

**Perspectives on international actors'
involvement in Yemen's transitional period
2011-2014**

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Abstrakt

I denne masteroppgaven har jeg undersøkt ulike perspektiver på internasjonale aktørers rolle i Jemens overgangsperiode 2011-2014, med et fokus på den nasjonale dialog konferansen.

Målet med perioden, og den nasjonale dialog konferansen var å skape langvarig fred i Jemen, og skape en demokratisk stat. Ved bruk av intervjuer, og nyhetsmediet *Yemen Times* har jeg innhentet perspektiver på hvordan internasjonale aktører tilrettela perioden, og hvordan de bidro for å løse de mest pressende problemene i Jemen 2011-2014. Jeg har også undersøkt hvilke agendaer de hadde for å involvere seg i prosessen. De internasjonale aktørene bidro i en rekke aspekter. Likevel, flere viktige problemer ble ikke løst, og overgangsperioden i Jemen endte i borgerkrig.

Tema i denne oppgaven er bred, fordi utfordringene Jemen stod overfor i 2011-2014 var mange. For å forstå disse utfordringene har jeg også sett på viktige teoretiske begreper, teori om stabilitet, og sett på hvilke erfaringer tidligere forsøk på demokratiseringsprosesser kan lære oss.

Internasjonale aktører har en egeninteresse i Jemen, men dette trenger ikke å være et problem. Egeninteresser blir et problem når det ikke er i samsvar med hva som er best for prosessen. Rollen til de internasjonale aktørene i Jemen vil oppfattes ulikt fra hvem vi spør; noen vil mene de spilte en viktig rådgivende rolle; andre vil si de styrte prosessen. Noen vil si de ikke gjorde nok; andre vil igjen si de overskred sin rolle.

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List of key persons

Abdulla, Nadia. NDC delegate representing youths.

Al-Ahmar, Sheikh Sadiq. Leader of the Hashid tribal configuration. Saleh regime insider.

Al-Beidh, Ali Salem. President of South-Yemen 1986-1990.

Al-Emad, Ali. Houthi leader.

Al-Madabi, Abdulwali. Editor-in-chief of GPC-sponsored Al-Methaq Newspaper.

Al-Mikhlaifi, Dr. Mohammed. Yemeni Minister of Legal Affairs.

Al-Mutawakil, Dr. Mohammed Abdul-Malik. Former leader of Joint Meeting Parties.

Al-Qirbi, Abu Bakr. Yemeni Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Al-Zindani, Abdul al-Majeed. Established the Muslim Brotherhood in Yemen.

Benomar, Dr. Jamal. Special Envoy and Special adviser to Yemen.

Dabwan, Abdul-Moez. Islah Party member.

Karman. Tawakkul. Nobel Peace Prize winner.

Hadi, 'Abd Rabuh Mansur. President of the Republic of Yemen 2012-2022.

Mohsen, General Ali. Military leader and Saleh regime insider.

Robertson, Hugh. United Kingdom minister of state for the Foreign and Commonwealth office.

Saleh, Ali Abdullah. President of the Republic of Yemen 1990-2012.

Sharafeddin, Professor Ahmed. Houthi representative to NDC.

Zakout, Wael. The World Bank's Country Manager in Yemen.

Zaid, Hassan. The General Secretary of the Al-Haq Party.

Chapter 1: Introduction

On the 25th of February 2012, President Ali Abdullah Saleh officially stepped down as president of Yemen after over 33 years. On the same date, the newly elected president ‘Abd Rabuh Mansur Hadi was sworn in (Encyclopaedia Britannica, s.v “Ali Abdullah Saleh,” 20.04.2023; Alley 2013, 74).

The Gulf Cooperation Council, GCC, and the United Nations, UN, provided support in the negotiation between the Saleh government and the opposition, which resulted in the signing of the Gulf Cooperation Council Initiative, and the Agreement on the Implementation Mechanism for the Transition Process¹. Both documents were signed on the 23rd of November 2011 in Riyadh (Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen Undated A). Although Saleh did not officially step down until February 2012, I consider the signing of the GCC Initiative and Implementation Mechanism as the beginning of the transitional period. The Houthi takeover of Sanaa on the 21st of September 2014 (Al-Jazeera 2019) constitutes the end of the transitional period in this thesis.

The Implementation Mechanism is an agreement which laid out the steps for Yemen’s transitional period. The hope was that these steps could lead to a peaceful Yemeni state (Implementation Mechanism 2011, 2). The Implementation Mechanism divided Yemen’s transitional period into two phases, which I will describe in further details in chapter 2.

Why should we study this time period in Yemen? It is my opinion that the ongoing crisis in Yemen does not get the attention it deserves. Not only is Yemen nine years into a horrific civil war, but the country is also facing one of the worst humanitarian crisis in the world. In 2023, two thirds of the Yemeni population is in need of humanitarian assistance (USA for UNHCR 2023). In my opinion, we need to understand Yemen’s past in order to establish a secure future. A better understanding of the transitional period is therefore a valuable contribution to the scientific discussion.

During the transitional period, Yemen held the National Dialogue Conference, the NDC. This process started on the 18th of March 2013 and ended on the 25th of January 2014 (Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen Undated B). Although I will look at the transitional period in its entirety, I will have a special focus on the NDC in this thesis.

¹ The official title of this document is: *Agreement on the Implementation Mechanism for the transition process in Yemen in accordance with the initiative of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)*. I will refer to it as: Implementation Mechanism 2011.

In this thesis I will use the terms “international actors and community” and “the West”. This is simply because these are the terms that has been used by my sources. Where specific people, states, or organizations are mentioned I have used the specific term. The most central international actors in this thesis will be: the UN, Dr. Jamal Benomar, The Friends of Yemen, the World Bank, The GCC and Saudi Arabia. The United States of America and several western European countries are also important actors.

Based on the wording of the Implementation Mechanism: “*Part 1 (c) This situation requires that all political leaders should fulfil their responsibilities towards the people by immediately engaging in a clear process for transition to good democratic governance in Yemen.*”

(Implementation Mechanism 2011, 2). My starting point of this thesis is that the transitional period in Yemen was an effort to eventually create a democratic state in Yemen. This was especially interesting due to the troubled history of promoting democracy in the Middle East.

The establishment of a new democracy is difficult, and the best way to develop a democracy is a source of constant debate in the international community. To create a democracy, theory suggests that certain elements will drive democracy forward, and that the establishment of democracy without such elements can end in disaster. This will be outlined later in this thesis. The history of democratic assistance in the Middle East is arguably not optimistic.

In order to transition to good democratic governance, the Implementation Mechanism called on the assistance of the member states of the GCC and the United Nations Security Council to support the implementation of the mechanism in order for it to be effective. The GCC Implementation Mechanism called for the secretary-general of the United Nations to assist in the implementation of the initiative, and to coordinate assistance from the international community (Implementation Mechanism 2011, 8-9). In other words, Yemen called for international assistance in its transitional period.

It is important to remember that the actors who were involved in the transitional period in Yemen, both insiders and international, were very diverse. The diversity of the actors also means that their interests were varied, and that the goals of the different actors would have been different. Yemen, and who controls Yemen, is especially geopolitically important. This is due to Yemen’s proximity to the Suez Canal (Fattah 2011, 80), and the Bab al-Mandab strait (Al Ashwal 2021). The international community therefore has a self-interest in Yemen.

Against this complex background, my research question is as follows: *What role did international actors play in Yemen’s transitional period?*

As mentioned, I will especially focus on the international actors' involvement in the NDC, but also the transitional period in general. The issues that needed to be addressed were broad. This thesis will therefore have a broad perspective.

My analysis will be focused around four sub-questions, reflecting different aspects of the transitional period. The first question is: *Why a national dialogue?* I will look at which components came together to create a national dialogue. I also look at how the NDC was preliminarily perceived by some of the Yemeni actors, and the steps the international community took to facilitate and initiate the NDC.

The second question is: *What were the challenges faced during this period and what strategies were proposed by the international community to overcome them?* There were many challenges needed to be overcome, and I could not cover all of them in this thesis, I have therefore chosen those I deemed to be most important.

The third question is: *What were the contested topics and how were they perceived or negotiated?* The NDC and the transitional period, was filled with contested topics, and in no way can they all be covered here. I have thus had to make a selection, and focus on the issues I found most essential.

The fourth and final research question relates directly to the outcome of the international involvement in the NDC and the transitional period: *How was the international actor's involvement perceived and what were their respective agendas?*

As will be evident in this thesis, international actors were involved in many aspects of the transitional period, and as I will further demonstrate, they themselves had an interest in Yemen. Although looking at specific topics or issues could give us valuable insight, it is my opinion that looking at the whole picture is important. As mentioned above, this thesis offers a broad approach to the transitional period in Yemen. This could make for an insurmountable framework for a master thesis. However, I chose to limit myself to a limited set of sources: Material from Yemen Times and interviews with individuals with expertise on the process. While I acknowledge that a broader selection of sources may have offered different answers, I argue that the range of topics discussed in this thesis offer an insight into the successes and failures made at the time.

As I have already mentioned, to solve the ongoing crisis in Yemen, it is necessary to understand what happened during the transitional period as a whole. Some researchers have

focused on why the transitional period failed, and it is my opinion that this leads to an oversimplification of a quite complex situation. The people involved in the transitional period in Yemen did not know what the outcome would be. I therefore think it is important to investigate this topic as a historian. I have also looked at the transitional period in hindsight, and questioned both myself and the people I have interviewed; what should have been done differently? It is however an important distinction between what was known then, and what we know now.

Another relevant perspective is to view the process with a mind to theory on democratisation, governance and development. This must be viewed against the historical backdrop of past experiences of stability and democratisation in the modern Middle East.

Previous studies on the transitional period and the NDC

I will now present some of the previous studies that has been done on the transitional period in Yemen 2011-2014. This is both to understand what research already exists on the topic of this thesis, but also to present what sparked my interest in this topic. These studies have also been valuable in shaping the four sub-questions I raise in this thesis.

Leading up to the NDC, several papers and studies discussed the challenges that needed to be resolved. It is thus evident that many of the challenges faced in Yemen were clear to observers. One such paper is *Triage for a Fracturing Yemen*, published by April Longley Alley in 2012. Alley argues that the transitional period had four main fronts that needed to be addressed for the NDC to be successful: “[...] a return to basics; political inclusion; removing spoilers; and demonstrating a new leadership model.” (Alley 2012). By returning to basics, Alley means that the Yemeni government needed to focus on the economy and security. This shows that Yemen had a diverse set of challenges and issues that needed to be overcome, and the establishment of a democracy was not the only measure needed. This also shows that these challenges and issues were also evident during the transitional period.

Adding to the Controversy? Civil Society’s Evaluation of the National Conference Dialogue in Yemen, published by Moosa Elayah, Luuk van Kempen and Lau Schulpen. The article was published in 2020, and compared the perspectives of fifty Yemeni civil society organizations, CSOs, with the perspectives of international commentators on the NDC (Elayah, van Kempen and Schulpen 2020, 431).

This article explored several topics. The most central to my own research question is that Elayah, van Kempen and Schulpen highlighted the role of international actors in the NDC. In

their study, Elayah, van Kempen and Schulpen found that Yemeni CSOs were divided in the view of foreign involvement. Some CSOs viewed foreign involvement as positive, while some viewed it negatively. Elayah, van Kempen and Schulpen also found that specific international actors, the GCC and Jamal Benomar were viewed particularly negative by parts of the CSOs. They also found that the international commentators believed that the NDC had been taken over by external agendas (Elayah, van Kempen and Schulpen 2020, 450-451).

There are several studies that discuss why the transitional period in Yemen failed. Examples include *Why Yemen's Political Transition Failed* published by Farea Al-Muslimi in 2015, and *Yemen's transition to political stability was doomed to fail. Here's why* published by Mareike Transfeld in 2015. Today we know that the transitional period did fail, but that was not the reality of the people involved in 2011-2014. A focus on the ultimate failure of the process is therefore ahistorical and creates a negative connotation. Perhaps it was doomed to fail, but then how can we explain the efforts made for it to be successful? Why did international actors get involved at all if they did not believe it could be a success?

Transfeld points to the proposed federal structure as the main reasons for the failure of the transitional period (Transfeld 2015). Transfeld is not alone in this opinion, Susan Stigant and Elizabeth Murray also singles out federalism as the point of failure “*Although Yemen's NDC had a far-reaching agenda, it failed to produce agreement on the highly contentious issue of federalism.*” (Stigant and Murray 2015). As I will show in this thesis, federalism is not the only contested issue which remained unresolved. The failure to find consensus on federalism cannot be the sole explanation. Therefore, only focusing on federalism is an oversimplification of a much larger issue. The proposed federal structure might have been a catalyst, but I do not believe it was the sole reason for failure. As federalism has received a lot of research, I have chosen to dwell less on this topic in my research.

Al-Muslimi accredits the failure of the transitional period to the Yemeni model (Al-Muslimi 2015 A), which in his opinion did not adequately deal with the country's grievances, economic and security challenges, but rather focused on discussing the establishment of the political system. The timeframe which was laid out in the Implementation Mechanism, was according to Al-Muslimi not realistic. Al-Muslimi also believed that the Yemeni model was unsuccessful because the GCC Initiative had given Saleh immunity, but did not stop his continuation in Yemeni politics (Al-Muslimi 2015 A). These criticisms peaked my interest, and I wished to understand how the international community themselves viewed these

problems. Where these challenges not evident? Or did they have a different take on the situation?

The book *Destroying Yemen, what chaos in Arabia tells us about the world* written by Isa Blumi especially sparked my interest in the role of international actors in Yemen's transitional period. In *Destroying Yemen* Blumi argues that the Hadi government with the backing of the US and GCC "[...] proceeded to literally sell Yemen off to Saudi and Qatari interest." (Blumi 2018, 189). According to Blumi, the GCC Initiative and Implementation Mechanism was created by the GCC and the UN to steer Yemen "[...] away from real change." (Blumi 2018, 189). Blumi further argues that the transitional period was a way for the international community, or the "empire" as he called it, to profit on the destruction of Yemen (Blumi 2018, 188-199). He also argued that the international actors tried to delegitimize and side line the Houthis during the transitional period (Blumi 2018,195).

Blumi is definitely a harsh critic on the efforts of the international community. Again, I asked myself, how can one then explain the effort that was made? This led me to not only take a deep dive into the efforts made by the international community, but also investigate what agendas they might have had.

The outline of this thesis

I will begin this thesis by looking at the historical background in chapter 2. Yemen is a complicated case, with a long and rich history. I can therefore in no way cover every important aspect of the history of Yemen in this chapter.

In chapter 3, I present my method, and in chapter 4, I present the theoretical framework that I considered important to answer my research questions. In chapter 4, I also investigate the claim that democracy is the price of stability in the Middle East. I will also look at past experiences of promoting democracy in the Middle East.

In chapter 5, I carry out my analysis. Chapter 5 is divided into four sub-chapters, each dedicated to answer one of my sub-research questions. In chapter 6, I offer a conclusion.

Chapter 2: Historical background

Yemen

Yemen is one of the oldest civilisations in the Middle East (Selvik and Stenslie 2007, 67). According to Paul Dresch the natural Yemen is not confined to the boundaries of the modern nation-state. For many Yemeni the “natural Yemen” would include areas within present-day Saudi Arabia and for some, parts of Oman. The border between North-Yemen and Saudi Arabia was drawn after the Saudi-Yemeni war in 1934 (Dresch 1989, 1-3). Unlike many other countries in the Middle East, the concept of Yemen, of being Yemeni, predates the modern state building projects. Even before Islam, the concept of Yemen as a unit has existed. However, this does not mean that Yemen has been a single power unit for most of history (Dresch 2002, 1). Yemen has long been characterised by political fragmentation, and the state has had to compete for power with religious leaders and tribes. Political fragmentation led to the Saleh regime need for survival politics (Selvik and Stenslie 2007, 68).

Yemen’s geography is one of the reasons for this fragmentation, as Yemen is disjointed by mountains, deep valleys and desert. Yemen is also one of the most multi-ethnic countries in the Middle East. In addition to Arabs, we also find people of African descent in Yemen. Historically we also find multiple faiths, and a strong tribal and clan structure. In 2011, Zaydi Shia Muslims were believed to make up about 50 percent of the population². The rest of the population is made up of Shafi’i Sunni, Ismaili Shia, and a small number of Hindus of Indian descent. Historically there has also been a Jewish minority in Yemen (Selvik and Stenslie 2011, 89-90).

Before unification in 1990, Yemen was divided between two states, North- and South-Yemen. North-Yemen was also known as The Yemen Arab Republic, and the capital was Sanaa. South-Yemen was also known as the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, and the capital was Aden (Dresch 1989, 2-3).

South-Yemen was a British colony from 1839 until 1967 (Selvik and Stenslie 2007, 41). In 1967 the British came under pressure by a national movement, and withdrew from South-Yemen. South-Yemen was the only Marxist state in the Middle East, and had close ties to the Soviet Union (Selvik and Stenslie 2007, 69-70). Society in South-Yemen was somewhat liberalised compared to its neighbours, for example in the early 1980s, the university in Aden

² Estimates on the percentage of Zaydi Muslims vary. Lauren Bonnefoy estimated that around 35 percent of the Yemeni population was Zaydi (Bonnefoy 2009, 27).

had an equal number of female and male students. Even though many more women got access to university in South-Yemen during the 1980s, the change was slow to reach more remote areas (Pappé 2014, 228). Despite its relative liberalized society, South-Yemen was not peaceful. Inside the regime of South-Yemen there were violent coups in 1969, 1978 and 1986. The coup in 1986 evolved into a civil war, in which Ali Salem al-Beidh emerged as president (Al-Hamdani and Lackner 2020; Mouzahem 2013). Al-Beidh would remain president of South-Yemen until unification in 1990 (Al-Muslimi 2015 B).

North-Yemen was a part of the Ottoman empire until 1636, when the Zaydi-Imamate managed to take over control of the area known as South-Arabia. The Imamate came under pressure from both the Ottoman Empire and Saudi Arabia, which led to the Ottoman Empire regaining control over Sanaa in 1871. The Ottoman empire struggled to maintain control over Yemen, which resulted in the treaty of Daan. The treaty of Daan generated Zaidy Imamate control over the Yemeni highlands. The Ottoman empire still had control in some areas, until North-Yemen became independent in 1918. The Imam wished to extend his power to all of the natural Yemen, but was according to Kjetil Selvik and Stig Stenslie careful to not provoke the British in South-Yemen. The Imamate fell in 1962, when a military coup took power and created a republic. In the aftermath of the revolution there was a civil war in North-Yemen until 1967. The war was supported by outside powers. Egypt took the side of the republicans, while Saudi Arabia supported the Imamate (Selvik and Stenslie 2007, 68-69). Saudi Arabia viewed South-Yemen as a threat. According to Farea Al-Muslimi, Saudi Arabia wanted North-Yemen as a buffer zone between the Marxist South-Yemen and Saudi Arabia (Al-Muslimi 2016). We can therefore see that international actors have been involved and has had interest with the internal politics in North- and South-Yemen for decades before the transitional period. In July 1978, Ali Abdallah Saleh became president of North-Yemen (Day 2012, 68).

Starting in 1979, the government of Saudi Arabia began to fund the spread of Wahhabism in northern Yemen. Prior to the 1970s, Yemeni had for the most part rejected Wahhabism, as it did not fit with their traditionally moderate practise of Islam. Things started to gradually change during the 1970s and 1980s. More and more Yemeni migrated to Saudi Arabia to find work, and during their stay there they converted to Wahhabism (Day 2012, 101).

A troubled union

On the 22nd of May 1990, the republic of Yemen was created. The new republic was a union of the former North- and South-Yemen (Day 2012, 22). Saleh became the president of the

new nation (Lackner 2021, 148), al-Beidh became the vice-president (Selvik and Stenslie, 2011, 91). This was not an untroubled union.

In 1984 oil was discovered in the borderlands between North- and South-Yemen. Northern and Southern officials realised that cooperation would benefit both countries economically. According to Stephen Day, the discovery of oil was the catalyst for the unification of North and South (Day 2012, 113-114). Selvik and Stenslie on the other hand, believed that unification de facto meant that the North took over the South. South-Yemen had become weak after the civil war in 1986, and due to the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989, had lost its greatest ally (Selvik and Stenslie 2011, 91).

According to Dresch the idea of a single unified Yemen arose from the wishes of outside powers (Dresch 2002, 1), not because of mutual interest as described by Day. North- and South-Yemen had already agreed to a unification in 1972, but the unification was postponed due to conflicts between the two states (Selvik and Stenslie 2007, 70). According to Al-Muslimi, the unification agreement was improvised, and drawn up in haste (Al-Muslimi 2015 B). According to Dresch, most Yemenis were unprepared for the unification of the two states in 1990 (Dresch 2002, 183).

Helen Lackner takes a different view on the 1990 unification. According to her, unification was well received from every part of Yemeni society (Lackner 2017, 114). She states that the unification had a higher chance of success than other unifications, as the two areas were seen as “part of the homeland” by Yemeni (Lackner 2017, 97). Lackner’s view of the unification is in great contrast to how it is described by Dresch. According to Dresch, unification had been a source of bitter conflict. He does however acknowledge that on the unification day in 1990, crowds of people were celebrating the new state (Dresch 2002, 183).

Before unification, North-Yemen had about 11 million inhabitants, while South-Yemen only had about 2.5 million inhabitants. According to the unity accords, the positions of the government were supposed to be divided equally between previous inhabitants of North- and South- Yemen. Freedom of speech had long been established in the northern countryside. After unification, this also spread to the cities in the old North-Yemen, and more slowly to the old South-Yemen (Dresch 2002, 186). Whether or not one believes that unification was troubled from the start, by 1994 we can definitely see the relationship with the old North and South go sour.

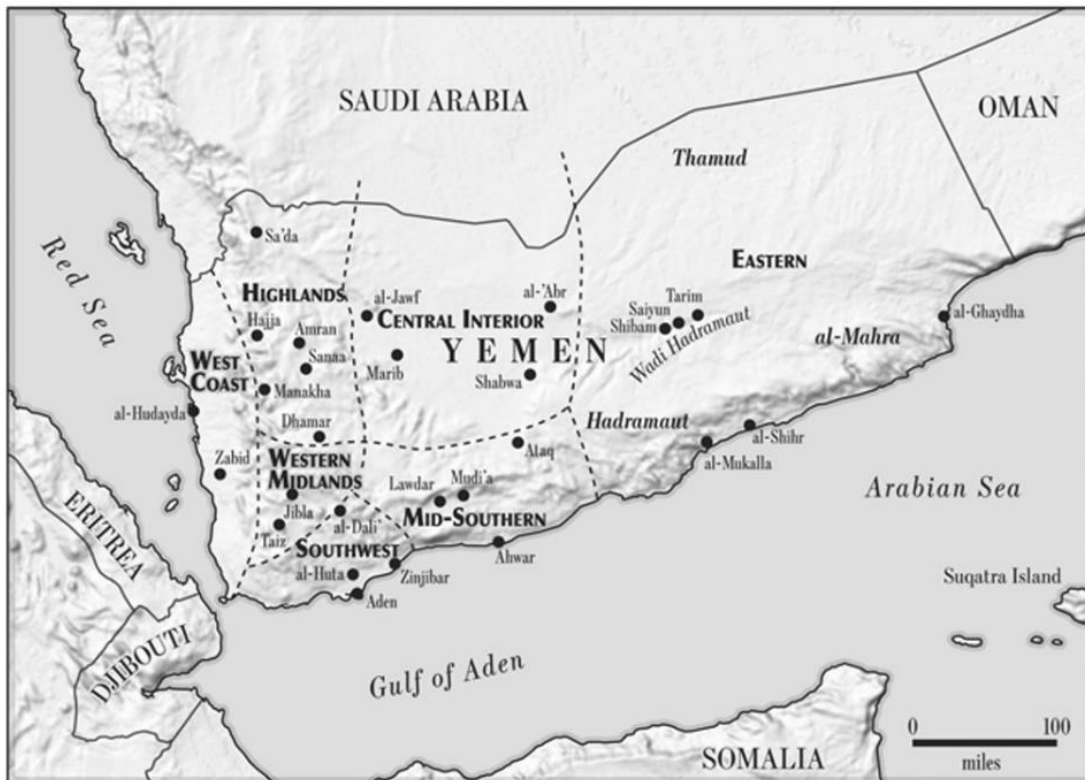
In 1994, al-Beidh and the Yemeni Socialist Party, YSP, announced the creation of an independent republic in Aden. This resulted in a civil war between the old North- and South-Yemen (Selvik and Stenslie 2007, 70). Although Saudi Arabia had been unhappy with the Marxism in South Yemen, they somewhat surprisingly supported South-Yemen in the civil war. This was a direct consequence of Saleh's support of Saddam Hussein in the Gulf war from 1990-1991 (Al-Muslimi 2015 B). In spite of Saudi Arabia's support, the North won the civil war. In part this was due to an alliance between Saleh and the Islamist Islah party (Selvik and Stenslie 2011, 92). I will discuss the further implications of Saleh's decision to support Saddam Hussein later in this chapter. According to Al-Muslimi, after the northerners won the civil war in 1994, Saudi Arabia ended their push for southern secession (Al-Muslimi 2015 B).

Regionalism

As we have seen, the Republic of Yemen was troubled from the start. As mentioned, although the concept of Yemen has existed since pre-Islamic time, this does not mean that Yemen has been a single political unit for most of its history. Up until 2011, Yemen had also experienced decades of political and social conflicts, including armed conflicts (Small Arms Survey 2010, 1). Unlike other states in the Middle East, for example Iraq, Lebanon and Syria (Day 2012, 43), sectarian violence has traditionally not been the norm in Yemen (Fattah 2014 A, 207). In an article from 2009, Bonnefoy argues that the religious divide in Yemen is considered for most to be merely symbolic. Zaidy and Shafi'i Muslims often pray in the same mosques (Bonnefoy 2009, 27).

So, what then are the traditional roots of conflict? Conflicts have been for the most part due to tribalism and regionalism. According to Day, the state of Yemen was close to collapse before 2011. This was due to the regional conflict plaguing the country. There were regional divisions between the old North and South, but also between all the regions in Yemen (Day 2012, 7-8). Understanding these regional divisions are therefore important to answer my research questions, as they give insight into the roots of internal conflict in Yemen.

In the map below, we see the seven regions in the Republic of Yemen. Not all people inside these different regions are homogeneous, but we can still use these regional divisions to understand the general distinctions and the interest of the people living inside of these regions (Day 2012, 44-45).



This map shows the seven different regions in Yemen. The map is sourced from Day 2012, 45.

In the Highlands we find Yemen's capital, Sanaa. The Highlands are also described as the heartland of Zaydism. In the Highland mountains in the north-west part of the country we have traditionally found the two most influential tribal configurations, Hashid and Bakil. This region is resource poor, and leading up to the transitional period was facing acute water shortage (Day 2012, 47).

In the West Coast we find the region of Tehama, where we traditionally find people of African descent. The Western Midlands has fertile soil, and a relative moderate climate, making the region suitable for agriculture. In the Southwest we find the city of Aden. When Day published his book in 2012, Aden was generally viewed as the most liberal place in Yemen. Before the unification in 1990, Aden had a strong industrial sector. This sector was shut down in line with economic reforms mandated by the International Monetary Fund, IMF (Day 2012, 47-50).

The Mid-Southern region is also resource poor, and tribal traditions were still strong in 2012. The Central Interior is sparsely populated, as most of the region is desert. This region holds big oil reserves, making it an important region. The Eastern region is very diverse, and in Hadramout we find Yemen's biggest oil reserves. The tribal traditions in Hadramout had a

revival in the 1990s due to the Saleh regime. According to Day, the people living in Al-Mahra and Soqatra had little influence in Yemeni politics (Day 2012, 50-53).

As we can see, Yemen is a geographically varied country, and some parts lack natural resources. It would be natural to think that the regions without natural resources would be the poorest and with least political influence. This is not the case. As I will outline in the next section, the tribes in the Highland region had been political elites in Yemen prior to 2011. Before 2011, tribes in the Highland and the Central Interior claimed the right to self-governance (Selvik and Stenslie 2011, 95).

Although Yemen has not been a single power unit for most of its history, the Imamate did in periods also control areas in southern Yemen. According to Dresch, this led to southerners not trusting northern tribesmen (Dresch 1989, 11).

Two important actors emerged due to regional grievances, the Southern Movement and the Houthis. I will discuss these later in this chapter. Both the Southern Movement and the Houthis are groups with military capacities (Rulac 2021; Human Rights Watch 2009), that existed prior to the 2011-uprising.

Tribes

Yemeni tribes are traditionally mostly farmers, not nomadic as is common in the rest of the Middle East. Dresch points out that it is a mistake by westerners to assume that Arab tribal communities are nomadic (Dresch 1989, 3). As mentioned, the most influential tribal configurations were Hashid and Bakil. The former president Saleh was part of the Sanhan tribe, which again is a sub-tribe under the Hashid tribe. The Sanhan sub-tribe was considered weak. Because the Sanhan tribe was considered weak, the tribes of Hashid and Bakil did not initially view the presidency of Saleh as a threat (Day 2012, 93). Since the 1962 revolution, the Hashid tribe have managed to hold some of the most powerful government and military positions in the country (Day 2012, 86-88). A central person to note here is Sheikh Sadiq al-Ahmar, the leader of the Hashid tribal configuration³ (International Crisis Group 2011). The tribes in southern Yemen are smaller, and more fragmented. The biggest tribal configurations in southern Yemen are Himiar and Madhhij (Selvik and Stenslie 2007, 68).

In South-Yemen, the Marxist regime had tried to breakdown the old tribal system, but they were never successful in totally removing them. After unification in 1990, the tribes in the

³ Sheikh al-Ahmar became the leader of the Hashid tribe in 2008 (Al-Jazeera 2011 A).

south also revitalized, and it was seen as a way to balance out the power of the northern tribes (Selvik and Stenslie 2007, 74-75).

Arms, and the bearing of arms has traditionally been an important feature of tribesmen. In *Tribes, Government and History in Yemen*, from 1989, Dresch describes that tribesmen bear their rifles in public, and that even poorer tribesmen will own arms. Inside the houses of tribes' people, he found heavier weapons, like machine guns, mortars and light artillery (Dresch 1989, 38). In 2010, Small Arms Survey estimated that there were approximately 10 million arms in Yemen, making Yemen one of the most heavily armed societies in the world. It is difficult to make accurate estimates of number of arms, and Small Arms Survey found that some researchers estimations went as high as 60 million arms and weapons (Small Arms Survey 2010, 1).

The Saleh regime

Saleh led the political party the General People's Congress, GPC. The GPC was established in 1982. The main opposition party pre-2011 was the Joint Meeting Parties, JMP, which was founded in 2002. JMP was a coalition between several parties, including the Islah party and the YSP (Durac 2012, 169-170).

In 1991 a referendum was held, and a new constitution was ratified. This new constitution was, according to Selvik and Stenslie, relatively liberal. It allowed opposition parties, and demonopolized the media. According to Maria-Louise Clausen, Yemen was viewed as the first representative democracy on the Arabian Peninsula (Clausen 2018, 562).

After the civil war in 1994 however, Selvik and Stenslie argues that President Saleh steered the country towards authoritarianism. After the election in 1997, the Islah party accused GPC of voting fraud. In 1999 Saleh won the presidency with 96 percent of the votes. In 2003, the Islah party won 50 and YSP 7 of the seats in parliament. The rest of the seats, 225, were won by the GPC (Selvik and Stenslie 2011, 92-93).

President Saleh announced several times in his career that in the upcoming elections he would not be running for president. But the Yemeni people saw this as a farse. The GPC created media campaigns to try to make Saleh change his mind, saying how the Yemeni people wanted him as leader (Selvik and Stenslie 2007, 71). In many ways this was quite a smart tactic, making it seem like Saleh was quite prepared to pass the presidential power on. This is smart because the turnover of power after elections is considered by many as proof of a real democracy (Lodge 2013, 21). As mentioned, before the civil war in 1994, Yemen had been

relatively liberal. It is possible that Saleh used the tactic to make himself look less like an authoritarian leader.

President Saleh used his family and political connections to create a patron-client system (Day 2012, 88). This system was mostly based on tribal relationships and military loyalty, but he did also select a few outsiders, and elevated their social and economic standing to ensure their loyalty (Lackner 2021, 148).

Day argues that: *“I am not convinced that President Salih and his family are alone to blame for the country’s failures. This is because the regionally configured structure of power inside Yemen will outlive Salih’s rule, and likely continue to plague the country’s political and economic development.”* (Day 2012, 6).

Dismantling the political system that existed in Yemen in 2011 should not be viewed as easy. Prior to 2011 the Saleh regime was strong, but the state of Yemen was weak. Although Saleh was, in many ways, a strong leader, he was not the only power figure. The Saleh regime did not exercise control over all areas of Yemen (Hamidaddin 2022, 6).

A common definition of a state is that it must have a monopoly on legitimate violence over its territory. Although other bodies might exercise violence inside the territory, they do not have a legitimate mandate to do so. When the state cannot stop other bodies from exercising violence, a monopoly no longer exists (Poggi 2014, 64).

President Saleh’s regime is a complicated case. The Saleh regime had many aspects of authoritarianism. Nevertheless, according to Khaled Fattah, Saleh was never able to exercise a monopoly on violence. In many parts of the country, the state had little or no control (Fattah 2010, 25-26). According to Fattah, in some tribal areas national security and military institutions were viewed as foreign intrusion (Fattah 2011, 83). This lack of control is vital for understanding the power dynamics that existed in Yemen before the 2011 uprising. The Saleh regime spent their energy on creating strategies for regime survival, rather than actually extending state control. To compensate for the lack of control, the state had to rely on tribal leaders in order to exercise some control over society (Fattah 2011, 84).

During the Saleh regime, tribes were able to develop their own judiciary, which was formed on a basis of Sharia, and tribal laws and customs. The state regularly declined to investigate murders, kidnappings, and other crimes that were considered to be part of tribal traditions (Selvik and Stenslie 2007, 73-74). This can be seen as an expression of the state’s lack of

monopoly on violence. Not all researchers agree on this. Antony Chimente argues that as head patron, Saleh did actually have a monopoly on violence prior to the 2011 uprising (Chimente 2022, 181).

A long-winded debate on whether or not the Saleh regime did, or did not have a monopoly on violence is beyond the scope of this thesis. In my opinion, because tribal powers were seen as legitimate, even preferable to state power, and that the regime arguably wanted to, but was unable to exercise control, constitutes a lack of monopoly on violence. As Fattah puts it, “[...] *the state behaves like a tribe, and the tribe behaves like a state.*” (Fattah 2011, 83).

Yemen and the rest of the world

On the 2nd of August 1990, Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait. At this time Yemen was on the United Nations Security Council, as the only Arab state. While all the other members agreed to formally condemn the invasion, Yemen abstained (Dresch 2002, 185). As I have already mentioned, Saudi Arabia was very unhappy with Saleh’s support for Saddam Hussein.

Although Yemen’s handling of the Gulf war cannot alone be blamed for the subsequent problems of the newly formed united Yemen, it did invoke considerable distrust from the West and particularly from Saudi Arabia (Dresch 2002, 186).

On the 19th of September 1990, Saudi Arabia revoked a decree that gave Yemeni people a special status, which had allowed them to work in the country. 800 000 Yemenis, from Saudi Arabia, and other Gulf states were forced to return home. Yemen was diplomatically isolated, and international remittance and aid stopped (Dresch 2002, 186). The people returning to Yemen, combined with a massive population growth, put a severe strain on Yemen’s resources (Cleveland and Bunton 2016, 471). The strained relationship between Yemen and Saudi Arabia remained until 1996, when Sheikh al-Ahmar, on behalf of President Saleh, started to mediate the relationship with Saudi Arabia. In 2000, Saudi Arabia and Yemen signed a border treaty, which resolved what had been the most pressing issue between the two countries (Al-Muslimi 2016).

After Yemen resolved its relationship with Saudi Arabia in 2000, Yemen was on track to becoming a member of the GCC. However, Saleh showed little initiative to join, and when visiting GCC member states he was more occupied with asking for money instead of membership (Al-Muslimi 2016).

In 2000, the relationship between the US and Saleh became tense. In 2000, Al-Qaeda had successfully carried out a terrorist attack on the US frigate, the USS Cole in Aden. The US

was disappointed with Saleh's investigation of the attack. According to Bruce Riedel, Saleh was seen to never properly crack down on Al-Qaida in Yemen (Riedel 2018). After the 9/11 terrorist attacks and subsequent war on terror, Saleh did increase the effort in anti-terrorism (Prados 2005). The US also got directly involved with fighting terrorism inside of Yemen. One example of this is that on the 12th of December 2009, the US carried out a drone airstrike, killing 41 civilians and 14 alleged terrorist (Human Rights Watch 2013).

Growing discontent

There were many factors which contributed to Saleh's unpopularity amongst the general public in the years leading up to his fall. The entanglement of Yemen's economy with the international economy, meant that the 2007-2008 financial crisis, also hit Yemen hard (Blumi 2018, 171). Another factor was the declining levels of oil production from 2003, which led to a fall of state revenue. Day argues that as the Yemeni population was used to economic crisis, the fall of revenue from oil cannot alone explain the decline of Saleh's popularity. He draws attention to the internal backlash Saleh faced when he aligned himself with the Bush administration during the 2003 US invasion of Iraq (Day 2012, 226). As we have already seen, the Saleh regime faced serious consequences when aligning himself with Saddam Hussein, and it is reasonable to assume that Saleh feared the international consequences in not taking the side of the US in 2003.

Financial security, especially for rural tribespeople, dramatically decreased from 2000. The declining economy, also led to declining financial stability amongst formally educated professionals (Lackner 2021, 150). Leading up to 2011, Yemen was facing rampant corruption and inflation, exacerbated by a rapid growing population (Lackner 2021, 150; Day 2012, 154-155; Noueihed and Warren 2012, 38). In 1990, the population of Yemen was estimated to be 13.3 million people, and by 2010 the number had reached 24.7 million people. By 2014, the population in Yemen had reached 27.7 million (the World Bank 2021).

Miscontent was not only growing among the general public. According to Blumi, Shaykh al-Ahmar made a career out of plundering Yemen. Allegedly, he did this by selling Yemeni crude oil via a London based Norwegian company called Arcadia. This enterprise grew big, and undercut global prices to the extent that rival oil companies lobbied the US government to have it shut down. In 2009 US regulatory bodies took Arcadia to court. At the same time Saleh intervened, and took back control of the oil, which led to an increase of state revenue. Saleh reported that he had not known of the plundering of Yemen's oil, which Blumi find hard

to believe. Regardless, if he had previous knowledge or not, Saleh made the decision to cut off a profitable revenue flow to the powerful Sheikh Al-Ahmar in 2009 (Blumi 2018, 172).

This move against Sheikh Al-Ahmar was, according to Blumi, encouraged by the Obama administration. Another powerful character in Yemen's political elite, General Ali Mohsen was also targeted by the Arcadia exposure (Blumi 2018, 173).

Leading up to 2011, Saleh increasingly started to favour his close family, which alienated his supporters. Saleh also made himself political vulnerable by alienating the Islah party and the YSP (Alley 2013, 75-76).

2011 uprising

In 2011, what many refer to as the "Arab Spring" swept through most of the Middle East and northern Africa. The Arab Spring started in Tunisia on the 17th of December 2010, and reached Yemen by the 23rd of January 2011 (Dabashi 2012, 20). In my thesis I will not use the expression "Arab Spring", but rather the term 2011 uprising. Yemen was unstable even before the uprising. As we have already seen, discontent had been growing for years. Yemen's stability and security situation was already dire (Boucek and Alkebsi 2010).

Although we can call the 2011 uprising a popular uprising, that the people themselves revolted against the regime, it must first and foremost be understood as an uprising of the Yemeni elite against the Saleh regime (Hamidaddin 2022, 2). At the start of the 2011 uprisings, the protests followed in the same pattern as Tunisia. Peaceful protesters demanded jobs, better living conditions, and rejected the government's attempt to change the constitution. On the 18th of March 2011, the atmosphere changed. 52 protesters were murdered by snipers. This led to an uproar of anger, and mass defections from the regime (Fattah 2011, 81-82). Two notable defections, that of Sheikh al-Ahmar, and General Ali Mohsen was instrumental in the fall of President Saleh. General Ali Mohsen was generally viewed as the second most powerful man in Yemen after President Saleh, and his defection led to a shift in the balance of military power within Yemen. The regular military was now largely loyal to the uprising, while Saleh still had control of the Republican Guard and the intelligence apparatus (International Crisis Group 2011). International Crisis Group viewed it as ironic that the most powerful backers of the 2011 uprising, Sheikh al-Ahmar, and General Ali Mohsen, were previous regime insiders and were symbols of the Saleh regime (International Crisis Group 2011).

Saleh tried to appease the protesters by announcing he would not run again for president in the upcoming 2013 elections (Boucek 2011). As we have seen however, this was an announcement he had made before, and he gave the people little confidence that he would hold his promise.

The once peaceful protest had now evolved into a power struggle with three different fractions. The first fraction was the youth movement inspired by the Arab Spring. According to Fattah, the participants in the youth movement were mostly from central and south Yemen, where levels of education and public awareness was higher than the rest of the country. The second fraction was tribal, headed by Sheikh Al-Ahmar and his family. The final fraction, and categorised as the weakest by Fattah, was that of the political opposition. In the power struggle, there was also two different militaries involved, the military loyal to the Saleh regime, and the military loyal to the uprising (Fattah 2011, 82).

Although the 2011 uprisings must first and foremost be understood as an elite uprising by tribal and political leaders, youth, women and civil society were also mobilized, and promoted by international actors. These were considered “new power groups” in Yemen. Although the leaders of the uprisings were more traditional power figures, the uprisings were also a mass mobilisation of all people in Yemeni society. It also allowed people from different regions, tribes and status groups to find common ground (Lackner 2021, 150-152).

After months of protesting, Saleh finally signed the GCC Initiative on the 23rd of November 2011, and his term of president was at an end. President Saleh felt like the GCC Initiative was a coup. He delayed signing the deal for several months (Day 2012, 290). Perhaps he hoped to resolve the situation with the al-Ahmar family and General Ali Mohsen. Nevertheless, he was unsuccessful.

The transitional period

As I have mentioned before, the transitional period started by the signing of the GCC Initiative and Implementation Mechanism on the 23rd of November 2011. The transitional period was, by the GCC Implementation Mechanism, divided in two phases. In the first phase, there was to be established a government of national unity. A Committee on Military Affairs for Achieving Security and Stability was also to be formed to address and resolve the security situation in Yemen. In the first phase, presidential elections were scheduled, and the Implementation Mechanism states that only Hadi would run as presidential candidate (Implementation Mechanism 2011, 3-6). As mentioned, Hadi became president on the 25th of

February 2012. Before becoming president, Hadi had been Vice-President of Yemen (Alley 2013, 78). Hadi was a representative of the GPC, which means that the GPC was still the ruling party in Yemen (Ardemagni and Al-Hamdani 2021).

After the presidential elections, the second phase of the transitional period began. The Implementation Mechanism stipulated that the NDC would then take place in this phase. After the NDC, the government of national unity was to form a Constitutional Commission, which would draft a new Yemeni constitution based on the outcomes of the NDC (Implementation Mechanism 2011, 6-8).

After President Hadi came to power, Yemen experienced a surge of violence, targeting security and military personnel. The country also had to deal with sabotage of infrastructure, which resulted in President Hadi having to direct attention in securing infrastructure, and adopting a Transitional Program for Stabilization and Development. Just as before, the state did not have the power to exercise control, and Hadi was unable to implement lasting results to stop the sabotages (Fattah 2014 B, 1-2).

Even though the first phase of the transitional period was supposed to end the escalating violence in Yemen. Fighting never ceased. President Hadi chose to not take military action, but instead negotiate ceasefires (International Crisis Group 2014).

Hadi did not have the same internal support as Saleh had built the foundations of his presidency on. General Mohsen continued to hold his political position and was still a strong military commander. Hadi came to power without the support of the army, the GPC or the rest of the government. He also did not have the support of the northern tribal system. In other words, he was initially without the support that had secured Saleh's position for so many years. He did however have international support (Alley 2012).

The uprising did not only affect the political landscape in Yemen. From 2010 to 2011, the GDP fell by 10,5 percent, and inflation increased to 23 percent. International Monetary Fund, IMF estimated that one million Yemeni workers became unemployed in 2011, and that the number of people living in poverty exceeded 50 percent of the population (International Monetary Fund 2012). The 2011 uprising made an already struggling economy even worse.

Internal actors

There were several important internal actors in the transitional period. The Implementation Mechanism refers to itself as an agreement between two parties, the National Coalition and

the National Council. The National coalition is referred to as the GPC and its allies. The National Council is referred to as the JMP and their partners (Implementation Mechanism 2011, 2). The Implementation Mechanism does not state who the allies and partners were. In 2011, the GPC was still the dominant party in Yemen (Ardemagni and Al-Hamdani 2021). An important factor to remember is that although Saleh had stepped down as president of Yemen, he was still the leader of the GPC (Almasmari 2012).

The JMP was a coalition of several parties. These were: the YSP, Al-Haq, the Unionist party, the Popular Forces Union party, and Islah. Of these parties, Islah was the most influential during the transitional period. Islah is a combination between Islamist and tribal elements, and as we have already seen was an important ally of Saleh in the 1994 civil war. In 2011, representatives of Islah included members of the al-Ahmar family (Al-Jazeera 2011 B). Islah was also closely associated with the Muslim brotherhood (Orkaby 2021). The Muslim Brotherhood was established in Yemen by Abdul al-Majeed al-Zindani (Counter Extremism Project, undated A). Al-Zindani is described as an Al-Qaeda fundraiser, and mentor of Osama bin Laden (Counter Extremism Project, undated B). In 2013, Islah publicly declared that they did not have connections with any global Muslim brotherhood movements. Due to its association with al-Zindani, it is very possible that the international community was concerned⁴. General Mohsen, who was allied with Islah during the transitional period reportedly had ties to terrorist groups (The Washington Institute 2011).

Another important actor was the Southern Movement. Many southerners were malcontent with the unification in 1990, and thought that the unification favoured the northern regions. After the civil war in 1994, this became even more prominent as the Saleh regime cracked down on southern separatists. In 2007, southern military officers were pushed into early retirement. The officers mobilized to demand rights and their pensions. This was the starting point of what is now known as the Southern Movement. The Southern Movement is also known as Hirak. As time went on, the movement both radicalized and fractioned into several groups. Some of these groups were, and still are secessionist, meaning they want to re-establish South-Yemen as a separate state. Although Hadi is a southerner, he established himself on the northerner's side in the 1994 civil war. His appointment as president in 2011 therefore did little to quell the wish for southern independence. Many Southern Movement leaders boycotted the NDC (Al-Muslimi 2015 B). Robert Forster argues that the Southern

⁴ Saudi-Arabia declared Islah a terrorist organisation in 2014, before they in 2015 reportedly started to back the organisation in the fight against the Houthis (Counter Extremism Project, undated A).

Movement course suffers due to the fractioning, as it led to southerners being pitted against each other (Forster 2019, 10). The inclusion of the southern secessionist question in the NDC will be discussed further in chapter 5.

The Houthis were also an important actor. The Houthis are often referred to as Ansar Allah. The Houthis base their movement on the teachings of Hussein al-Houthi (1959-2004), the founder of the Houthis (Haykel 2022, 17), and are traditionally Zaydi Muslims (Clausen 2018, 563). The Houthi Movement developed as a relatively peaceful countermovement to the encroachment of Wahhabism from Saudi Arabia, and to protect Zaydi traditions. It also started as a reaction to the decades of economic and political marginalizing of parts of northern Yemen (Clausen 2018, 562). As mentioned, the Houthis and the Southern Movement may both be viewed as a result of decades of regional grievances.

In the early 2000s the Houthi Movement became more radical, and in 2004 fighting between the Houthis and the central government started (Clausen 2018, 563-564). The six Saada wars lasted from 2004 until 2010, where the government fought against the Houthis (Salmoni, Loidolt and Wells 2010, 160). The final Saada war ended in a ceasefire (Clausen 2018, 564). The Houthis had long been critical of the US, and was using the slogan “Death to America, Death to Israel” (Al-Emad 2012), before the transitional period.

During the 2011 uprising, the Houthis supported the protesters demand that President Saleh had to step down (Clausen 2018, 566). The Houthis were one of the groups represented in the NDC (Alley 2013). Although the Saada wars ended in a ceasefire, and they attended the NDC, they never stopped fighting. According to Farea Al-Muslimi, the Houthis were acting contradictory during the NDC. While they participated, they also condemned the transitional period and the international involvement in the process. In and around the Saada province, the Houthis were fighting tribes loyal to the Islah party and Salafi groups during the transitional period (Al-Muslimi 2014).

International actors

In addition to the internal actors, there are also important international actors. As mentioned, these are: The UN, Dr. Jamal Benomar, The Friends of Yemen, the World Bank, The GCC and Saudi Arabia.

The Friends of Yemen was established in January 2010 to meet the growing concerns for Yemen’s instability (GOV.UK 2013). The Friends of Yemen is co-chaired by Yemen, The United Kingdom and Saudi Arabia. Other members are Algeria, the Arab League, Australia,

the European Union, Bahrain, Brazil, China, Czech Republic, Denmark, Egypt, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Republic of Korea, Kuwait, Malaysia, Netherlands, Oman, Qatar, Russia, Spain, Switzerland, Tunisia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, United States of America, the GCC Secretariat, the Islamic Development Bank, IMF, the Organisation for Islamic Cooperation, the World Bank, and the United Nations (Foreign & Commonwealth Office 2013).

Yemen was the only country in which the “Arab Spring” led to a negotiated solution. Fattah accredits this to the US, Saudi Arabia, EU, and Russia’s interest in Yemen. He also accredits it to a deep-rooted culture in Yemen of third-party mediation, and the delicate balance of the power of the Yemeni elite (Fattah 2014 B, 2-3). According to the Christina Bennett, the GCC decided to intervene in Yemen due to the view that Yemen was becoming a threat to their own national security and economy (Bennett 2013, 10).

In the concluding provisions of the GCC Implementation Mechanism, “[...] *the two parties call on the states members of the GCC and the United Nations Security Council to support its implementation.*” (Implementation Mechanism 2011, 8). As mentioned, Yemen therefore called on the assistance of international actors to aid its transitional period.

The Implementation Mechanism also says, “*The Secretary-General of the United Nations is called upon to provide continuous assistance, [...] He is also requested to coordinate assistance from the international community [...]*” (Implementation Mechanism, 2011, 9). In order for the UN Secretary-General to fulfil its obligations stipulated in the GCC Implementation Mechanism, he established the Office of the Special Envoy to the Secretary-General on Yemen in 2012 (Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, 2012).

In 2011, the United Nations Secretary-General had already appointed a Special Adviser to support the work of the Secretary-General in Yemen. The UN assisted in the mediation between the Saleh government and the opposition. After the signing of the GCC Initiative and Implementation Mechanism, the Special Adviser was still engaged in supporting the Yemeni transition (Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen Undated A).

The Office of the Special Envoy was responsible for leading the UN support to the NDC, and also to coordinate with other international assistance to the NDC. The office of the Special Envoy also gave support to the constitutional review, general elections, which they also coordinated with the security council, GCC and other international actors (Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen Undated A). In the transitional period, the

Special Adviser and Special Envoy to the UN Secretary-General was Dr. Jamal Benomar (Office of the Special Advisor of the Secretary-General for Yemen Undated).

The role of Benomar in the transitional period has been described as flawed. Al-Muslimi argues there was a lack of coordination between his office, other diplomatic missions, and other UN bodies. This was exaggerated as he replaced the aides three times during his role as Special Envoy. According to Al-Muslimi, Benomar was not able to effectively manage the situation in Yemen. Benomar had a monopoly of power, and when he was unsuccessful the transitional period stagnated (Al-Muslimi 2015 A). This criticism of Benomar is another topic I will further investigate in chapter 5.

Further criticism of international actors during the transitional period in Yemen also include military intervention in Yemen. During the transitional period, the US committed what has been described as war crimes in Yemen. From 2011-2013 the US carried out 101 drone strikes, and with it killing many civilians. This resulted in higher levels of anti-American sentiments, and a distrust of the Hadi government and transitional period (Fattah 2014 B, 3).

National Dialogue Conference

The NDC in 2013-2014, was not the first national dialogue in Yemen. Between 1962 and 1970 North-Yemen was plagued by civil wars, and a total of four national dialogues was necessary to end the fighting. Yemeni tribes have traditionally also used dialogues in smaller scales to prevent conflict. Smaller scale dialogues were also used to mediate between Islah and the GPC between 1997-2001 (Elayah et al. 2020, 98-99). Dialogues were therefore not a new model in Yemen. When using the term national dialogue conference, NDC, in this thesis I am referring to the NDC of 2013-2014 unless specified otherwise.

The NDC was supposed to bring together the multitudes of forces in Yemen's political sphere. This was the traditional political parties and power figures, the Houthis, the Southern Movement, and newly emerging forces, women, youths and civil society. The extremist jihadist, like Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, were not invited to join. According to Lackner, initially 30 percent of the delegates were supposed to be female, however this goal was not reached as 28 percent of the delegates were female (Lackner 2017, 42-43). This goal was not stipulated in the GCC Implementation Mechanism. The mechanism only mentions that "*Women shall appropriately [be] represented in all of the institutions referred to in this Mechanism.*" (Implementation Mechanism 2011, 8).

As mentioned, the NDC started on the 18th of March 2013 and ended on the 25th of January 2014. The NDC was held at the Mövenpick Hotel in Sanaa (Thiel 2014). The NDC was initially supposed to start 15th of November 2012, but was delayed several times. It was also only supposed to last six months, but due to several factors, ended up taking longer. Whether a time frame of six months, or even the timeframe it ended up taking, was enough to actually solve Yemen's problems is questionable (Yemen Times 2013 A). This question will be explored in chapter 5.

The conference was designed by the Technical Preparatory Committee for the National Dialogue Conference (Yemen Times 2013 A). Outsiders were also involved with the design of the NDC (Thiel 2014).

The NDC consisted of 565 delegates, with a majority representing Yemen's political parties. In table 1, we can see a breakdown of allotted seats to each of the groups represented in the NDC. Former president Saleh was not one of the representatives from the GPC (Yemen Times Staff 2013 A) but that did not stop him being active in Yemen's politics (Bennett 2013, 10-11).

Table 1. Breakdown of the allotted seats to each group

Group	Number of seats
General People's Congress (GPC)	112
Islah	50
YSP	37
Nasirist party	30
The Southern Movement	85
The Houthis	35
The Arab Baath Socialist Party	4
The Yemeni Unionist Congregation	4
The Popular Forces Union	4
The National Council	4

The Al-Haq party	4
Al-Rashad Party	7
Justice and Building Party	7
Youths	40
Civil society	40
Women	40
President list	62

(Alley 2013, 81; Yemen Times Staff 2013 A).

The “President list” was made up of a wide range of representatives handpicked by President Hadi. They were tribal leaders, politicians, clerics, and one representative of the marginalised groups Muhamasheen and the Jewish community (Yemen Times Staff 2013 A).

The United Nation’s Special Envoy to Yemen, Benomar, was given the task of allocating the number of delegates from each of the groups that had been mentioned in the GCC Implementation Mechanism. Meaning he decided how many representatives each of the parties would have. The Technical Committee then approved the allocations made by Benomar. The groups gave the Technical Committee lists of their proposed representatives, except for youths, civil society and women, where the Technical Committee handpicked representatives, and the previously mentioned “President list” (Yemen Times 2013 A).

They were divided into nine working groups. These working groups were: The Southern Working Group, The Saada Working Group, National Reconciliation and Transitional Justice Working Group, Working Group on State Building and Constitution-Principles and Foundations, Working Group on Good Governance, Working Group on Building the Foundations for the Security and Military Institutions, Working Group on Independent Institutions and Special Issues, Working Group on Rights and Freedoms, and Working Group on Development (Outcome document 2014, 4).

There was also a separate General Secretariate, Presidium, Consensus Committee, and Order and Standards Committee. The General Secretariat oversaw administrative duties, including communication, outreach activities, and record keeping. The Presidium were headed by President Hadi. There were six other deputies, one rapporteur, and one assistant rapporteur.

The Presidium was supposed to manage the General Assembly, and the eight members were supposed to represent the eight stakeholders stipulated in the GCC Initiative and Implementation Mechanism. These eight stipulated stakeholders were: GPC, JMP, Houthis, Hirak (Southern Movement), women, youth, civil society, or new political parties and other groups (Yemen Times 2013 A). The Presidium also managed the implementation of regulations and operations, and supervised the creation and performance of the working groups (Yemen Times 2013 A).

The Consensus Committee was tasked with mediating between the different stakeholders, and with the coordination between working groups. The members of the Consensus Committee were made up of the Presidium, the heads of working groups, and the members of the Technical Committee. There were also an Order and Standards Committee which enforced discipline and addressed issues of threats, corruption and bribery (Yemen Times 2013 A).

The 565 delegates were all a part of The General Assembly. The General Assembly was the supreme decision-making authority, and a consensus of 90 percent was needed in order for the passing of all final resolutions. There were however some exceptions of the 90 percent consensus rule, if the opposition was exclusively made up of one of the eight groups mentioned in the GCC Implementation Mechanism, consensus could not be reached. If 90 percent consensus could not be achieved, the Consensus Committee would mediate to try to reach an agreement. If this failed, a consensus of 75 percent would have been accepted. If this again failed, the Consensus Committee would again have to try to mediate. If this also failed, the Consensus Committee would present the issue to President Hadi who then had to mediate with the different groups to reach an agreement (Yemen Times 2013 A). This shows that a high level of consensus was desired.

The delegates that attended the NDC had to meet certain criteria. They had to be a legal and competent citizen of Yemen, must be an approved candidate from the group the delegate represented, follow international humanitarian law, not face credible allegations of human rights violations or crimes against humanity, and not be subject to penalties from the United Nations Security Council (Yemen Times 2013 A).

The delegates that represented youths had some additional criteria for inclusion. They could not be a part of any political party or group, nor have participated in activism or community organisation during the 2011 uprising, and be under 40 years. The delegates from women must have had experience in social development and especially in advancement of women.

These criteria must be met in order to have a seat from the designated pool especially set aside for these social groups, meaning that delegates under the age of 40 and women could have attended as delegates representing another group, for example a political party (Yemen Times 2013 A). As mentioned, representatives of youth, civil society and women were chosen by the Technical Committee. It is important here to note that Benomar chose the number of delegates by each group, he did not choose the specific delegates.

The then prime minister of Yemen, Mohammed Basindwa and representatives of the United Nations Special Envoy could attend the general sessions whenever they wanted, and could attend working groups by invitation. International ambassadors could also attend general sessions after coordinating with the Presidium, and attend working groups by invitation. Other members of parliament, the Shoura Council, ministers, diplomats and other important public figures could attend general sessions by invitation from the Presidium. All non-delegates could only attend on an observer basis (Yemen Times 2013 A). International actors could therefore directly observe the inside of the NDC.

The ousting of President Saleh did not end the triparty power struggle between him, General Mohsen and the Al-Ahmar family (Hamidaddin 2022, 2). Despite political struggles, the NDC did manage to find consensus, and it resulted in the Outcome Document. In the Outcome Document we can find hundreds of different recommendations by the different working groups (Outcome document 2014). The hundreds of recommendations do show that a lot of effort was made in finding solutions, and that the different actors were able to find consensus.

Breakdown of the transitional period

After the NDC concluded, there were still many contested issues that were unresolved (Alley 2014). We will look closely at contested issues in chapter 5.

As mentioned, one of these issues was federalism, which the NDC did not manage to find consensus on. A subcommittee, known as the 8+8 Committee, had tried, and failed to reach a decision (Thiel 2015). President Hadi therefore appointed a special Executive Committee to solve the issue of federalism. The Executive Committee decided that Yemen should restructure into a federal state with six regions. This decision was made without broad consultation (Day 2019, 3; Thiel 2015). The Houthis and Saleh both rejected the proposed structure of federalism (Day 2019, 4), but importantly YSP, Al-Rashad Party, and fractions of the Southern Movement also rejected or voiced concerns about the six regions. The Houthis

did, according to Tobias Thiel, not reject the idea of federalism, but rejected the federal proposal as it deprived them of natural resources and access to the sea (Thiel 2015).

“[...] rather than achieving the goal of ensuring peace and the equitable distribution of resources in the country, the flawed and rushed proposal served to further fragment the country, exacerbate divisions, and harden demands for increased local autonomy.” (Al-Deen 2019).

It is my opinion that although federalism was a catalyst, it was just the end of the line of decades of regional grievances. The Houthis had long felt marginalized by the central government. Looking at it as the single point of breakage therefore does not adequately reflect the reality.

After the 2011 uprising, the Houthis took advantage of the power vacuum (Hamidaddin 2022, 2). As mentioned, fighting never really stopped and they managed to use this situation to strengthen themselves. On the 21st of September 2014, the Houthis seized control over Sanaa (Clausen 2018, 567). The UN facilitated negotiations in order to prevent a further conflict, but negotiations proved ineffective. President Hadi asked for assistance, and on the 26th of March 2015, a coalition led by Saudi Arabia started a military intervention to support the Yemeni Government (Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen Undated A). The country had yet again descended into civil war.

Chapter 3: Method

In my analysis I have used both written material from the Yemeni English-language newspaper *Yemen Times* and conducted my own interviews. My research questions called for different perspectives, both in how the international actors were perceived, and concrete measures they took to aid Yemen's transitional period. In order to answer my research questions, I needed to gather perspectives from a Yemeni standpoint and an expert standpoint. I have combined these sources and given them equal weight. The method of this thesis is therefore a qualitative research design, using both written material and interviews, and source criticism. In my analysis I have also utilised some quantitative data in form of statistics.

I will start this chapter by looking at qualitative research design, and how this was an appropriate method for my thesis. I will then present my material, starting with my approach to finding information in *Yemen Times*. Secondly, I will present my approach to conducting interviews, and present the subjects I have interviewed. Lastly, I will look at source criticism. Throughout this chapter, I will also include the ethical and legal considerations central to this thesis.

Qualitative research design

As already stated, this thesis has a qualitative research design. Qualitative research can produce unique insights (Barbour 2008, 9). "*Qualitative research can make visible and unpick the mechanisms which link particular variables, by looking at explanations, or accounts, provided by those involved*" (Barbour 2008, 11). Qualitative methods make it possible to understand how people understand concepts (Barbour 2008, 12), and it is therefore the right research design for this thesis, as I want to gather and understand the perspectives of how the international actors impacted the transitional period in Yemen. I want to understand how different people understood what was happening in Yemen 2011-2014. That is not to say that I do not hope to find objective truth, but that truth is contested and subjective. The main objective is to understand how different actors understood concepts. It does not matter if this understanding is objectively true or not, it matters that people believed they were. This is the role of qualitative research (Barbour 2008, 28). Although I do not seek to evaluate if the concepts are objectively true, source criticism is still essential, and I will explain why later in this chapter.

I concluded that it was important to use both written material and interviews. This is because the written material in *Yemen Times* gives me an insight of what was conceived and conveyed

at the time of the transitional period. Using Yemen Times, I have been able to access opinions from a wide range of people as they have published interviews and viewpoint of people that would be difficult for me to access today, such as the Houthis. The material from Yemen Times captures a moment in time. Yemen Times was, and still is, a Yemeni news outlet, but as it is written in English it is also meant for international consumption. I therefore chose to use Yemen Times above other news agencies as it provided a Yemeni understanding. As I do not speak Arabic, the fact that Yemen Times was written in English also impacted my decision to choose it as a source. The interviews I conducted allow for an in-dept understanding of the topic, with views from different experts and people who participated. This is the material that make up my perspectives of the international actors' involvement in Yemen's transitional period 2011-2014.

In qualitative methods, written material can be used to explore issues that might not have been evident at the time of writing. Written material can shed light on how concepts were perceived at a particular point in time, without the chance of being influenced by our understanding today (Barbour 2008, 16). In the analysis we will see that the written material does discuss the international actors' involvement in the transitional period, meaning that the issues I wish to explore were evident. However, they allow us to understand how the topic was perceived at the time of writing, and allows us a better understanding without the baggage of knowing the final outcome of the transitional period (Barbour 2008, 15-16).

According to Rosaline Barbour, interviews as a method is the most common in qualitative research. The most common way of conducting interviews is to ask open ended questions, which allows the people being interviewed the flexibility to focus the response on what is most important to them. This hinders the agenda of the researcher to determine the answers (Barbour 2008, 17).

Yemen Times

The first issue of Yemen Times was published on the 27th of February 1991. Nadia Al-Sakkaf became the editor-in-chief in 2005 (Yemen Times undated A).

I accessed the publications in Yemen Times through the internet archive, Wayback Machine. This is because when starting my thesis, the Yemen Times domain was not accessible. The Wayback Machine is a digital library, which archives the internet. The Wayback Machine has archived over 735 billion web pages (Wayback Machine undated). This allowed me to access Yemen Times even though the official webpage was not accessible. I have only used the

digital publications of Yemen Times, not the printed version. As of February 2023, the webpage to Yemen Times is running again, with limited editions. I have not used the new webpage.

Through the Wayback Machine I accessed the archives on the 18th of June 2014. This date was chosen because it was the last day where the connection was stable throughout. I could still find days after the 18th of June 2014 that had timestamps with stable connections, but it made navigating the site difficult.

Using this access point, it allowed me to go back through the archives inside the site, meaning I could read all the material that had been published on the Yemen Times webpage up until the 18th of June 2014. The earliest material I used from Yemen times was published on the 12th of January 2012. The last material I have used was published on the 10th of June 2014. I looked at everything published as news, opinion, interview, report, and viewpoint. In this thesis I have analysed all the material published in the above-mentioned categories from the 12th of January 2012-10th of June 2014.

I did not look at material published as culture, business, variety, health and environment, and readers views. It could have been interesting to include material from the categories I did not look at, especially readers views. Due to the time constraints of this thesis, I decided to focus on the above-mentioned categories.

Interview

I have conducted qualitative semi-structured interviews. The qualitative research interviews attempts to understand the point a view of the subject. An interview is a conversation with structure and meaning, and it is not a conversation between equal partners. The researcher, or the person conducting the interviews defines and controls the situation, and therefore holds power (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009, 1-3). In some cases, oral sources are essential to be able to write about a topic. This is true when history has not been recorded by other methods. In other cases, like for this thesis, oral history is used to further cast light on a topic (Grove and Heiret 2018, 125).

The qualitative interview can also be called a non-standardized interview, as there is no concrete method of conducting such interviews. Decisions often has to be made on the spot during the interview (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009, 16). I shared the questions I would ask with my subjects in advance. For the most part, I let the subjects talk freely without major intervention. I found this to be quite useful as it allowed the subject to reflect and think back

on their experiences. I was interested in their subjective understanding of what happened. Where appropriate I asked follow up questions. I also asked quite open questions, this was appropriate as the topic itself is broad and it allowed the subjects to share what they themselves thought most essential.

My interviews were computer assisted. On all interviews I used Zoom. Except for the interview with Nadia Al-Sakkaf, I used video communication. By using video, I was therefore still able to interpret gestures and facial expressions, which are important non-linguistical information (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009, 148-149). It is unlikely that it would have been possible to carry out my interviews face-to-face. This is because my subjects reside in different parts of the world. I could have travelled to meet some of them, but it would take a lot of time meeting all of them face-to-face.

I found my interview subjects through snowballing. The interviews lasted approximately 60 minutes, was recorded and transcribed. I transcribed the interviews word-by-word, but without noting filler words. In the analysis I have included many direct quotes. In some of these quotes I have used brackets to show that I have taken out parts, added information myself, for example names, and also for ethical considerations. The ethical considerations are in relation to the anonymous statements to make sure that the subjects could not be identified.

The questions I asked during my interviews, were formed by the written sources in Yemen Times, theory, and also statements and opinions by other researchers. As I used snowballing to find the subjects I knew beforehand that their expertise was appropriate. I therefore did not need to send out questionnaires or check in any other way that the interview subjects were suitable for the interview. Unprompted, all of the interviewees provided me background information on themselves, and explained how they had ascertained their knowledge. I cannot share any information on my anonymous informants, but I know their credentials and evaluate them as credible.

In line with Norwegian privacy law, I applied for permission for my project with NSD. All data has been securely stored, and will be deleted at the completion of this project. All of the interview subjects were sent a consent form beforehand. All of the subjects signed that they consented to be a part of the project.

Sampling

The sample size of who I wanted to interview was quite large. I wanted to interview anyone with experience or knowledge of the transitional period in Yemen. The sampling size needed

to be large as it was challenging in the beginning to find people who would be willing to participate in the project. This means that not all of the interviewees could give answers to all of my questions, but they provided answers where they had expertise.

Ideally, I would have interviewed more candidates, but as I already stated it was challenging to find people who would be willing to participate in the beginning. I could have used further snowballing to get more candidates, but due to the time constraints I ultimately decided not to. This was always intended to be a qualitative study. The aim was to understand different perspectives, not achieve statistical correlations. In the next section I will present my interviewees. It is my opinion that although my sample was limited, the expertise of the interviewees carries significant weight.

Presentation of the interviewees

The people I have interviewed has a wide range of expertise. Some of the people I have interviewed will be kept completely anonymous, I will refer to them as Anonymous A, Anonymous B, and Anonymous C. I have also interviewed Dr. Anne-Linda Amira Augustin, Dr. Nadia Al-Sakkaf, Nicholas Ross, and Professor John Packer. Augustin, Al-Sakkaf, Ross, and Packer gave me permission to use their names. I guaranteed Anonymous A, B, and C complete anonymity as a requisite for the participation. As part of my ethical responsibility, I will not disclose the reasons why this anonymity is necessary.

Augustin is a specialist on south Yemen (Middle East Institute, undated). Since January 2022 she has worked at Leipzig University. Augustin has previously worked as a political advisor at the European Representative Office of the Southern Transitional Council. She is the author of the book *South Yemen's Independence Struggle: Generations of Resistance*, published in 2021 (Jadaliyya undated).

Al-Sakkaf was part of the Presidium and the Yemeni minister of information, she was also a delegate to the NDC. Al-Sakkaf was, and still is, the editor-in-chief of Yemen Times (The Washington Institute undated). In 2015, she was recognised by the BBC “[...] as one of 100 Women who changed the world and one of the World Economic Forum’s Young Global Leaders” (Wilson Center undated). Al-Sakkaf is a founding member of the National Reconciliation Movement (The Washington Institute undated).

Ross is currently a PhD candidate at the Australian National University. He has several years’ experience in peacebuilding and democratization, and previously worked for the Inclusive Peace and Transition Initiative. He has also advised the UN, national governments, civil

society, and non-state armed groups (Australian National University 2023). Ross is also the co-author of *Inclusive Political Settlements New Insights from Yemen's National Dialogue* (Paffenholz and Ross 2016).

Packer is a professor of International Conflict Resolution in the Faculty of Law, and Director of the Human Rights Research and Education Centre, at the University of Ottawa. Between 2012-2014 he was part of the United Nation's Standby Team of Mediation Experts attached to the Department of Political Affairs. Packer has advised on over fifty peace processes (University of Ottawa undated), including the NDC in Yemen.

Source criticism

Source criticism is about more than finding out if something is true or not. Truth is relative, and we can never know if what someone is saying is true or not. There may also exist multiple realities on how people perceive events. People with different standpoints can view topics drastically different (Barbour 2008, 27-29).

As I already mentioned, Yemen Times is written for international consumption, which again tells us something about their agenda. It is their agenda to reach out beyond the borders of Yemen, and also beyond the borders of the Arab world.

Reporters Without Borders rated the media press in Yemen 2011-2012, 2013 and 2014 amongst the lowest in the world (Reporters Without Borders 2012; Reporters Without Borders 2013 A; Reporters Without Borders 2014). This means that the media in Yemen was generally not considered free. In the transitional period, there was also violence against journalists (Reporters Without Borders 2013 B).

In 2006, Yemen Times won the IPI-IMS Free Media Pioneers award. This award is granted by The International Press Institute (The International Press Institute 2022). Yemen Times is therefore recognised as an independent media.

According to Knut Grove and Jan Heiret, people may also change their perception of their own past based on what they know today. Attitudes changes, and our perceptions of situations can change when we have acquired more knowledge. What is acceptable to say, and to mean also change (Grove and Heiret 2018, 128). When writing my thesis in 2022- 2023, it has been a decade since the events that I am researching unfolded. This is a long period where information can be forgotten or distorted. When researching and talking about the events in Yemen 2011-2014 in hindsight, it is also important to remember that our understanding today

of what happened, or what should have happened, might be influenced by the current devastating civil war. Going into the material, and especially the interviews, I was expecting to hear and talk about the Houthis and what led to the civil war in much greater detail. I was somewhat surprised, but also pleased, that this was not the case. I found that the people I interviewed were able to recollect what they had been thinking at that time, or at least what they believe they thought at the time. However, my informants are in the present, they might misremember. Grove and Heiret argued that to remember is a process in which one constructs one's own past, your memory is a fragment of what actually happened. You then construct a past which fits with the picture or identity one wish to create (Grove and Heiret 2018, 127). We cannot ignore that the people I interviewed might wilfully or unintentionally have distorted the picture that they present. The people I interviewed may also have ulterior motives, and may answer with bias. My interviewees often made it clear that what they were saying were their opinions and did not present them as facts. When evaluating their bias, we must also consider that they are speaking as professionals. This does not necessarily mean that they are more truthful, but it would be unprofessional to be wilfully misleading, and potentially professionally damaging. It is also part of my ethical responsibility to make sure that I present my findings accurately.

Everybody has their own agenda. The motives and agendas of the people I interviewed may vary, but a common thread is that they all find the topic to be interesting and important. The people I have interviewed have different backgrounds. Some, like Packer and Al-Sakkaf base their responses on their own participation in the transitional period. Other people, like Augustin and Ross have contributed information based on their professional knowledge on the topics. Augustin has worked closely with the south, and also gives testimony based on her own personal experience working in the region.

Chapter 4: Theory

In this chapter I will first outline the theoretical framework relevant to understanding the transitional period in Yemen. This is authoritarianism, the characteristics of a state, failed states, democratisation and good governance, transitional governance, economic development, and the concept of national dialogues. These are concepts and theories that were necessary for me to comprehend in order to understand the transitional period and to answer my research questions. This will help us put the transitional period in a broader context, and give us a better understanding of the challenges that Yemen faced. By looking at theory, we can also gain a better understanding of what knowledge the international community had before starting their involvement in 2011.

I will then look at Selvik and Stenslie's theory about stability and change in the Middle East. It is my opinion that this theory is important when researching political change in the Middle East. In the last section of this chapter, I will look at democracy assistance and the lessons learned from democratic assistance efforts in the Middle East. Looking at past experiences help us gain a better historical understanding and also understand what experience the international community had when they got involved in Yemen.

Yemen as an authoritarian state

According to Selvik and Stenslie, it has been common to describe Yemeni society as strong, but the state as weak (Selvik and Stenslie 2011, 90). According to Marc Lynch, Arab autocrats were more resilient than autocrats from other parts of the world pre-2011. Lynch attributes this to the existing political culture, especially dividing the opposition, and economical factors like oil and strategic rents, and the influence over military and security personnel. However, analysis of the trends from the Arab world before 2011 did show an increasingly frustrated youth, that the gap between the rich and poor was growing, and institutional decay (Lynch 2014, 5-6).

Authoritarianism and semi-authoritarianism can have some measure of legitimacy from its citizens. This legitimacy can by rulers be based on religion and nationalism, but also personal security. For citizens, stability in form of personal security might hinder political changes as keeping the status quo is seen as safer (Burnell and Rakner 2014, 210). It stands to reason therefore that unless personal security of the people is threatened, it might be preferable to continue under authoritarianism, as the push for democracy might risk further decline in personal security. As we know, leading up to 2011, Yemen faced a declining economy, which

again affected people's personal security. This is what led to the youths and other protesters to start the "Arab Spring" in Yemen.

The breakdown of authoritarianism comes with risks. In Angola and Mozambique it resulted in civil war, and in Somalia the state disintegrated. It can also lead to competitive authoritarianism, where the state holds competitive elections, but the lack of democratic institutions means that the state is in effect an authoritarian or semi-authoritarian state (Burnell and Rakner 2014, 210). The removal of an authoritarian system therefore does not guarantee that the state will evolve to a democracy. This is important to understand for this thesis, the removal of Saleh was not a guarantee for democratisation.

What are the characteristics of a state?

Gianfranco Poggi argues that although scholars do use the term "state" when discussing ancient civilisations, it is a more appropriate term in the context of modern states (Poggi 2014,64).

There are many different ways and features one can include when discussing what a state is. I will look deeper into the concepts: monopoly of legitimate violence, territory, sovereignty, and plurality. These concepts or characteristics are somewhat problematic, as many states does not embody them fully. They are also created concepts, originating from the West (Poggi 2014, 64). These theories are based on a European world view. Although they are established theories, should we say that a state is a failed state if they do not meet the criteria? What if the society in question has historically valued other concepts? Can a state, without meeting all of these criteria, still be successful in the modern world? Answering these questions are beyond the scope of this thesis but they are still important to keep in mind.

Max Weber introduced the concept of monopoly on legitimate violence. A modern state must have a legitimate monopoly on violence. The state is the only actor that can use force to make its citizens act. Those who are appointed to carry out the monopoly, for example judges and police, can only do so by mandate of the state. Force used by other actors, like religious or community leaders not appointed by the state is illegitimate (Aarebrot and Evjen, 2014, 104). Poggi argues that without a monopoly of violence, you no longer have a state, but a polity (Poggi 2014, 64). As I have already discussed, Yemen arguably lacked a monopoly on violence and therefore lacks one of the basic characteristics of a state.

According to Poggi, the territory is the most significant element of a state. A state itself is a territory. A state must not only be able to exercise the monopoly of legitimate violence, but it

must do so in a defined area. The state must claim the area as exclusive, and not allow the encroachment of other states (Poggi 2014, 64).

Sovereignty is also essential. A state cannot recognise a power more superior than itself, and does not allow internal interference from any other actor than itself. Poggi also mentions the concept of plurality, meaning that states exist side by side with other states. In principle states are equal, and acknowledge each other. However, some states will be in competition, and may view each other as contenders, while others may be allies or neutral to each other (Poggi 2014, 64-65). I would also like to point out that not all states recognise each other, and although states of course hold to their own sovereignty, it is not uncommon to face outside political pressure. States also exercise control over people. They are however also made of the people, and operate based on individual people. It therefore exists an asymmetrical power relationship between those exercising rule, and the majority which are subjected to rule (Poggi 2014, 65). As mentioned, Fattah argued that in Yemen, the tribes behaved like a state. Before and during the transitional period in Yemen, parts of the Southern Movement also wanted secession. Meaning that one could argue that the state of Yemen before 2011, and during the transitional period, was being challenged from within and lacked the essential characteristics of a state. Understanding these concepts are therefore important to understand the challenges Yemen was facing.

The features I have presented here are just some of the characteristics of a state. State building is a broad concept. Other theories include Joseph Schumpeter monopoly on taxation. The state must have a monopoly on taxation, which benefits its population as it secures the survival of the state (Aarebrot and Evjen 2014, 107-108). I will not discuss this theory further, but mention it to illustrate that there is not one way of viewing what a state or state building means.

Failed states

The Fragile States Index was developed to assess how close states are to collapse or becoming failed states (Fragile States Index undated A). The Fragile States Index looks at 12 different indicators and use them to rate states (Fragile States Index undated B). In table 2, I have chosen to include the scores of five of the indicators in order to further illustrate the situation Yemen was dealing with in the transitional period. The indicators are rated on a scale from 0-10, 0 being the most stable, and 10 being most unstable. The total score is from 0-120. For both the indicator and total score, a low score is an indicator of a stable state. The rank refers

to how the state is ranked in relation to others, with 1st place going to the most unstable country. States with a total score of above 90.1 is considered the most in danger of failing (Fragile States Index undated B).

Table 2. Fragile States Index Yemen 2010-2014

Year	Rank	Total	E1	C1	C2	X1	P1	P3
2010	15 th	100.0	7.9	8.9	9.2	7.8	8.7	8.0
2011	13 th	100.3	7.7	9.3	9.3	8.2	8.6	7.7
2012	8 th	104.8	8.7	9.7	9.8	8.3	9.1	8.4
2013	6 th	107.0	9.2	9.8	9.5	8.7	9.3	8.7
2014	8 th	105.4	9.1	9.5	9.4	8.5	8.9	9.0

The data in table 2. is collected from Fragile States Index (Fragile States Index 2022)

Indicator code	Indicator full name
E1	Economic Decline and Poverty
C1	Security Apparatus
C2	Factionalized Elites
X1	External Intervention
P1	State Legitimacy
P3	Human Rights and Rule of Law

(Fragile States Index undated A)

The indicators all measure several factors. I will not mention them all, but I will include those that in my opinion are most essential to understanding the situation in Yemen during the transitional period. E1 measures factors related to economic decline. E1 takes many economic factors into consideration, including government debt, inflation, GDP, unemployment, and the opinions of experts' views on the economy of a state (Fragile States Index undated C).

C1 measures the security threats to the state, both violence such as rebels, terrorist and coups, and serious organized crime. C1 takes many security threats under consideration, including

availability of weapons, political violence, civilian control of the military, and private forces (Fragile States Index undated D).

C2 measures “[...] *the fragmentation of state institutions along ethnic, class, clan, racial or religious lines, [...]*” (Fragile States Index undated E). This indicator looks into the representatives of government, and if the government is fairly elected. It also considers national identity, and concentration of wealth (Fragile States Index undated E).

X1 measures the influence and impact of external intervention. It considers military assistance, and military infringement from other states, if any states supports opposition fractions, and economic aid (Fragile States Index undated F).

P1 measures the legitimacy of the state. P1 does not necessarily make judgment on if a state is democratic or not, it rather measures if the state is representative and transparent, and if political violence such as terrorism and assassinations occur. This indicator also looks into the people’s confidence in the state (Fragile States Index undated G).

The last indicator I have chosen to include is P3, which measures levels of human rights, and the level of abuse of legal, political and social rights. P3 questions whether the legal system is fair, and if the government systematically violates the rights of its citizens (Fragile States Index undated H). As we can see from table 2. Yemen scored poorly on all points. According to these measurements, Yemen was becoming an increasingly failed state.

The concepts and theory of failed states is not without controversy. Maria-Louise Clausen argues that the failed state thesis lacks analytical precision (Clausen 2019, 488). The West use concepts like failed states to legitimize foreign intervention in states that are experiencing or at risk of violence. Notably, this intervention is carried out in states that is threatening western interest (Clausen 2019, 488-489).

Democratisation and good democratic governance

As we have already established, the aim of the GCC Implementation Mechanism was to create good democratic governance in Yemen. I have therefore included theory on democratisation and good democratic governance, to show how this can be achieved, and the problems a state faces when evolving to a democracy.

The Huntington thesis

The Huntington thesis developed by Samuel Huntington was based on the experience of decolonization during the 1950s and 1960s, where representative democracy failed to take

root in many newly independent countries. The Huntington thesis challenges the earlier view that industrialisation, mass democracy, and the modern bureaucratic state would occur simultaneously in developing societies. Huntington however argued that if social mobilisation outran the establishment of democratic institutions and industrialisation, it would lead to social disorder, and fragile states. Premature mass participation would lead to destabilisation, and the mobilization of new groups and holding elections should therefore wait. A state is not ready for mass participation before the foundation of legitimate authority, social order, and the rule of law is established (Norris 2013, 30-31).

Huntington recommended that democratisation should be achieved through gradual modernizing authoritarianism. Legitimate authority, social order and rule of law needed to be established first, and then a country could gradually move towards mass participation. The Huntington Thesis had its revival due to the continuation of violence and the political instability that continues even with the attempt to democratise Iran and Afghanistan. This effort will be discussed later in this chapter. Pippa Norris argues that most commentators see that democratisation is a long-term goal best achieved by indirect means (Norris 2013, 31). In other words: neither international nor internal actors could, or should, push Yemen into democracy.

Working on the basis of the Huntington thesis, Sequentialist theories emphasize that the international community must establish a strong state before holding elections in countries with deep-rooted conflict. In multicultural societies, the state must use force to disarm militia in order to establish control over the national territory. If elections are held before state control over territory, internal conflicts go unresolved which creates instability. Social development, economic growth, and democratic elections can eventually become established in societies, but this development needs to be supported by a foundation of order and stability. The foundation must demobilize fractions that has military capacities, end corruption and deregulate state-controlled economy (Norris 2013, 31-32). This theory suggests that multicultural societies, like Yemen, should focus on state building before evolving into a democracy. The Huntington thesis calls for gradual modernisation of authoritarianism, while Sequentialist calls for a more active process.

Good governance

As the concept of good democratic governance is mentioned in the GCC Implementation Mechanism, I found it important to understand the concept of good governance. According to Norris, the international community views the need for good governance as essential for

economic growth and the eradication of poverty (Norris 2013, 32). There are multiple understanding of the term good governance. In this thesis we will define it as follows: Governance encompasses “[...] *how power is exercised and checked through mechanisms of accountability*” (Rakner 2014, 225). Governance does not need to be democratic. Democracy encompasses “[...] *how power is attained through electoral processes and participatory institutions*” (Rakner 2014, 225). Government as a term is linked to government legitimacy, human rights, rule of law, and accountability, and focuses on the institutions that secure these features. Good governance therefore refers to the positive features of these institutions (Rakner 2014, 225).

Good governance has eight characteristics. The first is participation, meaning participating of all citizens in legitimate institutions or participation through representatives. In good governance, participation also means that the citizen is informed, and has freedom to association and expression. The second characteristic is rule of law, meaning that the state has an impartial judiciary and enforcement, and follows human rights. The third characteristic is transparency, meaning that rules and regulations are followed when decisions are taken, and it also means that all necessary information is shared for people to take decisions. Transparency is the opposite of corruption. The fourth is responsiveness, meaning that institutions should respond in reasonable time. The fifth is consensus oriented, meaning that there should be a broad consensus in society. Long term goals and needs should also be taken into account. There will always be different opinions and interest in a society, and consensus should be reached with mediation with as broad representation as possible. The sixth is equality and inclusiveness, which means that all citizens should feel included in society. The seventh is effectiveness and efficiency, meaning that the state should effectively and sustainably use its resources for the benefit of its people. The eighth and last is accountability, meaning that the government, the private sector and CSOs must be accountable to the people or stakeholders. Accountability is a key requirement of good governance (The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific undated).

In the 1980s the World Bank started to view poor or weak governance as a major problem. Good governance is linked with better development, and makes assistance in development more effective (Rakner 2014, 225-226). An organization like the World Bank can more effectively assist countries that has good governance. In the following chapter, we will see how the lack of good governance in Yemen hindered assistance towards development and economic growth.

Some scholars have argued that democracy is a luxury which poorer or developing countries cannot afford. The quality of the government is what matters, citizens need public services delivered efficiently and fairly. That does not mean that democracy and good governance is not linked. The highest levels of governance are found in highly democratic countries. But it is also important to note that we find semi-high levels of governance in authoritarian regimes. The lowest levels of governance is found in countries with semi-democracy. It is also important to note that the studies done on the relationship between democracy and governance is not entirely conclusive. However, many studies have found a correlation between democracy and governance (Rakner 2014, 236-227).

Lise Rakner argues that politicians aim to be re-elected, and in states with poor economic development, the demands of citizens can be in the long-term disservice of development. Governance is then negatively affected when politicians make decisions that in short-term benefit the population in order to get re-elected. Long-term plans that do not have an immediate benefit therefore gets rejected (Rakner 2014, 227). I would therefore argue, that if one wants to build democracy as one builds good governance, a lot of learning needs to take place. The people of a state need to understand the long-term goals, and not only focus on what would benefit oneself today.

Transitional governance

The aim of transitional governance is to rework the institutions and the constitution of a state. This was also the goal of the transitional governance in Yemen 2011-2014. Transitional governance is exercised by a provisional government or authority, governed by a transitional law, for example a transitional constitution or charter (De Groof and Wiebusch 2020 A, 1). In the case of Yemen, this is the interim government of President Hadi, which is governed by the GCC Implementation Mechanism.

The GCC Initiative has been described as an elite pact by Sheila Carapico and Stacey Philbrick Yadav (Carapico and Yadav 2014). Transitional governance arrangements are often an elite pact (Day and Malone 2020, 24). Therefore, we should not necessarily consider it a problem if the GCC Initiative was an elite pact, as it is in line with what is common practice.

Although transitional governance is often aided by international actors, it should nevertheless be based on domestic responsibility and formally should be guided by domestic actors.

Geopolitics does however play a role, and external actors often has an interest in the development of other states (De Groof and Wiebusch 2020 B, 13-14).

Creating or redrawing a constitution is an integral part of transitional governance (Day and Malone 2020, 24). As already mentioned, one of the goals of the transitional period was to create a new Yemeni constitution.

The process of writing a new constitution “[...] must deal with certain universal problems of political reconstruction.” (Elkins, Ginsburg and Melton 2008, 1142). First, the crimes of the old regime must be resolved. These crimes can for example be resolved by trials, and truth and reconciliation commissions. This is also known as transitional justice, a topic I will discuss further in chapter 5. Crimes must be reconciled, not necessarily punished. Second, unless the old regime is completely removed, the remaining parts must be included in the new regime. As we know, Hadi was as vice-president part of the old regime. Third, in order for democracy to endure, the pillars that hold it up must endure over time (Elkins, Ginsburg and Melton 2008, 1143). The pillars need to be built on solid foundations, and democracy cannot be based on deals or compromises that will not endure over time.

Several conflicts in the world have led to transitional power-sharing agreements. When a transitional period is underway, it is possible to renegotiate the power-sharing agreement that have been decided on. Christine Bell and Robert Forster found 21 cases from 1990 and 2015, where such renegotiation had taken place. Meaning that even when a transitional period is underway, it is quite possible to change agreements to overcome new obstacles or include more people in the process (Bell and Forster 2019, 3). Issues that can also be readdressed when renegotiating transitional arrangements are timelines, transitional justice, humanitarian needs and security related questions (Bell and Forster 2019, 16). This shows that renegotiating the GCC Initiative could theoretically be possible, which will be discussed further in chapter 5 in relation to the timeline of the transitional period. As mentioned, Al-Muslimi argued that the timeline was unrealistic.

The hope was that the steps in the GCC Implementation Mechanism, and especially the NDC would prevent Yemen falling into a civil war. According to Day and Malone, conflicts have become more difficult to permanently resolve in the last decades. Since the early 2000s, 60 percent of conflict relapsed within five years (Day and Malone 2020, 24). Statistically, it is therefore challenging to establish lasting peace, and the task should be taken seriously.

Economic development

When looking at state building and good governance, economy is an essential part. Economic development includes increasing the well-being of citizens, and providing access to health and

education. Economic development differs from economic growth, as economic growth only concerns with rising the value of goods and services. Economic development can also include greater economic equality (Perkins et al. 2013, 23).

Several studies have shown a positive relationship between economic growth, and rule of law, level of corruption, property rights, and the quality of governance and institutions (Perkins et al. 2013, 79-82). As mentioned, the dire economic situation was one of the reasons for the growing discontent in Yemen. Economic development was therefore one of the challenges the transitional period needed to address, and it is therefore an important concept to comprehend to answer my sub-research question: *What were the challenges faced during this period and what strategies were proposed by the international community to overcome them?*

Socio-economic development is not necessarily needed for democratic transition, and poor countries can sustain democracy. However, experience show that socio-economic development increases the longevity of democracy. On the other hand, developing countries can be left with having to choose between developing economy or developing democracy. Developing a robust economy will often lead to unpopular decisions, as cutting public spending, which will impact people's personal finances. Theory suggest therefore that a lasting democracy is more viable after a period of economic development (Burnell and Rakner 2014, 215-216).

Good governance, and strong institutions make it more likely for a country to attract investment, as it reduces risk for the investor (Perkins et al. 2013, 82). The International Monetary Fund, IMF and the World Bank had pressured Arab countries to make neoliberal reforms. The private sector did however develop differently across the region. Yemen's private sector were according to Henry consigned to the informal economy. Having access to bank credit can indicate higher level of private sector. In 2010, private credit as percentage GDP in Yemen was measured as 6.3 percent. In other words, Yemen was in 2010 a primarily informal cash-based society, with "low private-sector credit ratios" (Henry 2014, 128-129). In other words: Yemen had a mostly informal economy. Informal economy is a hinder for economic development and economic growth. Over time, sustainable economic development needs to reduce informal economy, and build a stronger private sector (Deléchat and Medina 2020).

The resource curse

In 2011 the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative reported that the Yemeni government had a revenue of 5 billion dollars from oil and gas. From 2010-2012, 63 percent of the Yemeni government revenues came from hydrocarbons. Although Yemen is not considered a major oil and gas exporter (US energy information administration 2020), the revenues from oil and gas is still considerable. However, Yemen seems to have been the victim of what economist refers to as “the resource curse”. This refers to the failure of many countries who benefit from vast natural resources to both benefit and disperse the revenues created. Economist also see a link between high levels of natural resources and authoritarianism (Natural Resource Governance Institute 2015, 1-3). I think it is essential here to consider this theoretical framework. Not only because it impacts Yemen, but because it is also a major issue for other states. All states have their unique challenges, but looking at similarities can be very useful.

The problems of the resource curse can be overcome. Perkins et al. refers to Indonesia, a country where despite prevalent corruption, the revenues from oil had been managed well. A method to brake or avoid the resource curse is the establishment of sovereign wealth funds, that can both act as a long-term savings for when the natural resource runs out, and it can also be used, when appropriate, to aid the national economy (Perkins et al. 2013, 705). A badly run economy has a wider set of problems than inequality, poverty and corruption. We also find links between high levels of natural resources and conflict. Oil-states are twice as more likely to experience civil war (Natural Resource Governance Institute 2015, 2). Suffice to say, creating a better economic system in Yemen was essential, but also major theoretical challenges needed to be addressed.

National dialogues

Understanding the concepts of national dialogues are essential to answer my first sub-research question, *why a national dialogue?* National dialogues have been used as a tool for conflict resolution in many cases. Although all cases have their unique features, the model is not untested. National dialogues have also been used in a variety of states, including Egypt in 2011, Mali in 1991, Mexico in 1995-1996, and The Democratic Republic of Congo in 1999-2003, to name a few (Inclusive Peace & Transition Initiative 2017).

National dialogues have six key features to achieve a meaningful outcome. The first is inclusion, which means that all relevant stakeholders should be included. The second is transparency and public participation, meaning that the general public must also be informed of the process of the dialogue, and have the opportunity to have an impact. The national

dialogues must facilitate opportunities for the general population to voice their suggestions and concerns. The third is a credible convener. A credible convener is a person, organisation or other type of organizer who facilitates without having a perceivable personal stake. This convener can, without bias, facilitate the participation of all stakeholders' policies (Stigant and Murray 2015). In the case of Yemen, the GCC and Benomar can be seen as conveners.

The fourth key is that national dialogues must actually discuss and reach an agreement on the topics that create conflict. The fifth key is that national dialogues must have a clear mandate, which must be tailored to the specific situation. National dialogues happen outside the pre-existing political structure, and must therefore have a special mandate to make it legitimate. The mandate must also be transparent, and include the structure, rules and proceedings which are relevant to the process (Stigant and Murray 2015). In the case of Yemen, the mandate was created by the GCC Initiative and the GCC Implementation Mechanism.

The sixth, and last key is an agreed outcome implementation mechanism. Before a national dialogue takes place, there should be an agreement on how the outcomes should be implemented in a new constitution, law, or other policies (Stigant and Murray 2015). As mentioned, it was decided that the NDC Outcome Document should be sent to the Constitutional Commission.

Although the models of national dialogues are not new, and has established features, it does not mean that it is an easy process: “[...] *it is no magic bullet. Even in the most successful instances, national dialogue is but one step along the long and arduous path of building a peaceful society.*” (Stigant and Murray 2015). As already mentioned, Yemen had several national dialogues before the NDC, and it did not stop the country falling into civil war.

In a study of 40 cases of inclusive negotiations between 1990-2013, Thania Paffenholz and Nick Ross found that inclusive processes have a higher chance of success. Paffenholz and Ross points out that this correlation only happened when those included can actually influence the process (Paffenholz and Ross 2016, 201). Inclusion is therefore a topic that must be taken seriously.

The price of stability

I will now look at the concept of stability, and the relation with promoting stability versus democracy in the Middle East. This is to put the transitional period in a wider historical context, to better understand the starting point in 2011, and also shed light on past experiences of regime change in the Middle East. This will also shed some light on the past agendas of the

international community in the Middle East, and is therefore essential to answer the sub-research question: *How was the international actor's involvement perceived and what were their respective agendas?* With the exception of Iran and Iraq, the other Arab rulers had, in 2011, on average been in power for over 20 years (Selvik and Stenslie 2011, 1-2).

As we have seen in chapter 2, there was already much opposition to the Saleh regime pre-2011, but prior to the uprising it was not a foregone conclusion that the Saleh regime would be close to the end. In my opinion it is important to understand the agendas of the international community pre-2011, to better understand their possible agendas after 2011. Did they change? Or did they fundamentally remain the same?

Since the 1980s the West has put pressure on states to steer them towards democracy. In *Stability and Change in the Modern Middle East*, published in 2011, Selvik and Stenslie argues that this pressure has not been greatly extended to the Middle East (Selvik and Stenslie 2011, 215). Selvik and Stenslie argues that this is because of the fear of instability. The West feared that instability would impact access to oil, and what Selvik and Stenslie describes as the Islamist “ghost” (Selvik and Stenslie 2011, 215). Selvik and Stenslie characterises Islamism as “[...] *the West's principal bogeyman.*” (Selvik and Stenslie 2011, 141). Islamism has been described as the new totalitarianism, and as a threat to western civilisation. This created fear, which both politicians and rulers in the West and the Middle East took advantage off. In the West politicians used the fear to gain support for the “war on terror”, and in the Middle East rulers used the fear to gain outside support. Saleh was one of the rulers who used this fear to his benefit (Selvik and Stenslie 2011, 141-142).

In the 1960s, the US policy towards the Middle East was security for Israel and access to oil. During the cold war, the US policy was to prevent wars, coups and revolutions in order to ensure stability. Democratisation and human rights were the price of this stability. Under the presidency of George Bush, the policy changed. In 1997, the aim of only stability was challenged. The policy now reflected that the US thought it a moral duty to spread democracy and human rights, and that the use of force to reach this goal was justifiable. The policy of stability changed, as it was found that the authoritarian regimes in the Middle East was a breeding ground for terrorism. The support for the new policy change was significantly boosted after the 9/11 terrorist attacks in 2001 (Selvik and Stenslie 2011, 215-216). It is important to note here that the US thought it both necessary and right to use force, “*The war against terror should be won through a war for freedom, capitalism and democracy.*” (Selvik and Stenslie 2011, 216).

According to Thomas Carothers and Marina Ottaway, both the US and European policy communities began to view the lack of democracy in the Middle East as a security problem after 9/11. Therefore, promoting democracy in the Middle East were a tool to combat violent extremism, in order to solve a security problem for the West (Carothers and Ottaway 2005, 3-4).

There are a number of factors that speak in favour of regime stability in states like Yemen. For groups closely connected to the regime, they have personal economic and social interest. People can also support regimes, because they fear that removing the regime will lead to chaos and civil war. Selvik and Stenslie argues that events in Lebanon, Algeria and Iraq have exacerbated this fear (Selvik and Stenslie 2011, 261).

Crucially to my research question, there are also regional and international interest in regime stability. According to Selvik and Stenslie, "*The great powers have a long tradition of preserving regimes in the Middle East to serve their interest.*" (Selvik and Stenslie 2011, 261). Selvik and Stenslie predicted in 2011 that regime stability would be the most likely short-term scenario, and that authoritarian leaders would rather risk state failure than to end their survival politics (Selvik and Stenslie 2011, 262).

Democracy assistance

Understanding what role international actors can have in assisting the creation of democratic good governance is necessary to answer my research question. The assisted spreading of democracy is one of the most controversial issues in comparative and international politics (Burnell 2014, 421). There are a variety of methods that can be used when promoting democracy, ranging from the use of hard to soft power. Methods using hard power can be coercing through pressure or even military invasion. Methods using soft power can include assistance and incentives (Burnell 2014, 422- 223).

International actors can give direct or indirect support in order to promote democracy. Direct promoting can be seen as supporting democratic values, norms and institutions. Indirect promoting can be seen as supporting conditions for democratisation, such as supporting better socioeconomic conditions (Burnell 2014, 422-423).

The method of coercing democracy is widely viewed as ineffective. From the lessons learned in Afghanistan and Iraq, where democracy promotion violently removed the old regime, it is now widely viewed that this actually harmed democracy promotion. It gave authoritarian rulers a way to legitimize themselves, as standing against the invasion of the West (Burnell

and Rakner 2014, 219). Although the situation in Afghanistan was not resolved when the transitional process in Yemen started in 2011, it can still provide information to make us better understand how the international actors were operating. In 2010, the Obama administration had, in the words of Norris, “[...] signalled retreat from the more muscular attempts of promoting democracy in Afghanistan.” (Norris 2013, 32). Meaning that some lessons had already been learned when the Yemeni process started. Although the situations in Iraq, Afghanistan and Yemen was not the same, we could think that the international actors were considering the lessons learned from Iraq and Afghanistan in their approach to Yemen.

In an article from 2009, Thomas Carothers said that the providers of democracy assistance were moving away from the thought that a one-size-fits all model of aid. According to Carothers, we could now see a pattern of two distinctive approaches in democracy assistance, the political approach and the developmental approach. The political approach focuses on elections and political liberties. The view is that democratisation is the struggle of democrats versus nondemocrats. In the political approach the aid is therefore directed at political institutions and processes, like elections and political parties and civil society groups. The developmental approach is wider in its conception of democracy, and views democratisation as a slow process of change which ultimately will lead to political and socioeconomic development. In the developmental approach the aid is directed at long-term projects to assist the political and socioeconomic sectors. The goal is to build a well-functioning state (Carothers 2009, 5). The international community could therefore apply different approaches in their assistance to Yemen 2011-2014.

After the end of the cold war, the idea of promoting democracy as a foreign policy started in earnest (Burnell 2014, 424). Several democratic western states are major actors in actively engaging to developing democracies in other states. The United Nations is also a major actor, with the United Nations Development Fund (UNDP) being a substantial funder of programs to increase democratic governance (Burnell and Rakner 2014, 218).

Lessons learned from democratic assistance

There are several lessons learned from democratic assistance, and I will now go through the once I find most essential. Looking at these lessons, we gain a better understanding of why models like national dialogues are chosen. Citizens are less likely to accept rules that appear to be imported. Constitutions that are written by, or largely influenced by, an occupying power are less likely to succeed. This is because the people did little to challenge the elite, and gained little experiences in holding their rulers accountable, as this was done by the

occupying power. The people can also become ignorant of their need to challenge their rulers (Elkins, Ginsburg, and Melton 2008, 1146). Making sure that citizens have the technical capacities to carry out actions as writing constitutions and challenge the elite is therefore necessary. One way of overcoming these issues is to use models like national dialogues, where the stakeholders themselves make the decisions.

According to Zalmay Khalilzad the international community viewed the establishment of a democratic system in Iraq and Afghanistan “[...] as a key element in the successful reconstruction of each country [...]” (Khalilzad 2010, 41). Like Yemen, Iraq and Afghanistan was also dealing with the problems of state building at the same time as the international community was providing democracy assistance (Khalilzad 2010, 41).

In Iraq, the state had powerful institutions and a strong national army. To swiftly move power away from the Baath party, and Saddam Hussein, the Bush administration put the coalition in power. The new power, The Coalition Provisional Authority, dissolved the Baath party, and many government officials lost their jobs. They also dissolved the military and security forces. Many Iraqis felt alienated from the new state, which resulted in a growth of sectarian violence (Khalilzad 2010, 43).

According to Khalilzad two lessons were learned from the cases of Afghanistan and Iraq, “*The first is that external powers should not become occupiers.*” (Khalilzad 2010, 43). In Afghanistan, an attempt to create an inclusive political process was ongoing in 2010, and Khalilzad identified this as the best way forward as it gave citizens the opportunity to “[...] *normalizing their politics.*” (Khalilzad 2010, 43). We know now of course that this process was not successful in Afghanistan either, the Taliban had been fighting against the US backed government since 2001 and returned to power again in 2021 (Maizland 2023).

The second lesson was that the international actors should have an active approach and should not “go away” after a transitional government had been in place. The international actors should, according to Khalilzad, act as mediators and facilitators (Khalilzad 2010, 43-44).

After the cold war ended in 1989, the trend of transitional periods changed. The trend moved away from territorial administration, and moved towards being domestically driven, but with international support. Territorial administration is expensive and challenging, which resulted in a wish for more nation driven transitions. This is one advantage of using models like national dialogues, they are less expensive to carry out. Another reason for the trend moving towards domestically driven transitions is the change of nature of conflict itself, which Day

and Malone argues has made “[...] *sustainable peace more complex and elusive.*” (Day and Malone 2020, 19). Nation driven transition therefore carries less risk for international actors to involve themselves with.

The method of domestically driven transitions is not without its risk. When the international actors are present, national actors are able to set aside their difficulties and grievances, but these can escalate when the international actors withdraw. This is the case of Iraq, The Democratic Republic of Congo, Afghanistan and Libya (Day and Malone, 2020, 19). This means that there are also risks of using nation driven transitions.

Chapter 5: Analysis

In the following chapters I will present and analyse my findings. This chapter is divided into four sub-chapters. In chapter 5.1, I investigate the sub-research question: *Why a national dialogue?* I will look at which components came together to create a national dialogue. I will then look at how the NDC was preliminary perceived by some of the actors, and the steps the international community took to facilitate the NDC.

In chapter 5.2, I investigate my sub-research question: *What were the challenges faced during this period and what strategies were proposed by the international community to overcome them?* There were many challenges that needed to be resolved, and I have therefore made a selection. The challenges I will discuss in this thesis are technical capacities, state building, economy, corruption, security, and transitional justice. I will look into how the international actors assisted on these topics.

In chapter 5.3, I investigate my sub-research question: *What were the contested topics and how were they perceived or negotiated?* I look separately at some of the contested topics that has come up in my research. This is both contested topics mentioned in other studies, but also topics I continuously noted when analysing Yemen Times. I investigated these topics further through my interviews. As with challenges, there were also several contested topics. I therefore had to make a selection. The contested topics I will discuss in this thesis are: Timeframe, UN resolutions and inclusion.

In chapter 5.4, I investigate my sub-research question: *How was the international actor's involvement perceived and what were their respective agendas?*

We will see that many of the topics, components and challenges that will be discussed in this chapter are closely tied together and will in some cases overlap.

Chapter 5.1. Why a national dialogue conference?

As we have seen, a stable Yemen was of importance to the international community, especially in the West. During the 2011 uprising, there was a real fear that Yemen could descend into a civil war, and it would be in the best interest for the international community to do whatever they could to prevent that. But why a national dialogue? Why was this particular model chosen? One of my sources told me that there was a distinctive mood around the Arab Spring that national dialogues were good models for change (Nicholas Ross, interview by author, 07.02.2023).

Another reason emphasized by informants, and the historical background of this thesis, is that dialogue was not a new phenomenon in Yemen.

“Dialogue has been the answers for anything politicians fail to agree on. [...] It’s a great political solution to kick the ball away from you. It’s part of the political imagination of the Yemeni political landscape. It was a way to get people involved but keep them away from the scene. Just like a charade. [...] What made it possible? I would say it was political necessity. And since it was part of [...] the political imagination it wasn’t hard to execute.” (Anonymous C, interview by author, 13.02.2023).

As mentioned in chapter 1, the transitional period and the NDC was, according to the GCC Implementation Mechanism, meant to transition Yemen to good democratic governance. This would constitute a considerable change in the Yemeni political system.

Why did the international actors not simply opt to promote the continuation of Saleh’s authoritarian regime, or the same authoritarian regime with another leader? As we have seen, promoting stability had long been in the interest of the international community. One could argue that the placement of Hadi as president suggests a preference for continuity. He was a political insider and Yemen’s vice-president. In any transitional societies, there needs to be a balance between the old elites and the new power. If the old elites still hold power, it can delegitimize the new power (Steen and Ruus 1999, 1). In an article from 2013, Dingli wrote that *“The uncontested ascension of a former elite strongman to the presidency has created the impression that the GCC deal may have brought about a change in faces and names, but not in substance.”* (Dingli 2013). I do however think it is important here to reflect on the lessons learned from Iraq, where the total removal of the Baath party was arguably a disaster.

Ross argued that *“[the NDC] was set up as a forum to re-imagine the social political contract. But it lasted for years, and during that period of years you essentially had a basic continuity of the Saleh regime. There were minimal changes.”* (Ross, interview).

When discussing regime continuity, one must also consider that Hadi was viewed as weak.

“There were a lot of miscalculations, [...] Hadi was very weak. We [Yemeni] didn’t have good leadership, you had miscalculations and you had the waiting game. And the economic crisis was chipping away at the credibility of the entire process. By the end of 2014, by mid-2014, the people themselves didn’t believe in The National Dialogue anymore.” (Dr. Nadia Al-Sakkaf, interview by author, 14.02.2023).

When I asked Al-Sakkaf if everyone had believed Hadi was weak, she answered “*Yes, that was one of the things that everyone agreed on.*” (Al-Sakkaf, interview). Although Hadi represents a continuation of the GPC, the international community may have hoped he could be easily managed. Saleh was a strong leader, Hadi was not.

“[...] the international community, the UN system, the US, Europe, has a very poor record when it comes to [...] revolutionary moments. They don’t deal with them very well. I think in part because they are chaotic and unpredictable, all of that is scary and bad for business. [...] you could argue that having this familiar regime stay in power while a sort of, the very least, even if you don’t say they wanted this to amount to nothing, but the decision to intrust the state to sort of continuity, GPC government, seems like a fairly conservative move.” (Anonymous A, interview by author, 07.02.2023).

Anonymous A did not think that the UN or the international actors had any nefarious reasons for acting like they did, it is simply how the system is set up. *“[...] the UN, I cannot think of a case where they have [been] a really revolutionary actor in any way shape or form. It’s not the business that they are inn.”* (Anonymous A, interview).

As mentioned in chapter 4 by Elkins, Ginsburg and Melton, it may be better to include the old elites if you cannot completely remove them. Although promoting Hadi is a conservative move, it might have been sensible. It allowed the continuation of the GPC, but with a leader that did not have the same power as Saleh had. Although the GPC was still in power, the international community was supporting the NDC and the end of authoritarianism.

However, as shown in chapter 2, in Yemen 2011, there was more than one stakeholder with military capacities. To prevent civil war, those stakeholders would have had to reach an agreement. Al-Sakkaf believed that the NDC could also happen because Yemen had a strong popular opposition to the Saleh regime, and they managed to hold their ground until the international actors intervened (Al-Sakkaf, interview). So, according to Al-Sakkaf it was not only the stakeholders with military capacities that were able to stand their ground and demand change, the Yemeni people also demanded change. It therefore seems unlikely to me that continued promoting of the Saleh regime would be stabilizing. By 2011, many of his Yemeni allies had turned against him, and it is possible to imagine that stakeholders might have tried to forcefully remove him had he not stepped down. It is thus logical that promoting stability would include the removal of Saleh, and getting all the stakeholders to reach a consensus off how the new state should be organized.

“[...] a lot of credit has to go to some of the leaders, Abd Al-Karim Al-Iryani [GPC] willingness to step away from Ali Saleh. To work with Islah, to work with people like, [...] the socialist. [...]. Professor Ahmed [Sharafeddin], [...] the leading constitutional lawyer in the country. [Who was a] designated representative of the Houthis, Ansar Allah. Far from radical. That guy was a mainstream professor of constitutional law. Suit and tie. These people were willing to sit down and work through the issues, and in inclusive ways. A lot of credit has to go to those people.” (Professor John Packer, interview by author, 02.02.2023).

It seems to me that both forces inside and outside of Yemen wished to reach an agreement to prevent civil war, and to rebuild Yemen.

“[...] there was a fairly good concord at the security council, and there was persistently strong support by the security council. So whatever differences the Chinese, Russians, Americans, others had elsewhere. They were quite onboard. And they sang the same song. Both in New York and in Yemen, on Yemen. Nobody wanted disruption.” (Packer, interview).

Packer also referred to the experience of Jan Egeland⁵. The UN already had people ready to deal with crisis, and mediation experts (Packer, interview).

“[...], when you are faced with crisis you don't want at that point to do the work, find the tools, you want your tools to be in hand before the crisis erupts, or at least have it in hand at the time [of] the crisis. Even from a negotiation perspective, you don't want the transaction cost to trying to establish these things when you are in the midst of negotiate the real thing. [...] [When] Jamal Benomar was sent by Ban Ki-moon to Yemen in 2010 he could already call upon some staff and mediation unit that had been set up just three years before.” (Packer, interview).

As mentioned, in order for the transitional period to be successful, a number of challenges needed to be dealt with, technical capacities, state building, economy, corruption, security, and transitional justice. A national dialogue was the chosen apparatus to have all of the stakeholders together to overcome these challenges.

Getting people involved with the NDC proved difficult. According to Hugh Robertson, the United Kingdom minister of state for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in 2014, a real

⁵ Egeland served as the UN Under-Secretary-General and Emergency Relief Coordinator from 2003-2006 (Norway in the UN 2017). In 1999, he was appointed the UN Secretary-General's Special Adviser on Colombia. Prior to this, Egeland also had experience with facilitation of peace talks between several states and stakeholders including Israel and Palestine, Guatemala, Mali and Sudan (United Nations 1999).

challenge for the Friends of Yemen was to convince the Yemeni people that they could and actually wanted to make a difference, in other words that the conference was not only for show (Robertson 2014).

Packer considered this to be “[...] *one of the huge problems of transitions. [...] They [the people] don't believe the state*” (Packer, interview). Packer accredited this problem to stem from the Saleh regime. The system of governance that Saleh had created damaged the people's ability to trust and take part in the state. “*The last place they go to resolve their issues is the state [and] its institutions.*” (Packer, interview).

In the end, 565 people did come together, and hopefully believed in the process. It seems a reasonable assumption that the Yemeni people did not want a civil war. “*There had [...] already been serious intercommunity ethnic conflict in Iraq and other parts of the Arab world and Yemeni were aware of that*” (Packer, interview). The short answer to why a national dialogue must therefore be the quite obvious, neither the international actors nor the Yemenis wanted a civil war. It also happened because it was part of the political imagination of what could happen. Yemen had used dialogue before, and the international actors believed national dialogues to be a good method. In sum: Forces inside and outside of Yemen wanted a dialogue to take place, a dialogue that would hopefully lead to lasting peace. As we will see in the next section, this does not mean that all parties were satisfied with how the process was done, and the international involvement that occurred.

The NDC must be thought of first and foremost as a peace process. It was a national dialogue conference, not a state building conference. The point was to find consensus, that the new Yemen would be built on. As theory has shown, and as will become evident later in this thesis, this was a difficult task. The NDC also happened after disastrous efforts of democracy promoting in other countries, and it is quite possible that the lessons learned from those processes affected why the model of the NDC was chosen. As outlined above, stability in Yemen was important for many actors, and it is a reasonable conclusion that they would have gone to great lengths to secure this stability. I therefore think that the choice of the NDC, and making it a Yemeni process was based on the lessons learned.

I do not think that a foreign military invention like in Iraq or Afghanistan was on the table for Yemen. However, the international community could still have used harder methods, for example sanctions.

Initial reactions

How did the multitude of Yemeni actors perceive the NDC and the international involvement? I will now only look at the initial reactions different stakeholders had to the GCC Initiative and NDC. Al-Sakkaf observed early on in the NDC process that Yemeni were divided in their approach to the international community. Groups like the Southern Movement, insisted on supervision. Other groups, like the Houthis, initially refused to engage with international actors, especially the US (Al-Sakkaf, Nadia 2013 A).

Amal Al-Yarisi reported that youth activist Radhwan Al-Haimi, rejected the NDC. He believed that the NDC, as it was based on the GCC Initiative and Implementation Mechanism, marginalized the rights of the Yemeni people (Al-Yarisi 2012). As we already know, youths participated in the conference with 40 delegates, but this shows that not all youths believed in the NDC.

Bushra Al-Maqtari is described as a *“leading revolutionary figure from Taiz’s Freedom Square”* (Al-Maqtari 2014) by Yemen Times. Al-Maqtari also takes a critical view of the GCC Initiative. In her opinion, youths were not able to reach their goals due to the GCC Initiative. She views it as an international conspiracy, and the initiative was not able to end corruption in Yemen (Al-Maqtari 2014). Al-Maqtari does not represent all of Yemeni youth, but her opinion as a leading revolutionary figure still carries weight. It is interesting to note that two separate youth activists felt that the GCC Initiative and GCC Implementation Mechanism did not take due consideration to youths. This is especially critical as the rapid population growth meant that a large part of Yemeni society were youths.

According to Amal Al-Yarisi, politics professor Nabeel Al-Sharjabi was concerned that the foreign, and especially regional, interest might hinder the success of the dialogue. He believed that foreign countries had their own agenda for Yemen. He was especially concerned about the Iranian agenda, and was worried that they would try to get parties to reject the NDC (Al-Yarisi 2012).

According to Mohamed Bin Sallam, leading Houthi figure Saleh Habra, told Yemen Times that the Houthis (initially) rejected to be part of the NDC, as they felt it only served the *“[...] interests of the US and other states [...]”* (Sallam 2012) and would not benefit Yemen (Sallam 2012). As we know, in the end they did participate with 35 delegates.

Another Houthi leader, Ali Al-Emad, a representative of the Houthis during the 2011 uprising, said that he withdrew from The Preparatory Committee of the NDC due to the presence of

U.S. Ambassador Gerald Feierstein. *“We think that the U.S. administration doesn’t respect Yemenis and is managing everything in the Yemen.”* (Al-Emad 2012). When asked if it was suitable to oppose the US efforts in the peaceful transitional period in Yemen, Al-Emad answered that he believed that the US was against both democracy and stability in Yemen. Al-Emad made it clear however that the Houthis were not against the NDC. They were against the involvement of the US in the process (Al-Emad 2012).

It is important here to note that youths, an expert on politics, and the Houthis was initially not positive to the GCC Initiative and Implementation Mechanism, and the NDC, due to the involvement of outsiders. It shows as Elkins, Ginsburg, and Melton suggest, that imported rules, or seemingly imported rules, are less likely to be accepted.

However, there were also positive initial reaction. According to Al-Yarisi, Siham Noman, the head of Women’s Authority in the Justice and Development Youth Party, were positive to the NDC. She believed that the NDC would be essential in Yemen’s recovery (Al-Yarisi 2012).

Facilitation

I will now look at some of the efforts the international community made to facilitate the NDC before it started. In December 2011, Benomar visited the Saada Governorate. This visit was positively received, and the Houthi leader Abdulmalik Al-Houthi reportedly told Benomar that the Houthis were willing to become involved in political discussions with the new government and engage in a national dialogue (Al-Sakkaf, Nadia 2012 A).

In early March 2013, Benomar met with southern leaders in Dubai, where he negotiated their participation in the NDC (Al-Samei 2013). A delegation of European Union diplomats also reportedly met with representatives of the Southern Movement in Aden to convince them to join the NDC (Yemen Times Undated B). Yemen Times did not provide information on when this meeting took place. It does however show that both the UN and European Union understood the importance of having the south involved with the NDC. When the Southern Movement later boycotted the NDC, Benomar again had to negotiate to resume their participation (Al-Hasani 2013).

According to Ghayda Al-Ariqi, Dr. Shafeeqa Saeed, head of the National Women’s Committee, met with Benomar in early June 2012. In the meeting, they discussed women’s issues, and the preparations for the NDC. Benomar made it clear that the UN would ensure that women would effectively participate in the NDC and government (Al-Ariqi 2012). As we

can see, Benomar, and by extension the UN, understood the importance of inclusion and made efforts in facilitating this inclusion.

Chapter 5.2: Challenges

In this part I will look at six of the challenges that needed to be resolved in order for Yemen to have a successful outcome at the end of the transitional period and the proposed strategies to resolve them. I will first look at technical capacities. By technical capacities I refer to the skills, knowledge of both individuals⁶, and the state and institutions. A state and its institutions cannot function without capable people. Building capacities is also important for good governance, democratisation, and economic development.

The second challenge is state building and creating good democratic governance, I asked the people I interviewed whether they believed that the NDC was an effective way to carry out state building, creating good governance and democratisation. The third challenge is economy, I will look at economic contributions, both in terms of economic support to the transitional period, and economic development. The fourth challenge is corruption, the fifth is security, and the last challenge is transitional justice. We will see that many of these challenges are tied together.

Technical capacities

One factor that has been brought up continuously in my research, is Yemen's lack of technical capacities both in human capital, meaning knowledge and skills, and its lack of functioning institutions. This means that, at least parts of the international community considered Yemen ill equipped to take the steps necessary to create a good democratic governing state.

Understandably that would be a problem that needed to be resolved in order for Yemen to have a meaningful outcome at the end of the NDC, and it was therefore one of the topics I further investigated through interviews. As we have seen in chapter 4, good governance needs institutions, and it needs people who are appropriately skilled to run these institutions. People also need technical capacities in order to efficiently deal with the problems that was discussed in the NDC.

In an interview with Yemen Times, which was published 22nd of October 2012, Wael Zakout, the World Bank's Country Manager in Yemen, said that the main challenges the World Bank had in assisting Yemen was that the Yemeni government had little capacity to implement changes, and also the severe problem of corruption in Yemen. Zakout also list the security

⁶ Also known as human capital.

situation as a challenge for the effective assistance by the World Bank. Zakout was of the opinion that Yemen did not have appropriate anti-corruption measures in place (Zakout, 2012). I will discuss the problem of corruption and security in further detail later in this chapter. Zakout's statements suggest that the need to rise technical capacities in Yemen was necessary.

Anonymous C also believed that Yemen lacked technical capacities. *"Everybody says that [Yemen lacked technical capacities], even people who were working on the dialogue."* (Anonymous C, interview). Anonymous C believed this was very evident on *"[...] the proposed structure of the inter-relationship between the governorates [Federalism]. They didn't know what they were talking about. They just pulled things that looked good on paper and published it"* (Anonymous C, interview).

Packer believed that Yemen did lack technical capacities, and that Yemeni themselves knew it. Packer accredited this problem to the previously existing political culture in Yemen. *"The whole thing [the transitional period] was a massive informal education."* (Packer, interview). Packer also pointed out the formal education that took place, in forms of courses, workshops, and seminars during the transitional period.

Al-Sakkaf does on the other hand not believe that Yemen lacked technical capacities. In the NDC, *"We had the Crème de la crème of the Yemeni society."* (Al-Sakkaf, interview) and this Yemeni expertise was supported by international experts. Al-Sakkaf's statement does show that Yemen received assistance from international experts, but in terms of technical capacities *"There is no excuse there."* (Al-Sakkaf, interview), it was not the lack of technical capacities that let the process down.

Ross was also sceptical to the argument of lack of technical capacities, *"[...] because you can find cases [...] that do reforms as they build capacities."* (Ross, interview). In other words: although it is a problem, it is a problem that can be resolved. You can build institutions at the same time as you give people the skills to run them. As we saw in chapter 4, this is not only possible it is also highly necessary.

An example of how this was done, is the formal education of civil society organisations in Yemen. *"There are over 10,000 civil society organizations (CSO) in Yemen, but the majority lack the institutional support to carry out their missions, [...]"* (Al-Sakkaf, Nasser 2013). Between 2012-2013 the Yemeni Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour, the Responsive Governance Project (RGP) and The United States Agency for International Development,

USAID, sponsored a yearlong training course to strengthen the capacities of 100 Yemeni CSOs (Al-Sakkaf, Nasser 2013).

Another example of how the international community aided in the building of technical capacities was at the Affiliated Network for Social Accountability in the Arab World, ANSA-AW. In an article published 5th of November 2012, ANSA-AW had just held its first workshop on “[...] raising awareness about the concepts and practices of social accountability and participatory government.” (Al-Wesabi 2012). ANSA-AW was created in 2012, with support from the World Bank. The workshop was attended by government representatives, NGOs, the private sector and media. Abdul-Moiz Dabwan, the coordinator of the network in Yemen, said ANSA-AW was the first step in trying to create good governance in Yemen (Al-Wesabi 2012).

From May 19th to May 21st 2012, USAID hosted a workshop that was aimed at explaining electoral systems, with a further aim that the media would educate the Yemeni people about the electoral processes (Al-Karimi 2012). As we saw in lessons from democratic assistance, it is essential that the people themselves gain experience in governance. These training programs shows that the international community made an effort in raising awareness and experience.

UNOPS were supposed to provide support for the writing of a new Yemeni constitution (Mattsson and Guenther 2013). France was also supposed to provide technical support for the new Yemeni constitution (Al-Samei 2012). I have not investigated how this support for constitution writing was actively done. Technical support in this area can be challenging, as mentioned in chapter 4, constitutions heavily influenced by foreign actors are less likely to be successful.

Problems of technical assistance was also discussed in Yemen Times. In an article by Al-Sakkaf, she reported that the minister of Human rights, Hooria Mashour was not being met with the expected support from the international community. A ministerial outreach committee had held a dialogue with youths, and not received any support from the international community (Al-Sakkaf, Nadia 2012 B).

“Apparently donors such as the Responsive Governance Project (RPG) from USAID and the EU have been supporting random projects with civil society organizations and with the Ministry of Youth, both unrecognizable by the youth in the squares. Even the German’s have been doing their own facilitations for several months now with the factions in the south.” (Al-Sakkaf, Nadia 2012 B).

When the official committee had asked for assistance, mainly with expenses, the donors had not responded. Al-Sakkaf viewed it as positive that the international actors are engaging with youths outside the official dialogue but viewed it as hugely problematic that the official authority was being ignored (Al-Sakkaf, Nadia 2012 B).

Augustin had a different view of this topic. “*Yemen has a different history of statehood, how the state is functioning, how society is functioning.*” (Dr. Anne-Linda Amira Augustin, interview by author, 03.02.2023). In her view, one of the problems of the transitional period was too much interference and the western international community trying to implement their ideas of statehood. Augustin argues, that from the point of view of the south, South-Yemen had been a functioning state. It had the technical capacities, and they could use their existing knowledge to rebuild a functioning state. Yemen might not have the same ideas of statehood as Europe, and the US, but that does not mean they are unable to govern (Augustin, interview).

Anonymous C believed that Yemen had changed too much, and that the south had changed too much from the time of the socialist party. In South-Yemen, corruption had been negligible, but that was no longer the case. Many of the people who governed South-Yemen was also long dead, or had according to Anonymous C, changed their political affinities (Anonymous C, interview). In 2011, there had been 20 years since the unification of Yemen. Perhaps many in the south had better capacities in dealing with the steps that were necessary, but for the last 20 years, the south, like rest of Yemen, had been living under authoritarianism, and I think it would be reasonable to presume that a lot of technical capacities could have been lost.

State building and creating good democratic governance

As mentioned, one of the goals of the transitional period, and the NDC, was to create good democratic governance in Yemen. We have already seen that the building of technical capacities was done in order to achieve this aim. I therefore posed the overall question to people I interviewed; Do you think that the NDC was an effective way to carry out state building, creating good governance and democratisation?

The NDC created “*an unmistakable reference point*” (Packer, interview), for the future of Yemen. Packer told me that even today, The Outcome Document, the decisions and deliberations, that took place during the transitional period is still very much being referenced in 2023. “*I think it would be just false to say that it was ineffective.*” (Packer, interview).

Augustin believed that it could have been effective, and that the NDC was a good idea in and of itself. However, “[...]it was not free enough.” (Augustin, interview). It was not only the fault of the international community, but also elites inside the country who obstructed the process (Augustin, interview). Augustin is not alone in this view. According to Dr. Mohammed Abdul-Malik Al-Mutawakil, former leader of the JMP, the JMP and GPC did not care about building Yemen, and therefore obstructed the transitional process (Al-Mutawakil 2012). As the former leader of JMP he has some credibility on the inner workings of the JMP, but we must also consider that he might have had ulterior motives for saying this to gain political influence.

Anonymous C did not believe it was effective, *“In reality, most people just wanted their salaries, [...]. I mean, policies are important. But I don’t think the NDC was a way to formalise good policies.”* (Anonymous C, interview).

Ross took a different approach to this topic, that *“state building is not really about discussing the nature of the state.”* (Ross, interview).

“I have this kind of incipient theory that the model that has been on the liberal model for ages is that, state building essentially has got to [be] extremely inclusive and consensus-based process in sort of every context, is maybe defeatist. It basically implies that, if you can’t do both, then it’s better to have a consensus process that leads to state building, than a state building process that lacks consensus or inclusivity. And I don’t think that the record of that is particularly compelling.” (Ross, interview).

To create good democratic governance, inclusion, representation and consensus is considered important. But these are not factors that are inherently needed for an operative state. As put forward by Poggi, and Aarebrot and Evjen, and explained in chapter 4, an effective state has several characteristics. Yemen did arguably not have all of them, most importantly not a monopoly on violence. As chapter 4 did show however, inclusive processes have more likelihood of succeeding, and it is therefore an aspect that should be taken seriously.

At the same time, the past experiences of creating strong states and not focusing on good democratic governance is not particularly strong. *“[...] everybody’s takeout from the Afghanistan intervention was the approach being state building first and never mind the good governance, but that that had been a complete failure. That you just can’t build a strong state over everybody’s heads and opposition.”* (Ross, interview). I believe this is a good evaluation,

and again shows how it was important that Yemen focused on its multitude of problems. Creating a monopoly on violence would have been very difficult.

When asked what state the Houthis wanted to build, Al-Emad answered, “[...] *a democratic civil state that guarantees the rights of everyone and is dominated by the law.*” (Al-Emad 2012). He also said that the Houthis would be open to federalism (Al-Emad 2012). By these statements, if we can believe them to be truthful, the Houthis were also looking to build a democratic state. As mentioned in chapter 1 and 2, one of the components that led to the current civil war in Yemen is believed to be the federal divisions. As mentioned, Thiel argued that the Houthis did not reject federalism, and the statements made by Al-Emad supports this theory. Although we do not know if these statements are truthful, it does support my idea that federalism itself cannot explain solely why the transitional period failed.

What about democratisation?

As we have already seen, the election of Hadi was not really democratic. It is difficult to argue that an election with only one candidate is democratic. Shatha Al-Harazi made it clear that it was understood that the election on 21st of February 2012 was not a democratic one. According to Al-Harazi this led to a debate on whether this move, an undemocratic election, was a wise move as it might give the Yemeni people the wrong idea about what democracy is (Al-Harazi 2012 A). I do not necessarily consider the election of Hadi in February 2012 as a hinder for a long-term democratic process. In an editorial article published on the 24th of October 2013 Nadia Al-Sakkaf said that the GCC Initiative needed to be revisited. She believed that Yemen should not be pushed into a democracy which it was ill equipped for (Al-Sakkaf, Nadia 2013 B). As we saw in chapter 4, rushed democracy can lead to disastrous outcomes, meaning that it would be better to work slowly towards the goal.

Ross suggested that the wording used in the GCC Implementation Mechanism, “[...] *transition to good democratic governance in Yemen.*” (Implementation Mechanism 2011, 2), is symbolic. The UN cannot stand behind a process of transition that does not use this type of wording. “*The actual day to day business of governance was about as democratic as it had been during Saleh.*” (Ross, interview). We do not know if this language was symbolic or not, but I would agree with Ross that the day-to-day governance during the transitional period was seemingly not very democratic. Although I do not see it as a hinder for long-term democratic process, Hadi was definitely not democratically elected. As shown by The Fragile States Index in chapter 4, there was also major issues with this administration. One example of this

is corruption, a topic I will discuss later in this chapter. As shown in Fragile States Index, it does not seem like the day-to-day governance was actually improved. It is important to note here that day-to-day governance is different to progression in the NDC. Inadequate day-to-day governance would of course impact the NDC, but these are two separate processes.

Economy

This section will first look at the economic contributions that the international community provided to Yemen's transitional period. I will then show some of the long-term economic development project that were implemented. As shown in chapter 4, economic development is important for several reasons.

Between 2011-2014, there were many foreign emergency aid programs in Yemen, providing basic necessities like food, water and medicine. In 2011, seven million Yemeni lacked food security (The Guardian 2011). Emergency aid programs are meant to be short term, and although they are important, I have chosen not to include them in my thesis as they provide limited or no economic development. Some emergency assistance may help long-term by rebuilding infrastructure, but most emergency aid is supposed to support basic necessities. This aid is usually not for long term investment and economic growth (Perkins et al. 2013, 526).

There are however other types of aid that is more relevant to look at. This is aid to support macroeconomic stability, and is often provided by IMF and the World Bank. The problem with any type of aid is that it is often wasted. The money does not end up where it should. A major criticism of aid is that it could actually lead to worse economic situations through corruption. Aid can support dictatorships which further impoverish the population. Even without corruption, the long-term benefits of aid can be lost if a state does not have the capacity to absorb the funds. Capacity to absorb the funds means that the state has existing infrastructure and human capital. As we saw earlier in this chapter, the World Bank saw this as a problem in Yemen. With an increase of aid, there also needs to be an increase of appropriately skilled labour. More money leads to bigger projects, which again leads to an increase in the number of skilled people one would need (Perkins et al. 2013, 527). This problem is therefore closely linked to the need to build technical capacities.

Another substantial issue in the disfavour of aid is that it undermines the private sector. When the state needs more workers, it draws the labourers and investments away from private production. Large sums of aid can also exacerbate inflation and negatively impact the

exchange rate, which in turn can hurt import and export. This can lead to what economists refer to as Dutch disease. Dutch disease can also come from an export boom of natural resources (Perkins et al. 2013, 527). Understanding Dutch disease in the context of Yemen is important because it explains the difficulty of economic growth being aided by outsiders. The international community could not send economic aid, without the structures needed for long-term development in place. We could see from Fragile States Index in chapter 4, that economic development actually became worse during the transitional period. Economic development is difficult, and as illustrated by the theory of Dutch disease, the international community could not just send aid to grow the Yemeni economy.

Economic contributions to the transitional period

Even though models like national dialogues are favoured because they are less expensive, they still need economic contributions. On the 17th of March 2013, Yemen Times reported that the NDC itself was due to cost 23.18 million dollars, with 50 percent of the budget being provided by the international community (Yemen Times 2013 B). The Hadi government had asked for a total of 11.9 billion⁷ dollars to assist Yemen in the transitional period (Zakout 2012). At the Friends of Yemen conference in New York from the 4th-5th September 2012, 6.4 billion dollars were pledged. At the Friends of Yemen conference in Riyadh 27th September 2012, a further 1.5 billion dollars were raised (Zakout 2012; Foreign & Commonwealth Office 2013).

The funding for the transitional period and the NDC was an essential part.

“Without this funding the NDC would have been very difficult to carry out. [...] there was around 600 people, [...], everybody had to stop work [...], their time had to be compensated. They were paid, for their transportation, for the food, because they left their jobs to go and do this. [...], if that hadn't happened, the NDC would not have happened.” (Al-Sakkaf, interview).

Without the financial support, the delegates might not have been able to attend the NDC. The support from the international community in financing the NDC was therefore essential. Giving people money for attending makes inclusion more possible, as not only people who have the means to leave their jobs can join in.

⁷ By comparison, the intervention in Iraq is estimated to have cost 3 trillion dollars (Stiglitz and Bilmes 2010)

Although a lot of money was pledged, it was not just handed over to the Yemeni government to do what they wished with. By 8th of May 2014, Robertson reported that 65 percent of the pledged money had reached Yemen. The remaining 35 percent was held back by donators who felt unsure that the money would actually reach the Yemeni people in a constructive way (Robertson 2014).

Zakout told Yemen Times that the World Bank played an important role in mobilizing support for the Friends of Yemen conference in New York. Zakout said they would “name and shame” the countries that made pledges but did not deliver the money as promised. According to him, after a donor conference in 2006, only 25 percent of the promised money reached Yemen (Zakout 2012). Getting states to uphold their pledges was therefore a problem. This problem also connects back to the lack of technical capacities, as donors felt unsure that the money would be used constructively. As outlined above, if it is not used correctly, aid can do damage.

Zakout wanted to draw attention to two aspects of the Friends of Yemen conference in New York. The first is that it showed that the international community stands with the Yemeni people. The conference also secured an important element, The Mutual Accountability Framework, between the donors and the Yemeni government. This framework defines a process of economic reforms that the government of Yemen should implement over a period of 18 months. The international community then mutually agreed to deliver the money that was pledged during the conferences to Yemen. The World Bank was planning to work closely with the Yemeni government, civil society, and the private sector to deliver the pledges made during the Friends of Yemen conferences (Zakout 2012).

In December 2013, Yemen’s government officially established an Executive Bureau in order to manage to absorb the donor pledges. Such an institution had been requested by the Friends of Yemen since September 2012. This can be viewed as an effort to build capacities.

Economist Rasheed Al-Hadad said that the slow willingness to create economic reforms had left donors discontented with Yemen. “*The Executive Bureau will be operated by the Yemeni government with cooperation and oversight from the U.K., the World Bank and the European Union.*” (Abulohoom 2013).

Economic development

The international community contributed money towards the transitional period, but also got involved in more long-term economic development projects. A major economic hurdle was that Saleh had prioritized the oil revenues over all other revenues, and by 2011-2012 other

revenues barely existed (Anonymous C, interview). As we see, the resource curse was therefore a problem that needed to be overcome in Yemen's transitional period.

The World Bank warned that the transitional period in Yemen would not be successful if the international community did not support Yemen's economy (Al-Maqtari 2012). As mentioned in chapter 4, economic development is closely linked with strength of rule of law, level of corruption, property rights, and the quality of governance and institutions.

A proposed strategy from the World Bank for economic development was that they would provide immediate funds to create jobs. The lack of jobs was identified as one of Yemen's main economic challenges. They were also planning to work closely with the government to make sure the Yemeni government had the resources and capacity to undertake the economic reforms that were agreed upon with the mutual accountability framework (Zakout 2012).

The World Bank sought to provide support in three stages. The first stage was to restore services and create jobs. The second stage was to support health, education and infrastructure. The third stage would have been to build the capacity of the government (Zakout 2012). This would be in line with what is needed for economic development.

As mentioned, a strong private sector is needed for long-term economic development. Zakout viewed the solution to Yemen's unemployment issue to be a strong private sector, and he argues that the government should create policies that attract the private sector, such as favourable taxation, access to land, and ease of business registration. The World Bank did not have programs to support the small and medium sized private sector at the time of the interview on 22nd of October 2012. The Yemeni government had employed "tens of thousands" in 2011-2012. Which Zakout did not see as an appropriate measure to deal with unemployment (Zakout 2012). This shows that the Yemeni government and the World Bank did not agree on appropriate measures in 2012. This also shows that the Yemeni government was experiencing the problems aid can lead to. The increased revenue created more employment in the public sector, but did not aid the private sector.

Another problem was qat (Zakout 2012). Qat is a narcotic substance, farmed for consumption in Yemen. A report from 2007 found that 72 percent of Yemeni men, and 33 percent of Yemeni women use it regularly. The use of qat is problematic for its adverse health implications and because of the cost, it is linked to poverty. Qat therefore has an impact on economic development. Qat also creates a bigger issue, as it depletes water supplies and has an adverse effect on other crops. Making qat illegal has implications for rural economy, in

2007 it stood for 33 percent of agricultural GDP (Rouis 2014). Zakout viewed qat as the biggest problem Yemen was facing (Zakout 2012). Raising technical capacities, in this case in farming and public health, was essential for Yemen to overcome this economic and health related challenge.

In February 2012, the World Bank announced the start of three projects to support the transitional period in Yemen. *“The three projects will implement crisis recovery initiatives, install basic education infrastructure for children and improve roads and logistical infrastructure.”* (Haddash 2013). The World Bank therefore assisted with several economic development projects.

One of the long-term economic steps that was taken, was Yemen joining the World Trade Organization, WTO, on the 26th of June 2014 (World Trade Organization undated A). The goal of WTO towards developing economies is to build their trade capacities, and create a better standard of living (World Trade Organization undated B). The decision for Yemen to joining WTO was not without controversy. Sanaa University economics Professor Salah Al-Maqtar said that joining WTO was a bad move for Yemen. This was due to Yemen importing at a much higher rate than exporting (Al-Jubari 2013).

On 20th of May 2014, Yemen Times published the news story that the Yemeni government was reducing fuel subsidies in order to receive an IMF loan of 500 million dollars. In 2013, Yemen spent 30 percent of state income on fuel subsidies (Al-Badaji 2014). This was not a popular move in the Yemeni population (Reuters Staff 2014). Understandably, fuel is a very important commodity, and the removal of such a subsidy would leave people feeling doubtful or even resentful of what Yemen was trying to achieve in the transitional period. This shows the problems of creating good governance, as Hadi became unpopular by implementing changes that would have long-term benefit.

Ultimately, the economic development projects did not have the desired effect, *“And the economic crisis was chipping away at the credibility of the entire process.”* (Al-Sakkaf, interview). I think this is a major issue. As mentioned in chapter 4, economic development is very important, not only for the wellbeing of citizens, but it also makes a democratic state more viable. As we also saw in chapter 4, during the transitional period, the Fragile States Index measured economic decline in Yemen, and the efforts made seems to have had little effect.

Corruption

As we have seen in chapter 4, corruption is a hinder for good governance. Corruption was definitely an issue in Yemen prior to 2011, and was therefore definitely a problem that needed to be addressed. But did this improve in the transitional period?

In table 3. we can see the results of the Transparency International Corruption Perception Index from 2010 to 2014. In 2010 and 2011 the Corruption Perceptions Index, CPI, was on a scale from 0-10, where 0 indicating highly corrupt and 10 indicating very clean (Transparency International, 2010 A). From 2012, the CPI scale changed, and is now from 0-100, where 0 indicates highly corrupt and 100 indicates very clean. The rank refers to how the country is in relation to other countries in the index. To best understand how a state is fairing in terms of corruption one should look at the score (Transparency International 2021).

Table 3. Yemen-CPI ranking 2010-2014.

Year	Score	Rank
2010	2.2	154 out of 178
2011	2.1	164 out of 182
2012	23	156 out of 176
2013	18	167 out of 177
2014	19	161 out of 175

Data collected from Corruption Perception Index (Transparency International 2010 B; Transparency International 2011; Transparency International 2012; Transparency International 2013; Transparency International 2014).

As we can see in table 3. Transparency International did not see an improvement of corruption under the Hadi government. If anything, the situation actually got worse. Blumi stated that the Hadi government was excessively corrupt and incompetent, and that the living conditions for the Yemeni population had worsened during the Hadi government (Blumi 2018, 4). This led me to question Al-Sakkaf on whether Hadi during the transitional period was more corrupt than Saleh, which she refuted.

“Saleh created this system of dishonesty and divide and conquer, and ignorance. Yemeni [society] today are that product. Of 30 years of that strategy. The education system, the corruption of the state institutions, the extreme centralized services, the nepotism, all of this is Saleh’s fault. Hadi was just somebody who found an opportunity probably. What Hadi was dealing with in terms of wealth is nothing compared to what Saleh was handling, revenue

from oil and gas, anti-terrorism, projects and funding that came from the US, the UK and Europe.” (Al-Sakkaf, interview).

Corruption is also a major problem for the militarization of Yemen. The militarization is also due to the culture of Yemen, as described in chapter 2. However, as Packer sees it, this is also due to the fact that “[...] there was a lot of resources, money, [...] for boy soldiers. [...] It was a way of distributing wealth. There was big corruption issues around procurement, and you had interoperability between security services. They were run as small fives. It was all corrupt, because it was all done through meetings, and who you meet and who you knew.” (Packer, interview).

In order to combat this problem, the Yemeni government adopted an online application for the process of tendering for procurement. Packer told me that Hadi had been very pleased with this newly created tendering process, which Packer described as fairly transparent. This tendering process would be auditable, and would be a radical change for the security of the state (Packer, interview).

The Yemeni Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation asked for UNOPS support for the assessment of the government’s public procurement system. When asked to evaluate the transparency and accountability, executive director of UNOPS, Jan Mattsson answered that a lot could be done, both to rise transparency and to rise the effectiveness of procurement (Mattsson and Guenther 2013).

We can therefore draw the conclusion that Mattsson was not entirely satisfied with his findings, and that the system of procurement was not as effective as one would wish. Mattsson further answered that UNOPS was providing supply chain management to assist in the effectiveness of procurement, and also for the system to be at level with international standards (Mattsson and Guenther 2013). This does at least show that the Yemeni government, together with the international community was actively working against corruption.

Yemen never had the opportunity to see if this online tendering process would actually result in radical change, so it is difficult to assess whether it would have been effective or not. It seems probable to me that to achieve more transparency, one would need incentives or direct consequences. Why would people agree to be audited if they could continue with their old system? And realistically, would the people in power want to dismantle the system? If they feel like their security is based on this system, at least in the short term it would be very

difficult to convince people that dismantling would be a good idea. To dismantle the system, a change in the security situation would also need to take place. As we can see from table 3. there is a lot of corruption in Yemen, and the transition to more transparency would probably need more time. It seems unlikely that an online tendering process would have been enough to stop the rampant corruption in Yemen. Perhaps with time, and added measures like prosecuting those who did not use the system, it might have worked.

Security

Another important challenge that needed to be resolved is Yemen's security situation. As already showed in chapter 2 and 4, it is widely accepted that a state needs to have control over its territory, and Yemen's security situation can be seen as a threat to the state, or at least create instability. This was one of the components that was supposed to be dealt with in the first stage of the transitional period as stipulated in GCC Implementation Mechanism. This stage should have been finished before the inauguration of a new president (Implementation mechanism 2011, 4). But the security situation was not resolved, neither before the NDC or after "*[...] the first part of the transition which was supposed to be six months did not succeed. There was not the security reform that was supposed to take place.*" (Packer, interview).

Benomar made it clear that he, and the UN was aware that parts of Yemen were controlled by armed groups:

"[...] the spread of arms will not be ended by a single law or happen in one or two months. Historically, Yemen [has] always been an armed society, and there have always been armed tribes operating outside the law. Transitioning to a civil state with a rule of law and equal citizenship will limit this." (Benomar 2013).

In an interview published the 1st of March 2012, Benomar stated that the Military Committee needs to put more pressure on actors to disarm militias. He does not mention any international support for the disarming of non-state actors in Yemen (Benomar 2012 A).

The general secretary of the Al-Haq Party, Hassan Zaid, did not believe that the demilitarization of non-state actors should be done. According to Zaid, the Republican Guard should hand over some of their weapons to the Houthis, as he feels this is the only group that is using weapons properly, to defend themselves (Zaid 2012). This statement is contradictory to what theory suggest is a good foundation to build a state on, unless Zaid was of the opinion that the Houthis should have the legitimate power in Yemen, and not the elected government.

Al-Emad agreed that the Houthis would have no right to bear arms in a potential future Yemen, if the rights of the Yemeni people were secured. He also states that this means that other armed factions need to be disarmed, and that the American drone strikes must stop (Al-Emad 2012). As shown in chapter 2, the US drones strikes killed civilians, and in my opinion, it is therefore not unreasonable to demand that they should be stopped.

If the statement made by Al-Emad was truthful, the Houthis did agree to the concept that the state is the only actor that can use legitimate force, and would then agree to disarm themselves. As weapons are so culturally important in Yemen, how could one reasonably expect people to stop bearing arms? Anonymous C believed that the security reform never would have happened. *“You have forces that are loyal to Ali Abdullah Saleh, and forces loyal to [General] Ali Mohsen, [who was] close to Islah. So that was security for both parts. Integrating them [would] diminish that security.”* (Anonymous C, interview).

I will return to the security situation from a different perspective and investigate some of the agendas the international community might have had for not pressing the issue in chapter 5.4.

Transitional justice

Transitional justice is not one straightforward process that can be easily applied to situations. The way forward to achieving transitional justice can be difficult, but it is nevertheless important for a nation to reconcile. Transitional justice refers to the way in which a society deals with vast systematic human rights abuses (International Center for Transitional Justice undated).

The carrying out of transitional justice can vary. It can be political, institutional and legal reforms, and mechanisms to establish the truth of what happened. To achieve transitional justice one can use both judicial and nonjudicial processes. These can be criminal prosecutions, both on national and international levels. It can also include economical compensation, but also memorialization or commemoration which acknowledges the human rights violations (International Center for Transitional Justice undated).

Transitional justice is an important step forward for any state or society that has experienced human rights abuse. In the case of Yemen, I would argue that there were several people who are responsible for human rights abuses.

“The human rights situation in Yemen deteriorated significantly in 2009. Yemen’s previous advances in the rule of law have been eroded by hundreds of arbitrary arrests and use of

lethal force against peaceful demonstrators as the central government responded to increasing political unrest in the south. A resurgence of conflict with Huthi rebels in the north saw both sides reportedly commit laws of war violations, and use child soldiers, and the government continued to deny humanitarian access to the displaced.” (Human Rights Watch 2010, 574).

Saleh himself, and the Saleh regime would be at the center of human rights abuses and arguably would be important to bring to justice. But the GCC, an international actor, granted Saleh immunity. This was a contested issue amongst the people I interviewed and in Yemen Times. This is not to say that people were of the opinion that Saleh had not created injustice, and morally done wrong. The argument is whether or not it was prudent to pursue transitional justice at that time, or at all. Meaning that other factors needed to be prioritized.

By allowing Saleh immunity, we can assume that the GCC thought that measure to be appropriate. We can however find several instances of the UN not approving of such a measure. In January 2012, the United Nation Human Rights chief had declared that giving Saleh amnesty is a violation to Yemen’s international human rights obligation (Al-Harazi 2012 B). In September 2012, Benomar made the statement that *"The United Nations has not granted any immunity to any individual because this contradicts its principles, [...]"* (Benomar 2012 B). This may seem like an opening for Saleh to be punished by the United Nations. We can therefore assume that this topic divided the international actors.

I will not go into great detail on why Saleh was granted immunity, but one could assume it must have been a strong incentive for him to relinquish his presidency. Without immunity he might not ever have peacefully stepped down. *"[...] I don't even know what absolute immunity means technically, [...] you would normally say immunity from legal process. The deal was, we won't pursue you, step aside. Was that a bad deal? I don't know, what was the option of him not stepping aside?"* (Packer, interview). But how can you have justice when a central person responsible for the abysmal state of Yemen is given immunity? To address this, I asked the interviewees the following question: Could transitional justice reasonably be carried out when President Saleh was granted immunity? As already indicated, this was a contentious issue.

Augustin believed that it was not a good idea to give him immunity, and that was evident when he tried to regain his political position with the Houthis after the breakdown of the transitional period. She believed that it would have been better to have him removed to a

different country (Augustin, interview). Packer did tell me that arrangements had been made if Saleh did leave Yemen, but as Saleh never left Yemen it did not happen (Packer, interview). It seems like the UN did evaluate the Saleh situation, and not intervening was a deliberate decision.

Augustin also pointed out that Saleh is not only a person, but also a Saleh-GPC ideology where Saleh was seen as “[...] *the only one who was able to keep the country together.*” (Augustin, interview).

“When you have amnesty for a person, and you leave him in the country, with control over the resources and the army. [...], it’s not even a slap on the wrist. He was still in charge, and he was still very much there. And he was much more angry over the attempted assassination⁸. The writing was on the wall. I don’t know why these experts, who has seen South Africa, or Rwanda couldn’t see that, if you leave somebody with so much power and anger inside as a stakeholder without consequences. Of course, it’s all going to fall apart.” (Al-Sakkaf, interview).

Packer argued that people have in several cases of injustice been willing to move on, if they felt like their children got a better deal, got to live in a better society. People do not need justice, *“What people need is safety, security, resources to live.”* (Packer, interview). This might seem harsh. On a personal level you might feel entitled to justice, and that the perpetrators against you should be punished. What the state needs, and what the general people in a society needs, are different than what individuals might need.

“Justice takes time. [...]. so the idea that we are going to stop everything happening while 5 million are not even fed. [...] to what? Have a trial of some kind? Doesn’t make any sense. I think its way overstated.” (Packer, interview). How could Yemen or the international community have brought Saleh to justice without more bloodshed? And would that not have created even more injustice? Packer pointed out that when Saleh finally got killed⁹, that did not help the southerners gain justice (Packer, interview).

As mentioned, Packer is an expert on international conflict resolution, and has experience in over fifty peace processes, his opinion on this topic therefore carries great weight in my opinion.

⁸ On the 3rd of June 2011, Saleh was attempted assassinated (Day 2012, 287).

⁹ Saleh was killed on the 4th of December 2017 (Al-Jazeera 2017).

Anonymous C believed that transitional justice should take place later, and referenced the model in Cambodia ¹⁰ (Anonymous C, interview).

“Transitional justice at the beginning of a process would just disintegrate the whole thing. In the beginning you want a reduction of hostilities, you want some respite, you want people to start believing in their future.” (Anonymous C, interview).

According to Al-Moshki and Scott, one major flaw of the GCC Initiative, was that the wording was flawed, and left much up to interpretation. The GCC Initiative made it very difficult for protesters that were injured or killed during the 2011 uprising to seek justice (Al-Moshki and Scott 2014).

In hindsight we could argue whether it would have been wiser to implement transitional justice, and by that resolving some of the greatest grievances of the Yemeni people, before starting the NDC. However, transitional justice needs time. Benomar believed that through the NDC, transitional justice issues could be resolved. He also stated that the NDC was designed so the Yemeni population could figure out how they wanted to achieve transitional justice (Benomar 2012 A).

As mentioned, transitional justice is more than the carrying out of punitive justice. One way transitional justice was carried out was the establishment of the Southern Victims Fund. UNOPS was asked to administer the fund to compensate southerners who lost their jobs and land after the 1994 civil war. Qatar reportedly donated 350 million dollars to this fund. This fund was an important step in trying to ease the tensions between the old North and South-Yemen. Of the 350 million dollars, 150 million dollars were paid straight after pledging (Mattsson and Guenther 2013). This fund was an important step towards transitional justice.

Another way transitional justice was carried out was that the United Nations Development Program, UNDP, supported a project to raise awareness in Yemen about what transitional justice law is. This project was according to Dr. Mohammed Al-Mikhlaifi, Minister of Legal Affairs, needed due to the lack of awareness of what transitional justice law is. People cannot demand transitional justice if they do not know what it is, or what they realistically could expect. The project was a cooperation between the Yemen ministry of legal affairs and the

¹⁰ In 2003, Cambodia and the UN signed an agreement to establish the Khmer Rouge Tribunal. It was meant to provide justice for the millions of people who suffered during the Khmer regime from 1975-1979 (Piñeros 2023).

UN. Al-Mikhlaifi tells us little about what the international community was doing to support transitional justice, but the program that was introduced tells us at least that the UN viewed transitional justice as important (Al-Mikhlaifi 2013).

In June 2014, the Regional Conference on Transitional Justice was held. This conference was held to discuss the Transitional Justice Law and its implementation. It was held in collaboration with UNDP, and UN Human Rights Agency, OHCHR (Al-Junaid 2014).

“Topics that were addressed include the outcomes of the National Dialogue Conference (NDC) and their relationship with immunity laws, transitional justice, democratic transition, and the role of international actors and civil society.” (Al-Junaid 2014).

In an editorial in Yemen Times, Al-Sakkaf warned about the lack of progress in transitional justice: *“[...] I want the world to know—especially a group of donor countries known as the Friends of Yemen—that matters are not progressing in the Transitional Justice Working Group’s report because the GPC is not committed to its word.”* (Al-Sakkaf, Nadia 2013 C). The steps that were taken in terms of transitional justice therefore did not have the desired effect as people were not held accountable. Al-Sakkaf viewed the lack of accountability as a major problem of the whole NDC and transitional period (Al-Sakkaf, interview).

Chapter 5.3: Contested topics

I will now look at some of the contested issues that has become evident in my research. As mentioned, these topics were both continuously mentioned in other studies or Yemen Times. The contested topics I have investigated further are the timeframe, UN resolutions and inclusion.

Timeframe of the transitional period and the NDC.

The timeframe of the transitional period was first decided in the GCC Implementation Mechanism but was extended several times. In an interview with Yemen Times, Benomar said that the security council was concerned by the short timeframe set for the process (Benomar 2013). As mentioned in chapter 4, it would not be theoretically impossible for the timeframe to be renegotiated.

In an interview published May 2014 with Yemeni Minister of Foreign Affairs, Abu Bakr Al-Qirbi, he told Yemen Times that the transitional program had failed. The priorities that were made in 2012, needed to be changed to handle the 2014 situation in Yemen. *“We must lay down the foundation for economic reforms and use the pledged money by donors to support*

the state's budget, ease livelihood burdens on the citizens, and improve their living conditions." (Al-Qirbi 2014). The needed economic reforms were still not established in 2014, meaning that the government had not successfully resolved the problems of the economic crisis in the timeframe. As we have already seen, the World Bank made it clear that this must be a priority for the Yemeni government. Al-Qirbi believed that the government had been busy with politics, not with economy and security. He also said that the planned program for the transitional period 2012-2014 had failed due to the governments lack of effort. He did however also say that the Yemeni people were partly to blame, they seemed uninterested, and was being unproductive (Al-Qirbi 2014). Based on these statements, we should consider the proposed timeframe of the NDC. Was the timeframe too short?

Robertson stated that the Friends of Yemen would hold Yemen to its transitional timeframe. He also stated that *"I think that everyone in Yemen should take enormous confidence from the fact that the international community is still so interested and engaged [...]"* (Robertson 2014).

As the timeframe was already quite optimistic, it might seem counterproductive to push Yemen to hold on to the timeframe. The most important step would surely have been to reach a consensus. Robertson statements seems strange when al-Qirbi had already admitted that the transitional timeframe had failed. This as therefore one of the topics I wanted to investigate further through my interviews.

Packer believed that the NDC timeframe had been reasonable. *"You need enough time for enough things to happen. [...] yet not so long that it drags on and you lose confidence. So, it's a judgment call, and it's difficult"* (Packer, interview). Ross also did not believe the timeframe was a problem. Further extensions *"[...] would have been even worse."* (Ross, interview).

Augustin did not think a longer NDC would have changed anything. The problem was not the timeframe, it was the lack of inclusion of certain topics, especially the inability for the south to discuss their independence (Augustin, interview).

Packer also pointed out that it was not the NDC that fell apart, it was the period immediately after (Packer, interview). Anonymous C thought that perhaps an extension of the committee to decide the regions could have been helpful. However, it would have only delayed the conflict for a short time (Anonymous C, interview).

Al-Sakkaf believed that the Saada group, and the Southern Movement group did need more time. The other groups, besides a few issues regarding transitional justice were finished and agreed upon. She also believed that the issue of federalism was rushed. *“We had agreed that it would be a federal state. How many regions, that was cooked up in matter of weeks. And it should not have been the case. It was the trigger that, you know, brought everything down. It shouldn't have been that way.”* (Al-Sakkaf, interview). Al-Sakkaf believed that it would have been more prudent to wait with the divisions of regions. Yemen should have created an interim constitution, and then later on decide on federalism (Al-Sakkaf, interview).

However, Al-Sakkaf did not believe this was the only issue. *“[...] we were going around in circles, because we would agree on something, next day it would be changed or different, or something would happen on the ground. It was not a conducive environment for creating agreements.”* (Al-Sakkaf, interview). We can therefore see that Anonymous C and Al-Sakkaf also views the issue of federalism as a catalyst, but that it was not the sole issue.

Based on these statements, we therefore cannot say that the NDC and the transitional period ended in a civil war simply because they ran out of time, nor only because of the federal divisions.

UN resolutions

The UN passed three resolutions that are of interest when studying the transitional period in Yemen. These are *Resolution 2014* passed in 2011, *Resolution 2051* passed in 2012, and *Resolution 2140* passed in 2014. Resolution 2014, *“[...] was the resolution endorsing the GCC Initiative for a peaceful transition of power.”* (Security council report, undated).

Resolution 2051 *“[...] focused on the second phase of the transition and expressed the Council's readiness to consider further measures, including under Article 41 of the Charter.”* (Security council report, undated). Resolution 2140 *“[...] expressed the Council's strong support for the next steps of the political transition and established sanctions against those threatening the peace, security or stability of Yemen.”* (Security council report, undated). We can therefore see that the UN used resolutions actively to support Yemen.

The resolution that seems to have gotten most interest is Resolution 2140, and I therefore decided to focus on it. The use of sanctions can be understood as an exercise of hard power. Why was such a resolution necessary?

In a news article published on the 28th of January 2013, Sultan Al-Sami, the Secretary General for the Nasserite Party and also Chair of the JMP, demanded that the security council took

action against former President Saleh to stop him derailing the transitional process and leading the country into war (Yemen Times Staff 2013 B). This took place before Resolution 2140 was decided by the Security Council. As a representative of the Nasserite party and Chair of the JMP, Al-Sami welcomed international help in stopping Saleh's continued involvement with Yemeni politics.

In an interview, published on the 4th of February 2013, Benomar told Yemen Times that the Security Council saw a positive progress in the situation in Yemen, but that there were also problems that still needed to be resolved. Benomar said that the Security Council recognised real attempts to hinder the transitional process and resolution 2051 (Benomar 2013). The UN was already in February 2013 conscious about actors trying to hinder the transitional process, and it is difficult to understand why actions were not taken sooner. This shows that there were attempts to hinder the transitional period in Yemen, and shows that these issues were evident before the announcement of federal divisions.

All of the people I interviewed believed that Saleh's continued involvement in Yemeni politics were a hinder for the transitional period and NDC. Al-Sakkaf believed it was the main reason that hindered the transitional period (Al-Sakkaf, interview). When Saleh stepped down as president, the GPC fractioned into those who were still loyal to him, and those who were against him. *"[...] his spectre was ever present. Off what he could do, of what he had done, who he knew."* (Packer, interview).

"You have [...] multiple actors that can contest for the central power. Getting them to sign on to a moderate consensus arrangement is really difficult. Especially when they don't have the model for what that would look like, and especially if they are willing to steamrole each other to try and grab for power. It would have been really challenging to go through that period in a completely peaceful way." (Ross, interview).

Not only was he still powerful, but he was also popular. *"Ali Abdulla Saleh is a war ship itself. He was super corrupt, but people, especially in Sanaa and some other major cities, people worshipped him."* (Anonymous C, interview). Anonymous C believed that Saleh and the GPC was in competition with Islah over resources. Saleh was such a strong institution, and Anonymous C believed that even if Saleh had wanted to step away, he would not have been allowed to. *"If it [Saleh] shuts down, a lot of things around him shuts down."* (Anonymous C, interview). It is therefore very clear that Saleh's continued involvement in

Yemeni politics was a huge problem for the transitional period and the NDC. Resolution 2140 was necessary to try and stop Saleh's involvement.

Although Saleh's continued presence was a problem and a persuasive argument for having him arrested, Packer believed that his influence was diminishing. The influence Saleh had over Yemeni politics was diminishing, and he was becoming largely isolated by losing supporters. He was able to regain influence in spring 2014, before that his power had been dwindling (Packer, interview). If the international community saw Saleh's power over Yemeni politics weakened, that would explain their decision to let him carry on.

"Yemen asked for international assistance." (Packer, interview), and one way the international community could practically provide this assistance was through passing security resolutions. A lot of people were asking for the sanctioning of Saleh, and people were willing to have targeted sanctions in place (Packer, interview).

Security Resolution 2140 was, according to Ali Abulohoom controversial in Yemen. We will see that it divided the Yemeni parties during the transitional period. Both the Houthis and the Southern Movement criticized the resolution, as they felt it interfered with Yemen's internal affairs. The GPC initially also criticised the resolution, but changed their position and decided to accept it in order not to be accused of hindering Yemen's political process (Abulohoom 2014). Before they changed their position, Yemen Times reported that the GPC launched a media campaign against the resolution. Saleh was also negative to the resolution, believing it to remove the authority of Yemeni officials (Al-Moshki 2014).

According to Abulohoom, the GPC decided to accept the resolution in order not to be accused of breaking it (Abulohoom 2014). It seems unreasonable that to criticise or to reject the resolution might activate the resolution against you. It might also have put doubts in the Yemeni people, making them fear a military intervention like the one in Iraq, which might again have made more Yemeni doubtful of the international community's intentions. The threat of sanctions can be seen as applying hard power.

International law expert Abdularzaq Al-Baghdadi told Yemen Times that he believed the Security Council had authority to use sanctions against those who tried to hinder the transitional process due to Yemen being *"[...] governed by the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)-brokered power transfer deal [...]"* (Saeed 2014). In the Implementation Mechanism, it says *"Take any other measures to reduce the risk of armed confrontation in Yemen."* (Implementation Mechanism, 2011, 6). By signing the Implementation Mechanism, Yemen

had asked for assistance from the international community, and one of the provisions of the mechanism was that any measure could be used.

According to Ali Ibrahim Al-Moshki, leading Islah member Abu Bakr Mohammed viewed the resolution as a means to deter any hindering of the transitional period. He also viewed it as a means for the Yemeni people to have the money back from the looting done by the Saleh regime. According to Al-Moshki, NDC youth representative Nadia Abdulla accepted the resolution as she believed there was no other way to obstruct those who sought to hinder the transitional period. According to Al-Moshki, Tawakkul Karman, the 2011 Nobel Peace Prize winner, viewed the resolution as positive, showing how important Yemen is to the international community (Al-Moshki 2014).

GPC member Mohammed Yahia stated to Yemen times that he believed that the resolution was an opening for military intervention in Yemen. Abdulla Ali Ahmed, an Islah Party parliament member, also viewed the acceptance of the resolution as the acceptance of foreign intervention in Yemen. Ali Al-Bukhaiti, a spokesperson of the Houthis at the NDC, believed that the resolution would result in an occupied Yemen without sovereignty. He believed it gave the Security Council authorization to military intervene in Yemen without any further justification (Abulohoom 2014). According to Al-Moshki, Al-Mikhlaifi, who as already mentioned was the Yemeni Minister of Legal Affairs, did not believe that the resolution infringed on Yemen's sovereignty (Al-Moshki 2014).

As we can see, Resolution 2140 was not only controversial, but also divided the Yemeni parties on a fundamental question on whether this infringed on a fundamental part of statehood, its sovereignty.

The people I interviewed, felt the controversy around resolution 2140 was greatly exaggerated. My interviews suggest that resolution 2140 did not have the impact in Yemeni politics that statements put forward in Yemen Times suggest. Augustin told me that *“People were not really interested in a UN resolution [...]”* (Augustin, interview).

When resolution 2140 was passed in 2014, the security situation was already dire in the south, and the UN resolution did not make people believe that anything would change (Augustin, interview).

“Because of the rumours that Yemen was now under the chapter VII¹¹ [people were scared], but soon enough we had bigger fish to fry. We started to get worried, but it wasn’t because of the resolution at all. After some time, we realised it’s [resolution 2140] not even serious.” (Al-Sakkaf, interview).

Anonymous C did not believe the resolution was harmful. At first the resolution had created some excitement about having money stolen by Saleh returned. *“It depends on who you are asking. It was an empty threat really. [...]. Everybody knew that a military invasion would not happen.”* (Anonymous C, interview).

Packer pointed out that foreign military intervention was already happening in Yemen *“[...] through drones, always on the request or with the explicit approval of the state.”* (Packer, interview). However, a further military intervention was not likely in his opinion (Packer, interview). As military interventions had gone so badly before, I agree with Packer on this point.

The geopolitical situation also needed to be understood when talking about resolution 2140. In Saudi Arabia, there had recently been a change of power, and you also had the nuclear deal with Iran (Packer, interview).

“[...] every day that you don’t make progress that’s an additional risk of it falling apart. I think unfortunately that’s what happened. Both domestically and geopolitical. The resolution was reflective of that, not surprising, and I don’t believe the resolution precipitated. I think the resolution reflected the facts and was aiming at helping. But it probably came too late.” (Packer, interview).

It seems that the general population did not care so much about the resolution, and perhaps politicians, fearing economic sanctions were vocalising fear that was not realistic in order to create opposition against the resolution. Anonymous C believes that resolution 2140 *“[...] alienated the GPC.”* (Anonymous C, interview). As they had protested, and only accepted the resolution in order not to break it, it seems very likely that resolution 2140 did alienate the GPC. It seems likely that those who had something to fear was the once who was vocal against the resolution, fearing sanctions against themselves. An example of that would be

¹¹ Chapter VII refers to: United Nations Charter, Chapter VII: Action with Respect to Threats to the Peace, Breaches of the Peace, and Acts of Aggression. This charter lays out the steps the security council can take to restore international peace and security. These steps can include the use of force (United Nations 1945).

Saleh. It does not seem like it was particularly harmful in terms of making the general Yemeni population fear a military invasion.

Al-Sakkaf believed that the transitional period had failed because there had been no accountability. *“The guaranties, the code of conduct, the consequences were not set. And it was taken as just a passing time for political issues, [...]”* (Al-Sakkaf, interview). It seems like resolution 2140 was a way of trying to rectify this problem, but as Packer points out, it probably came too late.

“The international community at that time, including the UN, wasn’t strict on naming culprits or people who would violate agreements.” (Al-Sakkaf, interview). The resolution did not name any culprits besides Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (Resolution 2140 2014, 1). It did however say: *“Recognizing that the transition process requires turning the page from the presidency of Ali Abdullah Saleh, [...]”* (Resolution 2140 2014, 2). The resolution did establish a Sanctions Committee, which then again would name culprits (Resolution 2140 2014, 6).

As far as I could ascertain, the Sanctions Committee did not name any specific persons until the 7th of November 2014, when they created sanctions against Saleh, Houthi military commander Abd al-Khaliq al-Houthi, and Houthi second in command Abdullah Yahya al Hakim (United Nations 2014). By November 2014, it was arguably too late, but it does show the UN willingness to take action. This lack of action shows perhaps that the Houthis and Saleh was not viewed as a major threat in 2011-2014. This again shows the importance of doing historical research on this topic. Today, it seems unfathomable that specific steps were not taken towards disarming Saleh and the Houthis. However, it seems that in 2011-2014 this was less obvious. Again, it is easy to criticise decisions that we know lead to disastrous outcomes, but it is not as obvious that the international community should have known better. As already shown however, Saleh was a major spoiler of the transitional period and the NDC, but according to the information from my interviews his power was diminishing. It seems likely that the international community was satisfied with a gradual diminishing, and did not see a need for harder intervention.

Al-Sakkaf argued that Yemeni had a lot of respect for the UN (Al-Sakkaf, interview). If that is the case, a stricter regime of holding people accountable would have been productive. I do however believe that the process would have to be careful, people should not be punished for disagreeing. However, if there were cases of people actively working against the process, then

that needed to be stopped. Al-Sakkaf also points out that there was no code of conduct, and I think that would have been very useful, to set expectations beforehand. I therefore assume that the work of the Order and Standards Committee was not successful. If people knew they would not be allowed to participate without serious intent, they might have handled themselves differently.

Inclusion

Inclusion is important for any democratic process. As mentioned, inclusion is also important for the success of national dialogues. The inclusion of all stakeholders in the NDC would make it more likely to succeed. According to Lackner, the international community were only successful in promoting the new power groups, women, youths and civil society, in the NDC. In other parts of the transitional period these groups were merely symbolically represented (Lackner 2021, 150-152).

As I have mentioned, Benomar made the allocations for the number of delegates from the groups mentioned in the GCC Implementation Mechanism. Including all of the different parts and stakeholders in the NDC was not an easy challenge. There were many, and they all wanted as many delegates as possible. Packer stated that the Nasserite Party claimed to be stronger than they actually were, and also the Socialist Party demanded that their representation should not be smaller than the Houthis (Packer, interview). How did the international actors influence inclusion? And how did different Yemeni actors feel about their representation?

Packer told me that the suggestion of delegates to the NDC had been 1000 delegates. But due to budget and security this was cut in half, to 565. Interestingly, Packer also noted that Benomar had only proposed the number of delegates after being asked his opinion from the Yemeni actors. Benomar also only agreed to make a proposal after seeing that the Yemeni actors could not reach an agreement between themselves (Packer, interview). Benomar also put two conditions on sharing his opinion on this,

“One is, you understand this is not a perfect thing. This is my appreciation of what I think will both representatively, fairly, accurately, reflect relative standings. And two, I am only going to share this appreciation, what I think it is, if you agree in advance that you will respect it.”
(Packer, interview).

“Hadi [...] did not want more than a 100 [delegates]. He thought we could do the whole thing with a 100 people, [...]. Others wanted 1000s, there was proposals of 10 000. I was asked, in

one of the preparatory meetings, what is the ideal number? I said, your ideal number is 27 million, it is every citizen.” (Packer, interview).

This shows that the international community pushed Yemeni actors towards a more representative solution. I also think it reflects that Packer, as an international actor in this process, was conscious that the ideal situation would be one person, one vote, and shows the real effort in building an actual democracy. Packer also brought up some of the challenges of inclusion. How does one include the whole population when a significant number of the population is illiterate? (Packer, interview). In 2004, the World Bank measured the literacy rate to be at 54 percent, meaning that only 54 percent of the Yemeni population over the age of 15 could read and write a simple statement (the World Bank 2004). Although this data is from 2004, it is likely that it is still relevant for the transitional period. There could be measures to overcome this. Instead of spreading information in print one could use radio or TV. However, both including every citizen in itself, and taking the time to spread the message to people who are illiterate would take a significant amount of time. So, although mass representation would be good for democracy, it would not be efficient enough for state building.

How did the different parties view inclusion? Zaid, said that even if the NDC was successful “[...] it would be on foundations that disqualify Yemenis from participating in their own decisions. He said this mentality is reflected in the distribution of representation percentages.” (Zaid 2012). As we know, Benomar was the person who distributed representation quotas, meaning that he had created a situation which in Zaid’s opinion was not representative of the Yemeni people. “*Jamal Benomar does not have a scale to weigh party popularity or membership in Yemen.*” (Zaid 2012). This statement suggests that Zaid and the Al-Haq party did not have full confidence in Benomar. Zaid indicates that groups close to Hadi and Benomar were given a higher percentage of representation in the NDC. According to him, the Technical Committee was concerned with pleasing Hadi and Benomar. Benomar was given too much deciding power, without having a clear picture of the situation in Yemen (Zaid 2012).

According to Ahmed Dawood, the JMP, the Popular Forces Union, Al-Haq Party and Ba’ath Party, all rejected the NDC representative allocations made by Benomar, and said that they would refuse to participate if they were not provided with a higher percentage. Already at this point, Benomar made it clear that the UN would consider sanctions against those who hindered the transitional process (Dawood 2012). As shown in chapter 2, these parties did in

the end choose to participate. Their initial refusal does show that not all parties were satisfied with their levels of inclusion.

Although the representatives of the Southern Movement in the end did participate in the conference, they were not representative for the whole Southern Movement. Augustin made it clear that parts the Southern Movement did not choose to participate due to “[...] *there was no option to discuss if the south could be an independent state again, or if there could be a referendum.*” (Augustin, interview). Those who did choose to participate in the NDC as representatives of the south was seen as corrupt by other southerners. “*Those who are very clear about the independence of the south didn’t take part, like Ali Salem al-Beidh [and] Hassan Al-Ba’aum.*” (Augustin, interview).

Al-Sakkaf told me that the opportunity to have the south become an independent state was on the table. However, the NDC decided that after five years of federalism, there would be a referendum. The matter of southern secession would be settled after five years (Al-Sakkaf, interview).

“The problem of that [southern] border is that people are not the same anymore. So even Hadramout, Shabwah or other regions in the south were not [the same as they once were]. The south is not one thing, it’s not homogeneous. So, when you say you want secession, who decided the secession? What kind of referendum? How can you guarantee that this is the popular will of all of the people living in this region? You cannot do that when you have war. You have to have some sort of stability. And then, when there is institutions, you can have a referendum and see what the people want. [...] the secessionist knew that not everybody was on the same page, and everybody wanted a piece of the cake. If we make it the people’s choice, it might [not] come the result that we want. So, this is why they wanted to push for independence. This is a fraction of the Southern Movement, not all of it. They wanted to push for it there and then, and they were not allowed [...]. A lot of the leaders of the south, who were calling for secession, were not even in Yemen. They were in Syria, and Egypt [...].” (Al-Sakkaf, interview).

This shows the difficulty in dealing with these problems. The questions put forward from Al-Sakkaf are reasonable, the state is not the same as it was in 1990 and 1994, and how can you guarantee that this is actually the will of the people?

Augustin believed that the international community had made the decision that the south would not be allowed to become independent. “[...] *international law, and also the*

international community really struggles to accept secessionist movements because it's like opening the Pandora box. You open the box, and you give them the right, and then many others also want the right to secede from the motherland [...]” (Augustin, interview).

This argument seems plausible. There are numerous parts or regions that wish to become independent states, Catalonia in Spain is an example which has a secessionist movement (Burgen and Jones 2022). However, as Augustin herself points out, Yemen has a history of being separated (Augustin, interview). Other countries have had secessions, I am therefore not entirely convinced that the international community would stop secession in south Yemen due to the implications it would have for other states.

Whether it is factually true or not that the south would never be allowed to become independent, and that the southerners who attended the NDC were corrupt, it seems probable that a large proportion of the southern population held these opinions. Greater inclusion might have been a better solution for the southern question, where the topic of separation would have been on the table as something one would have voted for. To have a referendum after 5 years might be sensible for many reasons. However, it would have been a strong gesture of goodwill to let the south have a referendum immediately after the NDC. It might also have brought more people to the table, and it might have created more participation of the general population in hope that the NDC could achieve something. Importantly, if it was the case that southern Yemen was not allowed to separate due to the implications this would have for other secessionist movements, allowing an earlier referendum on the topic would symbolise that inside Yemen, Yemenis are calling the shots. Augustin had herself talked to and been in many provinces in the south, Aden, Abyan, and Lahej, so although we do not have statistics to determine how many in the south wanted independence, her assessment was that the general population in the south favoured independence (Augustin, interview).

I think a likely reason why southern secession was not on the table in the NDC was the implications it would have for the border between north and south. Here, it is important to consider the reasons North- and South-Yemen united in the first place. If border wars were likely to happen, it would be better to stay united. Staying united is surely a more desirable outcome than war? It would also be easier for the international community to deal with a united Yemen than having to deal with two separate states.

The south is not the only group that was contentious in terms of inclusion. The selection of representatives from women, youths and civil society was equally challenging. As I

mentioned in chapter 2, the representatives from women, youth and civil society were supposed to be unpartisan. But how does one guarantee that? “[...] *Tawakkul Karman, who distinguished herself, leading on the streets and squares in the revolution. [...] she was insisting that she would only participate in the NDC as an independent woman. But she was very closely allied, and everybody knew it, with Islah.*” (Packer, interview).

“[...] *we ended up in a very unsatisfactory process for the selection of these individuals, independent women, youths and civil society.*” (Packer, interview). Some of the parties for example appointed their wives and daughters to fill the requirements for women representation. The definition of youth was also problematic. Who is a youth? It was decided that it would be defined as anyone under the age of 40 (Packer, interview). How do you prove that people are under 40? “[...] *there were some pretty old looking people who were identified as youth.*” (Packer, interview). However, Packer still saw the process as good enough. “*That’s really what you have to do in these circumstances. [...], we had three weeks. We tried to make sure there was representation from, geographically throughout the country, we had applications, 10 000 applicants.*” (Packer, interview).

The selection of women delegates has also been contested for other reasons. Abdullah Hamidaddin argues that the women who were selected was those who were recognisable to the international community. While others who had grass root support in their communities were left out (Hamidaddin 2021).

Anonymous C agreed with this statement, and told me that “*This is also a UN problem. [...]. [the UN] only talk to women who are recognisable, who can speak English, [...] not representatives of the demographic of the country, they are always almost older, the majority of the people in Yemen are youngsters. They talk about big things. Politics, transitional justice, and young people, and women, are more interested in [...] education, employment and opportunities.*” (Anonymous C, interview).

Anonymous C gave the example of education for girls in rural areas. In rural areas girls over grade six cannot longer safely walk to school. In a population where 70 percent of the population lives in rural areas this is obviously a huge problem, and leaves a large segment of the Yemeni population without access to basic education (Anonymous C, interview).

Al-Sakkaf disagreed with the statement that only women who were recognisable to the international community were included. She was part of the committee that selected women delegates. If you wanted to attend the NDC, you had to fill out an application. On the

application you were asked to state why you should be chosen to be a part of the NDC.

According to Al-Sakkaf, many women left it blank (Al-Sakkaf, interview).

“They were immediately disqualified [...] If you don’t have enough in you to fill out a form, [...] I don’t care how popular you are in the village. But you are [...] coming here to talk head-to-head with tribal leaders, or religious men, or politicians, or doctors. You need to hold your ground. We needed the best women we could afford. And these women represented the entire majority.” (Al-Sakkaf, interview).

“If there was somebody who didn’t get through it was because there was not enough space to have everybody, and you had to have the criteria. And we had channels for input. We had ambassadors of the National Dialogue go to different areas. There were town hall meetings, there was Facebook and web pages people would send their suggestions, and you could have reached out. [...] You needed people who knew what they were doing.” (Al-Sakkaf, interview).

In my opinion, there is no doubt that the education of girls was, and still is, important. But the technicalities of how to achieve this does not need to be talked about in the NDC. In the NDC one needed to talk about the big issues, and how to overcome decades of hostilities. There is no point in discussing how to secure education for girls, if there is no money for schools in general. It would need to be a priority off course, half the population cannot go uneducated. That would leave the state without people to fill important roles. But the most important thing is to secure that there is a state to begin with.

Another important takeout from Al-Sakkaf’s statement is that it shows how the NDC was engaging with public participation. It was possible for the Yemeni population to have an impact during the NDC. We see that this input was possible over the internet and in local meetings, which is essential as many would probably not afford to travel to Sanaa. As I mentioned in chapter 4, public engagement is an important feature of national dialogues.

Benomar made his stance on the inclusion of women clear.

“[...] his special assistant was always a woman. And he made it clear, to the Salafists or when he went to Saudi Arabia. If you got a problem with this, we are not meeting. This is us. We come with a non-discrimination element. So, he walked the talk himself. Which was important.” (Packer, interview).

It seems to me therefore that Benomar took the inclusion of women seriously.

When discussing inclusion in the NDC, it is also important to note that not all groups of people or causes in Yemen were represented. One example of this is that the Tehama region were excluded.

“The reluctance to address accumulated grievances and include the Tehama question as a national issue suggests that the central authorities cherry-picked grievances, depending on the nature and extent of the threats, rather than out of a true desire to bring about transitional justice and address the underlying concerns. This deepened the resentment and anger in the Tehama, which reached new heights during the war.” (Jalal 2021).

Anonymous C told me that Tehama was excluded from the NDC simply due to *“Racism towards Yemeni of African descent.”* (Anonymous C, interview). Another group of people, the Muhamasheen were only represented with one delegate. Muhamasheen is a minority in Yemen, who are victims of a form of caste-based discrimination (Minority Rights 2018).

“[...] who is heard by the international community, and who has the influence to be heard by the international community. [...] I think this is a problem of the peripheralization in Yemen itself. [...] And those who were heard, in the Yemeni context, where of course the elites. Mainly coming from Sanaa, or from Taiz.” (Augustin, interview).

As mentioned, Yemen’s regionalism has long been a source for conflict, and led to movements like the Houthis and the Southern Movement. Ross told me that it is no longer the case that you can *“[...] ignore the regions anymore.”* (Ross, interview). I think this statement is accurate, and especially true for Yemen.

In sum, I think it is fair to say that there were problems with inclusion. This is especially evident in the south. People did not feel represented, and thus lost confidence in the process. This is also evident when looking at Tehama. That does not mean that the NDC was not a good process. Even in established democracies it is almost impossible to make sure that absolutely everyone feels represented. I would also argue that inclusion is not a prerequisite for state building. That is not to say that inclusion is not desirable, only that many established democracies has been built on processes where there was lack of inclusion. Good governance and democracy demands some sort of inclusion, at least from the majority of the population, a strong state does not.

The lack of inclusion of the Tehama region deepened the anger, and following the Houthi takeover in 2014, they armed themselves (Jalal 2021). If a process like the NDC, or another

form of reconciliation talks in Yemen is ever to be successful at a later date, no groups or grievances should be ignored; No regions or regional grievances should be ignored.

Chapter 5.4: Perceptions and agendas of the international actors

In chapter 5.1 I looked at some of the initial reactions different actors had to the NDC and the transitional period. I will now look at how the international involvement was perceived further, and how this involvement was seen to have influenced the outcome of the NDC. I will especially focus on perceptions of the role of Benomar. The role of Benomar has already been discussed in the previous sub-chapters, but will be discussed in further detail here. In the last and final part of my analysis I look at agendas of the international community.

The international actor's involvement with the NDC and the transitional period

“As the National Dialogue Conference (NDC) drags on, political parties are intensifying criticisms of the international community's role in the nation's reconciliatory talks, which are slated to lead to a new constitution and national elections. The role of U.N. Special Envoy to Yemen Jamal Benomar has been the most contentious for some political parties.” (Bamadhaf, Al-Madabi and Abdulla 2013).

The 1st of October 2013, Yemen Times reported that the Southern Issue Working Group had suspended talks until Benomar came back to Yemen. The Southern Working Group denied that Benomar had any sway in the decision making in the group, but acted in a supervisory role. According to the Yemen Times, several Yemeni politicians, felt like this showed that Benomar was overstepping his role, and interfering in Yemeni affairs (Bamadhaf, Al-Madabi and Abdulla 2013).

Benomar, by the request of the Security Council and resolution 2051, updated the Security Council on the situation in Yemen every 60 days. According to Benomar the Security Council was very concerned with the situation in Yemen. Benomar told Yemen Times that he had three main priorities for Yemen. The first was to make the NDC a success. The second was to create a new Yemeni constitution. The third was to create general election based on the new constitution (Benomar 2013).

When arriving and departing Yemen during the transitional period, Benomar visited Saudi Arabia and Qatar, to consult with these countries on how to coordinate the efforts in Yemen (Benomar 2013). One might question whether it would be better to discuss Yemen with Yemeni representatives. Part of his role of course was to coordinate the efforts, but it would be better to do that with a Yemeni representative present, and I think it is fair to question if

this was part of the geopolitical landscape that Benomar had to manoeuvre in order for the transitional period to be successful.

Abdulwali Al-Madabi, the editor-in-chief of the GPC-sponsored Al-Methaq Newspaper, believed that Benomar was the only candidate who would have been widely accepted in Yemen, but after some initial success, he overstepped his role (Bamadhaf, Al-Madabi and Abdulla 2013).

“The Gulf Initiative and Dr. Abdullatif Al-Zayani, the Secretary General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), were supposed to carry out Benomar’s role but Benomar overstepped his boundaries. He also meddled in the president and prime minister’s duties. For example, the government said nothing about the war in Dammaj in Sa’ada [governorate] but Benomar intervened regarding this issue. He has also intervened in the procedures and major issues at the NDC. This doesn’t sit well with all Yemenis.” (Bamadhaf, Al-Madabi and Abdulla 2013).

Al-Madabi believed that it was not Benomar’s job to implement the GCC Implementation Mechanism. Al-Madabi felt like Benomar, was unrightfully meddling in the Political Isolation Law, and disintegrating the Yemeni army (Bamadhaf, Al-Madabi and Abdulla 2013). Nadia Abdulla suggested that the criticism of Benomar emerged in order for specific parties to get their way in the negotiations (Bamadhaf, Al-Madabi and Abdulla 2013). Al-Madabi as the editor-in-chief of Al-Methaq does potentially have ulterior motives.

Packer refuted that Benomar had overstepped his role in the NDC and the transitional period.

“As much as one had meetings and sought to persuade them in certain ways it was 100 percent always their decision. In fact, it later became very problematic, I tried to persuade Jamal Benomar to be a bit more forward leaning a couple of times. I mean, on the one hand it’s ironic because critics thought that Benomar was very influential, more than influential, that he was deciding things. Absolutely not. He refused to do that and he declined all the time.” (Packer, interview).

According to Packer, Benomar did not impose his ideas or opinions. They were, according to Packer, asked for.

“I think it was quite crucial that Jamal Benomar was chosen as a Special Adviser because he had some background there. [...] he had a combination of modernity, street credit, but also connection with authenticity [...] and by the way he is professionally very good at what he did

[...]” (Packer, interview). This shows that Packer believes that Benomar was an effective conveyer.

The Southern Movement appreciated the support Benomar provided. Khalid Bamadhaf, a representative of the Southern Movement, stated that they appreciated the efforts of Benomar based on the UN resolutions and the GCC Implementation Mechanism. They did however feel that the GCC countries should do more to assist Yemen. They also believed that the international community, represented by Benomar, did not fully comprehend the complexity of the situation in Yemen. They saw Benomar as too restricted by the GCC Implementation Mechanism, and that it did not offer him enough flexibility (Bamadhaf, Al-Madabi and Abdulla 2013). In other words: The Southern Movement did not think that Benomar’s lack of success necessarily was his own fault. They did also believe that the role of Benomar should have been carried out by Yemeni officials (Bamadhaf, Al-Madabi and Abdulla 2013).

“At that time, most of these UN envoys, they had highly questionable positions.” (Augustin, interview). Augustin did not believe this was just the UN envoys, but also ambassadors (Augustin, interview).

“I don’t think Yemen is the only country who has these problems. I guess. Probably the whole area, the whole Middle East, Africa, Asia, you find similar unequal structures. That western diplomats think they can structure the world as they did 100 years ago, when the world was colonized.” (Augustin, interview).

Augustin’s criticism was not directed specifically at Benomar, but the system of how other countries and organisations approached Yemen. Diplomats, NGOs, and consultants make a lot of money, and it is also a problem that they might not know the country they operate in (Augustin, interview). The individuals, diplomats, NGOs and consultants are therefore themselves stakeholders in this process, as they earn money by being involved.

The criticism that Benomar and the international community faced, led me to ask the people I interviewed the question: Do you think that the NDC was a Yemeni process? Or was it influenced/led by international actors, like Benomar, UN, or the Friends of Yemen?

Al-Sakkaf believed that it was a Yemeni idea, she herself had been *“[...] part of the initial committee that went around to call for various stakeholders to come together to a national dialogue.”* (Al-Sakkaf, interview).

Packer believed that the NDC was a Yemeni process, *“Was it influenced by the international actors? Absolutely. Was it led by them? No.”* (Packer, interview). The design was created by international actors, and they provided the economic and technical support that I have discussed above. The Yemeni delegates to the NDC also asked for advice on comparable legal practices elsewhere, for example on the topic of early marriage (Packer, interview).

“It was definitely influenced by international actors. I am not sure if Yemeni parties left to their own devices [...] would have come up with The National Dialogue Conference.” (Ross, interview). The NDC, and the design of the NDC was an external suggestion, but there was a lot of Yemeni leadership. Packer was part of designing the process (Packer, interview), and he of course was an international actor. Based on Packer’s and Al-Sakkaf’s statements however, it seems like they came up with suggestions and recommendations, but in the end, it was Yemeni who decided.

Augustin also views the NDC as a Yemeni process, but *“[...] it’s not as much a question, of [whether it is] national or international. I think it’s more a question of who is heard by the international community and who has the influence to be heard by the international community.”* (Augustin, interview). *“[...] there was a strong relation already between the international community and elites in Sanaa, even before 2011.”* (Augustin, interview).

“The NDC was basically dominated by two parts. The GPC, and Islah. And those played the international community to get their way.” (Anonymous C, interview). Anonymous C did not believe that the UN was very influential. What was more important was the Friends of Yemen, who according to anonymous C held weekly meetings (Anonymous C, interview).

“So it was, [...], a mutually beneficial situation for the international community and the parties driving the traditional power brokers in the country.” (Anonymous C, interview). The Yemeni parties would try to get support from the US, the UK, and Saudi Arabia to advance their own positions. *“The international community was influencing and [being] influenced”* (Anonymous C, interview).

Abdul-Moez Dabwan, a member of the Islah Party was asked to evaluate the international performance of international organisations, and answered:

“Unfortunately, the majority of the international organizations operating in Yemen want to spend their funds under [superficial causes]. These organizations come from their country

with resources under the name of consolidating transparency and good governance as well as supporting the media freedom [but they are hollow causes].” (Dabwan 2013).

Anonymous C believed that the transitional period and the NDC was set up as a process to reach a compromise between Islah and the GPC. For GPC or Islah to hold leverage in this situation, they would go to the different ambassadors and offer solutions for anti-terrorism (Anonymous C, interview).

It is difficult to ascertain whether this is true or not, that the international community were being influenced by the GPC and Islah. This seems to contradict some of the other topics discussed; for example, GPC was negative to Resolution 2140. It is however difficult to ignore these statements, and in the next chapter I therefore look deeper into some of the agendas the international community possibly had for getting involved in the transitional period in Yemen.

Agendas of the international community

What was the international actors’ agendas in getting involved with the transitional period in Yemen and the NDC? As we have seen, the international actors spent large sums of money in aiding the process. The strategic geographical importance of Yemen is an obvious agenda, but what other agendas might we find? I will now look into agendas both obvious, and perceived.

An obvious agenda is the international actors fear of the export of global terrorism. According to Al-Sakkaf, during a visit to Yemen in March 2012 by the British Member of Parliament, Alistair Burt, he said that Yemen’s main concern was security, especially concerning Al-Qaeda (Al-Sakkaf, Nadia 2012 C). Al-Qaeda was clearly a problem, but to identify it as a main concern, when there are so many vital issues, really shows how concerned the international actors were with the export of terrorism.

An ambassador had once told Packer that “[...] in the world no one cares about Yemen except for two things. One is the security of the Gulf of Aden and the hydrocarbons [that are transported through the Gulf of Aden and the Bab al-Mandab] [...]. For Europe is a huge percent. [...] So that has to be secure. And that’s a vital thing. And the second thing is transnational terrorism. The export of terrorism. I mean, people don’t really care what the terrorist do inside of Yemen, to Yemenis.” (Packer, interview).

Anonymous C believes the interest of the international community was divided between the West and the regional actors. The West was concerned about terrorism. The regional actors,

Saudi Arabia, and to a lesser extent the UAE and Oman, were interested in regional geopolitics, borders, access to waterways, control over the Bab al-Mandab, who the president is, and not least migration. Saudi Arabia was, and still, is concerned about the migration of people from Ethiopia through Yemen in order to reach Saudi Arabia (Anonymous C, interview).

According to political analyst Thabet Al-Ahmadi, in 2012, Yemen had turned into an area where international and regional actors cared more about their self-interest. Al-Ahmadi was of the opinion that Iran did not want to see the GCC Initiative and GCC Implementation Mechanism as successful, just out of spite for its enemies (Al-Ahmadi 2012).

According to Dabwan, Saudi Arabia did not want to see stability in Yemen, as this would weaken Saudi Arabia's position (Dabwan 2013). It seems strange that Saudi Arabia would not want stability in Yemen. War and instability can possibly have overflowing effects into neighbouring countries. It seems unlikely that Yemen could financially compete with Saudi Arabia, at least in the short term. Saudi Arabia has the second largest oil reserves in the world, which is a considerably larger portion than Yemen. Of the world's oil reserves, Yemen is ranked as the 27th biggest (The Global Economy.com 2021). As mentioned, Yemen has little else of natural resources. So then, how would Yemen's stability realistically weaken Saudi Arabia's position? I do believe however that it is possible, or even likely, that Saudi Arabia might have had interest that was not in line with the interest of Yemen.

Political analyst Ahmed Sinan was of the opinion that Qatar's pledge of 350 million dollars to the Southern Victims Fund was a method to decrease some of Saudi Arabia's influence in Yemen (Al-Hassani 2013). This indicates that geopolitical manoeuvring took place in Yemen in 2011-2014.

In an interview with Yemen times Al-Mutawakil said the United States did not think that Yemen could be stable without a democratic state, and that they would be willing to assist in reaching that goal. Stability does, according to Al-Mutawakil, not have to come at the price of democracy in Yemen. In his opinion, without an effective state with good governance and democracy, there will be no peaceful resolution for Yemen. The workings of the ministers of different sectors in Yemen will be meaningless without a functional state (Al-Mutawakil 2012). I find this statement interesting because, it shows that US self-interests in a stable Yemen included Yemen being a democratic state. As already mentioned, the US was very concerned that authoritarian regimes was a breeding ground for terrorism, and it therefore

stands to reason that a long-term strategic measure to fight terrorism would be, as the US policy reflected, to promote democracy.

In hindsight it is very easy to point out that the demilitarization or disarmament of groups should have been prioritized. Why was not demilitarization done? When discussing the security situation in Yemen during the transitional period, and why disarming the Houthis and other groups with military capacities was not a greater priority, an anonymous source told me:

“They needed the Houthis to rival the Muslim brotherhood. Which was rising in Yemen. They were worried about having, what happened in Tunisia [happen in Yemen]. They wanted Islah to be destroyed or at least made timid. So, they needed some other extremist group. They knew that this was a balancing act. It’s like with Taliban in Afghanistan¹². You need these powers to even out each other. You had to give them space to grow, so that the Houthis are able to [take down Islah]. It’s about priorities and miscalculations. It wasn’t important to them. I’m not blaming the international community, the US or whoever, because [...] Yemeni didn’t do it right. They [the international community] are taking care of their interest. Which is fair, they are not responsible for making Yemen a better place. But they did contribute to making it worse.” (Anonymous B, interview by author, 14.02.2023).

If this is true, I would argue it was a massive miscalculation. It does however explain why disarming the Houthis was not a greater priority. On the 25th of August 2014, Charles Schmitz published an article on the fall of Amran. The Houthi takeover of Amran destroyed forces loyal to General Ali Mohsen. By this time General Ali Mohsen and the al-Ahmar family were supporters of the Islah party. *“President Hadi appears to be allowing the al-Huthi advances to hurt the Islah Party as part of a major reshuffling of the political landscape in Yemen.”* (Schmitz 2014).

Anonymous C believed the Houthi takeover of Sanaa was a power play by Saleh. Once it became obvious that Islah and the GPC would not reach a compromise, GPC allowed them to enter Sanaa to kick Islah out. It came as a surprise that the Houthis were actually able to secure their position. It was a massive miscalculation by the GPC, and Saleh in order for him to hold onto his power (Anonymous C, interview).

It seems plausible that the Houthis were used, by the GPC, as a counterweight to Islah. I also find it plausible that the international community was concerned about the power Islah had

¹² The United States of America had initially supported Taliban as a counterpoint to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979 (Mackenzie 1999, 92-96; The Office of the Historian undated).

due to its connection with the Muslim brotherhood, and by extension Al-Zindani and Al-Qaeda. It therefore does not seem unlikely that the international community would want to diminish the power of Islah.

Whether the Houthi takeover was due to a miscalculation of the GPC to take out Islah, we can safely conclude that the lack of efforts to disarm all non-state actors was a massive miscalculation. It is difficult to say how this disarmament should have been done, or if it was even possible. As I mentioned in chapter 2, there was already a lot of weapons in Yemen before the civil war.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

At the start of writing this thesis one of my hypotheses was that the transitional period tried to do too much, that it would have been better to exclusively work on building a secure Yemeni state and then later focus on the other issues. This would be in line with the Huntington thesis and Sequentialist theories about democratisation. I think it has become evident in my thesis that this hypothesis is false. As Ross said, “[...] *you just can't build a strong state over everybody's heads and opposition.*” (Ross, interview). The issues are closely linked, and I therefore think resolving one without the others would not have been successful.

In my analysis I have identified several problems that were unsatisfactory addressed by the international community in the transitional period in Yemen and the NDC. I therefore think it is fair to say that we should avoid pointing at federalism as the single reason for the current war in Yemen. The issue of federalism should be understood in a greater historical context of regional grievances. That is not to say we can dismiss the hypothesis that the proposed federal structure led to the civil war as false, only that many major issues were also unresolved.

The answer to my first sub-research question *Why a national dialogue?* is that national dialogues were seen as a preferable model, part of the political imagination for both the international community and the Yemeni population.

To answer my second sub-question *What were the challenges faced during this period and what strategies were proposed by the international community to overcome them?* I looked at the challenges I deemed most important, technical capacities, state building and good democratic governance, economy, corruption, security and transitional justice.

I found that the work the international community did in terms of building technical capacities were positive. They set up seminars, courses and workshops to get Yemeni involved. The building of capacities is very essential, as the Yemeni people must be the once ultimately responsible for their own governance. It also seems like economic development was taken seriously, but the effort made did not change the situation. Technical capacities are also closely linked to economic development and good governance, and the strategies of building technical capacities is therefore aiding these challenges as well.

Transitional justice takes time, and although it is understandable that people wanted Saleh brought to punitive justice, I agree with Packer's assessment that this would not realistically

have helped people live a better life. Civil prosecution to get stolen money back would be useful. But this again begs the question, how could that have been done?

The major unresolved issues are the security situation, economy, and corruption. Still, I have found no answers on how this could have been done. It might have been useful if resolution 2140 had come sooner like some of the people I interviewed suggested. Demilitarization should have happened, but how? The steps that were taken to achieve more transparency seems inadequate and only symbolic.

To answer my third sub-research question *What were the contested topics and how were they perceived or negotiated?* I looked at the timeframe, UN resolutions and inclusion. The timeframe was appropriate, but expecting so many major issues to be completely resolved in a span of two years was probably unrealistic. We cannot say that the transitional period in Yemen ended in a civil war because the NDC ran out of time.

UN Resolution 2140 was especially contested. The resolution was necessary in order to hinder Saleh's involvement in Yemeni politics. Several Yemeni political parties were displeased by the resolution, but the people I interviewed suggested that this was hugely overstated. As suggested by my interviews, the UN Resolution 2140 was not damaging to the process, and would have been more effective if implemented earlier.

As I have already said, I think it is fair to say that there were problems with inclusion. In many ways, the NDC was inclusive, but it also failed to include the Southern Movement in a meaningful way and include marginalized groups. Although large parts of the Southern Movement chose not to participate, the NDC cannot be entirely blamed for this. There were problems with inclusion, but I think this problem would have been even worse without the actions of the international community. As Packer told me, Hadi only wanted 100 delegates in the NDC. According to Packer, the international community actually pushed for more inclusion and tried to divide the seats as fairly as possible to reflect relative standings. Benomar also negotiated with the Houthis and the Southern Movement for their participation, which I believe shows that they did care about these issues.

To answer my fourth sub-research question: *How was the international actor's involvement perceived and what were their respective agendas?* I investigated how different actors evaluated the international involvement, and how the involvement impacted the outcome of this period. I also looked at what agendas the sources in Yemen Times and the people I interviewed could identify.

When it comes to how the international actor's involvement were perceived, my findings match that of Elayah, van Kempen and Schulpen, in terms of criticism towards Benomar. The role of Benomar was hugely criticized, and contested. Some people believe that Benomar was crucial to the NDC process, and others believe he overstepped his role.

International actors do have their own agendas, but this is not unreasonable. The obvious agendas, access to Gulf of Aden and the Bab al-Mandab, anti-terrorism, and other regional interest do not necessarily constitute a problem, and might actually be helpful for Yemen to get more support. Agendas only become unreasonable when they damage the process. If it is true that the international actors tried to diminish the Islah party through the Houthis, this is totally unjustifiable. Not only because the Houthis are instigators of the civil war, but also because this would imply a major orchestration of Yemeni politics. Due to the West's fear of Islamism, it is not improbable.

It is also damaging if international agendas obstruct what Yemeni themselves want. It is impossible to measure the real popularity of the Islah party amongst the general population as there had not been any free and fair elections. If the international community actually wanted to create a democratic state, it was not up to them to try and diminish the Islah party. If the Islah party did not have popular support, they would not have gained power in a democratic state, given free and fair elections of course. As mentioned before, Al-Sakkaf wrote in 2012 that the international community had been engaging with youths outside the official dialogue. While that itself is not problematic, it was a problem that the official youth representatives felt ignored. Again, it should not have been up to the international community to choose who to work with.

As mentioned, Blumi argued that the international actors tried to delegitimize and side-line the Houthis during the transitional period. We know that Hadi side-lined the Houthis with the federal divisions, but it has not become evident to me that this was on the behest of the international community. I think it is important that Packer said that a lot of credit had to go to people like the Houthi representative Ahmad Sharafeddin. I think this shows that the international actors involved, at least not all of them, tried to delegitimize the Houthis.

It does not make sense to go through the NDC, and then propose a federal structure which would cause the whole process to fail. Hadi would not have proposed a structure that would have diminished the Houthis if he believed they had the capacity to take over Yemen. This does support the idea that the Houthis were a total miscalculation.

I find the accusation that the international community did not want to create real change problematic. If the international community did not want real change, could they not have rather supported Saleh in making peace with the Al-Ahmar family and General Ali Mohsen? They also could have let the situation in 2011 unfold without interference. Why would they have spent 8 billion dollars if they did not want to create change? That is not to say that it is impossible that some of the actors did not have “good” intentions.

Although this has been a gathering of perspectives and opinions, this has also been a fact-finding mission in order to make an evaluation of the international actors’ involvement in the transitional period in Yemen. It is my conclusion that it is not possible to establish absolute facts on this topic, and an evaluation will therefore be guided by our own understanding. There are so many actors involved, and we can never know what their true intentions were. Take for example the topic of inclusion of women, if it was true that the international community chose to include recognizable women, was this intentional? The same can be said for security agendas. If it was true that the Houthis and Islah were intentionally pitted against each other, I find it unlikely that anyone responsible would be willing to admit to it publicly.

On some topics, like inclusion, the evaluation is relatively easy. On other aspects, where I cannot find a better solution, like security, it is difficult to say what would have been a better alternative. The perspectives gathered in this thesis is not all perspectives, and to make a definite evaluation more information and informants are necessary.

The answer to my primary research question: *What role did international actors play in Yemen’s transitional period?* will hugely differ depending on who you ask. Some would say they played an essential advisory role; some would say they led the process. Some argue they did not do enough; others would argue that they overstepped.

I think that despite its flaws, the model of the NDC was good. Although not unique, it was a very different model than previous attempts of democracy promoting like Iraq. I think it shows that the international community had learnt its lessons, that force should not be used. However, the transitional period and the NDC was arguable a too soft approach. If the efforts in Iraq had been too hard, perhaps the effort in Yemen ultimately was too soft. As Al-Sakkaf says, there was no accountability. At the same time, we must consider the record of interference. Theory, as well as lessons learned, show that interference often leads to undesirable results.

What this process tells us, is that creating lasting peace, creating a new democracy, and fighting issues like corruption and transitional justice, building the economy and insuring inclusion is extremely difficult. There is no successful recipe, there is no roadmap to lead us to a successful outcome. It is therefore very difficult to evaluate the effort, for which standard should we hold the evaluation up to?

One major takeout we see in this process is that the NDC and transitional period tried to do a lot. There were so many topics and challenges that needed to be resolved. This again begs the question, what should have been done? The goal was peace, and the grievances many. Getting all stakeholders to agree is a monumental task, but as we know, the NDC produced hundreds of outcomes, and therefore had hundreds of points they could find consensus on. Another major takeout from my thesis is that this topic would benefit from more research. The topics that needed to be resolved in the NDC, and the transitional period, are just as important today as they were then.

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Appendix 1. Interview guide.

1. Why do you think the NDC was possible in Yemen? What aspects of that particular situation made the NDC possible.
2. Do you think that the NDC was a Yemeni process? Or was it influenced/led by international actors [like Benomar, UN, friends of Yemen]?
3. Do you think that the NDC was an effective way to carry out state building, creating good governance and democratisation?
4. Resolution 2140 made many Yemeni worried about a military invasion. Was resolution 2140 helpful or harmful to the NDC process?
5. It has been argued by some, that Yemen lacked technical capacities in dealing with governance/the problems discussed in NDC. Do you agree with this assessment?
6. In some of the material I have found, there has been talks about NDC needing further extensions, while some international actors [ex. Friends of Yemen] have not wanted to extend the timeline. Do you think it would have been useful to renegotiate the timeline?
7. Should a more experienced actor have handled the transitional agreement?
8. Could transitional justice reasonably be carried out when President Saleh was granted immunity?
9. Was Saleh's continued involvement in Yemeni politics a hinder for the transitional period and NDC?
10. Should the international actors have done anything different in their efforts in the NDC?

Appendix 2. Agreement on the Implementation Mechanism for the transitional process in accordance with the initiative of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)

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Translated from Arabic

In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate

Agreement on the implementation mechanism for the transition process in Yemen in

accordance with the initiative of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)

Contents:

Part I.	Introduction
Part II.	The transition period
Part III.	First phase of the transition
Part IV.	Second phase of the transfer of power
Part V.	Settlement of disputes
Part VI.	Concluding provisions
Annex:	Draft Presidential Decree

Part I. Introduction

1. The two parties recognize that
 - (a) As a result of the deadlock in the political transition, the political, economic, humanitarian and security situation has deteriorated with increasing rapidity and the Yemeni people have suffered great hardship;
 - (b) Our people, including youth, have legitimate aspirations for change; and
 - (c) This situation requires that all political leaders should fulfil their responsibilities towards the people by immediately engaging in a clear process for transition to good democratic governance in Yemen.
2. The two parties deeply appreciate the efforts of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and its Secretary-General, the United Nations Secretary General acting through his Special Adviser, the ambassadors of the five permanent members of the Security Council, and those of the GCC and the European Union, to support an agreement on the peaceful transfer of power. The two parties adopt this Mechanism on the basis of the GCC initiative and fully in accordance with United Nations Security Council resolution 2014 (2011).
3. The following definitions shall apply in relation to this Agreement:
 - (a) The term "GCC Initiative" refers to the GCC initiative to resolve the Yemeni crisis in the draft of 21 and 22 May 2011;
 - (b) The term "the Mechanism" refers to this Agreement on the implementation mechanism for the transition process in Yemen in accordance with the GCC Initiative;
 - (c) The term "the two parties" refers to the National Coalition (General People's Congress and its allies) as one party, and the National Council (Joint Meeting Parties their partners) as the other.
4. The GCC Initiative and the Mechanism shall supersede any current constitutional or legal arrangements. They may not be challenged before the institutions of the State.

Part II. The transition period

5. The two parties acknowledge that under Presidential Decree No. 24 of 2011, the President of Yemen irrevocably delegated to the Vice-President the presidential powers to negotiate, sign and bring into force this Mechanism, along with all constitutional powers pertaining to its implementation and follow-up. Those powers include calling for early elections and taking all of the decisions necessary to form a government of national unity, including swearing in its members, as well as establishing the other bodies set forth in this Mechanism.
6. The transition period shall enter into effect as follows:
 - (a) In accordance with United Nations Security Council resolution 2014 (2011), which notes the commitment by the President of Yemen to immediately sign the GCC Initiative and encourages him, or those authorized to act on his behalf, to do so, and to implement a political settlement based upon it, and in accordance with Presidential Decree No. 24 of

2011, the President or the Vice-President acting on his behalf shall sign the GCC Initiative concurrently with the signature of this Mechanism by the two parties.

- (b) Concurrently with the signing of this Mechanism, and acting under the powers delegated by the President in Presidential Decree No. 24 of 2011, the Vice-President shall issue a decree providing for early presidential elections to be held within 90 days of the entry into force of this Mechanism. In accordance with the relevant provisions of the Constitution, the decree shall enter into force 60 days before the elections. The draft text of the Decree is annexed to this Mechanism (Annex 1).
 - (c) This Mechanism shall enter into force when the President or Vice-President has signed the GCC Initiative, all parties have signed this Mechanism in accordance with this paragraph, and the decree referred to in subparagraph (b) above has been issued.
7. The transition period shall begin with the entry into force of this Mechanism. The transition period shall then consist of two phases:
- (a) The first phase shall begin with the entry into force of this Mechanism and end with the inauguration of the President following the early presidential elections;
 - (b) The second phase, which shall last for two years, shall begin with the inauguration of the President following the early presidential elections. It shall end with the holding of general elections in accordance with the new Constitution and the inauguration of the new President of the Republic.
8. During the first and second stages of the transition, decisions of Parliament shall be taken by consensus. If consensus on any given topic cannot be reached, the Speaker of Parliament shall refer the matter for decision by the Vice-President in the first phase, or the President in the second phase. That decision shall be binding for the two parties.
9. The two parties shall take the necessary steps to ensure that Parliament adopts the legislation and other laws necessary for the full implementation of commitments in respect of the guarantees set forth in the GCC Initiative and this Mechanism.

Part III. First phase of the transitional period

Formation of the government of national unity

10. Immediately on entry into force of the GCC Initiative and the Mechanism, the opposition shall nominate its candidate for the post of Prime Minister. The Vice-President shall issue a presidential decree requesting that person to form a government of national unity. The government of national unity shall be formed within 14 days of the issuance of the decree. A republican decree shall be issued to that effect and signed by the Vice-President and Prime Minister;
- (a) Each party shall account for 50 per cent of nominees for the government of national unity, and due consideration shall be given to the representation of women. With regard to the

distribution of portfolios, one of the two parties shall prepare two lists of ministries and transmit them to the other party, which shall have the right to choose one of the lists.

- (b) The Prime Minister-designate shall appoint the members of the government as proposed by the two parties. The Vice-President shall then issue a decree setting forth the agreed names of the cabinet members. Nominees shall have a high standard of accountability and commitment to human rights and international humanitarian law.

11. The members of the government shall take the constitutional oath before the Vice-President. Within ten days, the government of national unity shall submit its programme to Parliament for a vote of confidence within five days.

Functioning of the government of national unity

12. The government of national unity shall take its decisions by consensus. If there is no full consensus on any given matter, the Prime Minister shall consult with the Vice-President or, after the early presidential elections, the President, in order to reach consensus. If consensus between them is not possible, the Vice-President or, after the early presidential elections, the President, shall take the final decision.

13. Immediately after its formation, the government of national unity shall

- (a) Take the necessary steps, in consultation with the other relevant actors, to ensure the cessation of all forms of violence and violations of humanitarian law; end the confrontation of armed forces, armed formations, militias and other armed groups; ensure their return to barracks; ensure freedom of movement for all through the country; protect civilians; and take the other necessary measures to achieve peace and security and extend State control;
- (b) Facilitate and secure humanitarian access and delivery wherever it is needed;
- (c) Issue appropriate legal and administrative instructions for all branches of the State sector to comply immediately with standards of good governance, the rule of law and respect for human rights;
- (d) Issue specific legal and administrative instructions to the Office of the Public Prosecutor, the police, prisons and security forces to act in accordance with the law and international standards, and to release those unlawfully detained;
- (e) The government of national unity shall comply with all resolutions of the Security Council and Human Rights Council and with the relevant international norms and conventions.

Powers of the Vice-President and government of national unity

14. In implementing this Mechanism, the Vice-President shall exercise the following constitutional powers, in addition to those appertaining to his office:
- (1) Convening early presidential elections;
- (2) Exercising all functions of the President in respect of Parliament;

- (3) Announcing the formation of, and swearing in, the government of national unity in the first phase;
 - (4) All functions relating to the work of the Committee on Military Affairs for Achieving Security and Stability;
 - (5) Managing foreign affairs to the extent necessary for the implementation of this Mechanism;
 - (6) Issuing the decrees necessary for the implementation of this Mechanism.
15. In the first phase, the Vice-President and government of national unity shall exercise executive authority encompassing all matters pertaining to this Agreement, including the following, acting in conjunction with Parliament where appropriate:
- (a) Formulating and implementing an initial programme of economic stabilization and development and addressing the immediate needs of the population in all regions of Yemen;
 - (b) Coordinating relations with development donors;
 - (c) Ensuring that governmental functions, including local government, are fulfilled in an orderly manner in accordance with the principles of good governance, rule of law, human rights, transparency and accountability;
 - (d) Approving an interim budget, supervising the administration of all aspects of State finance and ensuring full transparency and accountability;
 - (e) Taking the necessary legislative and administrative steps to ensure that presidential elections are held within 90 days of the entry into force of this Mechanism;
 - (f) Establishing the following institutions as provided for by this Mechanism:
 - (1) Committee on Military Affairs for Achieving Security and Stability;
 - (2) Conference for National Dialogue.
 - (g) The government of national unity and the Vice-President shall immediately establish a liaison committee to engage effectively with youth movements from all parties in the squares and elsewhere in Yemen, to disseminate and explain the terms of this Agreement; initiate an open conversation about the future of the country, which will be continued through the comprehensive Conference for National Dialogue; and involve youth in determining the future of political life.

Committee on Military Affairs for Achieving Security and Stability

16. Within five days of the entry into force of the GCC Initiative and the Mechanism, the Vice-President in the first transitional phase shall establish and chair a Committee on Military Affairs for Achieving Security and Stability. The Committee shall work to
- (a) End the division in the armed forces and address its causes;

- (b) End all of the armed conflicts;
 - (c) Ensure that the armed forces and other armed formations return to their camps; end all armed presence in the capital Sana'a and other the cities; and remove militias and irregular armed groups from the capital and other cities;
 - (d) Remove road blocks, checkpoints and improvised fortifications in all governorates;
 - (e) Rehabilitate those who do not meet the conditions for service in the military and security forces;
 - (f) Take any other measures to reduce the risk of armed confrontation in Yemen.
17. During the two transitional phases, the Committee on Military Affairs for Achieving Security and Stability shall also work to create the necessary conditions and take the necessary steps to integrate the armed forces under unified, national and professional leadership in the context of the rule of law.

Early presidential elections

18. The early presidential elections shall be held in accordance with the following provisions^{*}:
- (a) The elections shall take place within 90 days of the signature of the GCC Initiative and the Mechanism;
 - (b) The early elections for the post of President shall be organized and supervised by the Higher Commission for Elections and Referendums using the current register of voters on an exceptional basis. Any citizen, male or female, who has attained the legal age for voting and can establish as much on the basis of an official document such as a birth certificate or national identity card, shall have the right to vote on the basis of that document;
 - (c) The sides commit not to nominate or endorse any candidate for the early presidential elections except for the consensus candidate Vice-President Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi;
 - (d) The Secretary-General of the United Nations is requested to provide and coordinate electoral assistance to help ensure the orderly and timely holding of elections.

Part IV. Second phase of the transfer of power

Functions and powers of the President and government of national unity

19. After the early Presidential elections, the newly elected President and the Government of national unity shall exercise all of their customary functions as set forth in the Constitution[†]. In addition, they shall exercise the powers necessary to continue the tasks specified for the

^{*} *Translator's note: this paragraph is mis-numbered 20 in the original Arabic text.*

[†] *Translator's note: this paragraph is mis-numbered 21 in the original Arabic text.*

implementation of the first phase, and additional tasks specified for the second phase of the transfer of power. The latter include

- (a) Ensuring that the Conference for National Dialogue is convened, and forming a preparatory committee for the Conference, as well as an Interpretation Committee and other bodies established pursuant to this Mechanism;
- (b) Establishing a process of constitutional reform that will address the structure of the State and the political system, and submitting the amended Constitution to the Yemeni people in a referendum;
- (c) Reforming the electoral system; and
- (d) Holding elections for Parliament and the Presidency in accordance with the new Constitution.

Conference for National Dialogue

20. With the beginning of the second transitional phase, the President-elect and the government of national unity shall convene a comprehensive Conference for National Dialogue for all forces and political actors, including youth, the Southern Movement, the Houthis, other political parties, civil society representatives and women[‡]. Women must be represented in all participating groups.

21. The Conference shall discuss the following issues[§]:

- (a) The process of drafting the Constitution, including the establishment of a Constitutional Drafting Commission and its membership;
- (b) Constitutional reform, addressing the structure of the State and political system, and submitting constitutional amendments to the Yemeni people through a referendum;
- (c) The dialogue shall address the issue of the South in a manner conducive to a just national solution that preserves the unity, stability and security of Yemen.
- (d) Examination of the various issues with a national dimension, including the causes of tension in Saada;
- (e) Taking steps towards building a comprehensive democratic system, including reform of the civil service, the judiciary and local governance;
- (f) Taking steps aimed at achieving national reconciliation and transitional justice, and measures to ensure that violations of human rights and humanitarian law do not occur in future;
- (g) The adoption of legal and other means to strengthen the protection and rights of vulnerable groups, including children, as well as the advancement of women;

[‡] *Translator's note: this paragraph is mis-numbered 18 in the original Arabic text.*

[§] *Translator's note: this paragraph is mis-numbered 19 in the original Arabic text.*

- (h) Contributing to determining the priorities of programmes for reconstruction and sustainable economic development in order to create job opportunities and better economic, social and cultural services for all.

Constitutional Commission

- 22. The government of national unity shall establish a Constitutional Commission immediately on the conclusion of the work of the Conference of National Dialogue within six months. The Commission shall prepare a new draft constitution within three months of the date of its establishment. It shall propose the necessary steps for the draft constitution to be discussed and submitted for referendum in order to ensure broad popular participation and transparency.

Organization of elections under the new Constitution

- 23. Within three months of the adoption of the new Constitution, Parliament shall enact a law convening national parliamentary elections and, if provided for by the Constitution, presidential elections. The Higher Commission for Elections and Referendums shall be reconstituted and the new register of voters re-compiled in accordance with the new Constitution. That law will be subject to subsequent review by the newly elected Parliament.
- 24. The term of the President elected under paragraph 7 of this Mechanism shall end upon the inauguration of the President elected under the new Constitution.

Part V. Settlement of disputes

- 25. Within 15 days of the entry into force of the GCC Initiative and the Mechanism, the Vice-President and the Prime Minister of the government of national unity shall form an Interpretation Committee to which the two parties shall refer in order to resolve any dispute regarding the interpretation of the GCC Initiative or the Mechanism.

Part VI. Concluding provisions

- 26. Women shall appropriately represented in all of the institutions referred to in this Mechanism.
- 27. The Government shall provide adequate funding for the institutions and activities established by this Mechanism.
- 28. In order to ensure the effective implementation of this Mechanism, the two parties call on the States members of the GCC and the United Nations Security Council to support its implementation. They further call on the States members of the GCC, the permanent members of the Security Council, the European Union and its States members to support the implementation of the GCC Initiative and the Mechanism.

29. The Secretary-General of the United Nations is called upon to provide continuous assistance, in cooperation with other agencies, for the implementation of this Agreement. He is also requested to coordinate assistance from the international community for the implementation of the GCC Initiative and the Mechanism.
30. The following are invited to attend the signature of this Mechanism: the Secretary-General of the GCC and the Secretary-General of the United Nations or their representatives, as well as the representatives of the States members of the GCC, the permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, the European Union and the League of Arab States.

(Signatures and dates)

Exercising** the authority conferred on me by the President under Presidential Decree No. 24 of 2011, I hereby solemnly convene elections for the office of President of the Republic to be held on 00/00/2012. This Decree is deemed to be in force from today, and the convening of elections contained therein is irrevocable. The convening of elections shall take effect in accordance with the provisions of the Mechanism, without any need for any further steps, sixty days before the holding of elections as set forth in the Mechanism.

This decree shall be published in the Official Gazette.

** *Translator's note: On the basis of the unofficial English translation, the following may be missing from the Arabic text:*

" Annex: Decree issued by the Vice-President concurrently with the signature of the GCC Initiative and the Mechanism. The Vice-President of the Republic, acting under to the authority conferred on him by the President under Presidential Decree No. 24 of 2011."