (*Al-Thawarh*, 4 June 2009). In this regard, many tragic stories were reported on killings and attacks on northerners who travelled to the south by elements of the southern movement (*Al-Thawarh*, 3 December 2009). In the consequence frame also it was reported about the mass resignations of the members of the General People's Congress in parts of the south after the bloody events (*Al-Sahwah*, June 4, 2009).

### Attribution of Responsibility Frame

By imposing the responsibility frame the newspapers mentioned that political players either in the regime or the southern leaders and also the Joint Meeting Parties should be responsible in finding an urgent solution for what is going in the south. It was reported that Saleh directed to reveal to the publics who are the benefiteres of the south's lands and ordered to return 300

hectares lands to the southerners (*Al-Thawarh*, June 11, 2009). It was highlighted that on the one hand there were wrongdoings by the regime and the members of ruling party are not holy men to be exempted of their mistakes; on the other hand that does not constitute an excuse to commit crimes against the homeland and people, in blaming the southern movement and accusing them in committing those crimes (*Al-Thawarh*, December 17, 2009). Nevertheless, there was a manifestation in some writings in blaming the regime for the southern crisis in particular and all the crises that the country faced in general.

It was said that the regime and its wrong policies towards the south was the major cause for the southern movement which reached the level of diminishing love for national unity from people's hearts and minds and instead spreading hatred and regionalism. Therefore, the regime meant to find a solution for the deteriorating situation in the south which requires urgent action and showed good will toward protecting the Yemeni unity (*Al-Thawri*, January 15, 2009).

The urgent solution for the southern crisis and the only way out is to adopt the vision of the national dialogue proposed by the opposition coalition (JMP) which took the initiative of forming the Committee of the National Dialogue and urged all the political and civil powers to join in order to solve all of Yemen's crises (*Al-Sahwah*, 28 May 2009). It also asked to get back to the original version of the unity agreement and also follow whatever agreement prepared by the presidential committee led by Abdul Gader Helal and Saleh Basourah. A columnist in *Al-Sahwah* said that separation was highly presented and the state has now become absent, therefore the regime and the government must resign and leave to protect the unity (*Al-Sahwah*, May 21, 2009).

### **Morality Frame**

Under the morality frame the newspapers stressed on unity as a religious matter. Furthermore, most of the articles spoke about the necessity of holding a comprehensive national dialogue which includes all the political, social and civil spectrums. The Yemeni people must hold their unity as one of Allah's commands in the Qur'an as the first step to the unity of the Arabs and the Muslim *Ummah* (*Al-Sahwah*, May 21, 2009).

It was stated by the governmental officials as well as the leaders of the opposition parties that the unity is indisputable because it is the Yemenis' destiny and whoever believes that the unity is rooted in blood is just an illusion. Columns mentioned that the calls for racism, sectarianism and regionalism threaten the social fabric in Yemen and the leaders of both the south and the north must abolish the political tricks and bids; accept the truth; be modest in taking advice and most importantly having the legitimate duty (*Shari'ah*) and the sense of belonging to the homeland (*Al-Sahwah*, May 28, 2009).

### **The Human Interest Frame**

The human interest frame was manifest in the newspapers through bringing emotional angle into the presentation of the news. It was dramatically highlighted how individuals have been affected by hatred and discrimination generated by the crisis which took place instead of love and harmony among the one nation which resulted in pain and grief to the people. For example, the celebration of *Eid Alfitri* was wrapped with pain and sorrow in the families of the detainees. It was portrayed that rather than celebrate the occasion, the families marched demanding release of their sons. The mothers of the political detainees

of the southern movement in *Almukla* organized a sit-in demanding freedom for their sons (*Al-Sahwah*, November 19, 2009).

It was reported emotionally how the protesters threw their skinny hungry bodies on the road demanding their simple rights as human beings after they have been dismissed and humiliated by the regime in the south. The leaders of the southern movement faced illegal trials. It was reported that a former Ambassador, Gaseem Askar Gubran and other southern leaders were taken to the special court which was described as a political trial in an illegal court. The detainee responded by rejecting the whole trial as the judge kept quoting some versus in the Qur'an and religious sayings about the unity and accusing them of abusing the national unity without any legal provisions for the trial (*Al-Thawri*, May 21, 2009).

With regard to unity, a column mentioned the word unity 16 times of the "unity". The columnist narrated his story about his son who lost two marks in his final exam over a question about the Yemeni unity and whether it caused losses to the south or not. The writer stated that the school textbook remarked that the unity problem has caused losses while the father said there were no losses. The writer said even in the education system there is a culture in discrediting the unity by associating it with the meanings of losses and oppression instead of meanings of virtue, brotherhood, love and harmony (*Al-Thawri*, April 30, 2009).

The Vice Chairman of Partisan Oversight Committee in *Dali* governorate the main center of the southern movement described dramatically how the southern people have lost everything even their sense of belonging to the homeland since 7/7/1994 when the unjust and aggressive hands destroyed human being and lands in the south. He added that the homeland in the eyes of the southern people has become a large prison where they harvest only suffering and oppression (*Al-Thawri*, April 16, 2009).

### Slants of the Articles

Table 4 showed that in the slant of the articles, it was clear that the southern movement/*Al-Harak Al-Janubbiy* was favored by *Al-Thawri* (59.3%). *Al-Thawrah* and *Akhbar Al-youm* were most critical in their coverage of the southern movement, namely 75.0% and 72.6% respectively, while *Al-Sahwah* appeared to be the most neutral.

**Table 4: Slants for the Southern Crisis**

	<i>Al-Thawrah</i> N= 276	<i>Al-Sahwah</i> N= 288	<i>Al-Thawri</i> N= 435	<i>Akhbar Al-youm</i> N= 190
Favorable	0.00	14.9%	59.3%	2.1%
Unfavorable	75.0%	21.2%	8.0%	72.6%
Neutral	25.0%	63.9%	32.6%	25.3%

### DISCUSSION

A total of 1189 articles on the southern issue were gathered from the four newspapers, *Al-Thawri* scored the highest number of articles however, *Al-Thawrah* jumping in the average spaces by inches devoted for the issue due to its association to the National Unity. The data indicated that there was a great difference between the numbers of articles published by the

four newspapers. *Al-Thawri* had 435 articles, while the least was published by *Akhbar Al-youm* with only 190 articles, and this resulted in the difference of 245 articles between the two.

Although the great number of articles was scored by *Al-Thawri*, but the data showed that *Al-Thawri* the mouthpiece of the Yemeni Socialist Party and the major support to the southern cause provided more coverage in the form of straight news or hard news and very few in the other news items such as editorial, letters and interview.

In her study Sabah (2010) found that the Yemeni newspapers differ in their reporting on internal political issues due to the variation of their political trends and ideologies which in a way generate different news frames. Gamson and Modigliani (1989) stated that the frames in media content are not created in a social, cultural or political vacuum, but they are contested and formed by groups, such as social movements, politicians, organizations and the media themselves. Therefore, to examine an ideological formation in the media, framing contests simply rely on political elites. The findings proved that the four newspapers that carried different ideologies defined the southern crisis differently, based on how those in power define it. Each newspaper tended to reflect the point of view of those in the political parties they work with, for example, most of but not all the sources in *Al-Thawarh* were the government officials, *Al-Sahawah's* source was the leaders and members of the *Islah* Party, similarly in *Al-Thawri*, the independent newspaper was expected to deviate but it sounds like the official newspaper.

Despite the differences in the ideological framework and the conflict between the traditional rivals the Islamic party *Islah* and the Yemeni Socialist Party, there were some unexpected findings. It was found that *Al-Sahawah*, the voice of the Islamic party, carried more reports and interviews on the southern crisis, its causes and its future dimensions in more detailed and analytical manner. In the meantime, *Al-Thawri* as the mouthpiece of the YSP and the main support to the southern cause had inadequate argumentation on the issue and relied on here and now news.

The conflict was the most prominent frame across the four newspapers despite their type difference (official, partisan, and independent). To some extent, *Al-Thawarh* and *Akhbar Al-youm* were much alike in highlighting the aspect of the conflict frame. They associated the southern movement/*Al-Harak Al-Janubbiy* to be harmful to the Yemeni national unity, for example *Al-Thawarh* linked it with the violation of the constitution by abusing the unity which is one of the national constants which must be protected by every citizen.

The findings revealed that *Al-Thawarh* was trying to turn the true reasons behind the southern crisis and the eruption of the southerners aside. Instead, it labeled and described the leaders of the southern movement and their supporters as traitors and mercenaries while the worst one is the win-lose aspect and sending threatening messages using their power and reminding the southerners of their defeat in 1994. In addition, the newspaper accused the opposition parties in supporting the southern cause and the southern movement and also criticized their stands against the popular committees for protecting the unity in the south parts.

Both the two opposition newspapers in their turn criticized and condemned Saleh in using the threatening messages and the policies in addressing the southern grievances which in a way escalated the situation in the south due to its arrogance and ignorance. It was said that if the government tends not to listen, then peaceful protests and demonstrations would be the legitimate means to express people's rights and interests (Cottle, 2008). That is why

the southern movement was advised by the supporters to remain peaceful and avoid shifting to the armed struggle which may give the chance to the regime to justify its power upon the southerners. Cottle also stated that demonstrations remain at the forefront of struggles for citizenship rights and democracy in non-democratic regimes around the world.

In placing the consequences frame the partisan newspapers focused on reporting the arrests of the leaders and activists of the southern movements during the protests as well as the casualties from both sides, while the official newspapers tend to focus on reporting the crimes that were committed by the elements of the southern movement against the innocent northerners in the south.

In conclusion, this study found that the four newspapers focused on presenting differently the southern crisis and the southern movement through focusing on the conflict frame as a routine as there are often competing groups within the organized power of the society. That variance in coverage has revealed frames competition, in other words, ideological competition.

It is well known that crises, conflicts and violence are in general the media's favourite topics, and during this critical time audience tends to rely on the media to get the information and to make sense of the surroundings. By this reliance without a doubt media might have an impact on the audience and shape their opinions towards certain issue due to the way they narrate the news story (Berinsky & Kinder, 2006; Yaser, et. al 2011).

Journalists are encouraged to be objective in providing true information about the problem as well as bringing up the opinion of the two sides of the conflict to motivate the public to take the right decisions and stands. From the in-depth interview with the Yemeni people, it was found that these newspapers have not shaped their frames about the southern crisis due to distrust. However, this study confirmed that the people, until now, have not had a complete picture of the southern crisis and whatever the decisions that have been taken are based on emotional experiences, not rational information.

## REFERENCES

- Al-Jaubi, Jamal M. 2009. My son and the unity. *Al-Thawri*, April 30.
- Al-khyshani, Sabah. 2010. The relationship between the news frames of the Yemeni newspapers and the attitudes of university students toward the political events. Ph.D Thesis. Department of Journalism, Sana'a University. [http://www.yemen-nic.info/db/studies/detail.php?ID=34176&phrase\\_id=425296](http://www.yemen-nic.info/db/studies/detail.php?ID=34176&phrase_id=425296).(Retrieved December 13, 2012).
- Al-Safuani, Faisal. 2009. The present homeland in the vocabularies of the presidential speech. *Al Thawri*, January 1.
- Al-soruri, Habeeb Abdulra'ab. 2009. The protection of the unity ....How?! *Al-Thawri*, May 21.
- Alsufi, Ahmed. 2009. The crisis in the South: To Where? *Journal of Strategy Orbits*. 34 (1): 116.
- al-sumyai, Galeeb. 2009a. The absence of the state. *Al-Sahwah*. May 21.
- Ameen, Ameen Ali. 2009b. Hold the rope of unity and dialogue. *Al-Sahwah*, May 21.
- Baleem, Murad Hassan. 2009. The Jaasheen of the south. *Al-Thawri*, April 16.
- Berinsky, Adam J. & Donald R. Kinder. 2006. Making sense of issues through media frames: understanding the Kosovo crisis. *The Journal of Politics*, 68 (3): 640-656.

- Cherkaoui, Tarek. 2010. Orientalism, Pan-Arabism, and military-media warfare: a comparison between CNN and Aljazeera coverage of the Iraq war. A Doctoral Dissertation. AUT University. <http://www.aut.researchgateway.ac.nz/bitstream/10292/10238/3/cherkaouiT.pdf>. (Retrieved October 23, 2011).
- Cottle, Simon. 2008. Reporting demonstrations: The changing media politics of dissent. *Media, Culture, & Society*, 30 (6): 853-872.
- Dardis, Frank H. 2007. The role of issue-framing functions in affecting beliefs and opinions about a sociopolitical issue. *Communication Quarterly*, 55 (2): 247- 265.
- Dresch, Paul. n.d. History of modern Yemen. Cambridge University Press. <http://catdir.loc.gov/catdir/samples/cam031/00029266.pdf>. (Accessed June 22, 2011).
- Farthest from the sun. *Al-Thawarh*, April 30, 2009.
- Fears of the Joint Parties and their impact on the masses of Al-Harak. *Akhbar Al-youm*. January 8, 2009.
- For what offence were they killed? *Al-Thawarh*. December 3, 2009.
- Galander, Mahmoud Mohamed. 2008. Darfur in Western media, Darfur in Muslim media? A Discussion of cross cultural media framing. A paper presented at the International Conference The Representation of Islam and Muslims in the Media (ICORM08) organized by International Islamic University Malaysia, at the Putra World Centre, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, July 29 - 30.
- Gamson, William A. & Andre Modigliani. Media discourse and public opinion on nuclear power: A constructionist approach. *American Journal of Sociology*, 95 (1989): 1-37.
- Horton, Michael. n.d.. Filling the void. The Southern Mobility Movement in south Yemen. [http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no\\_cache=1&tx\\_ttnews%5Btt\\_news%5D=37845](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=37845) . (Accessed October 20, 2011).
- Human Rights Watch: World Report. n.d. Yemen: Events of 2009. [http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/related\\_material/yemen\\_0.pdf](http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/related_material/yemen_0.pdf). (Accessed December 30, 2011).
- Is South Yemen preparing to declare independence? *Yemen Times*. July 8 2011 <http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,2081756,00.html>. (Accessed November 6, 2012).
- Matthes, Jorg & Matthias Kohring. 2008. The content analysis of media frames: Toward improving reliability and validity. *Journal of Communication*, 58 (1):258-279.
- Middle East Report: Breaking Points? Yemen's southern Questions. n.d. <http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/Middle%20East%20North%20Africa/Iran%20Gulf/Yemen/139-yemens-military-security-reform-seeds-of-new-conflict.pdf>. (Accessed May 2, 2013).
- Mothers' sit-in demanding releasing their sons. *Al-Sahwah*, November 19, 2009.
- Mujahed, Ibraheem. 2009. Yes, Yemen is not fine. *Akhbar Al-youm*, May 22.
- Neuman, W. Russell, Marion R. Just & Ann N. Crigler. 1992. *Common knowledge. News and the construction of political meaning*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Never tolerate destabilizing the security and peace of the country. *Al-Thawrah*, April 16, 2009.
- No one agrees with the radical calls. *Al-Sahwah*, May 28c, 2009.
- Othma, Ahmed. 2009. Mars is the capital of Yemen. *Al-Sahwah*, April 23.
- Presidential directives to return 300 lands to the citizens of Aden. *Al-Thawarh*. December 17, 2009.

- Saleh, Ali Mahmoud. 2009. Yes, we lost everything, even the affiliation. *Al-Thawri*. April 16.
- Series of arrest: the leaders of the political parties were in the forefront. *Al-Thawri*. May 7, 2009.
- Severin, Werner J. & James W. Tankard Jr., 2001. *Communication theories: origins, methods, and uses in the mass media*. New York: Longman.
- Stephen, Day. 2010. *The political challenge of Yemen's southern movement. Yemen: On the brink*. Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Available online at [www.CarnegieEndowment.org](http://www.CarnegieEndowment.org).
- Tankard, James W. 2001. The empirical approach to the study of media framing. In *Framing public life: Perspectives on media and our understanding of the social world*, ed. Stephen. D. Reese, Oscar. H. Gandy, and Grant E. August. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- The committee of the National Dialogue starts the mission. *Al-Sahwah*. May 28a, 2009.
- The CPJ worries on banning newspapers on reporting of the events in the south. *Al-Thawri*. May 14, 2009.
- The culture of hatred. *Al-Thawarh*, June 4, 2009.
- The mass resignation of the members of the GPC in Dali. *Al-Sahwah*. June 4, 2009.
- The president in Aden. *Al-Thawarh*, June 11, 2009.
- The unilateral system and the exclusion of the political partner. *Al-Sahwah*. March 12, 2009.
- The visions of the Joint Meeting. *Al-Sahwah*. February 19, 2009.
- The Yemeni Center for strategic Studies. n.d. 2009 the year of the political failure in Yemen. <http://www.ycfss.com/>. (Accessed May 5, 2012).
- Weaver, David H.. 2007. Thoughts on agenda setting, framing, and priming. *Journal of Communication*, 57 (1): 142-147.
- Yaseen, Ali. 2009. Aydrrous no reconciliation. *Al-Thawri*. January 15.
- Yaser, Noman, et al. 2011. Effects of exposure to electronic media political content on voters' voting behavior. *Berkeley Journal of Social Science*, 1 (4):1-22.
- Yemeni Observatory for Human Rights. 2009. Annual report for Human Rights and Democracy in Yemen". [http://www.yohr.org/?ac=sub&d\\_f=106&no=253&find=1&tast=1&lang\\_in=Ar](http://www.yohr.org/?ac=sub&d_f=106&no=253&find=1&tast=1&lang_in=Ar). (Accessed November 2, 2012).