Four Years of Conflict:

Analysis of the Violence and the Humanitarian Response

in Yemen

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Date: May 29, 2019

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### Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>ECHO</td>
<td>European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations</td>
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<td>ICRC</td>
<td>International Committee of the Red Cross</td>
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<td>IFRC</td>
<td>International Federation of the Red Cross</td>
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<td>IHL</td>
<td>International Humanitarian Law</td>
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<td>OCHA</td>
<td>United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs</td>
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<td>OHCHR</td>
<td>Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights</td>
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<td>UCDP</td>
<td>Uppsala Conflict Data Program</td>
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<td>WASH</td>
<td>Water, Sanitation and Hygiene</td>
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<td>WHO</td>
<td>World Health Organization</td>
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<td>YHRP</td>
<td>2019 Yemen Humanitarian Response Plan</td>
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Abstract

Due to the ongoing conflict between the Houthi rebels and the Yemeni government supported by a Saudi-led coalition of nine countries, the civilians in the country have already been exposed to violence for four years. According to the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO), the current situation in Yemen is the world’s worst humanitarian crisis. A large number of humanitarian organizations are present intending to alleviate the suffering. However, their response has been criticized as ineffective.

Therefore, this thesis seeks to investigate the humanitarian response in Yemen in order to identify potential weaknesses. This was done out from a theoretical framework that drew on Johan Galtung’s conceptualizations on violence. The applied qualitative research approach was based on a case study research design. With the help of a literature review, the relevant data relating to the case was gathered and an analysis of the violence in Yemen was conducted using the concepts of direct and structural violence by Galtung. The 2019 Yemen Humanitarian Response Plan (YHRP) published by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), coordinates and guides the response of more than 240 aid organizations in Yemen. This plan was used to analyze the humanitarian response in order to find weaknesses in diminishing the identified direct and structural violence.

The main findings are as follows: besides small exceptions, the identified aspects of structural violence are being addressed in the YHRP, which are related to the poor access to health care, food insecurity, poor WASH conditions, spread of infectious diseases and displacement. On the contrary, actions against the manifested direct violence, such as civilian casualties of the fighting, are hardly included in the plan. However, it should be noted that due to the humanitarian principle of neutrality, the aid organizations are obligated to remain neutral and are not permitted to get involved in the conflict. Thus, their inactivity regarding direct violence can be traced back to the humanitarian principle of neutrality.

**Keywords:** Yemen, Violence, Galtung’s Triangle of Violence, Structural Violence, Direct Violence, Humanitarian Response, 2019 Yemen Humanitarian Response Plan (YHRP), Humanitarian Principles, Neutrality
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III
1 Introduction

In March 2015, the conflict broke out between the Yemeni government supported by a Saudi-led coalition and the Houthi rebel group. Since then, the population has been exposed to violence and terrifying circumstances in their everyday life. According to the United Nations Human Rights Office (OHCHR), a total of 6,872 civilians have already been killed in air strikes and attacks between March 2015 and November 2018, and approximately 10,768 civilians have been injured. The actual numbers may even be higher (OHCHR, 2019). Additionally, thousands of Yemenis died from starvation and diseases such as cholera. Approximately 24 million people are in need of humanitarian aid, which makes up 80 percent of the entire Yemeni population, and 10 million people in the country are severely food insecure. According to the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO), the situation in Yemen is currently the world's worst humanitarian crisis (ECHO, 2019).

Yemen is dependent on humanitarian assistance which is why United Nations organizations such as the World Health Organization (WHO), as well as hundreds of additional international aid organizations are present to support the civilians. According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), they implement a vast number of diverse projects in order to reduce the people’s suffering and to ensure their basic needs (OCHA, 2019).

Despite this quantity of projects, Orkaby (2017) claims that “the practical response to the crisis from international aid organizations has been ineffective” (p. 95). This statement motivates the focus of this thesis on the humanitarian response intending to identify potential weaknesses in the projects applied by humanitarian organizations in Yemen. Initially, the violence in Yemen needs to be analyzed, which will be done according to Galtung’s triangle of violence, and more specifically with his distinction between direct and structural violence (Galtung, 1969; Galtung, 1990). This will be used as the theoretical framework from which the responses of the humanitarian actors to these types of violence will be examined in order to reveal potential weaknesses. Hence, the topic of this thesis includes the forms of violence that Yemeni civilians face on an everyday basis, as well as the humanitarian response of the aid organizations towards this violence.

This introductory section presents the aim and the research questions of this thesis and summarizes the research that has already been done in this field. Next, the relevance for the
field of humanitarian action is described and the methodology used to answer the research questions is explained, as well as its limitations. This section ends with a presentation of the structure of the thesis.

1.1 Aim and Research Questions

The aim of this thesis is to identify potential weaknesses in the humanitarian responses to direct and structural violence in Yemen. In pursuit of that goal, it becomes necessary to first examine the characteristics of the violence committed against civilians and the humanitarian responses to that violence.

Galtung’s triangle of violence consists of three types of violence: direct, structural and cultural violence. The focus here will be limited to structural and direct violence. The main difference is that for the latter, a clear perpetrator that commits the violence is identifiable, whereas structural violence refers to indirect suffering without a clearly identifiable actor. These two were the initial types of violence Galtung identified (Galtung, 1969: 168). Since cultural violence was added 20 years afterwards, and due to limitations in its scope, cultural violence is excluded from the analytical framework of this thesis (Galtung, 1990). Moreover, according to Galtung, the basic distinction of violence should be made between direct and structural violence (Galtung, 1969: 173). The topic of violence, as well as Galtung’s classifications of violence will be discussed in detail in the second chapter outlining the theoretical framework.

The analysis of the humanitarian response in Yemen will use the 2019 Yemen Humanitarian Response Plan (YHRP) developed by OCHA. This plan presents the activities and aims that are planned to be implemented in 2019, to address the suffering in Yemen. A total of 242 organizations have committed to the YHRP (OCHA, 2019). In chapter 4.2, where the thesis discusses the empirical background in depth, this plan will be further introduced.

This thesis seeks to answer the following research questions to pursue the aims stated above:

1) Are direct and structural violence, as conceptualized by Galtung, committed against civilians manifesting themselves throughout the current conflict in Yemen? If so, in which way(s)?
2) Do the interventions of the 242 humanitarian organizations that have committed to the 2019 Yemen Humanitarian Response Plan address this direct and structural violence? If so, in which way(s)?

The term *civilians* in this text includes all persons that neither belong to the forces of the Hadi-led government, nor to the Houthi rebels.

1.2 Previous Research

There is not substantial research on the topic of violence within the current Yemeni conflict, which could be explained by the fact that the conflict is still ongoing. The Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP), that has been collecting data on conflicts around the world for almost 40 years, has been recording the number of deaths in Yemen since the conflict broke out. They also subdivide the violence into state-based, non-state and one-sided violence, and according to Galtung, these distinct types can be grouped as different categories of direct violence since the responsible persons for the killings are identified (UCDP, 2019a). However, no data on structural violence is presented. Moreover, as the UCDP does not distinguish their analyses between violence against civilians and members of conflicting parties, the numbers represent all casualties (PCR, 2019).

Some authors look into specific areas of violence in Yemen, for instance airstrikes and attacks against medical facilities (Rubenstein, 2017) or violence against water and water systems (Gleick, 2019). But again, these are analyses that differ from the approach that will be taken in this thesis – the division of direct and structural violence – and so will not be discussed further.

When it comes to the humanitarian response in the country, some studies have already been conducted. Guidero and Carter Hallward (2019) for example, recently published a book comparing the differences in the global responses to the violence in Yemen as opposed to Syria. However, they analyze the media coverage of the conflict rather than the humanitarian response that the countries have received. Furthermore, Federspiel and Ali (2018) write about the response of the major relief organizations, such as the WHO and the *International Committee of the Red Cross* (ICRC), during the cholera outbreak between 2016 and 2018 in
Yemen. They analyze these organizations’ interventions that were implemented in order to tackle the spreading of cholera (Federspiel & Ali, 2018). But similarly, this analysis did not specifically focus on the responses to direct and structural violence. In this way, this thesis seeks to contribute with a new perspective, and to deepen the understanding of violence and humanitarian responses to such violence in the context of Yemen.

1.3 Relevance to Humanitarian Action

Even though the Fourth Geneva Convention clearly states the importance of the “protection of civilian persons in time of war”, the Yemeni population suffers from different types of violence every day that are traceable back to the conflict (ICRC, 2019). As will be discussed in depth in chapter three, mapping out the background of the conflict, both sides have violated the Fourth Geneva Convention multiple times in Yemen, and research shows that the human rights of the civilians are not respected (Raducea, 2018: 19). Therefore, it is necessary to investigate the topic of violence in Yemen, and to reflect on the results in order to develop an overview of the situation for the civilians. Upon analyzing the different types of violence as well as the humanitarian response tackling these kinds of violence, potential weaknesses in addressing the humanitarian crisis become identifiable. This could help improve the humanitarian response and lessen the suffering of the Yemeni population. For this reason, the results of the investigations in this thesis are relevant for the field of humanitarian action.

1.4 Methodology

A qualitative research approach will be applied, specifically a case study research design, in order to find answers to the posed questions. According to Gerring (2006), the most common understanding of the case study approach is “that the research investigates the properties of a single phenomenon, instance or example” (p. 17). Yin (2009) states that the case study can help to describe and explain these phenomena in their everyday context. In this thesis, the phenomenon under investigation is violence and its manifestation within a specific context.

On one hand, the representativeness of a case study is criticized since this approach only focuses on a small number of cases or sometimes on only one case (Gerring, 2006: 43). On the other, this makes it easier to investigate the phenomenon and sometimes “in-depth
knowledge of an individual example is more helpful than fleeting knowledge about a large number of examples” (Gerring, 2006: 1). Additionally, a case study can be of questionable use because it barely gives opportunities for generalizations (Crowe et al., 2011: 7). Then again, this can be beneficial when a more “naturalistic understanding of an issue” is needed (ibid.: 4).

The conflict in Yemen and the violence function as the case in this thesis and different techniques are applicable to gather data for a case study. One approach is to conduct interviews, but since the conflict is ongoing, this method is not feasible due to severe security constraints (ibid.: 6). Presenting the case with the help of a literature review is another approach and more practical in the case of Yemen, therefore it has been chosen for this research.

The *Uppsala University Library Search Tool* was used for the search and the results were refined by language ('English') and publication years ('2015 – 2019'). Due to limitations of time and space, this will not be a systematic review of all articles published about the conflict in Yemen. It will rather be a review based on material that is specifically relevant for the research questions. Therefore, only the literature related to the topic of violence committed against civilians in the current conflict will be discussed. Since the focus is on the violence against the civilians and not on the origin of it, articles relating to violence originating from both the government and its loyalists as well as the Houthi rebels will be included. The conflict in Yemen was chosen as a case study, as it is a very recent and violent conflict, and the situation has been declared to be the world’s worst humanitarian crisis. Furthermore, only limited research on the violence and the humanitarian responses to the different types of violence has been done so far, as discussed in chapter 1.2.

In order to answer the second research question, the humanitarian response of aid organizations to the identified direct and structural violence will be analyzed. The United Nations organization OCHA coordinates humanitarian responses in order to provide good support for people in need. For the crisis in Yemen, OCHA published the *2019 Yemen Humanitarian Response Plan* (YHRP) which describes the strategies of how to tackle the problems in Yemen and lists actions to reach certain objectives. OCHA works together with 242 humanitarian organizations which all strive for the same objectives. Therefore, the YHRP functions as an overall plan for a high number of organizations which is why it has been chosen as the
data basis for the second question. In chapter 4.2 the YHRP is further presented. In accordance with the structural and direct violence identified in the analysis of the first research question, the activities and objectives mentioned in the YHRP will be examined. This will be executed by going through the YHRP and by specifically looking for those activities that address the different aspects of direct and structural violence that are detected in the precedent analysis. This analysis will give insight into the extent the 242 aid organizations address the structural violence and its repercussions as well as direct violence against civilians in Yemen in 2019. By doing this analysis, potential weaknesses in the humanitarian response will be uncovered.

According to Cook and Lounsbery (2017), civil wars are extremely complex, and although similar factors have an impact on different conflicts, the interaction of these factors can lead to very diverse outcomes (p. 11). Thus, they claim that this “makes examining patterns of violence problematic” (ibid.). For that reason, the results about how structural and direct violence manifest themselves in Yemen will not necessarily be directly applicable to other conflicts. It will be similar with the humanitarian response, since it is also specifically related to the situation in Yemen, and therefore difficult to apply the results to other humanitarian crises.

1.5 Limitations

There are some limitations regarding the research set up that need to be considered. Since the conflict in Yemen is still ongoing, this research must rely on secondary data presented in academic articles. It is assumed that both the data and the articles were gathered and written according to all standards, and that the underlying studies meet the research requirements. Collecting data on site by means of interviews for instance, is impossible due to the immense security constraints. Apart from that, the limitation in time and scope of this project have influenced the choice of research set up. The latter is moreover the reason for the exclusion of Galtung’s concept of cultural violence from the analytical framework. Furthermore, it will be difficult to make general concluding statements related to the manifestation of direct and structural violence, as the conflict and the violence are persisting and thus continuously subject to dynamic changes. Moreover, it needs to be emphasized that the analysis only reflects the humanitarian response of the 242 organizations that are coordinated by OCHA and work
in accordance with the YHRP. The projects of organizations that have not committed to the YHRP are not included in the analysis, which needs to be considered when regarding the results.

1.6 Thesis Outline

After this introduction, a presentation of the theoretical framework follows, including discussions on violence and Galtung’s triangle. Then, the empirical context of the conflict in Yemen will be described as it forms the case study in this thesis. The subsequent empirical background gives an overview on the situation of the civilians in Yemen as well as a presentation of the YHRP. Next, the analysis of the thesis will be conducted which aims at finding answers to the research questions, before the concluding chapter will give a summary of the results.
2 Theoretical Framework

In this theoretical framework, the relevant concepts and theories that later will be applied in this thesis will be defined and explained in depth. The concept of violence is very relevant for this research and therefore its meaning needs to be clarified. On this basis, Galtung’s triangle of violence will be presented with the focus on structural and direct violence.

2.1 Violence

According to the Oxford Dictionary of Politics and International Relations, the standard definition of violence states that it is an “act of force exerted to impart physical harm or injury on another person” (Bufacchi, 2018). However, it is criticized that this definition does not include psychological abuses and that it only refers to persons as victims and not to animals or objects (ibid.). Therefore, the suggestion is to define violence in a more accurate way as “the direct or indirect physical attack, injury, or psychological abuse of a person or animal, or the direct or indirect destruction or damage of property or potential property” (ibid.).

The definition published by the WHO in their World Report on Violence in 2002, as well as the one in the SAGE Encyclopedia do not include animals and objects as victims. On the other hand, both specify that the use of force is intentional and that also the threat of violence and not only the act itself should be considered as such. Furthermore, they add the fact that the victim of violence can also be groups or whole communities. “The intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation” (Krug et al., 2002: 5; Hunt, Tomlinson & Ward, 2018: 2).

According to the WHO, violence can be categorized by its nature as well as by the difference in the relationship of the victim and the perpetrator. It can be categorized in physical, sexual and psychological violence and beyond that, deprivation is a form of violence. Dependent on the role of the victim and the perpetrator, violence can be self-directed (e.g. suicidal behavior), interpersonal (e.g. domestic violence, violence in schools) and collective (committed by larger groups, such as wars or violent conflicts) (Krug et al., 2002: 6).
The threat and the act of violence can have severe consequences for the affected individuals, communities or nations. Obvious impacts are death and injuries, and annually more than half a million people die worldwide due to some sort of violence and many more are injured. However, violence also leads to less obvious mental health problems, such as depression, anxiety, or post-traumatic stress disorder, for victims and witnesses alike (Hunt et al., 2018: 2).

2.2 Galtung’s Triangle of Violence

One researcher that shaped the world of peace and conflict studies is Johan Galtung and in particular, his article *Violence, Peace and Peace Research* contributes a lot to this field. He is seen as a pioneer, and his theory of violence has become “one of the prevailing paradigms guiding research” in the field of conflict and peace studies, which is why his theory on violence has been chosen for this analysis (Vorobej, 2008: 84).

According to Galtung, defining violence is dependent on the understanding and conceptualization of peace and it is a difficult task to find “the definition” (Galtung, 1969: 168). In his view, violence constitutes “avoidable insults to basic human needs, and more general to life”, and it implies a level of needs satisfaction that is greatly low. Suffering that is objectively avoidable is considered as violence (ibid.: 171). However, he states that it is neither of great importance nor fully necessary to search for a single definition of violence since there are different types. He distinguishes the concept of violence in six different ways, for instance, between physical and psychological violence and between intended and unintended violence. Although, the most important distinction he identifies is between violence with a subject that acts, and violence without such a clear subject (ibid.: 168).

This is the approach that led him to the concepts of direct violence and structural violence. Direct violence, also referred to as personal violence, refers to violent acts to which persons can be identified who commit this violence. He compares direct violence to “elementary sentences in […] languages: subject-verb-object” to emphasize that there is a person from whom the violence can be traced back (Galtung, 1969: 171). One example of this form of violence are the direct casualties of a war (Galtung, 1990: 293).

Structural violence, on the other hand, signifies violence without the subject-verb-object relationship because a subject committing this violence cannot be clearly identified (Galtung,
Structural violence indirectly causes suffering and impacts the most vulnerable members of a community first, such as children, elderly and the poor. For example, due to a lack of healthcare or insults to other basic human needs, victims can die from preventable illnesses or food shortages. Exploitation and social inequality play a big role in the understanding of this form of violence (Galtung, 1990: 293).

To conclude, in both types of violence persons may be killed or injured, but “in the first case these consequences can be traced back to concrete persons as actors, in the second case this is no longer meaningful” (Galtung, 1969: 170-171).

In 1990, Galtung published the article Cultural Violence that is regarded as a continuation of his precedent article on structural and direct violence (Galtung, 1990: 291). In this publication he introduces cultural violence as the third category of violence. It is a form of violence that relates to “any aspect of a culture that can be used to legitimize violence in its direct or structural form” (ibid.). It therefore refers to conditions that justify the two categories of direct and structural violence (ibid.). Each type of violence represents one of the three vertices in Galtung’s triangle of violence and all forms of violence are interrelated. Based on the concepts of direct and structural violence, Galtung developed the distinction between negative and positive peace. He writes of negative peace, once direct violence has been overcome, whereas positive peace additionally requires the elimination of structural violence, in other words the social injustices (Galtung, 1969: 183).

Boulding (1977) criticizes Galtung’s structural violence and positive peace. He is of the opinion that “they are metaphors rather than models, and for that very reason […] suspect” (Boulding, 1977: 83). Boulding believes the models that these metaphors imply are dangerous. In his view, Galtung creates an inappropriate picture with these metaphors that does not reflect the reality (ibid.: 83-84).

The Australian philosopher, Coady, also harshly criticizes Galtung’s theory in his book Morality and Political Violence (Coady, 2007). However, Vorobej (2008) responds to this critical publication and states that a careful read of Galtung’s articles will disprove Coady’s criticism. Coady (2007) argues, for example, that the moral significances of direct and structural violence seem to differ (p. 32). Vorobej (2008), amongst other things, responds thereto that Galtung never states the two forms of violence “are similar in all respects” (p. 93).
Furthermore, some scholars use Galtung’s structural violence in an inappropriate way. Hirschfeld (2017) refers to two research teams that examined the ebola outbreak in West Africa and both concluded that the outbreak was related to structural violence. Hirschfeld (2017) disagrees and points out that according to Galtung, an “incurable disease should not be considered an example of structural violence” (p. 158). According to her, cholera, rather than ebola outbreaks, fit within Galtung’s concept of structural violence because “cholera can be prevented with infrastructure improvements that prevent human waste from contaminating drinking water supplies” (ibid.: 159).

Despite these critical opinions, Galtung and his concepts of direct and structural violence have contributed significantly to the field of peace studies, and other scholars have applied his categories for their own research (Vorobej, 2008: 84). In this thesis, Galtung’s concepts will also be used as the theoretical background for the analysis of the violence in the Yemeni conflict. The objective of the subsequent chapter is to become more familiar with the background of the conflict in Yemen.
3 Case Study Yemen

Yemen is a country located in the southwest of the Arabic Peninsula. It borders Saudi Arabia in the north, Oman in the east, and its capital is Sanaa in the west of the country. According to the World Bank, the country’s total population was 28 million in 2017. Yemen has faced big challenges related to poverty in the past and is the poorest country in the Arab world (World Bank, 2019).

During the Arab Spring in 2011, the Yemeni people started a revolution and succeeded in forcing the president Saleh to abdicate in November 2011, after being in power for more than 30 years. In the subsequent elections, Hadi became the new president. The government decided to cut off fuel subsidies, and subsequently, the Houthi rebels organized protests, and unrests occurred among the people. In September 2014, fighting broke out between the Houthis alongside forces that were loyal to the former president Saleh, and the government’s military forces. The rebels took control of the capital, Sanaa, in January 2015 and Hadi resigned within the same month. He fled to Aden, a city in the south of Yemen, withdrew his resignation, and declared Aden to be the temporary capital. Hadi’s government is still the one recognized internationally today (UCDP, 2019b).

This quick progress of the rebel group resulted in the interference of a coalition of nine countries led by Saudi Arabia which started the so-called Operation Decisive Storm in March 2015 to support the Hadi-led government (Feierstein, 2017: 19). The rebels, on the other hand, are supported and equipped by the government of Iran (Byman, 2018: 141). This international support of both conflicting parties can be explained by their religious backgrounds: the rebels are mostly Shia Muslims just like the nation of Iran, whereas the majority of the Hadi-led government is Sunni Muslim just like Saudi Arabia and the other countries of the coalition (Darwich, 2018: 126). Both Iran and Saudi Arabia are fighting for influence in the Muslim world and therefore have an interest in the conflict (Byman, 2018: 148).

The origin of this conflict is multifactorial and deeply rooted in Yemen’s history. According to Byman (2018), the country’s past is “a chronicle of instability” (p. 142). However, discussing the large number of root causes of the conflict would go beyond the scope of this thesis. Therefore, the subsequent chapter will proceed with the empirical background for this research.
4 Empirical Background

This section gives a brief overview of the situation for the Yemeni civilians since the conflict broke out in 2015. Then, it will be discussed in greater detail in the subsequent discussion in chapter five. Afterwards, the YHRP and its structure are presented.

4.1 The Situation for the Yemeni Civilians

The price of the war is paid by the civilians, as it is the case in many conflicts. The country has become a terrible humanitarian crisis, constantly endangering the civilians’ lives, well-being, safety and basic human rights. According to ECHO, more than 19 million people are in need of basic health care. Over 17 million people lack access to safe drinking water and sanitation which makes it easy for infectious diseases to spread (ECHO, 2019). More than three million people are internally displaced, and 70,000 people have been killed since 2016. However, these numbers may even be higher. Furthermore, huge parts of Yemen’s infrastructure have been destroyed in the airstrikes, as well as almost 50 percent of its health care facilities (ECHO, 2019). The airstrikes continuously represent a huge hazard for the civilians, as they have not always been limited to the targeting of combatants. In August 2018, an airstrike launched by the Saudi-led coalition hit a school bus and killed 54 civilians, including 44 school children (Bachman, 2019: 309). The situation for the Yemeni civilians will be further illustrated in the course of the analysis in chapter five, in which the manifestations of structural and direct violence will be discussed.

4.2 The 2019 Yemen Humanitarian Response Plan (YHRP)

OCHA published the 2019 Yemen Humanitarian Response Plan in February 2019 and a total of 242 organizations are committed to this plan and work under the coordination of this UN organization. It is valid from January until December 2019 and presents the plan for the humanitarian response in Yemen for these 12 months. The plan is freely accessible and can be downloaded from the website of OCHA as well as from the Reliefweb. The document is divided in three parts, and starts with the country strategy giving an overview of the current
crisis and introduces the humanitarian strategy for 2019. The second part presents the cluster plans, in which all 12 clusters are specifically addressed. The twelve clusters are as follows:

- Food Security and Agriculture,
- Nutrition,
- Health,
- Water, Sanitation and Hygiene,
- Protection,
- Shelter and Site Management,
- Education,
- Refugee and Migrant Multi-Sector,
- Rapid Response Mechanism,
- Logistics,
- Emergency Telecommunications and
- Coordination.

Each cluster plan includes a detailed list of the actions that are planned for 2019, the approximate budget that the cluster presumably needs, and the number of people that are being reached by the activities. The annexes make up the third and last part of the YHRP, containing strategic objectives, indicators and targets. It is important to notice that not each of the 242 organizations works in all of the 12 clusters. For instance, the Food Security and Agriculture Cluster has 100 partner organizations of which 54 are actively involved in the activities of this cluster (OCHA, 2019: 18).

To analyze the second research question, the humanitarian strategy (ibid.: 10-12) and the 12 cluster plans (ibid.: 18-29) are of particular interest, since these sections include information about the planned activities and objectives. In the subsequent chapter, the analysis of the violence in Yemen is carried out in order to examine to what extent Galtung’s conceptualizations of direct and structural violence manifest themselves in the current conflict.
5 Analysis of the Violence in Yemen

This chapter addresses the first research question and is divided into the two different types of violence that are being investigated. First, the direct violence will be analyzed, then the structural violence, and section 5.3 concludes this chapter with a discussion.

5.1 Direct Violence

As discussed in the theoretical framework, direct violence conceptualized by Galtung is present if the subject of the violence is identifiable (Galtung, 1990: 293). Bearing this in mind while assessing scientific literature on the current violent conflict in Yemen, some aspects of direct violence can be found. They are related to casualties through attacks, such as airstrikes, bombings and shootings, meaning that these violent acts are originating from specific persons of the conflicting parties and those subjects of the violence are identifiable.

At first glance, a large number of civilians have been directly affected and killed by the aerial bombings and the attacks of the opposing parties, but the figures vary depending on the source. Raduca (2018) refers to data published by the UN Human Rights Office suggesting that between the outbreak of the conflict and February 2018, a total of 5,974 civilians have been killed (p. 19). More recent figures referring to the period until November 2018 state that a total of 6,872 civilians died in direct attacks (OHCHR, 2019). Bachman (2019) states that more than 13,000 Yemeni civilians have already been killed (p. 298). It is a common problem that recorded numbers of civilian casualties in conflicts are often imprecise and that the figures vary (Kaldor, 2013: 8). In any case, civilians have already been killed in the war and have therefore become victims of direct violence. Furthermore, there have been many more civilians injured in attacks than killed. According to OHCHR, around 10,768 civilians have been injured in violent acts committed by the conflicting parties (OHCHR, 2019).

According to international humanitarian law (IHL), the conflicting parties are obligated to constantly avoid direct attacks and threats against civilians (ICRC, 2019). However, the literature and the figures on civilian casualties show that both sides fail to comply with the law since civilians are constantly targeted. Especially the Saudi-led coalition intentionally
“attacked civilians in their homes, markets and mosques, and while attending weddings and funerals” since the beginning of conflict (Bachman, 2019: 309).

Moreover, medical staff have been targeted by these direct airstrikes and attacks (WHO, 2015: 670-671). These casualties are included in the numbers of killings and injuries against civilians as, per definition, medical staff belong in the category of civilians. Again, these cases fall into the category of direct violence, as perpetrators of these attacks are identifiable and a subject-verb-object relationship is recognizable (Galtung, 1969: 171). These cases of direct violence deserve special attention, since they have an additional impact on the structural violence against civilians. This will be discussed further in the next chapter about the structural violence in Yemen.

5.2 Structural Violence

As discussed in the theoretical framework, structural violence conceptualized by Galtung refers to suffering that cannot be traced back to a specific subject (Galtung, 1969: 170-171). Therefore, the literature on violence in Yemen was searched for incidents that fit this description, and this chapter outlines these results. To present the findings in a structured way, they have been subdivided into the following sections Poor Access to Health Care, Food Insecurity and Malnutrition, Poor WASH Conditions, Spread of Preventable Infectious Diseases and Displacement.

Poor Access to Health Care

Since the conflict broke out, the civilians are indirectly harmed by poor access to health care. For instance, many diseases are easily treatable in a well-equipped medical facility, but since access to such places is currently very poor in Yemen, civilians are denied a usual recovery. This avoidable suffering is therefore caused by the current structures in the country and is therefore considerable as a form of structural violence (Galtung, 1969: 171). Furthermore, it is a basic need for people to have access to health care and Galtung himself mentions the lack of health care as one example for the presence of structural violence (Galtung, 1990: 293). In the literature relating to the current conflict in Yemen, several issues concerning health care in the country are identifiable.
First of all, health care facilities have been destroyed by airstrikes and attacks which rendering them inaccessible and useless (WHO, 2015: 670; Ripoll Gallardo et al., 2016: 702). Overall, 50 percent of the health care facilities were affected by 2018 and damaged beyond operational capability (Dyer, 2018: 1). These circumstances deny a large number of civilians an access to health care at all.

Furthermore, as a result of shortages of medicines and medical equipment, the staff of health care facilities that are still operational struggle to provide the same level of health care as they did before the conflict (Orkaby, 2017: 95). Additionally, shortages of fuel and petrol in Yemen complicate their work, since some hospitals can neither make use of the electricity generators, nor use their ambulances (WHO, 2015: 670). These shortages in health care facilities are mainly traceable back to logistical problems directly caused by the blockade of the port in Hodeida and the destruction of roads and bridges through airstrikes (Orkaby, 2017: 95). Moreover, these logistical issues complicate the transport of patients who need special treatment outside of the country (Orkaby, 2017: 95). Thus, these aspects related to the poor health care are technically avoidable as they are consequences of the current conflict. According to Galtung (1969), violence is present when there is a “the difference between the potential and the actual, between what could have been and what is”, and when the actual is avoidable (p. 169). This explanation can be transferred to the problems related to the mentioned shortages. The repercussions of the conflict lead to insufficiently equipped health care facilities, and this situation has a negative impact on the treatment and recovery of patients. As there is no clear actor identifiable that directly commits this violence to the people, and it is rather rooted in the structures of the country, it is considered structural violence.

From the precedent chapter it becomes clear that the attacks and bombings that directly target civilians, also destroy their infrastructure and worsen the logistics in the country. Therefore, the committed direct violence partly leads to the manifestation of aspects related to structural violence. Another example of the overlapping of these two forms of violence are the attacks against medical staff that were already mentioned in chapter 5.1. These attacks can also be perceived as structural violence, as they have a negative impact on the availability of health care for the civilians (WHO, 2015: 670).

In conclusion, the conflict in Yemen has been disrupting the access to health care for civilians since 2015. Health care facilities are destroyed or insufficiently equipped, and
further destruction in the country aggravates the logistics of transporting equipment, supplies and patients. The suffering these conditions cause is avoidable and would lessen if the fighting stopped. Since an actor of these effects is not clearly identifiable, unlike the actor of an aerial bombing for instance, these acts fall into the category of structural violence.

Food Insecurity and Malnutrition
The harbor blockade in Hodeida also has a negative impact on the food security of the country. Before the conflict started, Yemen typically imported more than 80 percent of its food which is why the harbor in Hodeida plays a very important role for the population (Feierstein, 2017: 24). The destruction caused by airstrikes of the Saudi-led coalition and the subsequent fighting limited the processes at the harbor. Additionally, all the operations at the port are slowed down because the Hadi-led government and the coalition suspect that the Houthis use the port as an entry point for Iranian weapons (ibid.: 24). These complications related to the harbor in Hodeida have a huge impact on the life of the Yemenis because the interruption of the usual import of food leaves millions of Yemenis hungry and without food security (ibid.; Orkaby, 2017: 93). Additionally, the aid organizations struggle to implement their interventions to help feed the hungry Yemeni people. This is caused not only by the harbor blockade, but also exacerbated by the destroyed infrastructure that impedes the access to civilians in need (ibid.: 95).

Moreover, the economic situation in Yemen worsened with the beginning of the conflict and then collapsed (ibid.). Many civilians do not receive their salaries, and in particular, the public sector fails to pay their workers and at the same time, the prices of food increase (Feierstein, 2017: 25). For example, in 2018, the price of flour increased by 80 percent (Dyer, 2018: 1). Because of this lack of liquidity and the increasing prices, some families cannot afford to buy food anymore (Orkaby, 2017: 95).

A high number of Yemenis suffer from severe malnutrition and especially children are lacking food and nutrition. More than two million children in Yemen are acutely malnourished (Moghadam, 2018: 10). Tarran (2019) refers to figures by the United Nations, stating that half of the population suffers from “severe acute food insecurity”, of which 65,000 people are “in catastrophe”, meaning that they are close to starving to death (p. 28). These figures
are not sufficient to declare a famine, but it is nearly impossible to collect accurate data by reason of the ongoing conflict (ibid.).

In conclusion, hunger and starvation are preventable miseries, especially since one of the main causes for this suffering is the blockade of the harbor. Therefore, this is undoubtedly considerable as violence, according to Galtung’s conceptualization. As it is impossible to track the causes back to specific persons, food scarcity in Yemen is clearly structural rather than direct violence. Moreover, Galtung (1990) states that “direct violence is an event, and structural violence is a process”, and the term process describes the situation related to food and nutrition in Yemen very well (p. 294). Different factors combined throughout the years of conflict, leading to the large number of Yemenis that are food insecure and malnourished.

**Poor WASH Conditions**

The term WASH summarizes the fields of water, sanitation and hygiene. In the context of structural violence, the destruction of water supplies and sewage systems, as well as the poor hygienic conditions that follow needs to be discussed.

Since 2015, water pipelines, water mains and tap-water supplies have been destroyed in the war, and many Yemeni civilians do not have access to clean drinking water (WHO, 2015: 671; Orkaby, 2017: 95). This lack of water access is an “avoidable insult to basic human needs”, as Galtung (1969) phrases it (p. 171). It is perceivable as a violent act, as the destruction leading up to these poor WASH conditions is preventable. If the conflict had not broken out, the water supplies in Yemen would most likely still be intact. Some airstrikes carried out by the Saudi-led coalition even targeted the water mains directly, resulting in deficient access to drinking water for the civilians (Bachman, 2019: 302). This again shows an overlap of direct and structural violence. Furthermore, sewage facilities were destroyed in the conflict which makes the disposal of sewage in parts of the country challenging (Orkaby, 2017: 95). This leads to contamination of drinking water, health problems and the spread of infectious diseases which will be discussed in the next part.

Overall, the devastation of the WASH infrastructure causes harm to the civilians that is clearly avoidable, since it is a consequence of the ongoing conflict. According to Galtung’s conceptualization, the poor WASH conditions in Yemen are a form of structural violence, because a specific perpetrator for this violence is not identifiable (Galtung, 1969: 170).
**Spread of Preventable Infectious Diseases**

Amongst other repercussions of the conflict, particularly these poor conditions of the drinking water supply and the unhygienic sewage disposal create fertile ground for infectious waterborne diseases, such as cholera. Cholera spreads quickly in contaminated water and can infect many people in a short time frame (Orkaby, 2017: 93). According to the WHO, Yemen experienced the worst cholera outbreak since the epidemiological recording of this illness started in 1949. The outbreak began in April 2017 and lasted until October 2018 and more than 1.2 million cases were reported. Almost 60 percent of the affected Yemenis are children (Federspiel & Ali, 2018: 1). According to Bachman (2019), it is not unthinkable that another large cholera epidemic will break out (p. 310).

Mosquito-borne diseases, such as malaria and dengue, spread as well, since the insects find plentiful breeding grounds in the destroyed water infrastructure and poor hygienic conditions. For instance, many people store their water in open containers, which are ideal spaces for mosquitoes to breed. As a result, large outbreaks of malaria and dengue have been recorded (WHO, 2015: 671). More than 6,777 suspected cases of dengue fever were documented just in the first year of conflict, constituting a massive increase compared to the preceding years. Particularly, the area of Taiz experienced a large increase in the number of reported cases in 2015. Throughout four weeks in 2015 a total of 1,178 cases were reported, in contrast to only 54 cases during the same period in 2013 (Alghazali et al., 2019). Since the spread of these diseases is avoidable, it is in Galtung’s view a form of violence. However, as no person committing this type of violence is clearly identifiable, and the infections are rather caused by the current situation in the country, the spread of these preventable diseases is considered a structural violence (Galtung, 1969: 171).

**Displacement**

Since the beginning of the conflict in 2015 until March 2018, more than three million Yemenis were forced to leave their homes as a direct result of the conflict (Feierstein, 2017: 23-24). Being displaced indicates a suffering that is definitely avoidable, which is why it is perceived as violence, according to Galtung’s conceptualization (Galtung, 1969: 171). The affected civilians are required to leave their homes because of the ongoing fighting between the Hadi-led government and its loyal forces, and the Houthi rebels. Their displacement
comes along with living in overcrowded camps with poor hygienic conditions, which can be linked to the structural violence discussed in the preceding sections. Without the raging conflict, there would most likely be no reason for those families to leave their homes. A clear subject causing the displacement is not identifiable, and therefore, the displacement of Yemenis is structural violence (Galtung, 1969: 171).

5.3 Discussion

After having outlined the direct and structural violence in Yemen, a couple of aspects remain for discussion. The definitions of Galtung and the references to his scholarly articles provide guidance in evaluating the violence and assigning the cases to one of the two categories. However, it should be noted that the distinction of direct and structural violence is not always very clear-cut. The displacement of civilians, for instance, has been discussed as a type of structural violence in the previous section, even though it is also reasonable that some families are actively pushed and threatened to leave their homes by a clearly identifiable actor. Those specific cases could therefore also be classified as acts of direct violence.

Moreover, the argumentation for direct or for structural violence could have been different based on the literature of Galtung in some cases. One example is the aspect of food insecurity, which is categorized as structural violence. Galtung mentions “denial of food” as one example for direct violence in his article (Galtung, 1969: 174). However, in his description of the different types of violence, he writes that for structural violence, there is “no direct, personal link between a subject and an object” and this last description fits better to the situation in Yemen, since there is no direct link between a subject causing the food insecurity and the object suffering from it (ibid.: 178). Additionally, the harbor blockade can be mentioned as another example. On one hand, Galtung names blockades together with sanctions and sieges as cases of direct violence. They cause, for instance, “killing through malnutrition and lack of medical attention” (Galtung, 1990: 293). On the other, in his further explanations he states that “by making the causal chain longer the actor avoids having to face the violence directly” (ibid.). This last part seems a lot more like structural violence, which is why the blockade in Hodeida is discussed in relation with the factors of structural violence (such as food insecurity), and not as a finding for direct violence.
Furthermore, it could be confusing that the bombing of the different kinds of infrastructure and health facilities do not appear in the category of direct violence, because one could argue that there is a clear relation of the subject and the object. However, it needs to be emphasized that according to Galtung (1969), both “subject and object [are] persons” (p. 171). The reason why they are categorized as structural violence are rather the consequences these destructions have, instead of the destructive act itself.

Some of the identified conditions in the conflict-torn country have had an impact on the manifestation of several forms of structural violence, such as the destruction of roads and bridges. This destroyed infrastructure does not only complicate the supply of health care facilities, but also the provision of humanitarian operations intending to reduce the food insecurity. Another example is the destroyed water infrastructure, since it has an impact on the drinking water supply, but at the same time also on the spread of diseases in Yemen.

Moreover, it became apparent in the precedent analyses that structural violence has more facets than direct violence. The Yemeni civilians indirectly experience violence in many ways, including poor access to health care, food insecurity, poor WASH conditions, the spread of diseases and displacement. Direct violence, on the other hand, is basically limited to direct casualties caused by the fighting of the conflicting parties.

Lastly, another important aspect is that the direct violence not only produces civilian casualties, but at the same time causes massive destruction to their infrastructure and environment. This, in turn, results in structural violence, such as broken water mains or the spread of infectious diseases. Therefore, the direct violence committed by the conflicting parties is the reason for a large amount of the structural violence in Yemen.

In conclusion, the analysis above showed that both direct and structural violence manifested themselves in Yemen and that they both play a big role in the everyday life of the civilians. At this point the question arises how the humanitarian organizations respond to these identified types of violence. The next chapter will provide an answer and aims to analyze the YHRP.
6 Analysis of the Humanitarian Response

After creating an overview of the ways structural and direct violence manifested themselves throughout the country of Yemen, in this chapter, the response of the humanitarian organizations in the country will be analyzed. The analysis is based on the 2019 Yemen Humanitarian Response Plan (YHRP) that 242 organizations are committed to. The humanitarian strategy and the 12 cluster plans of the YHRP will be investigated to identify actions that address the specific forms of violence outlined in chapters 5.1 and 5.2. First, the findings relating to direct violence will be presented, then those relating to the identified structural violence, and finally the results will be discussed in chapter 6.3.

6.1 Direct Violence

Direct violence manifests itself in the form of direct casualties of the conflict in Yemen. In the humanitarian strategy of the YHRP, OCHA aims to reduce “the risk of displacement and violence against civilians […] by advocating for adherence to international humanitarian law” (OCHA, 2019: 11). As discussed in the analysis of the direct violence, the conflicting parties currently violate the IHL by not showing consideration for civilians. Therefore, advocating for the IHL could be perceived as a step towards addressing direct violence.

The organizations committed to the YHRP will additionally intensify the “monitoring of incidents”, as well as continue “to track the impact of the conflict on civilians” (ibid.). If they observe that the situation for the civilians is worsening, they plan to “intensify their advocacy with all parties to respect and uphold all aspects of IHL, international human rights law and international refugee law” (ibid.).

Furthermore, the organizations plan to scale up the “specialized assistance to the victims of violence” in 2019, which means they will take care of the victims of the direct violence and respond to its consequences (ibid.). However, this is not an approach to address the direct violence in order to reduce it. In the response plan of the Protection Cluster the aim to protect the civilians with “specific protection needs, including the victims of violence” appears as well (ibid.: 22). This implies again that they take care of the victims of direct violence and support them with the consequences these acts of direct violence entail. However, the
organizations do not tackle the direct violence itself and make no effort to prevent it from happening.

Moreover, the partners of the Protection Cluster aim to “help resolve local level disputes”, which slightly goes in the direction of taking preventive actions towards direct violence (ibid.). However, it does not become apparent whether this action specifically addresses local disagreements that are connected to the ongoing conflict between the government and the Houthis in the country, or any local disputes within certain communities or neighborhoods. Therefore, it is not clearly identifiable as an action addressing the direct violence discussed in the precedent chapter.

Lastly, the Coordination Cluster strives to facilitate “civil military liaison, including de-confliction mechanisms”, which seems to be addressing the direct violence in Yemen (ibid.: 29). However, it is very vague and lacks further descriptions, and is therefore not clearly meaningful nor likely to reduce the direct violence discussed in 5.1.

To conclude, the aspect mentioned in the humanitarian strategy is the only relevant one in order to take action against direct violence in Yemen. To advocate for adherence of the IHL is an objective that addresses the origin of direct violence, rather than only dealing with the consequences of direct violence. Even though it is vague, it is at least considerable as a step in the right direction. However, this action is not assigned to a specific cluster and according to the cluster plans, none of the 12 clusters is responsible for the advocacy of the IHL. Therefore, it is questionable whether this strategy will be implemented at all.

6.2 Structural Violence

The findings related to structural violence have been subdivided in the five sections Poor Access to Health Care, Food Insecurity and Malnutrition, Poor WASH Conditions, Spread of Preventable Infectious Diseases and Displacement in chapter 5.2. All aspects have in common that according to Galtung’s conceptualization, they are forms of violence, because they are avoidable. Since it is not possible to identify a clear origin of those violent acts, such as a person causing harm to another, they are forms of structural violence. This chapter follows the same subdivision as chapter 5.2.
Poor Access to Health Care

The cluster objective of the Health Cluster is to “improve access to [...] health care including district hospitals” (ibid.: 20). They want to make sure that “highly vulnerable people have access to an expanded range of health services” and that the “health systems and health infrastructure [...] is strengthened” (ibid.). To reach these aims, the Health Cluster plans for instance to renovate, rehabilitate and equip the health facilities that have been destroyed in the war. The focus will be on “high priority districts” (ibid.). These activities clearly address the main reason for the poor access to health care for the Yemenis – the destroyed health care facilities. Improving these facilities means working on eliminating one aspect of structural violence in the country.

Furthermore, the Logistic Cluster strives to support humanitarian operations by “facilitating cargo transport by air and sea to Yemen, and by land within the country”, which will potentially make it easier to get medical equipment into the country as well as to areas that are difficult to reach (ibid.: 27). Plus, this cluster wants to focus on rebuilding the “key sections of the [Hodeida] port” to further facilitate access in the country and logistics of medical and humanitarian equipment (ibid.). The Logistic Cluster also plans to work on a fuel facility in order to provide fuel to health facilities (ibid.). Additionally, a “medical air bridge for patients suffering from conditions that cannot be treated inside Yemen” is planned by the Health Cluster (ibid.: 20). The Coordination Cluster aims in general at providing “all possible support to expand access” (ibid.: 29).

In conclusion, to all the aspects that were discussed in relation with the poor access to health care in chapter 5.1 corresponding actions are detectable in the YHRP.

Food Insecurity and Malnutrition

One of the overall objectives of the humanitarian strategy in the YHRP is to help “millions of destitute Yemenis [to] overcome hunger” (ibid.: 10). As discussed in the chapter 5.2, the harbor blockade in Hodeida and the difficult access to certain areas in the country are the main causes of the food insecurity in Yemen. Therefore, the planned activities of the Logistic and the Coordination Cluster that have been pointed out in the precedent section play an important role in this context as well. Facilitating the transportation of goods within the
country, supporting access for humanitarian operations, and “rehabilitating key sections of the […] port” will also alleviate the problems related to food insecurity (ibid.: 27; ibid.: 29).

The Food Security and Agricultural Cluster plans to “reduce severe hunger among highly vulnerable groups”, namely “severely food insecure families”, “displaced families and host families of displaced persons” (ibid.: 18). They plan, for instance, to distribute “food, cash or vouchers [and] agricultural and fishery kits” (ibid.). Distributing cash and vouchers will address the lack of liquidity and the fact that some families cannot afford food, which has been discussed as another major contributor to the food insecurity. The Protection Cluster and the Rapid Response Mechanism Cluster plan similar activities related to cash assistance and distribution of emergency supplies (ibid.: 22; ibid.: 26).

The Nutrition Cluster is intensively addressing the issue of malnutrition in Yemen. They aim to “reduce acute malnutrition among highly vulnerable populations” (ibid.: 19). The organizations committed to this cluster intend to focus on children and pregnant and lactating women in their responses and they want to refer the acutely malnourished among them to treatment programs (ibid.). Furthermore, they plan amongst other things, to provide “counselling on feeding practices to pregnant and lactating women”, as well as to equip Yemenis with “nutrition supplies and medicine” (ibid.). Moreover, they focus on reducing “micronutrient malnutrition among highly vulnerable populations” and they provide “vitamin A supplements to children aged under 5 years” or give “iron-folic acid supplements” to pregnant women (ibid.). Lastly, the Health Cluster aims to provide “inpatient care for people suffering from Severe Acute Malnutrition” (ibid.: 20).

Overall, the organizations committed to the YHRP plan to respond to the problems related to food insecurity and malnutrition that were presented in section 5.2. Several clusters work together to prevent the Yemenis from hunger and malnutrition.

**Poor WASH Conditions**

One of the overall objectives of the YHRP is to reduce outbreaks of infectious diseases, and OCHA lists “repairing and decontaminating water and sanitation systems” as one of the means to reach that aim (ibid.: 10).

The YHRP has a WASH Cluster that focuses on the identified structural violence related to water, sanitation and hygiene. This cluster’s objectives are to “provide emergency water
sanitation and hygiene services and assistance to highly vulnerable people” and to “restore and maintain sustainable water and sanitation systems”. To tackle the problems related to WASH, they aim to “[repair] public water supply systems”, “[to truck] water and [provide] storage containers at communal and household levels”, as well as to provide water filters (ibid.: 21).

Concerning the matter of sanitation, they plan for example to “[construct] and [desludge] communal emergency latrines” as well as to “maintain the functionality of water and sanitation systems”. The Rapid Response Mechanism Cluster as well as the Health Cluster plan to distribute “basic hygiene kits”, which also helps to approach the problems related to the WASH sector (ibid.: 20; ibid.: 26).

To conclude, the main problems related to poor WASH conditions are the lack of access to drinking water and the destroyed sewage system. After analyzing the YHRP, it becomes clear that the organizations plan to address these difficulties in 2019.

**Spread of Preventable Infectious Diseases**

One of the objectives mentioned in the YHRP is the reduction of “outbreaks of cholera and infectious diseases” (ibid.: 10). Several clusters are involved in achieving this goal and in addressing the structural violence related to the spread of diseases. The Health Cluster has on its agenda to [upgrade] vaccination programmes” and amongst other things, they are going to vaccinate vulnerable groups against cholera (ibid.: 20).

As mentioned in the precedent section, the WASH and the Rapid Response Mechanism Cluster plan to distribute “basic hygiene kits”, which should help to contain outbreaks. Moreover, the WASH Cluster plans to distribute cholera kits that specifically support in containing cholera (ibid.: 21). Furthermore, the organizations committed to the WASH Cluster will support families by “monitoring [the] water quality at household level” (ibid.). As far as the mosquito-borne diseases are concerned, the Nutrition Cluster is “testing and treating malaria among children suffering from […] malnutrition” (ibid.: 19). Beyond that, activities regarding malaria are not included in the YHRP and neither the detection nor the treatment of dengue are addressed at all.

Thus, it can be concluded that the organizations committed to the YHRP plan to act to rectify the poor hygienic conditions and the further spread of cholera. On the other hand, the
containment of a spread of malaria and dengue, that has been identified as a form of structural violence in Yemen in chapter 5.2, are only barely or not addressed at all.

**Displacement**

Promoting “the dignity of displaced families living in emergency and IDP settlements” is one of the objectives of the humanitarian strategy (ibid.: 10). The organizations in the *Shelter and Site Management Cluster* are focused on improving the situations of displaced Yemenis. Their aim for 2019 is to “[provide] safe, appropriate shelter and essential household items to displaced and highly vulnerable families”. They work towards this aim by making sure that basic services are available in the settlements and that the families immediately get the emergency supplies they need (ibid.: 23). The *Shelter and Site Management Cluster* wants to “upgrade living conditions for families living in […] settlements and transitional shelter arrangements” by, for instance, maintain the shelters and settlements (ibid.).

The *Rapid Response Mechanism Cluster*’s objective is to provide immediate assistance to newly displaced families. Therefore, they also plan to address problems related to displacement. For example, they support affected families by providing “basic hygiene kits […] within 72 hours of receiving and verifying information on the movement and location of displaced people” (ibid.: 26). Furthermore, the organizations in this cluster provide “cash assistance, […] shelter kits, non-food items and hygienic supplies to newly displaced persons” (ibid.).

In conclusion, these actions address the structural violence related to the problems of displacement that were outlined in chapter 5.2. The clusters try to reduce the suffering amongst displaced families by providing a safe shelter and meeting their basic needs.

**6.3 Discussion**

After having analyzed the humanitarian response that is planned for Yemen in 2019 with the help of the YHRP, a closer look into the results should be taken and some aspects must be discussed.

First of all, it has to be mentioned that some of the activities and aims in the YHRP are kept very broad, which makes it difficult to figure out what is hidden in the activities. The *WASH Cluster* for instance, aims to “[conduct] emergency cleaning campaigns”, and
potentially this could also address problems related to the sewage disposal. However, it is not explicitly mentioned here and therefore, this activity is not discussed in the section on poor WASH conditions.

Moreover, it is important to emphasize that the YHRP is a plan. It does not necessarily mean that all the discussed activities are actually being implemented. Just because the plan includes all the objectives and cluster activities, it does not imply that the aims and activities will be fully achieved until the end of 2019. However, each cluster refers to its achievements from the precedent YHRP of 2018, which suggests that the organizations have succeeded with the last plan, and that they have good preconditions to build on.

Since the aim of this thesis is to identify the potential weaknesses in the response, the following summary can be given based on the two precedent chapters: as pointed out in the section 6.1, only one aim mentioned in the strategic objectives is relevant in order to address the direct violence committed against civilians in Yemen. This objective promotes advocacy for adherence of the IHL. However, the cluster plans do not include specific actions that work towards this aim. Therefore, the direct violence that has manifested itself in Yemen over the past years of conflict is hardly being addressed in the YHRP and can be considered as a weakness in the plan. On the contrary, the problems identified regarding the manifested structural violence in Yemen are addressed in the YHRP. The only exception is that activities against the infectious diseases dengue and malaria are barely included in the plan. Therefore, the lack of activities preventing the spread of these diseases is a weakness in the YHRP. All the other types of structural violence discussed in chapter 5.2 are covered in the YHRP with planned interventions.

However, is it legitimate to consider the lack of a plan to address the direct violence in Yemen appropriately by the humanitarian organizations committed to the YHRP as a weakness? Addressing direct violence, meaning the killing and injuring of civilians, would imply that the organizations must actively intervene in the conflict between the Hadi-led government and the Houthi rebels. This is a step that would clash with a very important characteristic of humanitarian organizations: the humanitarian principles. The four core humanitarian principles are humanity, impartiality, independence and neutrality and they function as a foundation for today’s humanitarian action (IFRC & ICRC, 1994). The next paragraph will
shortly present these four principles and their background in order to make this issue more comprehensible.

The principle of humanity implies that the purpose of aid organizations is to prevent and minimize suffering and to protect the life and health of the affected people. Impartial assistance means the humanitarian actors are only guided by the need of the people and the urgency of the cases, without any discrimination. Furthermore, they must be independent and unbiased from political, economic, military or any other objectives and lastly, they must remain neutral and they should not get involved or take sides in the conflict setting they are working in (IFRC & ICRC, 1994: 3). These four principles originated from the International Community of the Red Cross (ICRC) and they have guided the work of the ICRC already for a long time. The discussion started with a book published by Jean Pictet in 1955, which played an important role in promoting the principles. Subsequently the ICRC pursued this work and in 1965, they have adopted the four humanitarian principles (IFRC & ICRC, 2015: 12-13). Nowadays, the major document for humanitarian actors concerning the principles is the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs for Disaster Relief that was published by the IFRC and the ICRC in 1994. It includes ten articles of which the first four relate to the humanitarian principles (IFRC & ICRC, 1994).

The organizations that have committed to the YHRP work in accordance with the humanitarian principles, which is emphasized in the plan: “During 2019, in accordance with the cardinal humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and operational independence, more than 242 partners across the country are committed to [the] strategic objectives” (OCHA, 2019: 10).

If these organizations took the step and intervened in the conflict intending to address the direct violence against civilians in Yemen, they would violate the principle of neutrality. They are obliged to remain neutral and are not permitted to get involved or take sides in the conflict (IFRC & ICRC, 1994). It is crucial for the work in the humanitarian sector that this principle exists. The principle of neutrality helps the organizations to negotiate access, and therefore, if they neglected this principle, they would risk that their presence is no longer accepted by the conflicting parties. According to Labbé and Daudin (2016), “this non-participation in hostilities is at the core of the relief provisions” (p. 189). Furthermore, once a
humanitarian organization takes side and gets involved in a conflict, its work can no longer be seen as humanitarian (ibid.).

To conclude, the humanitarian principles and especially the principle of neutrality can be considered as a valid explanation for this imbalanced response in the YHRP towards direct and structural violence. The organizations are not allowed to get involved in the conflict, which is why their response to the direct violence is limited on the aspect of advocacy work. Apart from the small weakness related to the response to malaria and dengue, the YHRP addresses all of the aspects related to structural violence in the country that have been identified in 5.2.
7 Conclusion

The analysis of violence in Yemen throughout this thesis has clearly shown that both types of violence conceptualized by Galtung are manifested in the country. Direct violence against the civilians is expressed in killings and injuries caused by the fighting of the conflicting parties, by their attacks and airstrikes. Structural violence shows more diverse facets, ranging from poor access to health care, food insecurity, poor WASH conditions and spread of diseases to displacement. The two types are also overlapping and interlinked, with direct violence and the caused destruction through direct violence being the main reason for many aspects related to structural violence. For instance, direct attacks against medical staff can also be perceived as structural violence, as such attacks have a negative impact on the availability of health care for the civilians.

Analyzing the YHRP has helped to reach the aim of identifying potential weaknesses in the response towards these types of violence. The organizations that are committed to this plan for 2019 aim to address most of the identified aspects of structural violence by implementing specific actions, and the only exception is the prevention of the spread of the infectious diseases dengue and malaria. Regarding the identified direct violence, the YHRP includes the objective to do advocacy for the adherence of the IHL. Beyond that, the organizations have activities planned to care for the civilian victims of the conflict, but they do not address the direct violence or make any move to stop the attacks and injuries against civilians from happening. However, it should be noted that due to the humanitarian principle of neutrality, the aid organizations are obligated to remain neutral and are not permitted to get involved in the conflict. Thus, the identified weakness regarding their response to direct violence can be traced back to the humanitarian principle of neutrality.

There are some limitations that need to be considered regarding the analyses and the results of this thesis. The civilians in Yemen were struggling with poverty already before the outbreak of war in 2015. Therefore, it is possible that some of the identified aspects regarding structural violence were already present in the country and that they may not have been exclusively caused by the conflict. For example, since Yemen’s economy has already been weakened, some families could potentially not afford to buy food before the outbreak of the conflict either and suffered already from food insecurity. However, this does not change the fact that there is structural violence currently manifested in Yemen, and that the conflict is
surely an aggravating factor. Furthermore, the literature review used to identify the manifestation of direct and structural violence in the country, refers to sources published during the whole period of the conflict (2015-2019), whereas the humanitarian response plan, used to analyze the response towards this violence, is only focused on the year 2019.

The results of this thesis imply that it could be helpful for the future of humanitarian action to further investigate the impact of the humanitarian principle of neutrality on the effectiveness of humanitarian responses. However, it needs to be remembered that this principle is also crucial for humanitarian organizations to negotiate access to conflict areas in order to implement their projects.
8 Reference List


