

UNIFICATION IN YEMEN

Dynamics of Political Integration, 1978-2000

**Sharif Ismail
Wadham College**

Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the degree of MPhil in
Modern Middle Eastern Studies

Faculty of Oriental Studies, University of Oxford

Contents

<i>Acknowledgements</i>	3
<i>List of Abbreviations</i>	4
<i>Maps</i>	5
1. Introduction	10
2. Theories and Methods	12
<i>Deutsch, Security Communities and the Pluralist Model</i>	12
<i>The Challenge from Functionalism and Neo-functionalism</i>	14
<i>Federalism and Lessons from Etzioni</i>	14
<i>Migdal and the Question of 'Social Control'</i>	15
<i>Towards a Synthesis</i>	16
<i>Methodology</i>	17
3. Reviewing Elite-centred Histories of Unification	19
<i>Constrained State-building, Accommodation and Co-option in the YAR</i>	19
<i>Weakening State Control in the PDRY</i>	21
<i>The Enduring Theme: discourses of a united Yemen</i>	23
<i>Explaining Unification</i>	23
<i>Elite-level Politics in the Transition Period</i>	25
<i>Elite-level Politics after 1994: Sālih and the GPC triumphant</i>	28
4. Coercive Contest: the limits of the state's attempts to enforce integration	30
<i>Theoretical Considerations</i>	30
<i>The Situation in the North pre-1990</i>	31
<i>The Situation in the South pre-1990</i>	34
<i>The Transition Period</i>	37
<i>The Civil War</i>	39
<i>The Post-War Impasse: negotiating a limited 'Security State'</i>	40
<i>Conclusion</i>	43
5. The Battle for Control of Yemen's Water Resources	45
<i>Theoretical Considerations</i>	45
<i>The Situation in the North pre-1990</i>	46
<i>The Situation in the South pre-1990</i>	48
<i>The Transition Period</i>	51
<i>Political Compromise, 1994-2000: the limits of state control</i>	53
<i>Conclusion</i>	55
6. Defining a New National Discourse in the Education Sector	56
<i>Theoretical Considerations</i>	56
<i>The Situation in the North pre-1990</i>	56
<i>The Situation in the South pre-1990</i>	60
<i>The Transition Period</i>	63
<i>Negotiating the Education Agenda, 1994-2000</i>	67
<i>Conclusion</i>	69
7. Conclusion	70
<i>Appendix 1: Brief Chronology</i>	74
<i>Appendix 2: List of Interviews Conducted</i>	74
<i>Bibliography</i>	75

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr Philip Robins, for his research guidance throughout the year. I owe a particular debt of gratitude to Helen Lackner and Jamal in Oxford, both for their hospitality and for extremely valuable insights borne of direct experience of many of the issues in Yemen that I address here. Dr Chris Edens, Director of the American Institute for Yemeni Studies in Sana^ca, made important early suggestions and helped me to track down contacts there. Finally, it would have been impossible to carry out field research for this thesis without the financial support I have received from the AHRC and Khosraw Eghbal fund at Wadham College, for which I am extremely grateful.

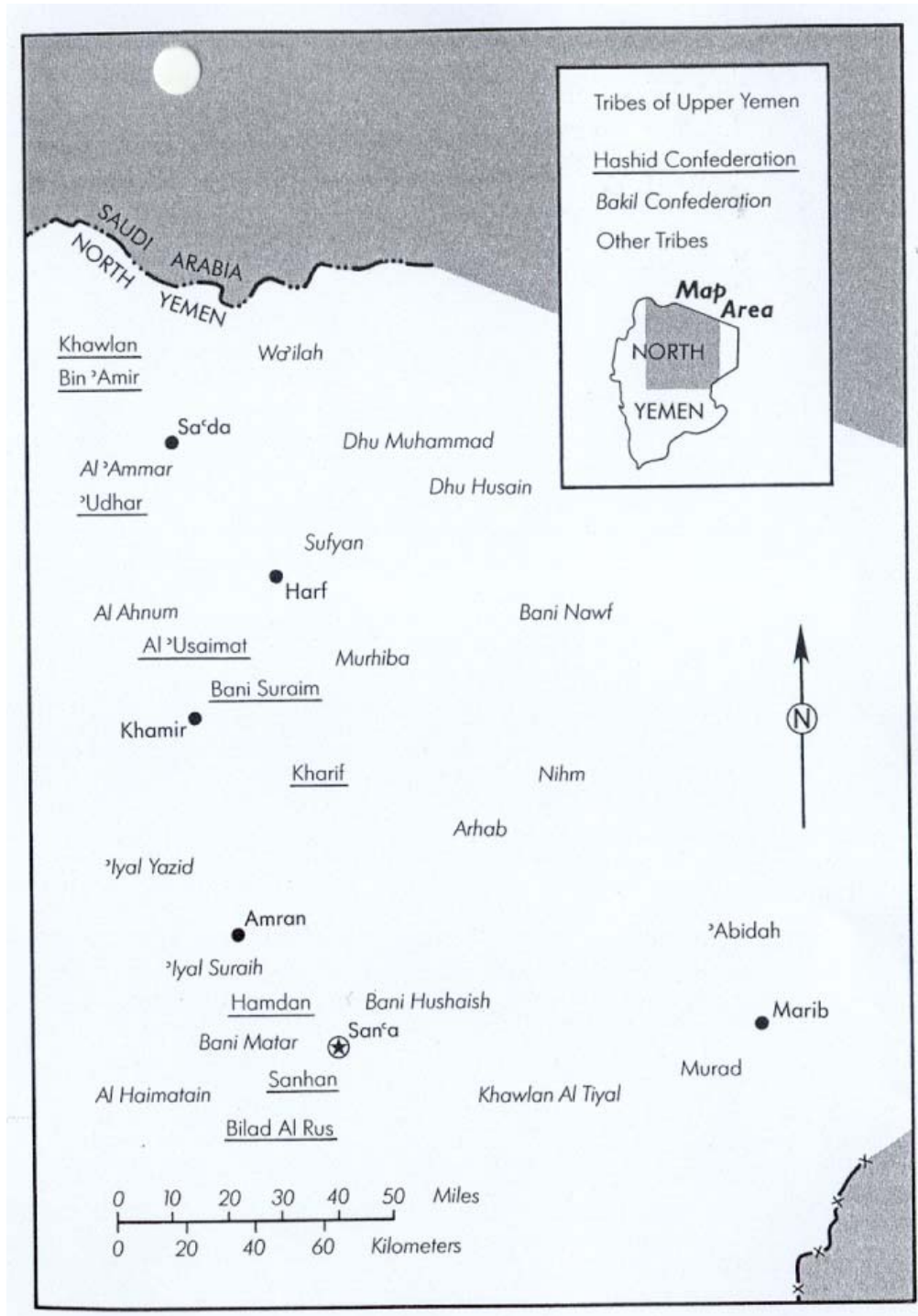
List of abbreviations (including footnoted sources)

AAIA	Aden-Abyan Islamic Army
AFP	Agence France Presse
AI	Amnesty International
AP	Associated Press
BBC SWB	BBC Summary of World Broadcasts
CPO	Central Planning Organisation (YAR)
CSO	Central Security Organisation (RoY)
DRY	Democratic Republic of Yemen (Southern state briefly declared independent in 1994)
EIU	Economist Intelligence Unit
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations
GAREW	General Authority for Rural Electricity and Water (RoY)
GPC	General People's Congress
HWC	Higher Water Council (YAR)
IBRD	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
IDAs	International Development Agencies (as distinct from Bretton Woods institution – of the same name – affiliated with the World Bank)
IISS	International Institute for Strategic Studies
IN	Intelligence Newsletter
LDA	Local Development Association (YAR up to 1985)
LEDC	Less Economically-Developed Country
LCCD	Local Council for Cooperative Development (YAR from 1985)
MAWR	Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources (YAR)
MEI	<i>Middle East International</i>
MEW	Ministry of Electricity and Water (YAR)
MOMR	Ministry of Oil and Mineral Resources (YAR)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NDF	National Democratic Front
NLF	National Liberation Front
NSO	National Security Organisation (YAR)
NWRA	National Water Resources Authority (RoY)
NWSA	National Water and Sewerage Agency (YAR)
PDF	Popular Defence Force
PDRY	People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (South Yemen)
PSF	Public Security Force (South Yemen)
PSO	Political Security Organisation (RoY)
PWC	Public Water Corporation (PDRY)
RoY	Republic of Yemen (after 1990)
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNESCWA	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
YAR	Yemen Arab Republic (North Yemen)
YBRD	Yemeni Bank for Reconstruction and Development (YAR and RoY)
YSP	Yemen Socialist Party
YT	<i>Yemen Times</i>

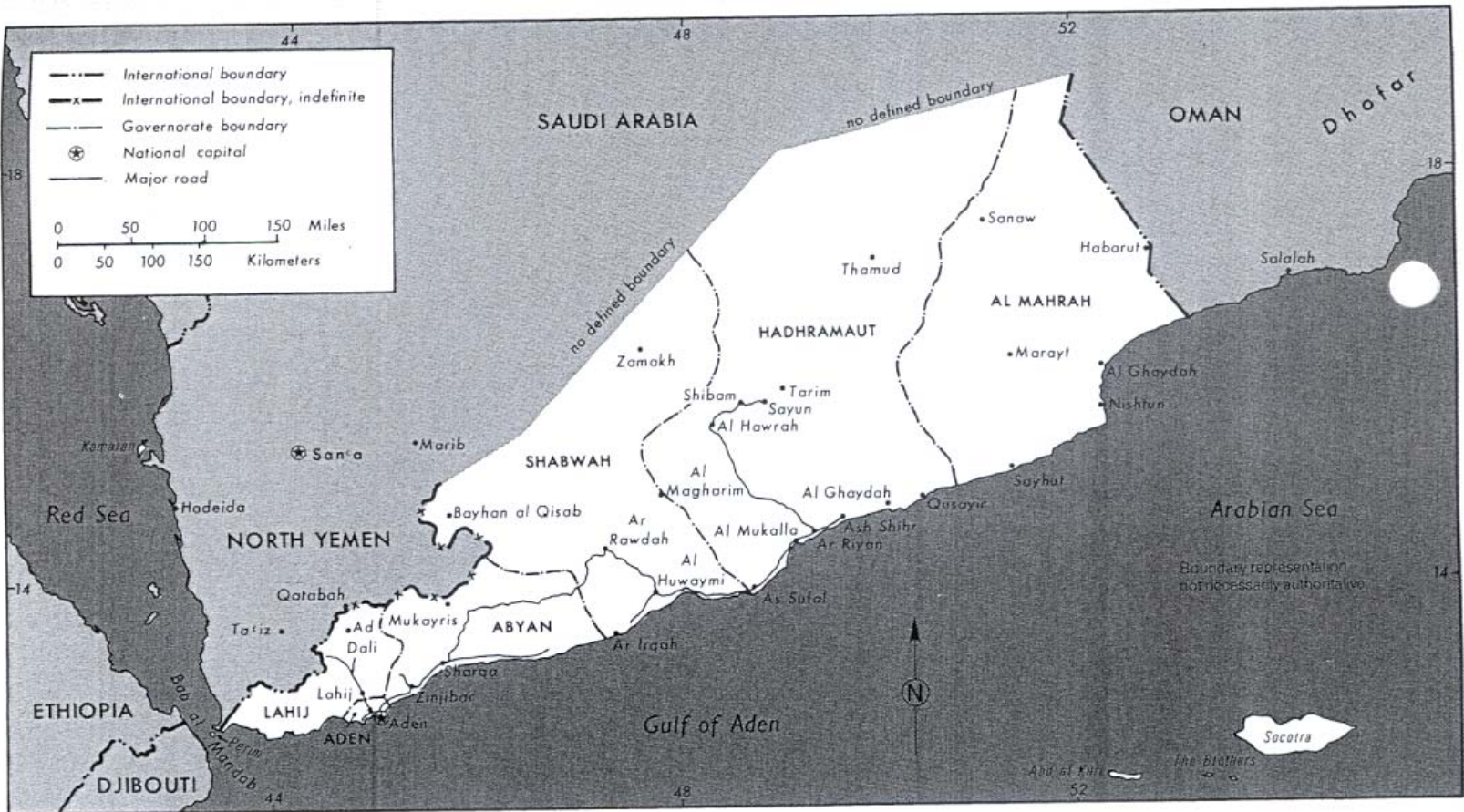
Maps



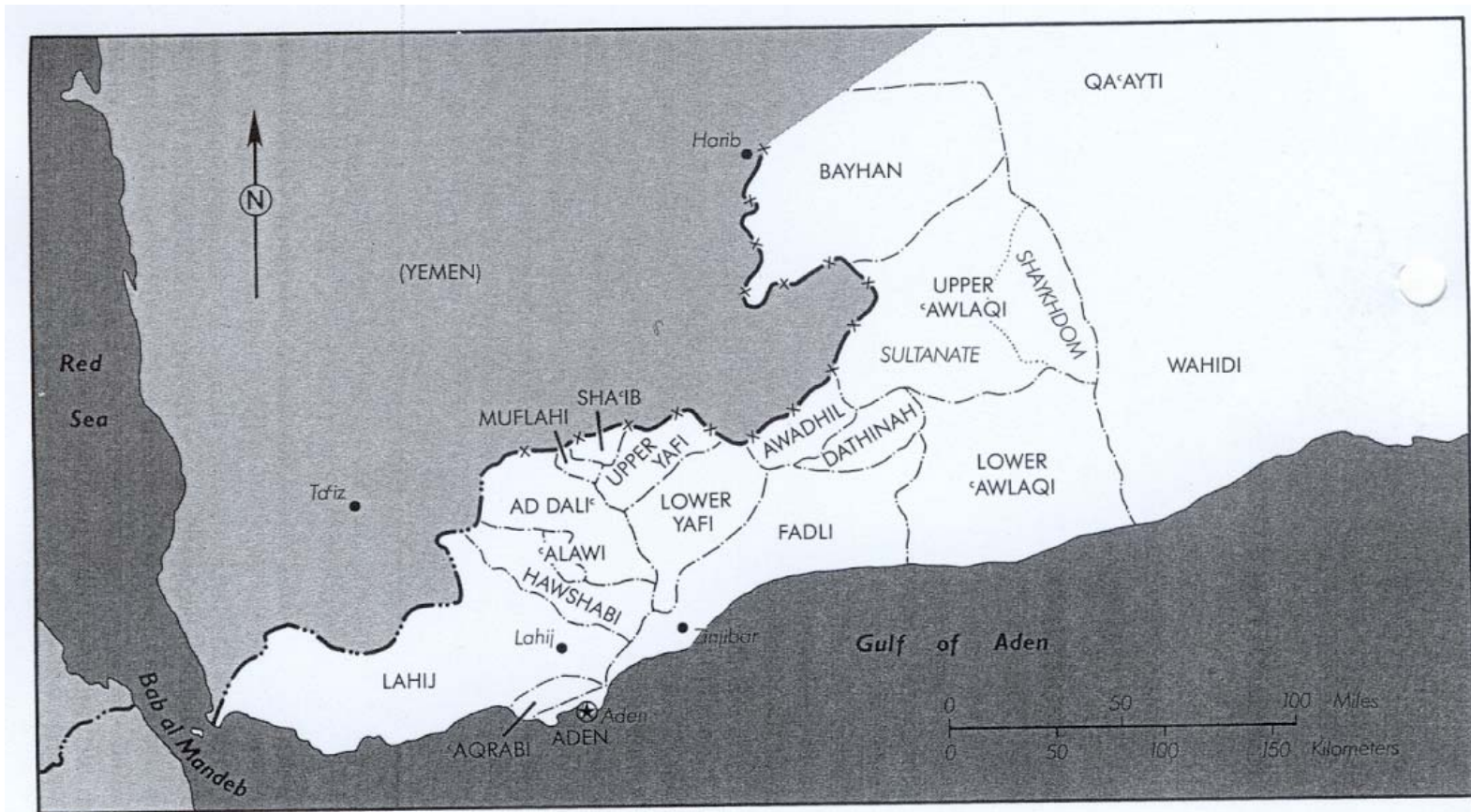
Map 1: the Yemen Arab Republic and its governorates, 1984 (Source: Gause 1990: 14)



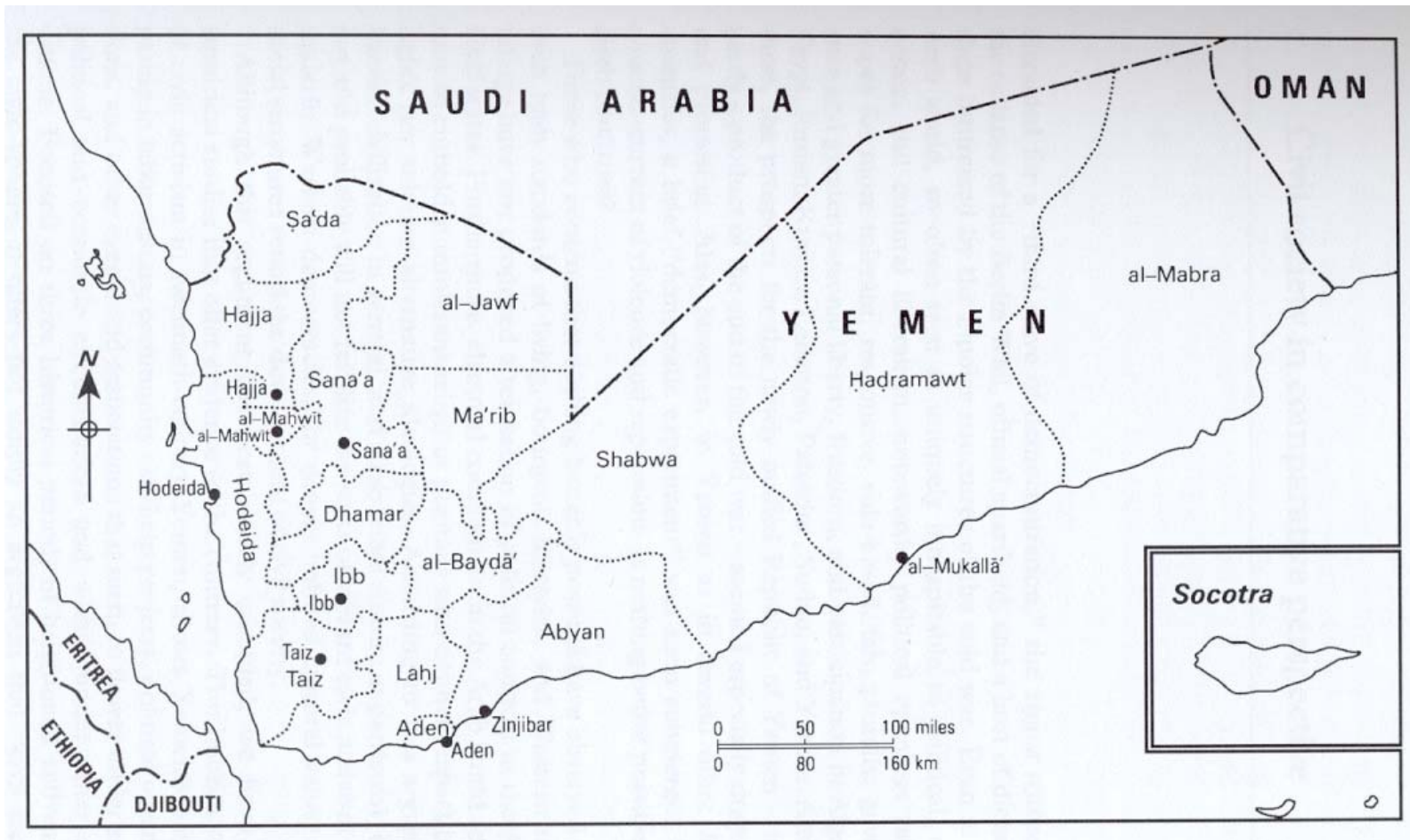
Map 2: the tribes of Upper Yemen (Source: Gause 1990: 15)



Map 3: the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen and its governorates, 1984 (Source: Gause 1990: 29)



Map 4: Aden and the Protectorates under British rule, showing key tribal and regional groupings (Source: Gause 1990: 31)



Map 5: the Republic of Yemen and its governorates in 1998 (Source: Carapico 1998: xv)

1. Introduction

In October 1987, a senior government official in the Yemen Arab Republic (YAR) declared that ‘except by some historic accident, unity [with South Yemen] will only come about over a long period of time’¹. Less than three years later, on May 22nd 1990, the governments of the YAR and People’s Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY) took almost everyone by surprise by announcing formal political unification². Although it was true that the two states had been engaged in detailed negotiations over the mechanics of integration for several years, few expected these difficult, perhaps existential questions, to have been resolved with such speed. °Alī °Abdallah Sālih and °Alī Sālim al-Baydh, the respective leaders of the YAR and PDRY, had cast aside a carefully formulated timetable for unification by moving towards completion in May.

For all the grandiose rhetoric and popular jubilation that greeted its establishment, the newly unified Republic faced profound political and economic difficulties. First, it inherited a legacy of hostility and ill-feeling between the Northern and Southern leaderships that had culminated in open conflict on at least two occasions since the early 1970s, and renewed border skirmishes as late 1988. Second, Western observers were deeply sceptical of the prospects for a hurried amalgamation of two states with severe economic and political legitimacy problems of their own³. Nevertheless, many found cause for optimism. Joint oil-prospecting in what had been the border zone between the two states promised greater economic security. Constitutional changes suggested a transition to consensus politics, and talk of parliamentary elections within two years seemed to herald the beginning of a democratic opening in a post-Gulf War Middle East⁴. Perhaps most importantly, national unity enjoyed overwhelming public support, ensuring a lengthy ‘honeymoon’ period for the new political leadership as it grappled with sizeable early problems.

Despite impressive progress in certain areas during the ‘transition period’ (1990-93), the sceptics appeared vindicated when in 1994 the two leading political actors in unified Yemen – the General People’s Congress (GPC) of °Alī °Abdallah Sālih and the Yemen Socialist Party (YSP) of °Alī Sālim al-Baydh – engaged in a brief but bloody war for control of the fledgling state. Widespread violence across the country in the months leading up to the war, the manner of the YSP’s defeat, and the involvement of non-state actors on either side all seemed to confirm the victory of ‘Northern’ anarchy over ‘Southern’ law and order, and the collapse of the unity project. Equally troubling was the realisation by the late 1990s that Yemen’s democratic experiment had failed, as President Sālih imposed an increasingly autocratic style of rule. By 2002, Western academics wrote of an ‘aborted opening’, and of the state ‘opening and closing’ the political system at will since 1990⁵.

How representative was this ‘conventional’ account of unification? The secondary literature in English on this momentous period in contemporary Yemeni history is

¹ Dresch 2000: 181.

² See Dunbar 1992, among others.

³ *The Guardian*, February 24th 1990; Hudson 1991.

⁴ Hudson 1991; for a later review, Ayubi 1995: 431-8

⁵ Schwedler 2002: 48-9, among others.

thin, and dominated by discussion of elite-level politics⁶. It reflects an overwhelming concern with the democratic ‘experiment’, and particularly the Civil War and its implications. A recent PhD thesis by Stephen Day helps to restore some balance by examining bureaucratic integration at *regional* and *local* levels, demonstrating the apparent ‘colonisation’ of Southern institutions by a Northern ‘highland’ elite tied by family and tribal affiliations to the President. But as a study primarily of power-sharing in the ‘transition period’ it retains a strongly state- and elite-centric view of political change⁷.

In fact, no attempt has yet been made at a long-term, multi-dimensional analysis of the unification process to compare with treatments of the German case published from the mid-1990s onwards, many of which are grounded in a substantial body of work in political integration theory⁸. Issues of broader social and cultural change have largely been ignored in academic circles, though there are important exceptions. Paul Dresch and Lisa Wedeen have produced valuable contributions through occasional rather than comprehensive works⁹. Most notably, Sheila Carapico’s *Civil Society in Yemen* is a seminal thesis bridging political science and social anthropology, documenting ways in which civic spaces in Yemen have been contested by a range of political, economic and cultural actors¹⁰; she argues convincingly that civic activism has had important effects on elite-level politics throughout modern Yemeni history. Carapico’s focus on civil society activity nevertheless leaves important questions about the unification period unanswered. What impact did the complex and changing relationship between ‘state’ and ‘society’ have on wider political integration outside urban areas? Could clear distinctions be drawn between patterns of integration in different sectors? What kind of role did violence play in this process? And, given the history of nationalist discourse in Yemen, what kind of role has ideology exercised?

This thesis is an attempt to redress imbalances in the existing account. It conceptualises unification in two dimensions, both state-state *and* state-society. I draw heavily on work in political integration theory, making use of the concept of a *political community* in which the state is but one – albeit extremely important – actor, to show that we must look beyond elite-level politics if we are to fully understand political change in Yemen since 1990. In demonstrating that contest and negotiation between elites and non-elites have played crucial roles in defining the post-unification political environment, I hope to show that the key battlegrounds of integration have been over *norms* and *values* or *symbol systems*, rather than formal political or structural institutions. For reasons of space, I will not explicitly address external factors here, although some – particularly the complex relationship with Saudi Arabia – will be important underlying themes. This thesis is primarily a domestically-focused account seeking broader insights into the ways in which state and society interact to define the terms of integration in Third World countries – where state capacity may be so weak that the agency of political elites is limited.

⁶ See, among others: Burrowes 1991, 1992; Halliday 1995; Hudson 1995; Saif 2001; Schwedler 2006.

⁷ Day 2001.

⁸ Consider: Hancock, D. and Welsh, H. (1994), *The Domestic Politics of German Unification* (Lynne Rienner); Anderson, C., Kaltenthaler, K., and Luthardt, W. (1993), *The Domestic Politics of German Unification* (Lynne Rienner)

⁹ Dresch 1993; Dresch and Haykel 1995; Dresch 2000; Wedeen 2003.

¹⁰ Carapico 1998.

2. Theories and Methods

Characterising patterns of integration in Yemen since 1990 has proven a daunting exercise. It was perhaps tempting to draw comparisons with another contemporary example – the unification of East and West Germany – but fundamental differences were rapidly recognised. As early as 1993, Sheila Carapico argued that ‘in contrast with Germany, [the two Yemens’] marriage was more merger than takeover’ between two politically weak states with important convergences in their economic systems¹¹. Few authors employed the substantial body of work in political integration theory in their analyses of the changing Yemeni political climate, however. This was partly because of its strong emphasis on *regional* integration, and particularly on supposedly post-modern, even ‘post-industrial’ European societies where state capacities were acknowledged to be extensive.

In this section, I argue that we *can* draw important lessons from mainstream integration theory in the Yemeni case. After highlighting some major difficulties with existing theoretical treatments of Yemeni unification, I will show that a conceptually strong alternative exists in Amitai Etzioni’s theory of political unification, provided that important adjustments are made to reflect the role of non-elite politics. The result is a model that takes account of state-society contest and negotiation, and accommodates the peculiar importance of ideology in a political environment in which Yemeni nationalist discourse, and the sense of an ‘imagined community’, had long had a strong influence.

Deutsch, Security Communities and the Pluralist Model

Without exception, secondary accounts analysing Yemeni unification in an integration theory framework employ the pluralist/transactionalist model advanced by Karl Deutsch in *Political Community and the North Atlantic Area* (1957). Deutsch postulated the development of ‘security communities’ as solutions to problems of profound regional instability and conflict. Deutsch and his team made a distinction between four types of community as follows¹²:

	Non-amalgamation	Amalgamation
Integration	Pluralistic security-community	Amalgamated security-community
Non-integration	Not amalgamated, not-security-community	Amalgamated, but not security-community

Michael Hudson and Fred Halliday have retrospectively used this model to describe the Yemeni political arrangement between 1990 and 1994, arguing that far from being unified, the two states – North and South – existed in parallel in an uneasy ‘amalgamated, but not security-community’ arrangement¹³. There was no basis for a security community, still less integration, in this arrangement. In Hudson’s view, ‘the fact that the Yemens, North and South, felt a sense of common identity on a cultural, historical and social level was in itself no guarantee that *political* integration could be taken for granted’. In fact, the two amalgamated but not-integrated states actively

¹¹ Carapico 1993.

¹² Deutsch et al 1957: 7.

¹³ Halliday 1995; Hudson 1995. Note that Halliday does not refer to Deutsch’s model by name.

manoeuvred, politically and militarily, to ensure their own survival¹⁴. Similarly, for Halliday, unification was simply ‘the continuation of rivalry by other means’, by two states that ‘were well entrenched in their respective territories and were not prepared to surrender their power, nor so weak that they had to do so’¹⁵. There was thus a certain inevitability to the outbreak of war. Hudson suggests that ‘the liberal, multi-party electoral parliamentary institutional matrix, so carefully constructed to manage conflict, nurture the newborn unity and promote good government, was unable to override *the logic driving the two power centres towards war*’ [emphasis added]¹⁶.

The Hudson-Halliday account of the transition period is an attempt to explain why power-sharing so spectacularly unravelled in 1994. Informative though it may be in its analysis of elite political dynamics, it is deeply problematic as a general model for unification. Firstly, both authors take as their starting point the perceived failure of unification with the outbreak of war, and on this basis declare an amalgamated, non-integrated, non-security community arrangement to be the outcome of political unification, just four years after the May 22nd announcements. The circularity of their argument imposes an artificial timescale for the completion of a highly ambitious project and ignores deeper political currents.

It also reflects a serious underestimation of the importance of force as an *agent* of political integration. Deutsch’s work sought to explain the evolution of a security-based community (NATO), in which all participants had ‘come to agreement on at least...one point: that common social problems must and can be resolved by processes of ‘peaceful change’...[entailing] the resolution of social problems, normally by institutionalised procedures, without resort to large-scale physical force’¹⁷. His model cannot explain the use of force in national integration, where, I contend, it *does* have an essential role to play. Hudson hints at the need for a revised understanding of the relationship between force and political integration when he suggests that in fact ‘the 1994 Yemeni civil war may have paved the way for real unity through the elimination of a rival ‘sovereignty’’, but does not follow this through¹⁸.

Thirdly, Deutsch’s work explores means of peaceful adjustment and accommodation between existing nation-states that retain their sovereignties, but in the Yemeni case something much more total than mere political *harmony* has been attempted. I shall demonstrate in due course that there is good reason to question Hudson’s contention that during the transition period Yemen ‘was still divided into two *de facto* sovereign power centres’, but in any event, Deutsch’s model offers little for the post-1994 period since the Republic did not collapse into two or more sovereign entities after the Civil War¹⁹.

Finally, Deutsch’s model is resolutely top-down in its view of political agency. Hudson implicitly acknowledges this failing when he states that ‘a full explanation of the *pays réel* would involve examining Yemen in terms of political culture, political

¹⁴ Hudson 1995: 20-1.

¹⁵ Halliday 1995: 136.

¹⁶ Hudson 1995: 31.

¹⁷ Deutsch et al 1957: 5.

¹⁸ Hudson 1995: 32.

¹⁹ *Ibid*: 32.

economy and exogenous factors, among others'²⁰. The question of what role non-political-elite and non-state actors played in defining the new national consensus merits serious consideration. This is especially important given the strength of the cultural and ideational commitment to unity at popular level in both the former North and South. While Deutsch and his colleagues recognise the importance of ideational factors – ‘communication and the sense of community’ are included among their six necessary ‘background conditions’ for integration – they do little to flesh out the role of these factors, how society may come to define them, or how their importance changes as the process proceeds.

The Challenge from Functionalism and Neo-functionalism

In contrast to Deutsch and the pluralists, theorists of the functionalist and neo-functional schools advocated a bottom-up approach to integration emphasising ‘the economic, social and technological factors which, by much less direct processes, are said to bring about political change’. They also conceptualised integration as a process, eschewing Deutsch’s typological, outcome-based approach²¹.

Functionalism and neo-functionalism are *technocratic* models of integration in which institutional factors are of paramount importance. The noted functionalist theorist, David Mitrany, emphasised the role of mid-level bureaucrats, technocrats and businessmen, envisioning the proliferation of ‘flexible, task-oriented international organisations’ to formalise political integration at regional level. Political elites had a supervisory, rather than driving role in this process²². The climax of this thinking was the neo-functionalism of Ernst Haas, who defined political integration as ‘the process whereby political actors in several distinct national settings are persuaded to shift their loyalties, expectations and political activities towards a new centre, whose institutions possess or demand jurisdiction over the pre-existing national states’²³.

There is much to recommend a functionalist/neo-functional analysis, not least its rejection of elite-centrism, and emphasis on structural factors and social interests as a basis for integration. Crucially, however, both schools postulate the transcendence of the nation-state as the paramount form of political organisation. This clearly does not hold in the Yemeni case; here, the aim was unification of two countries that had been ‘affected from the start by the bad fit between state and nation’²⁴ to create – for the first time – a unified *nation-state*, with all the political, institutional, structural and identitive implications that this entailed²⁵. Secondly – in common with Deutsch – these models provide no conceptual framework for understanding the integrative use of violence.

Federalism and Lessons from Etzioni

Federalism is often regarded as the broadest church of all the schools in integration theory. Amitai Etzioni’s 1965 study, *Political Unification* (and its more recent edition, *Political Unification Revisited: on building supranational communities*) falls broadly into this scheme, though the clear influence of functionalist thinking in his

²⁰ *Ibid*: 20.

²¹ Hancock and Welsh 1994: 3.

²² Rosamond 2003: 35.

²³ Haas 1958: 16.

²⁴ Burrowes 1991: 489.

²⁵ Dresch 1993: 67.

work ensures that it cannot easily be classified in terms of the main schools of integration theory²⁶. This is an important advantage: Etzioni does not pre-judge the outcome of political unification in the typological manner employed by Deutsch.

Etzioni views integration as a process leading ultimately to the creation of new *political communities*. For him, 'a *community* is established...when the maintenance of its existence and form is provided for by its own processes and is not dependent upon those of external systems or member units...[it] is thus a state, an administrative-economic unit, and a focal point of identification'²⁷. He defines a political community (and by implication, integration) in the following terms:

'A political community is a community that possesses three kinds of integration:

- it has effective control over the use of the means of violence (though it may 'delegate' some of this control to member-units);
- it has a centre of decision-making that is able to affect significantly the allocation of resources and rewards throughout the community; and
- it is the dominant focus of political identification for the large majority of politically aware citizens'²⁸

This is a more complete, multi-dimensional definition of political integration than any of the other schools we have examined: at once 'state'-'state' *and* 'state'-'society'. From these foundations, Etzioni outlines the process by which a political community is created: from the initiation stage, generally enacted by political elites by agreement; through 'take-off', a nebulous stage often outside the control of political elites, at which a process 'has accumulated enough momentum to continue on its own...without the support of non-member units'²⁹; a phase of expansion; and finally to termination – the point at which a political community has been created³⁰. Etzioni breaks decisively with other integration theorists by providing us with a way of classifying political agency in the integration process: the notion of 'integrating power'. Integrating power may be 'coercive' (military), 'utilitarian' (bureaucratic, economic) or 'identitive'.

Problems with Etzioni's model: the Validity of Elitism

Integrating power is the critical determining factor in political integration for Etzioni, but he assumes it to lie exclusively in the hands of the elites³¹. This is a significant conceptual problem. By overwhelmingly emphasising the role of political elites, Etzioni suggests that the direction of integration is determined only by the assets and powers that they have at their disposal. The argument that all three forms of integrating power are essentially contested between political elites and non-elites, and that non-elites may play an active role in defining the course of integration, will be a constant underlying theme in the discussion that follows.

Migdal and the Question of 'Social Control'

The impetus for this revision comes from an acknowledgement of the enduring salience of contests over social control in many Third World countries. This dynamic

²⁶ Rosamond 2003: 28

²⁷ Etzioni 2001: 4

²⁸ *Ibid*: 4

²⁹ *Ibid*: 51

³⁰ *Ibid*: 59

³¹ *Ibid*: 37-8

forms the basis for Joel Migdal's study of state-society relations³². For Migdal, 'state social control involves the successful subordination of people's own inclinations of social behaviour or behaviour sought by other social organisations in favour of the behaviour prescribed by state rules'³³. The expansion of state social control is an important tool for political leaders to ensure their survival. Migdal argues that social control has historically been highly fragmented in the territories now claimed by single nation-states. It is therefore unsurprising that in many Third World countries it remains at best compromised.

For Migdal, societal structure inevitably 'affects politics at the highest levels of the state and the administration of state policy at much lower levels'³⁴. The imperative for state leaders to continually reinforce their weak patterns of social control is realised in a 'politics of survival', as they repeatedly resort to purges and shuffling of key personnel, non-merit appointments, and gross abuses of the law that provide for torture and illegal imprisonment of political rivals. But it is also reflected in an ongoing battle with societal 'strongmen' manifested in state attempts to co-opt key forms of social organisation outside their control, and may extend to armed conflict. In this system of political accommodation, any 'integrating power' the state may have is likely to be constrained by societal powers that augment, complement or even undermine it. Political leaders are obliged to engage constantly in bargaining and trade-offs to reinforce their positions³⁵.

Towards a Synthesis

Migdal provides us with a strong sense of the complexity of the state-society relationship, belying the simplistic 'strong' society and 'weak' state dichotomy explicit in the title of his work. He envisages society 'as a melange of social organisations', as opposed to the 'centre-periphery' and 'traditional-modern' understandings customary of early political development theory. 'In this melange', Migdal suggests, 'the state has been one organisation among many' that have competed for the allegiance of various segments of the population; 'social control is the currency over which organisations in an environment of conflict battle one another'³⁶. These views complement Etzioni's notion of a broad political *community*, while moving analytical emphasis away from the dominant elite-focus characteristic of his *Political Unification Re-visited*.

By viewing integrating power as an agent of 'social control', I will show how contest over the course of integration has been a constant feature of the political scene, both in North and South Yemen from 1978, and then in the unified Republic since 1990. In doing so, I will try to redress the strong state and political elite focus characteristic of the secondary literature on the Yemens, much of it grounded in mainstream political development theory of the 1960s and 1970s³⁷. This is particularly true of authors such as Robert Burrowes and Manfred Wenner writing on the YAR, and Helen Lackner, Fred Halliday, and Tariq and Jacqueline Ismael writing on the PDRY. Over the past 20 years, this theoretical consensus has undergone considerable

³² Migdal 1988.

³³ *Ibid*: 22.

³⁴ *Ibid*: 256.

³⁵ *Ibid*: chapters 6-7 passim.

³⁶ *Ibid*: 30-2.

³⁷ See Randall and Theobald 1998 for a fuller account of the evolution of political development theory.

revision, with authors emphasising the increasing importance of civil society, and the impact of wider dynamics including globalisation³⁸.

This thesis argues broadly for a *sociological* understanding of integration. I contend that, in the relative absence of state institutional penetration of society, it was fundamental governing *norms* and *value* or *symbol systems* – rather than formal institutional structures – that were at stake. This has two important implications. Firstly, I argue that the ‘North’-‘South’ divide collapsed with extraordinary rapidity during the transition period, in contrast to Hudson’s suggestion of enduring political ‘bipolarity’ after 1990³⁹. The weakness of state institutional penetration in the PDRY, and limited hold of norms and values associated with it, ensured that political interests broadly associated with the YAR were predominant at state level well before the Civil War of 1994, across a number of fields. Secondly, and as a result, the ‘state’-‘society’ dimension assumed particular importance post-1990 as the state engaged in a series of renewed efforts to extend its remit. By the year 2000, evidence that the state had failed in these efforts was overwhelming.

Methodology

This study will draw on Etzioni’s typology of integrating power to provide the theoretical underpinning for three case studies in political integration. In each case, the focus will be on the ways in which the respective form of integrating power has been contested, and the means and assets at the disposal of the state and centres in society, to guarantee control. The first case study will address coercive power; the second will tackle contest and negotiation over utilitarian assets in the water sector, an issue that by the late 1990s had become highly politicised as a result of acute national shortages; and the third will look at identitive contest in the education sector. For reasons of space, it would be impossible to address the full *pays réel* here; I will not look at structural factors underlying political unification, which have been covered in detail elsewhere⁴⁰, and external factors will be an underlying rather explicit theme. I hope instead to provide snapshots of contest and negotiation in three fields as evidence of a more general picture.

Political unification and particularly enduring North-South tensions remain contentious issues in Yemen today. Access to primary material is often limited. The choice of case studies for this thesis reflects this difficulty. The problem of access to information is most acute in the coercive field, and here I will rely almost entirely on press reports. In the water sector, my main source will be reports issued by major development agencies with field missions in Yemen, as well as evidence from interviews with development professionals. In the education field, I will look mostly at Arabic language sources, including monographs on developments in the education sector to primary and secondary school textbooks covering the period 1978-2000. Across all three case studies, I will draw on an impressive body of anthropological work produced over the last thirty years, particularly on North Yemen. This provides

³⁸ The ‘state and civil society’ school includes Migdal, J. (1988) *Strong Societies and Weak State* (Princeton University Press) and various papers by Peter Evans, among others; the ‘globalisation’ school, which has concerned itself principally with Third World democratisation, includes Huntington, S. P. (1991), *The Third Wave: democratisation in the late twentieth century* (University of Oklahoma Press)

³⁹ Hudson 1995.

⁴⁰ Most notably by Carapico 1993.

important insights into local dynamics without which a fuller understanding of the political environment would be impossible.

3. Reviewing Elite-centred Histories of Unification

In *Civil Society in Yemen*, Sheila Carapico suggested that while it was ‘tempting to conceptualise states as fixed entities possessing hegemonic control over the civic sphere’, in contemporary Yemen ‘the state’ has been a variable rather than a constant⁴¹. This statement captured well the nature of the Yemeni state’s relationship with society in a broader sense, beyond what might strictly be defined as the ‘civic sphere’ – a relationship that was complex and in constant flux both North and South of the border pre-1990. While state capacities expanded in important respects during this period, they were everywhere constrained by conflicting societal dynamics. The push by ʿAlī ʿAbdallah Sālih and ʿAlī Sālim al-Baydh for the sudden acceleration towards unification may to a large degree be understood in the context of a growing sense, by 1989-90, that both states had failed in their respective bids to create viable political communities.

Constrained State-building, Accommodation and Co-option in the YAR

In the YAR this was not, perhaps, entirely obvious. ʿAlī ʿAbdallah Sālih approached unification at the head of a state that had made substantial progress in the expansion of its mechanisms of social control, achieving a hitherto unseen degree of penetration of a historically fragmented society – despite widespread feeling when he assumed power in the political chaos of 1978 that he would not see out the year⁴². Indeed, Robert Burrowes argues of the Sālih period that it was marked by a profound ‘change from political turmoil and economic uncertainty at its beginning to political stability and the prospect of oil-based development and prosperity in more recent years’⁴³.

Burrowes’ contrast with the preceding period is to some extent justified. Under the Imāmate the ‘state’ – such as it was – relied on levying of tribal forces for defence. It was extraordinarily limited in bureaucratic capacity, being focused on the person of the Imam himself, through whom almost all official transactions had to be conducted. It was, moreover, a sectarian state, dominated by Zaydī interests at the expense of a Shāfiʿī community that accounted for more than 50% of the population⁴⁴. The condition of the North Yemeni economy in this period was poor; sealed off from the outside world, the country relied almost exclusively on subsistence-level agricultural production, and industry was non-existent. In the immediate aftermath of the revolution of 1962, the economy was opened up to outside concerns, but Egyptian attempts to impose their ill-fitting bureaucratic-administrative model on the country exacerbated existing problems, and it was not until the Iryānī period⁴⁵ in the late 1960s that any substantive change occurred, with the establishment of the Central Planning Organisation (CPO), the Yemen Bank for Reconstruction and Development (YBRD) and various other allied state agencies⁴⁶.

⁴¹ Carapico 1998: 19.

⁴² Interview with Helen Lackner, Oxford, January 15th 2007.

⁴³ Burrowes 1991: 484.

⁴⁴ Gause 1990: 19.

⁴⁵ Qādī ʿAbd al-Rahmān al-Iryānī was the first President of the YAR after the reconciliation agreement of 1970 that brought rival combatants in the Civil War into government.

⁴⁶ Burrowes 1991: 487.

These changes disguised a reality of profound state-society tension throughout the post-revolutionary period that repeatedly constrained attempts at institutional capacity-building. This was not to suggest that divisions were absolute; more often than not, clear dividing lines between ‘state’ and centres of social control in ‘society’ were impossible to draw. ʿAbd al-Rahmān al-Iryānī’s post-civil war government was based on consensus politics bridging the Republican-Royalist divide, drawing leading tribal *shaykhs* into government at the expense of the *sayyids* on which the Imamate’s power had been founded. This arrangement brought stability, but stunted state expansion: in return for their allegiance, the *shaykhs* expected free reign on their own turf. Swathes of northern tribal territories were beyond the control of central government, and what access it had was ‘on the sufferance of local leaders’⁴⁷. Following the failure of Ibrahīm al-Hamdi’s attempts to challenge burgeoning tribal centres of power in the North Yemeni highlands during his presidency in the mid-1970s, ʿAlī ʿAbdallah Sālih was quick to disavow this approach on his assumption of the presidency, at a time of profound political instability in the YAR.

The state found itself in contest with myriad political actors, some of whom enjoyed substantial external support – notably from Saudi Arabia⁴⁸. Firstly, the government was perennially beholden to the powerful Northern tribal confederations – the Hashīd and Bakīl – the great beneficiaries of the Republican movement’s debasing of the traditional social authority of the *sāda*⁴⁹. Indeed, the alliance between ʿAbdallah al-Ahmar, the leading figure in the Hashīd, and Sālih was the lynchpin of political stability in the North throughout the 1980s. Secondly – and with some encouragement from the government as a means of facing down violent leftist opposition from the National Democratic Front (NDF) – the YAR witnessed a major Islamist resurgence in the early 1980s. This was manifested in violent opposition to the NDF’s campaign in the North, but also in the rising phenomenon of ‘Scientific Institutes’. These ‘Institutes’ preached notions of political and religious authority that were often at variance with state-sanctioned ideals, and they came increasingly to be regarded as a threat. Finally, the ascendance of Local Development Cooperatives (LDAs)⁵⁰ provided strong reinforcement for the autonomy of the kind of local ‘strongmen’ to which Joel Migdal devotes considerable attention in his ground-breaking study of state-society relations⁵¹.

In the early 1980s, the state embarked on a new – and more successful – attempt to expand its mechanisms of social control. The formation of the GPC as an umbrella organisation was intended to co-opt the wealth of Northern political interests by accommodation. ʿAlī ʿAbdallah Sālih also sought greater control over the now enormous system of LDAs, by merging them with the Local Councils for Cooperative Development (LCCDs) that had been established as branches of local administration

⁴⁷ Gause 1990: 26.

⁴⁸ Wenner 1993: 174-5.

⁴⁹ These social groups were intimately tied with the religious authority of the Imāmate. Every Imām had properly to be a *sayyid* (plural: *sāda*); tribal *shaykhs* were subordinate, though powerful, actors.

⁵⁰ The LDAs had first emerged in the early 1970s around the major urban centres in the Southern uplands (Ibb and Taʿizz), established at the behest of a new, educated urban middle-class. They were involved in projects ranging from road building to the construction of schools, water wells and clinics. By the mid-1970s, supported by rising remittance revenues, they were prominent features in rural areas too, becoming important sources of revenue and control for local *shaykhs*. See among others, Day 2001: 190ff.

⁵¹ Migdal 1988.

in the governorates⁵². The President had, in effect, expanded state capacity several fold for free – by co-opting pre-existing local forms of organisation. The discovery of oil in the Ma'rib region in the mid-1980s was also a turning point. Oil 'rents' promised greater power for the state vis-à-vis the leading tribal groupings, as well as freedom from total economic dependence on Saudi Arabia⁵³.

By 1989-90, then, Sālih found himself in a position of unprecedented power. But this was relative and if anything reflected the singular *lack* of state penetration in the foregoing period. The question of how far the state's authority really extended remained open; a series of violent confrontations between the state and tribal elements in Khawlān and Murād in the late 1980s over the course of a new oil pipeline provided ample illustration⁵⁴. Declining remittance revenues from the mid-1980s onwards were beginning to tell at local level, as development projects were either stalled or scaled back. Perhaps most damagingly, the regime's legitimacy was compromised by the enduring popularity of greater Yemeni unity.

Weakening State Control in the PDRY

At face value, the pattern of state-society relations and political change in the PDRY was radically different, for in the South the state had embarked on an altogether more ambitious programme of development from above from independence in 1967. The aim was social revolution: the total transformation of society, the elimination of tribalism as a political and social phenomenon and the marginalisation of Islam. This bid to create a political community defined in socialist terms had begun to lose momentum by the late 1970s, belying Fred Halliday's suggestion in 1979 that the South Yemeni experience was 'the most profound and indeed the only incontestable [social revolution] in the Arab world so far'⁵⁵.

The fledgling state's social transformative project depended on a high degree of political centralisation. This revolved principally around party structure, but it also encompassed bureaucratic expansion outside the traditional political centre in Aden, for under the British much of the area under the nominal control of the protectorates had been left untouched by development. In these areas, the situation was remarkably reminiscent of the North under the Imamate: 'a vast, mostly distant, politically fragmented hinterland that was, for the most part, based on subsistence agriculture and traditional culture and social organisation'⁵⁶. A huge expansion in the size of the bureaucracy during the immediate post-independence period was augmented by significant local administrative development, including the establishment of local councils and militias by the late 1970s. There were also wholesale economic changes, including extensive land reform (1970) involving the collectivisation of agricultural land into state-run cooperatives – by force during the violent *intifādhāt* of the early 1970s – the nationalisation of private enterprises, and moderate industrial expansion into areas such as textiles and basic petrochemical refining.

The vigour with which these policies were pursued depended on balances of power in the YSP leadership, which by 1978 had become profoundly unstable. Political

⁵² Carapico 1998: 117.

⁵³ Wenner 1993: 172.

⁵⁴ Dresch 2000: 180.

⁵⁵ Halliday 1979: 4.

⁵⁶ Burrowes 1989: 438.

authority in the PDRY theoretically resided in the People's Supreme Council, whose 111 members were elected by secret ballot every 5 years and who alone could pass legislation. In reality, the Party Central Committee and Politbureau, elected by the Council from among its members to lead the state, were the real centres of executive power. Increasingly bitter personal struggles between leading YSP figures were played out here during the late 1970s⁵⁷. Much of the transformation of the mid-1970s – especially the rural *intifādhāt* that aimed to displace 'bourgeois' landowners – took place under the radical leadership of Sālim Rubay^ʿa ^ʿAli, variously described as 'populist' and 'Moaist' in orientation⁵⁸. In 1978, he was usurped by the more pragmatic, pro-Soviet ^ʿAbd al-Fattāh Isma^ʿīl, in turn displaced in 1980 by ^ʿAlī Nāsir Muhammad. Both men sought to scale back centralised control, the latter even permitting limited economic liberalisation. As in the North, 1978 proved to be a political turning point.

The ideological shift under ^ʿAlī Nāsir was in part recognition of enduring opposition from power loci in society to radical socialist transformation on Rubay^ʿa ^ʿAlī's model. In 1979, Fred Halliday had claimed that 'there has been an almost total stamping out of corruption'⁵⁹, and while another author contended in 1986 that 'the old ruling class of tribal leaders, *sāda*, big landlords and members of the bourgeoisie ceased to exist and were replaced by the petty bourgeoisie, the workers and the peasants'⁶⁰, it was hard to believe that such binary replacements of one form of social organisation with another had really taken place. Norman Cigar argued in 1986 that 'traditional basic social patterns and values – private property, inheritance, family structure, the role of women, even tribal solidarity – appear to have remained surprisingly resilient over time'⁶¹, and further, that 'the general population has not been mobilised around the regime and that Marxism has not taken deep root among the population'⁶².

There was also evidence of significant *regional* differences in state penetration. Gause suggests that political actors in Hadramawt and al-Mahrah retained a high degree of autonomy, on account of their 'relative isolation from Aden, their much less intrusive experience with British colonialism, and the prevalence there of larger tribal confederations and Bedouin groups'⁶³. In Hadramawt in particular, the state's success in overriding the traditional authority of the *sāda* was limited. Fear of the enduring power of regional and tribal affiliation was perhaps nowhere better illustrated than in the decision to substitute governorate names for numbers in the mid-1970s⁶⁴. It was vindicated by a brief but bloody internecine conflict in January 1986 in which virtually all of the YSP leadership were either killed or sent into exile, and in which more than 6,000 civilians died. In truth, although statistical evidence certainly showed a significant expansion in state *capacity*, and *nominal* changes in social structure, the 'South Yemeni brand of Marxism' ultimately could not deliver on

⁵⁷ Stookey 1982: 70.

⁵⁸ Lackner 1986: 73.

⁵⁹ Halliday 1979: 8.

⁶⁰ Abu Amr 1986: 197.

⁶¹ Cigar 1990: 190.

⁶² *Ibid*: 194.

⁶³ Gause 1990: 52.

⁶⁴ Day 2001: 88.

its goals of wholesale societal restructuring, and a viable, socialist political community proved elusive⁶⁵.

The Enduring Theme: discourses of a United Yemen

The enduring popularity of notional Yemeni unity throughout this period was a conspicuous reflection of the weak legitimacy of both the YAR and PDRY regimes. The history of nationalist discourse across the region was in fact much richer, extending back to the time of Imām Yahya, and his ancestral claim to Southern Arabia in 1911. The Imām's claims to 'Greater Yemen' were later countered by emerging popular currents in the Southern Protectorates advocating independence from British colonial rule⁶⁶. Statements of political intent were paralleled by important forms of cultural production. ʿAbd al-Wāsiʿ al-Wāsiʿī's *History of Yemen*, published first in 1928, was an important early example: a history that 'encompassed all Greater Yemen...the idea of Yemen – not just people who were Yemenis – as an historical subject was new, and the backbone of such accounts was the succession of Imams...'⁶⁷. New movements were also characterised by regular exchange between North and South, particularly after the attempted coup in the North in 1948.

A commitment to unification was a key element of the constitutions of both the YAR and PDRY, even if little was done to bring it to fruition. Both regimes viewed it as a legitimating tool, and the rhetoric of unity was endlessly exploited by political figures, who spoke openly of its 'inevitability'⁶⁸. Popular cultural production during this period was also extensive, across all manner of media. It was exemplified by the Yemeni Writers' Union, which made a strong, public contribution to promoting the cause of national unity through its literary activities. Established in Aden in 1972, this organisation was unique in formalising exchange between scholars and intellectuals in North and South through regular meetings. By alternating its headquarters between Aden and Sana'a it also pointedly rejected corporatising overtures from both regimes.

Explaining Unification

The history of North-South relations was characterised by fleeting diplomatic rapprochements that invariably ended in disappointment and dispute. In September 1972, tensions escalated into a brief border conflict, decided eventually in the North's favour; but in the immediate aftermath, leaders from both sides made verbal commitments to unification. Limited progress under al-Hamdī and Rubayʿa ʿAlī in the South during the mid-1970s was rapidly undone by a tumultuous series of events in late 1977 and 1978 that saw the former assassinated and the latter overthrown in quick succession. The two states traded accusations of meddling in each other's affairs, so that by the time ʿAlī ʿAbdallah Sālih won power in late-1978, relations were at their lowest ebb since 1972.

Rather inevitably, war broke out again in February 1979. This time, the South won a decisive victory in alliance with NDF forces in the North. Once again, the two sides re-stated their commitment to unity in the aftermath of the conflict, and a decision

⁶⁵ Stanzel 1988: 276.

⁶⁶ Nagi in Pridham 1984: 243.

⁶⁷ Dresch 2000: 49-50.

⁶⁸ Dunbar 1992: 456.

was reached to draw up a unified constitution within four months. Committees were established to handle the more complex aspects of unification and for a time political will on both sides of the border seemed to bring unity closer. By mid-1979, opponents of unification – notably the Saudi government – were organising against any such move. In March 1980, the Sālih regime relented to Saudi pressure through Northern tribal *shaykhs* and froze negotiations with the PDRY⁶⁹. Although relations between Sālih and his counterpart in the South, ʿAlī Nāsir Muhammad, were generally good throughout the latter’s tenure, neither side was willing to risk incurring Saudi wrath by resuming negotiations, and when ʿAlī Nāsir was spectacularly removed from power in 1986, unity seemed more distant than ever.

Remarkably, within two years, the prospect of unification was revived. In 1988, Sālih and ʿAlī Sālim al-Baydh met in Taʿizz and then in Sanaʿa, eventually putting pen-to-paper on May 4th in a deal providing for the establishment of a 2,200km² demilitarised zone on the North-South border for joint oil-prospecting. This was reinforced by the establishment of a joint-holding company, the Yemeni Company for Investment in Mineral and Oil Resources (YCIMOR)⁷⁰. Following a flurry of diplomatic activity, a more substantive agreement was signed on November 30th 1989, committing the two sides to agreement on a draft unity constitution, the acceleration of the work of various joint administrative bodies, and the establishment of a joint political organising committee⁷¹. By early 1990, discussions were tackling technical issues such as the splitting of government posts, and the length and nature of the ‘transition period’ to permanent unity⁷².

How do we explain this peculiar *volte-face* in North-South relations in the late 1980s? Domestic political circumstances were certainly a key factor. That political impasse had been reached in the PDRY was clear enough by the late 1980s. Devoid of political legitimacy since the events of 1986, the government in the South tried in vain to seize back the initiative by accelerating political decentralisation, and holding elections for the 111-member Supreme People’s Council for only the second time since 1967⁷³. In the North too, the triumph of the GPC in wielding control over the LDAs seemed by the late 1980s to have given way to the increasing re-assertion of local and particularly tribal autonomy. A succession of violent incidents in the North gave the impression of waning state control and of the bankruptcy of the Sālih regime. The political incentive for unification was borne of mutual weakness, though greater in the South than the North.

The economic incentive for unification was similarly coloured by a sense of mutual fragility. The discovery of oil resources in the North in 1984, and then in the South in 1986 along the border zone, promised a massive and vital increase in revenues to a unified state if a mutually acceptable agreement could be reached, especially as both states were suffering badly as a result of declining remittance revenues from the mid-1980s. Important similarities between the YAR and PDRY in the economic sphere, particularly after 1986, also favoured unification. Both states were heavily dependent

⁶⁹ Gause 1988: 42.

⁷⁰ Dunbar 1992: 459-60.

⁷¹ *Ibid*: 461.

⁷² *Ibid*: 462.

⁷³ Burrowes 1989: 451.

on overseas development aid⁷⁴. Elsewhere, despite the efforts of the Southern regime, Carapico argues convincingly that in fact ‘differences in ownership patterns were largely evened out by comparable access to investment capital...these forces cumulatively reduced the differences between the two systems’⁷⁵.

Finally, the regional environment appeared, for the first time, conducive to unification. Where previously Saudi resistance to a unified Yemen had been strong – they had made open statements of support for tribal elements opposed to unity plans at the first round of negotiations in 1972 for example⁷⁶ – by the late 1980s it had apparently waned. This was of critical importance not only in view of the hostile nature of relations between Saudi Arabia and the PDRY, which had on several occasions been translated into proxy conflict, but also in view of the heavy dependence of the YAR on Saudi aid. In 1991 it was estimated that Saudi development assistance and budgetary aid to the northern government amounted to some \$600m annually – making it by some distance the country’s leading aid donor⁷⁷.

Whatever the global political justifications, unification was met with jubilation when it was announced – prematurely, and without public consultation – in May 1990. Within months, however, the new government was thrust into a position of responsibility on the international stage – as a temporary member of the UN Security Council at the time of Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait – for which it was utterly unprepared. The Yemeni government’s failure to side with the coalition at this time was to have profound implications for the unity project. Principally, it exposed the limitations of elite politics. Having guided the Yemens to what Etzioni would term the point of ‘initiation’, the elites found their ability to define the terms of political discourse in the unified country as integration expanded constrained by increasingly vociferous opposition from society, civil or otherwise.

Elite-level Politics in the Transition Period

Domestic jubilation was accompanied by a sense that the unified country was entering an era of increased political openness⁷⁸. The rhetoric emerging from the political leadership at this time suggested the construction of a new political community on democratic foundations: multi-party politics would be the focus for the resolution of outstanding differences between North and South, and elections were promised for November 1992. In the meantime, the leaderships of the former North and South agreed to hold back bureaucratic integration during what was termed the ‘transition period’ until a popular mandate for political change had been secured.

The transition period witnessed a flourishing of political activity nationwide. At elite level, the dominance of the YSP in the South and GPC in the North was challenged by a new political force – the Islāh party, founded in 1990. This complex coalition of conservative tribal, Islamist and radical Islamist interests (among others) brought together the paramount *shaykh* of the Hashīd, °Abdallah al-Ahmar, and °Abd al-Majīd al-Zindānī, a prominent *salafī* scholar of modernist orientation. It epitomised the accommodative politics characteristic of the YAR under °Alī °Abdallah Sālih, but also

⁷⁴ Carapico 1998: 40-3.

⁷⁵ Carapico 1993: 9-10.

⁷⁶ Gause 1988: 39.

⁷⁷ Dunbar 1992: 470.

⁷⁸ This sense emerges very strongly in Dresch 2000: 183-5.

made important inroads in the South, notably into Hadramawt – a long standing seat of resistance to socialism in the PDRY – and Abyan⁷⁹. Narrower, interest-based parties also emerged as lesser forces, most notably *Hizb al-Haqq*, which campaigned for renewed recognition of traditional Zaydī interests; its leading members were to a man *sāda*⁸⁰.

The defining feature of this period was unquestionably the explosion in the mobilisation of what might be termed ‘civil society’. These non-state groupings varied greatly in degrees of organisation and handled everything from water supplies, basic religious instruction and legal services to direct-action projects such as theatrical displays, ‘open schools’, and community betterment drives⁸¹. Groupings recognisable as NGOs became prominent, advocating human rights, providing support for women and so forth – often supported by financial aid from abroad aimed at buttressing Yemen’s fledgling ‘democratic experiment’.

Tribal forms of association also underwent a renaissance during this period. In the North, leading *shaykhs* continued to take an active role in dispute resolution on a national level, but in new ways. Dresch and Haykel contend that tribal meetings ‘bridged a good many differences of party allegiance by invoking the claim that all of us are tribesmen together, ‘our customs and traditions are one’⁸². Tribal conferences – a prominent feature of the transition period – were the embodiment of this revival. Beyond frequent gatherings in the North bringing together members of the Bakīl, Hashīd and Madhhaj confederations, there were renewed efforts in the South. In 1992, southern groupings that had been dormant for a generation or more – the Saybān, Banī Zanna and Kathīrī – sent delegates to a gathering in Hadramawt that seemed to represent an attempt to rediscover past practices and associations⁸³.

These developments could not disguise deepening inter-elite conflict as the leaderships of the former North and South engaged in a bitter power struggle. Disagreement revolved around the bases of the power-sharing arrangement between the YSP and GPC, but ultimately hinged on the perception that – in Yemen’s increasingly lawless towns – figures associated with the YSP were being targeted in a campaign of violence. The management of Yemen’s dire economic situation was also proving hugely problematic. The cost of the government’s miscalculations during the Gulf Crisis had been the deportation of 800,000 Yemeni migrant workers from the Gulf states as regional relations soured; combined with the concurrent sharp decline in remittance revenues, this presented the government with problems that it could not tackle in the institutional stalemate of the transition period. Between 1991 and 1993, per capita income fell by 46% despite increasing oil revenues⁸⁴; rioting was seen on the streets of Sana’a and Aden⁸⁵.

Parliamentary elections finally held April 1993 helped entrench deepening division rather than resolving political disputes. No single party gained an outright majority,

⁷⁹ Dresch and Haykel 1995.

⁸⁰ *Ibid*: 412.

⁸¹ Carapico 1998: 15.

⁸² Dresch and Haykel 1995: 415.

⁸³ Carapico 1998: 164.

⁸⁴ Gray 1998: 41

⁸⁵ Carapico 1998: 54.

though the GPC now held 123 out of the 301 seats in the *Majlis al-nuwwāb*, the Yemeni parliament. Crucially, Islāh pushed the YSP into third place, winning 62 seats to the socialists' 57, although the YSP remained by some distance the dominant party in the governorates of the former PDRY⁸⁶. The election provided the mandate – however limited – °Alī °Abdallah Sālih required to push through changes that would entrench his own position as President, and marginalise Vice-President °Alī Sālim al-Baydh. Flaws in the hastily-agreed constitution – which did not adequately define divisions of power – provided the President with further leeway. In the words of one observer, the *Majlis* was made 'inferior, if not totally subordinate, to executive authority'⁸⁷. Clear lines of authority emerged: the *Majlis* could debate, amend or improve legislation but could not draw it up; Sālih was given the authority to decree laws when the *Majlis* was not in session; he could appoint the Prime Minister and members of the Cabinet; he was Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces; and crucially, he was also head of the Supreme Judicial Council – a position that effectively gave him control over judicial appointments⁸⁸. The executive power of the Presidency was clear in the pattern of decrees issued from his office – 50 laws between May 1990 and May 1992 during the interim *Majlis*, before elections had even taken place⁸⁹.

By late 1993, the situation had reached crisis point. °Alī Sālim al-Baydh withdrew to Aden along with leading members of the YSP in protest at perceived abuses of the power-sharing agreement and the escalating violence. His parting shot, the now infamous 'eighteen points', was a list of demands detailing the discontents of the YSP leadership at the political *status quo*, and particularly the lack of accountability and decentralisation. Military stand-off ensued, with skirmishes taking place between forces loyal to the former Northern and Southern regimes. An attempt from within the *Majlis* to defuse the situation based on a fact-finding mission headed by the °Abdallah al-Ahmar, was rebuffed by Prime Minister (and YSP member) Haydar Abu Bakr al-°Attas, who admonished the Parliament to 'stay out of politics and pay attention to its own business'⁹⁰.

Non-elite political groupings took leading roles in attempting to resolve the crisis. Prominent NGOs brought leading intellectuals together in Sana'a and Aden in late 1993 and early 1994 to discuss how to tackle outstanding differences between the YSP and GPC. Most significant, however, was the Yemeni National Dialogue of Political Forces that emerged from efforts by two respected Northern *shaykhs*, Mujāhid Abu Shawārib and Sinān abu Lahūm. Bringing together prominent political figures from North and South, abu Shawārib and abu Lahūm worked from al-Baydh's eighteen points and counter-demands from the GPC to produce a *Wathīqa* – a blueprint for a new political order that was eventually signed by Sālih and al-Baydh in February 1994⁹¹. When by late February it became clear that both leaders had signed in bad faith, abu Shawārib and abu Lahūm departed the country, issuing a statement

⁸⁶ Gray 1998: 38

⁸⁷ Sharif 1998: 84.

⁸⁸ *Ibid*: 84.

⁸⁹ *Ibid*: 91.

⁹⁰ *Ibid*: 89.

⁹¹ Carapico 1998: 178-9.

condemning ‘those driving the country toward ruin and destruction’ and left the country⁹². The fighting started in earnest less than two months later.

Elite-level Politics after 1994: Sālih and the GPC triumphant

The Civil War destroyed the YSP as a political force. Militarily defeated, the YSP’s leadership now saw the last vestiges of its power dismantled as key state enterprises in the South were privatised⁹³. The GPC’s dominance was reinforced by further centralisation of executive power. Prodigious pre-war decree-making by the Presidency continued, with 70 issued from Sālih’s office between May 1994 and April 1995⁹⁴. The campaign to undermine the *Majlis* also resumed, as leading figures in the regime encouraged prominent *shaykhs* to bypass MPs and appeal directly to the President himself on local matters⁹⁵. Finally, a raft of post-war constitutional changes enshrined political centralisation in law: under Article 145 of the revised constitution, for instance, local administrative units and local councils were seen as ‘an inseparable part of the power of the state’ and ‘obligated to execute the decisions of the president and council of ministers in all cases’⁹⁶.

Sālih now turned against the GPC’s coalition partner in government, Islāh. Initially rewarded with key portfolios in the post-war cabinet of 1994, the party came increasingly to be regarded as a threat by leading members of the regime. Important Islāh assets, particularly in the education sector came under attack as the GPC sought to impose *de facto* one-party rule. Underlying tensions were not always clear; in 1996, there was dismay at press suggestions that the leaderships of Islāh and the GPC might be conspiring to rig the results of elections planned for spring 1997⁹⁷, but by early 1997, each side was openly accusing the other of trying to manipulate the electoral process by violence or other means⁹⁸.

These were blows to the legitimacy of the electoral process from which it did not recover. Leading opposition figures in exile called for voters not to participate in the elections, and few were surprised when the YSP announced a boycott in March 1997, barely a month before they were due to be held. When results came through in April, it was clear that the GPC had secured a crushing victory, winning 67% of the seats in parliament – in effect, enabling it to pass legislation unchallenged⁹⁹.

As Yemenis went to the polls in the 1999 Presidential elections, the veneer of political pluralism and openness that marked the first years of the transition period had vanished. One-party politics had been re-entrenched in an environment in which constitutional provisions were routinely ignored. Sālih stood as the only recognisable candidate against a little known GPC-loyalist; the sole credible opposition figure had been disqualified from the running by the *Majlis*. It came as no surprise that the President secured a new mandate – his ‘first’ five-year term in office under the

⁹² Dresch, 2000: 195.

⁹³ Key Southern assets were sold, but a host of smaller enterprises – many of which were unviable – were not. Email correspondence with Helen Lackner, April 2007.

⁹⁴ Sharif 1998: 91.

⁹⁵ *Ibid*: 88.

⁹⁶ Carapico 1998: 58.

⁹⁷ Gray 1998: 42.

⁹⁸ *Ibid*: 44.

⁹⁹ *Ibid*: 44.

stipulations of the revised post-war constitution – with an overwhelming 96.3% of the vote.

4. Coercive Contest: the limits of the state's attempts to enforce integration

Introduction

If the evidence at the political centre by the late 1990s suggested that ʿAli ʿAbdallah Sālih was at the peak of his powers, an examination of coercive contest outside the regime's major urban strongholds provides a lesson in the limitations of an elite-centred perspective. Instead, the impression was of a patchwork of armed actors in the coercive field – regular and irregular – embedded to a greater or lesser extent in society, and over which the state had, at most, tenuous control. Ready distinctions between 'military' and 'civilian' could not be made, not least because the armed forces were themselves far from homogenous. In these circumstances, the best that the regime could hope to achieve was a *near* monopoly on the legitimate use of force, subject to political accommodation. This near monopoly was never stable. Firstly, it was subject to persistent interference by Saudi interests seemingly intent on manipulating the Yemeni political environment to their advantage¹⁰⁰. Secondly, it required constant re-negotiation, inter- and even *intra*-institutional bargaining to maintain its hold.

Theoretical Considerations

Etzioni contends that '*coercive power* (or *force*) results when coercive assets are used by one unit to impose its will or norms on the others, or by the system to impose its norms on the member units. *Coercion* is used to refer to the use of the means of violence, and not to pressure in a more generic sense as is sometimes done'¹⁰¹. His theory is constructed around an absolute notion of coercion as *force* to compel, rather than a sociological conception of coercive power derived from institutional and norm-setting behaviours. Importantly, and at variance with other integration theorists, he argues that 'force is an essential element in the fabric of every fully integrated union. It has a deterring capacity when it is not used and a unifying function when used sparingly at critical moments'¹⁰². Indeed, 'the use of force is often a pre-requisite for the success or survival of a union. Unions that lack coercive power at the critical stage or that lack the resolve to use it disintegrate'¹⁰³.

This view breaks comprehensively with the Deutsch-inspired analyses of the Civil War of 1994 by Michael Hudson and Fred Halliday. It provides us with a much more flexible theoretical framework for understanding the use of violence since 1990, and why there has been no suggestion of a split down the old North-South lines in the period since the Civil War. At face value, the war was the example *par excellence* of a 'coercive showdown' at a critical point in the life history of the unification process. Etzioni's definition of coercive assets as 'the weapons, installations and manpower that the military, the police, or similar agencies command' is also constructive in paving the way for a considered examination of the different *kinds* of actor at play in the coercive field, as I examine the changing face of the coercive field in Yemen since 1978¹⁰⁴.

¹⁰⁰ Wenner 1993.

¹⁰¹ Etzioni 2001: 38.

¹⁰² *Ibid*: 72.

¹⁰³ *Ibid*: 73.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid*: 38.

The Situation in the North pre-1990

Early challenges to the consolidation of the military-republican regime in the YAR

When ʿAli ʿAbdallah Sālih came to power in 1978, he faced two major coercive challenges in quick succession. His reliance on an established power-base within the military during this period was total. In October 1978, there was a coup attempt against him by Nāsirist supporters of former President Ibrahīm al-Hamdī, with Libyan backing. The attempt was put down, but only at an advanced stage; in the days and weeks that followed, those suspected of involvement were rounded up, tried and executed¹⁰⁵. A second major challenge came a matter of months later with the border war between the PDRY and YAR. This was a complex conflict that involved not only an *inter*-state showdown, but also – and more importantly in the long-term – *intra*-state one, as the Sālih regime was challenged by North Yemeni dissidents fighting under the banner of the NDF alongside conventional forces from the PDRY.

The origins of the NDF lay in widespread disaffection on the Yemeni left after the settlement ending the Civil War in 1970¹⁰⁶. It had been established – with considerable material, logistical and financial support from the PDRY – in 1976 from a coalition of Shāfiʿīs of leftist orientation. With the support of the ideologically radical ʿAbd al-Fattāh Ismaʿīl in the PDRY, and logistical back-up from Southern forces along the border, this guerrilla group had been engaged in a low-intensity conflict against Northern forces throughout 1977 and 1978. In late 1978, the NDF leadership – now including Mujāhid al-Quhālī, a Northern Army officer who had defected with his entire unit – launched a new phase in its campaign against the government of the YAR¹⁰⁷. For a time Ibb and Taʿizz were directly threatened by Southern advances, and when the fighting was brought to an abrupt halt in March under pressure from the Arab League, the North had suffered a heavy military defeat.

The cost to Sālih’s perceived legitimacy as president was catastrophic. For Burrowes, ‘the base of the Sālih regime had shrunk to little more than the military, a military that was divided, depleted and discredited by the corrosive effects of the al-Hamdī assassination and the dismal showing in the border fight’¹⁰⁸. It was this position of weakness – and these substantive early coercive challenges – that inspired a major expansion of the state’s coercive apparatus, as the new president sought to shore up his position.

Re-establishing the state’s conventional coercive power

The most conspicuous manifestation of this drive was unquestionably the massive increase in defence expenditure during the first years of Sālih’s rule. In 1978 defence expenditure stood at \$79m out of a total budget of \$1.5bn; by 1981 this figure was \$212m, and in 1982 it more than doubled to nearly \$527m¹⁰⁹. The size of the armed forces during this period remained constant; expenditure was instead concentrated on purchasing new equipment from the United States and the Soviet Union (under a major arms deal struck in 1979), re-organisation, and improvements in training aided by foreign advisers. Sālih also made a raft of political appointments. He posted his half-brother as Army Commander at Hizyaz in the Sanhānī heartland around Sana’a,

¹⁰⁵ Burrowes 1987: 95.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*: 99.

¹⁰⁷ Kostiner 1990: 61-72.

¹⁰⁸ Burrowes 1987: 96

¹⁰⁹ IISS, various years.

and other relatives were elevated to senior military positions, including °Alī Muhsin al-Ahmar from the President’s village¹¹⁰. Finally, an elite Republican Guard unit was assembled, numbering 3-5,000 men of Sanhānī affiliation under the command of Muhammad °Abdallah Sālih, the President’s full brother¹¹¹.

The size of military investment reflected the urgency of the problems Sālih faced, for the challenge from the NDF was fast becoming one that posed a direct threat to the regime. Major offensives in December 1980 and spring 1981 enabled the guerrillas to establish a foothold in the Sana°a-Ta°izz-Hudayda triangle in the heart of the YAR, setting up rudimentary administration that displaced existing state provisions¹¹². Hampered by the need to avoid a showdown with the NDF for fear of sparking wider North-South conflict, Sālih pursued a political resolution, seeking direct contacts with NDF leaders as early as June 1979¹¹³. The fall from grace of °Abd al Fattāh Isma°īl in April 1980, and the rise of °Alī Nāsir Muhammad – with whom Sālih personally enjoyed a cordial relationship – persuaded the Northern President that the time was right to mount a crackdown in southern regions of the YAR, where the NDF’s campaign had continued unabated since the end of the border war of 1979. Crucially, the regime could now rely on the support of irregular forces including tribal levies from those allied to °Abdallah al-Ahmar, and members of the so-called ‘Islamic Front’ – an Islamist grouping established in 1979 with Saudi financial backing and a strong ideological aversion to leftist influence in the YAR.

This tipped the balance in the regime’s favour when intensive fighting broke out in March 1982. With the PDRY having withdrawn its support for the NDF after the latest round of inter-state negotiations, the Northern Army and its irregular allies were able to operate much closer to the border than they had before. The NDF’s force of 600 was no match for its larger and better armed opponents, and rapidly succumbed.

The realm of state coercive power extended?

The showdown with the NDF had demonstrated the extent of the state’s reliance on irregular forces to shore up its fragile coercive apparatus. In the ensuing period, the regime embarked on an attempt to greatly extend its reach in the security sphere. Expanding the state security apparatus was deemed imperative, and began with the re-organisation of the National Security Organisation (NSO) under the auspices of the Ministry of Interior¹¹⁴. Sālih was again keen to ensure personal loyalty: the first head of National Security under his rule was Muhammad °Abdallah Sālih¹¹⁵. By 1984, the President’s brother commanded a paramilitary force of 5,000 men, with armoured personal carriers and even anti-tank weaponry. Links between this organisation and the military were strong; NSO members were also army officers.

The growing power of state security in urban areas was manifested in a pattern of politically-motivated ‘disappearances’. Arbitrary arrests on charges of affiliation with

¹¹⁰ Dresch 2000: 149, 180.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*: 147. The Sanhānī (of which Sālih is a member) tribe had been an obscure part of the Hashīd confederation pre-independence, but rose to prominence through the newly-established Army in the 1960s and 1970s.

¹¹² Burrowes 1987: 103

¹¹³ *Ibid.*: 100.

¹¹⁴ This organisation had originally been established by al-Hamdī. See *ibid.*: 63.

¹¹⁵ Dresch 2000: 149.

the NDF were common during the mid-1980s despite the government's pledge of an amnesty for all fighters as a condition of the ceasefire in 1982. As late as 1993, Amnesty International reported that many of these detainees were still being held, and evidence of torture was widespread¹¹⁶. Human rights organisations also questioned the breadth of the NSO's remit, which justified searching homes, monitoring telephone conversations, reading personal correspondence, and other forms of intrusion into private life in terms of defence of national security¹¹⁷. The zenith of the security state came after a series of attempts on the life of the President in 1987-8; in 1990, NSO numbers stood at 10,000 men¹¹⁸.

Conventional policing, which had been an early concern of the al-Hamdī government, was also expanded. As early as 1976, the police force nationwide had numbered some 13,000, and by 1981, it accounted for 16% of total state expenditure¹¹⁹. This was in some respects an elite force; recruitment was open only to those who were literate, and many officers were sent abroad to Egypt, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia for training.

These changes might have suggested a growing capacity on the part of the state to enforce political integration by coercive means, but the regime's power outside urban centres was severely constrained. The police were 'not welcome' in the tribal regions of the North, and the extent to which the NSO could exert its authority outside the major urban centres was equally doubtful¹²⁰. Instead, Sālih's system of political accommodation at the centre was replicated in rural areas, but here, in the absence of state capacity, it meant surrendering responsibility for rural law enforcement to tribal *shaykhs*. This reflected two realities: the limited availability of resources for state capacity-building, and the coercive strength of some of the power loci it faced, often externally-supported. Leading Northern *shaykhs* could muster irregular forces numbering up to 30,000 men between them, and 'Abdallah al-Ahmar alone was reckoned to command a force of 20,000¹²¹. Weaponry and logistical support were also readily available. Tribal groupings held an array of heavy weaponry seized from Egyptian forces in 1967 as they withdrew from Yemen, and the Saudi government was rumoured to provide financial and material support for restive tribal groupings in Ma'rib and Jawf as it sought leverage over North Yemeni domestic and foreign policy¹²².

The combination of heavily armed opposition and impassable terrain in the Northern highlands ensured that the state generally avoided armed conflict with tribal groupings throughout the 1980s. Any attempt at a showdown also risked engendering problems from within, since the military was itself by no means a homogenous and centrally-controlled structure. In fact, it resembled a collection of relatively self-contained fighting units, each with competing loyalties. Though Sālih attempted to ensure personal loyalty through political appointment, the realities of the struggle against the NDF had obliged him to overturn many of the ostensibly 'anti-tribal'

¹¹⁶ Amnesty International (AI) 1993: 4-10.

¹¹⁷ Krieger 1986: 211.

¹¹⁸ EIU 1989: 43.

¹¹⁹ Krieger 1986: 211.

¹²⁰ *Ibid*: 211

¹²¹ *Christian Science Monitor*, January 13th 1983

¹²² Email correspondence with Helen Lackner, April 2007; Wenner 1993: 175.

reforms of al-Hamdī, and bring other leading tribal figures outside his immediate circle into the fold, including Mujāhid abu Shawārib of the Hashīd. The pattern was repeated at junior level. Many men were both tribesmen and regular soldiers, and it was common for them to leave their units for sometimes extended periods to fight alongside their kinsmen in local disputes. Several newspapers in the North also documented cases in which military equipment or land was sold on to tribal figures¹²³.

The result was one system of law enforcement in urban areas, and another in rural ones. The leading tribal *shaykhs*, for instance, ran private prisons and frequently administered justice at local level with advice from religious scholars. Where disputes between tribal groupings escalated into armed conflict, resolutions were to be found in locally-mediated negotiation overseen by neutral tribal figures and *not* direct state intervention. On occasions when proposed expansions in the remit of the state came into conflict with local dynamics, government officials had to tread carefully. This was apparent in the later 1980s when overseas interests began prospecting intensively for oil on behalf of the government. Negotiating the construction of facilities for oil exploration and extraction on nominally tribal land with local *shaykhs* helped to avert the risk of coercive showdown for the time being, but as we shall see, tribal figures expected material and financial returns on these arrangements¹²⁴. Just how easily *shaykhs* could divest themselves of political accommodations was demonstrated in 1989 and 1990, when the Sālih regime faced – for the first time – serious tribal insurrections in Khawlān and Sa^ḥdah, apparently in protest at the proposed unification plans¹²⁵.

The Situation in the South pre-1990

If the military in the North suffered from a lack of cohesion throughout the pre-unification period, the same applied – and was perhaps more pronounced – in the South. More seriously, these divisions were characterised by factionalism that spread right across the coercive apparatus of the state, with military and security organisations treated as personal fiefs by members of the leadership. Events in 1978 provided early indications of future trouble. Allegations of Southern complicity in the assassination of the YAR's President al-Ghashmī turned the tide against long-term PDRY President, Sālim Rubay^ḥa ^ḥAlī; when he tried to enlist loyal units in the irregular armed forces to combat his detractors, he was countered by army units loyal to his great rival, ^ḥAbd al Fattāh Isma^ḥīl, captured, tried and executed¹²⁶.

Conventional coercive power as a vehicle for political and social transformation

This was profoundly at odds with the state-sanctioned image of the armed forces as key instruments of unity and social transformation. The Army in particular was, from the foundation of the independent state onwards, regarded as a crucial tool for the political, social and economic transformation envisioned by the Southern leadership. This was exemplified by its title – the Popular Defence Force (PDF) – by education programmes organised for recruits, and by the attachment of 'political advisers' to military units, as well as early involvement in a range of public works. Investment in the PDF was substantial: \$56m out of a total government expenditure of \$224m in

¹²³ Krieger 1986: 198.

¹²⁴ *Washington Post*, January 2nd 1988.

¹²⁵ *The Independent*, May 12th 1990; BBC Summary of World Broadcasts (BBC SWB), May 3rd 1990

¹²⁶ Kostiner 1990: 70.

1978, rising to \$159m in 1982, and \$194m out of a total expenditure of \$1.09bn in 1984¹²⁷.

The problem was that although in theory state control over the PDF was absolute, in reality political loyalty tended to be valued more highly than experience or ability. The PDF quickly became associated with ʿAlī ʿAntār and ʿAbd al-Fattāh Ismaʿīl, who enjoyed considerable support among the ranks. This was partly due to changing tribal and regional affiliations. Where in the pre-independence period the British had relied heavily on levying ʿAwlāqī and ʿAudhālī tribesmen from the Sultanates in the interior, in the post-independence period the Army came to be dominated by men from Abyan and Lahj – just as the armed forces had become a vehicle for the advancement of the previously anonymous Sanhān in the North.

Domestic security arrangements

Domestic law enforcement duties fell primarily to the state's burgeoning security apparatus, the Public Security Force (PSF), which included the regular police. In the 1970s, this arm of the state had resembled another semi-independent, coercive fiefdom under Muhammad Saʿīd ʿAbdallah ('Muhsin'), first as Deputy Minister of Interior, and as Minister of State Security from 1974. The PSF developed a fearsome reputation, and with some justification; in 1977 for example, they sentenced eight farmers to death for their part in a protest against government restrictions on *qāt* production¹²⁸.

Although Muhsin was removed from his post in 1979, any perceived weakening of the security state was superficial. In 1986, human rights organisations alleged that 'South Yemen [was] the worst police state in the Arab world, an estimated one quarter of its population allegedly being engaged in some kind of security work'¹²⁹. Although this statement was exaggerated, the security apparatus in the South was indeed vast – at 30,000 men including the regular police force it was six times the size of its counterpart in the North, serving a population that was three times smaller. Its reputation for ruthlessness derived partly from the involvement of Cuban and East German advisers tasked with training a state security apparatus modelled on the *Stasi*. Human rights reports throughout this period were scathing in their assessments of the situation in the PDRY. Besides politically-motivated 'disappearances', state security stood accused of imprisoning citizens without charge and using torture, much of it directed against victims of intra-party disputes¹³⁰. Clear division between state security apparatus and what might be termed a civilian police force were impossible to draw. Though a Civil Police Force had been formally established in 1983, it remained under the control of the PSF throughout this period, and its origins in the colonial Aden Police were barely recognisable after a series of purges in the late 1960s designed to remove any vestiges of British influence¹³¹.

¹²⁷ Figures from IISS, various years.

¹²⁸ Ismael and Ismael 1986: 67.

¹²⁹ Krieger 1986: 317.

¹³⁰ 'Information on Human Rights Abuses by the YSP in the Former South Yemen', UNHCR, accessed online at <http://www.unhcr.org/home/RSDCOI/414fe8a24.html>, May 1st 2007.

¹³¹ Krieger 1986: 321.

Irregular forces and grass-roots social transformation

The People's Militia was established by Sālim Rubay^ca 'Alī with Chinese support in 1969 to counter what he saw as the growing – and detrimental – power of the conventional armed forces in South Yemen¹³². It soon developed additional importance, increasing the PDRY's official military capacity by an extra 15,000 irregulars on top of the conventional armed forces total of 20,900. The Militias were important actors in law enforcement, in concert with locally-based People's Defence Committees. Duties ranged from maintaining night-time security and protecting sensitive installations, to distributing ID cards and participating in health and anti-literacy campaigns¹³³. They also had an ideological function; the programme advocated by the Militias combined military and ideological training including aspects of Marxist political economy¹³⁴.

The coercive showdown that failed: civil war in 1986

By 1986, appearances suggested that the state had established centralised control over the use of force, assisted by a policy of detribalisation that reduced the coercive threat posed by traditional power loci. The perception of central control was illusory, however. Each coercive arm had come to operate semi-autonomously of the others, serving as little more than guarantors of personal power for leading figures in the regime as they engaged in disputes over ideological direction, domestic economic policy, and foreign policy stances. The fragilities of this system and the enduring importance of complex affiliations were brutally exposed in January 1986, when long-running tensions within the party leadership finally boiled over into open war.

The crisis began in February 1985 with efforts by senior party members to break 'Alī Nāsir's monopoly over the three key offices of state – the presidency, premiership and position of party secretary-general¹³⁵. Opponents of the incumbent president, perceiving an effort to extend his personal control over the country, began agitating and distributing weapons among their followers – who tended, almost by definition, to share their regional or tribal affiliations. In May 1985, there were rumours of a coup attempt against 'Alī Nāsir led by 'Alī 'Antār, and by the time of the YSP's Third Congress in October, lines of support were clearly marked: 'Alī Nāsir stood alone among the established figures in the party, opposed by 'Alī 'Antār, Sālih Muslih Qāsim, Sālim Sālih Muhammad, 'Abd al-Fattāh Isma'īl (who had by now returned from exile in the USSR) and 'Alī Sālim al-Baydh¹³⁶. It seems that 'Alī Nāsir decided to take matters into his own hands at a cabinet meeting on 13th January 1986, ordering members of his personal bodyguard to kill key opponents in the Politburo. The assassination attempt was botched; several key opponents of 'Alī Nāsir escaped as rival guards became embroiled in a pitched battle in and around the party headquarters. Within hours the fighting had engulfed the whole of Aden.

Rival loyalties in the coercive apparatus now came to fore. Though 'Alī Nāsir enjoyed support from the small Navy and Air Force, his position vis-à-vis the Army

¹³² This view stemmed from deep suspicion towards the armed forces by many on the far left of the independence movement; they saw the army in particular as a vehicle for continued colonial oppression because of the imprint British rule had left upon its structure

¹³³ Ismael and Ismael 1986: 61.

¹³⁴ Krieger 1986: 312.

¹³⁵ Halliday 1990: 39.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*: 40.

was tenuous, particularly since key units including the tank corps owed their existence to °Alī °Antār, who had taken a leading role in the reform and expansion of the armed forces from the mid-1970s. Although °Alī Nāsir *could* call on support from Army units from his native Dathīna, and brought Militia units into the fighting on his side, once news of the assassination of °Alī °Antār emerged, the tide very quickly turned against him. The tank corps, almost entirely recruited from Abyan and Lahj, sided with the ‘rebels’, as did the PSF. The People’s Militias, meanwhile, split along regional or tribal lines into a host of unpredictable irregular forces without clear lines of control¹³⁷. Over the next few days the fighting spread to most of the rest of the country, resembling little more than a settling of scores. Hundreds of people were summarily executed after hastily convened, unofficial trials, among them some of the brightest of the new generation of technocrats to emerge from the PDRY’s education system.

In just twelve days of fighting, the fabric of the state was destroyed. Official estimates put the death toll at 4,330, but most external observers agreed it was much higher. In Aden, the damage was estimated at anything between \$120m and \$140m, a huge figure relative to the PDRY’s meagre GDP. Crucially, the core of the historic party leadership had been either killed or forced into exile: °Alī Nāsir and most of his supporters had fled to the YAR and Ethiopia; °Alī °Antār, °Abd al-Fattāh Isma‘īl and Sālih Muslih Qāsīm had been killed in the first few days of fighting; and by one estimate, 50 of the 75 members of the YSP Central Committee were now dead, wounded, missing, jailed or in exile¹³⁸.

Reform and coercive roll-back: picking up the pieces of the 1986 conflict

The after-effects of leadership conflict were felt in the South well beyond unification. Having sacrificed what little legitimacy it had left in the armed free-for-all of January 1986, and faced with the prospect of rebuilding in the midst of a further economic downturn as Soviet support declined, the government of the PDRY opted for political reform and roll-back of the more invasive branches of the security apparatus. These efforts were hampered by continuing fallout from the conflict. The trial of °Alī Nāsir and 141 of his colleagues, on charges of treason, dragged on until December 1987; the verdict – sentencing the former president and 34 followers to death and countless others to lengthy prison sentences *in absentia* – sparked a regional outcry and demonstrated that despite the veneer of political liberalisation, the Southern regime remained wedded to a vision of political integration through coercion.

The Transition Period

We have seen that in both North and South, the state sponsored enormous expansions in security apparatuses to augment the growing conventional power of the military. In the immediate post-unification period, the failure to integrate the various coercive arms of the two states into a cohesive whole created a stand-off that contributed significantly to the souring of relations between the YSP and the GPC. The impact was two-fold: on one hand, evidence emerged of increasing lawlessness even in urban areas where state control had previously been relatively strong; and on the other, there was a blossoming of civil society in the absence of clear lines of authority within a security apparatus that might otherwise have crushed it.

¹³⁷ Halliday 1986: 39.

¹³⁸ Burrowes 1989: 443.

Failures of integration were noted first in evidence of the declining power of the security services. Sheila Carapico contends that there was a noticeable fall in actions against civil society organisations, and fewer illegal detentions and human rights abuses during this period¹³⁹. Such observations were, of course, only partially representative. The supposed dismantling of security apparatuses controlled by the YSP and GPC could not mask the rising power of one newly created, this time answerable only to the President: the Political Security Organisation (PSO). It is unclear when exactly this organisation was created, but by the elections of 1993 its existence had become common knowledge, and it had acquired a high-profile head: Ghālib al-Qumāsh, a close associate of °Alī °Abdallah Sālih who had previously been Minister of Interior in the first unity cabinet¹⁴⁰. Al-Qumāsh's previous post – and control over the CSO – went to another GPC member, Yahya Muhammad al-Mutawwakil¹⁴¹.

In the military sphere, divisions were clear and differences at times publicly expressed. Appointments did not help matters; the first minister of defence was Haytham Qāsim Tāhir, a Southern tank commander from Lahj and veteran of the fighting in 1986¹⁴². Half-hearted efforts to integrate the military leaderships of North and South under his leadership failed utterly despite a public declaration of success in May 1992. The result was a stand-off with both leading political parties proving reluctant to relinquish control over coercive actors that had become intimately linked with dominant members of each – whether by personal, tribal or regional affiliations. This pattern was repeated in structures of command. Although Tāhir retained his cabinet post in the post-election re-shuffle of April 1993, relations were never easy between him and senior Northern commanders, most of whom owed their allegiance directly to the President. In July 1993, the Army Chief-of-Staff, General °Abdallah Husayn al-Bashīrī, a Northerner, submitted his resignation in protest at Tāhir's domineering leadership style, citing dubious promotions of some 3,500 Southern officers, and the sale of Army land as motivating factors in his decision¹⁴³. The elite Republican Guard of the former YAR also remained a key point of contention, increasing in size during this period despite pledges from the President that he would disband it¹⁴⁴.

The changing military and security balance contributed to a growing sense of lawlessness in both towns and rural areas. At first, this was evident in a wave of assassinations and violence in urban areas, much of which appeared to target interests allied to the YSP. In March and April 1992, a series of attacks against YSP members culminated in a bomb explosion at the house of Sālim Sālih Muhammad, then deputy leader of the YSP¹⁴⁵, and on June 14th, Hāshim al-°Attas, the brother of YSP-affiliated Prime Minister, was assassinated in Hadramawt¹⁴⁶. The shooting of °Alī Sālim al-Baydh's nephew in October 1993, in an attack almost certainly intended for his sons,

¹³⁹ Carapico 1998: 140.

¹⁴⁰ *Intelligence Newsletter*, July 1st 1993.

¹⁴¹ Cabinet listings from <http://www.al-bab.com/yemen/gov/gov2.htm>, accessed February 18th 2007.

¹⁴² *IN*, March 4th 1993.

¹⁴³ *IN*, July 29th 1993; Agence France Presse (AFP), July 21st 1993.

¹⁴⁴ *IN*, March 4th 1993.

¹⁴⁵ Reuters, July 7th 1992.

¹⁴⁶ BBC SWB, June 20th 1992.

was an important factor in his decision to withdraw to Aden shortly afterwards¹⁴⁷. Leading Northern figures were not exempt, either. In an unusually audacious attack, the home of Muhammad ʿAbdallah Sālih was also targeted by bombers¹⁴⁸. In most instances, perpetrators were never identified. Other attacks, especially those aimed at tourist targets in Aden, were pinned on emerging Islamist groups including the ‘Afghans’, veterans of the anti-Soviet campaign in Afghanistan.

In rural areas, the state faced renewed assertions of tribal autonomy. Actions were sometimes motivated by concerns for proper tribal justice. In February 1993, for example, tribesmen from the Dhinn region, east of Sana’a, kidnapped a Japanese irrigation expert, demanding the handover of two Army officers accused of killing one of their own, in return for his release¹⁴⁹. In other instances, however, kidnappings were manifestations of long-standing grievances against a state that was perceived to be withholding funds from oil extraction on tribal lands. This was the ostensible reason for the high-profile seizure of American diplomat Haynes Mahoney in Ma’rib in November 1993 and for further kidnappings of oil workers in January and March 1994¹⁵⁰.

The Civil War

Popular concern at perceived lawlessness gradually gave way to more immediate fears of Civil War by late 1993. In truth, both the YSP and GPC had been preparing for this eventuality for some time. Defence expenditure during the transition period was astronomical, amounting to far more than the combined totals of North and South pre-1990. In 1991, for example, military expenditure was \$1.06bn, and this level of investment in hardware continued throughout the early 1990s as both sides sought to boost their readiness for future conflict¹⁵¹. Patterns of deployment were ominous, with both sides strategically positioning loyal units to pressurise the other into political concessions. Thus the South had Army brigades in the North in ʿAmrān, Dhamār and Khawlān as well as two smaller units in Sana’a, while the North had a unit near Dhāliʿ, and the huge al-ʿAmāliqa Brigade in Abyan¹⁵².

As relations between senior figures in the YSP and GPC deteriorated in late 1993 and early 1994, skirmishes between these units became frequent occurrences. They were accompanied by a sudden reassertion of authority by the security forces that many had thought were losing their influence in urban areas, stopping highway and urban traffic for random searches¹⁵³. What was remarkable about these events was how frequently irregular forces became involved – a recognition, perhaps, of the military parity between North and South at the outbreak of war, and fears on both sides of what outcome it might bring. As early as March 1994, *The Independent* recorded that Bakīl tribesmen had joined in local fighting alongside forces from the PDRY when a Southern brigade came under attack from Northern armoured units¹⁵⁴. Although the tribes never participated in an *official* capacity, the involvement of levied forces

¹⁴⁷ Reuters, October 30th 1993.

¹⁴⁸ BBC SWB, September 23rd 1992.

¹⁴⁹ AFP, February 7th 1993.

¹⁵⁰ BBC SWB, January 10th 1994.

¹⁵¹ Figures from IISS, various years.

¹⁵² Warburton 1995: 24.

¹⁵³ Carapico 1998: 177.

¹⁵⁴ *The Independent*, March 2nd 1994.

throughout the war was an important dimension of the fighting. Indeed, the complexity of the fighting in May and June 1994 drove one prominent Western journalist to write of the conflict that ‘shorthand terms like ‘civil war’ and ‘North versus South’, which might have been appropriate seven weeks ago, are no longer accurate...’¹⁵⁵.

What began ostensibly as a coercive showdown between the YSP and GPC for control of the coercive arm of the state – in all its forms – descended into something more closely resembling an armed free-for-all, with a host of regular and irregular actors involved on both sides. Sālih once again brought in Hashīd tribal levies now numbering as many as 60,000 men, just as he had done in his bid to defeat the NDF in the early 1980s. This time, though, he relied heavily on irregular forces comprising veteran *mujāhidīn* and dissident Islamists whose hostility to Socialism and financial and military backing from Saudi Arabia made them strategic allies in the South¹⁵⁶. Southern leaders also attempted to win unofficial military backing from tribal forces, but with little success. Initially, al-Baydh sought the allegiance of Bakīl tribes in the North that had long been indifferent, and at times hostile, to Sālih’s rule¹⁵⁷. When this failed, leading figures in the newly declared Democratic Republic of Yemen (DRY) made attempts to garner support closer to home; in June, Aden Radio reported two attempts by al-Baydh to foster tribal support in Hadramawt and Shabwa as the tide of the fighting turned against the Southerners¹⁵⁸.

It was the overwhelming size of the irregular forces that the North could call upon that helped to turn the tide of the conflict decisively in its favour, despite blatant Saudi support for the South, not least in the form of arms shipments to the DRY¹⁵⁹. After weeks of stalemate around al-Baydh’s home town of Mukalla’ and the Southern capital, Aden, Northern forces made significant breakthroughs at the beginning of July, and the two cities fell on July 5th and 7th respectively. The subsequent ransack of Aden over a number of days was probably attributable to political bargains struck in Sana’a, as irregular forces reclaimed the dues of bargains struck with the Sālih regime.

The Post-war Impasse: negotiating a limited ‘Security State’

The post-war period was characterised by massive intrusions of a rejuvenated security apparatus into all walks of urban life. This was a security apparatus that – in concert with the police – acted with increasing impunity, especially after the GPC’s electoral success in 1997 and Sālih’s re-election to the presidency in 1999. Previously the state’s ability to maintain basic law and order in urban centres seemed compromised; now security organisations were used as partisan bodies by the regime, imprisoning political opponents, closing down civil society organisations, and violently breaking up protests. The newly ascendant PSO was heavily involved, under the watchful eye of the President. Actions were justified by recourse to laws that had often recently been altered to allow for the marginalisation of organised political opposition. The Parties Law, for instance, was amended in the run-up to the 1997 legislative elections

¹⁵⁵ MEI, June 24th 1994: 10.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*: 16.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*: 10.

¹⁵⁸ BBC SWB, June 17th 1994.

¹⁵⁹ Dresch 2000: 196.

to require registration, and enable the Supreme Parties Commission to intervene in internal party affairs¹⁶⁰.

In fact, the pattern had been set during and immediately after the Civil War. The YSP had been hit hard by the destruction of printing presses and arrest of journalists that put leading leftists publications such as *al-Mustaqbal* and *Sawt al-ʿUmmal* either temporarily or permanently out of business in 1994¹⁶¹. In the immediate aftermath of the war, other centres of opposition were targeted; 60 members of the Zaydī party, *Al-Haqq*, were arrested in August 1994 and held without charge by the PSO until their release the following year¹⁶². The campaign of intimidation against staff at *Al-Shura*, a newspaper noted for its criticism of all three major political parties during the transition period, was also indicative. The editor and senior journalists were arrested by security forces in summer 1994; later the same year, a series of attacks against the newspaper's offices provided the justification the Ministry of Interior needed to forcibly close *Al-Shura* down, citing the 'disputed' nature of its activities¹⁶³. Elsewhere, leading opposition figures were targeted on the streets. Abu Bakr al-Saqqāf, a professor of philosophy at Sana'a University, was abducted and beaten twice by the PSO in 1995 after writing a pamphlet entitled *The Invasion of the South and Internal Colonialism*¹⁶⁴.

By the late 1990s, local newspapers regularly carried reports of threats against prominent opposition figures and journalists¹⁶⁵, but in rural areas the state's coercive monopoly was more doubtful than ever. The state faced a concerted challenge from tribes in the far North and East, and now increasingly in the South. In some respects the Civil War had complicated matters; the tribes now represented an arguably more potent coercive threat than they had done in the transition period, having seized large weapons hauls during the fighting in 1994. But difficulties were greatly exacerbated by weapons inflows from North of the border, financed by Saudi interests that seemed intent on manipulating the Yemeni regime, whether through affiliations with leading members of the Hashīd confederacy, or sponsoring rising Islamist groups¹⁶⁶. As ever, these external actors were difficult to identify, and their connections to the Saudi government hard to discern.

In general, the Sālih regime continued its long-standing policy of non-intervention in tribal disputes. In one particularly bloody instance of inter-tribal fighting in 1996, the Army simply erected roadblocks on the major routes into Sana'a to 'prevent the clashes from spilling over into the city'¹⁶⁷. Where state forces did become involved, it was to try to secure the release of Westerners, and sometimes government officials, kidnapped by tribal groupings, but again the approach focused mainly on conciliation within local frameworks, with neutral tribal figures called in to negotiate the release of hostages. The *threat* of coercive inducement was also present (tribal hide-outs

¹⁶⁰ Carapico 1998: 191

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*: 191.

¹⁶² AI 1997: 6.

¹⁶³ Carapico 1998: 192.

¹⁶⁴ AI 1997: 14-15

¹⁶⁵ See for example *Yemen Times* (YT), March 1st-7th 1999.

¹⁶⁶ Kostiner 1995: 692.

¹⁶⁷ Associated Press (AP), April 5th 1996.

were surrounded, and relatives or kinsmen arrested), but usually remained no more than that.

On the few occasions the Army *did* try to assert its authority in rural areas, it invariably paid a heavy price. An early attempt – perhaps inspired by an inflated, post-war sense of military prowess – to confiscate weapons taken by the Sa^cdī tribe north of Aden in the Civil War ended in failure with 20 soldiers killed¹⁶⁸. By the late 1990s, there was a growing sense of state impotence in rural areas. Hostage-taking by tribal groupings, especially in Khawlān in the East, was widespread; a British journalist working in Yemen at the time estimated that there were 118 kidnappings in the country between 1996 and 2000, involving 147 foreigners¹⁶⁹. From 1998 there was evidence of a campaign against Western oil interests in the East by disaffected tribes angered at the paucity of government investment in the oil-rich zones. The pipeline carrying oil from Ma'rib to the Red Sea was badly affected, being bombed no less than 18 times in 1998 by tribesmen from the Jahm¹⁷⁰.

Every aspect of state activity was subject to contest, including foreign policy. In 2000 the Yemeni and Saudi governments signed an agreement finally ending their lengthy border dispute, but the boundary they imposed overrode a 240 year-old pact between tribal groups in the area, and ran straight through the middle of territory under the control of the Wā^cilah. The leading *shaykh* of the Wā^cilah at the time threatened violence, and skirmishes between Yemeni and Saudi forces and tribal irregulars have been a persistent problem in the area since¹⁷¹.

None of this was to suggest that absolute anarchy reigned in rural areas, although at times it must have seemed so. Leading *shaykhs* demonstrated a willingness to work alongside the state, and their effectiveness in resolving disputes and kidnapping stand-offs was important. They also continually sought agreement on independent frameworks to maintain rural order; in 2000, Sinān abu Lahūm inaugurated a 'Charter of Honour' aimed at reducing incidences of dispute between member tribes of the Bakīl after his own son was kidnapped¹⁷². The point, however, was that these initiatives offered the regime at best proxy control over rural security. In 1997, Sālih himself was said to have admitted that Yemen 'was being managed, not ruled'¹⁷³. In this sense, the establishment by the government of the *Dār al-Tahkīm* in 1997 to 'arbitrate in tribal vendetta cases, in conformance with Islamic law and tribal customs and laws' was a sign of desperation. Although it aimed to build consensus by including judges, lawyers, legal advisers and a number of prominent *shaykhs* on its panel, there is little suggestion that it ever played a significant role¹⁷⁴.

To these potent coercive challenges was added the prospect of rising Islamist violence from the mid-1990s, though in truth it was difficult to determine what *kind* of challenge these groups represented to the state. The 'Afghans', veteran *mujāhidīn* led by the Southern notable, Tāriq al-Fadlī, constituted an important irregular force in

¹⁶⁸ AFP, January 28th 1996.

¹⁶⁹ Kostiner 2000: 629.

¹⁷⁰ BBC SWB, December 7th 1998.

¹⁷¹ *YT*, August 28th-September 3rd 2000.

¹⁷² *YT*, April 3rd-9th 2000.

¹⁷³ Kostiner 1997: 665.

¹⁷⁴ AFP, October 2nd 1997.

1994, but were marginalised after their highly-publicised attacks on the tombs of Shāfiʿī saints in the South¹⁷⁵. They were opposed by Sunni Islamists led by the Northern ʿālim, Muqbil al-Wādiʿī, frequently described as a *salafī*. Coercive confrontations with the state, however, were few and far between. The greatest problems came from the Aden-Abyan Islamic Army (AAIA), a radical Sunni grouping in the South with international affiliations that became increasingly active in the late 1990s. In early 1998, state security forces attacked an ‘almost impregnable’ training camp run by the AAIA near Zinjibār with heavy losses¹⁷⁶. Later in the same year, members of the AAIA seized four foreign hostages; a bungled rescue attempt by state security forces left all of the hostages dead¹⁷⁷.

Sālih’s dominant performance in the presidential election in 1999 promised a renewed effort to enforce the state’s monopoly, but delivered little. A campaign to ban hand weapons in the towns in the same year had some effect in the major cities – particularly Sanaʿa and Aden – but little elsewhere¹⁷⁸. In urban and rural areas, the state embarked on a campaign to scale back the law enforcement power of local *shaykhs*, targeting in particular the private prisons. In one highly unusual instance, a makeshift detention centre of shipping containers was even discovered on the grounds of Sanaʿa University, for the imprisonment of ‘soldiers, citizens and students who violate rules’¹⁷⁹. But these were carefully targeted campaigns. Leading *shaykhs* continued to operate localised systems of law enforcement with impunity, because the politics of accommodation dictated that they could not be challenged.

Conclusion

In describing civil-military relations in Yemen, some authors have classified it alongside Syria, Egypt and Tunisia as a *mukhabarāt* state¹⁸⁰. While this certainly pertained in the major urban centres both North and South, it is a gross misrepresentation of the situation nationwide. As we have seen, state coercive power weakened badly outside the major urban strongholds, particularly in the North, despite substantial investment in security apparatuses and militaries pre-1990. The situation in the South was complicated by the emergence of fiefdoms in the state coercive apparatus; the fact that the conflict in 1986 was so quickly transformed into factional and tribally-based fighting demonstrated how much of an illusion the perception of centralised control had been.

After 1990, the temporary suspension of state security activities provided a window for a revival of tribal coercive autonomy nationwide, and the emergence of new kinds of challenge to the state from rising Islamist groups, both of which the Sālih regime exploited to great advantage in the Civil War, but then found it could not adequately control. Saudi interference in the coercive field, in the form of steady flows of weapons and financial support to favoured tribal figures and Islamist groups, proved a persistent problem. In the midst of all this, it was the crucial alliance between the President and ʿAbdallah al-Ahmar, the most powerful of the Hashīd *shaykhs*, that maintained the tenuous *status quo*. Coercive power seemed to have been ‘delegated’

¹⁷⁵ Dresch and Haykel 1995: 425.

¹⁷⁶ *MEI*, June 5th 1998.

¹⁷⁷ *MEI*, February 26th 1999.

¹⁷⁸ *YT*, September 6th-12th 1999.

¹⁷⁹ *YT*, July 31st-August 7th 2000.

¹⁸⁰ Kamrava 2000: 71; Wenner 1993.

by the Sālih regime to such a degree that a unified Yemeni political community barely existed.

5. *The Battle for Control of Yemen's Water Resources*

Introduction

Throughout the 1990s, academic and development consensus was universal: water scarcity was the greatest threat facing united Yemen, one perhaps approaching existential proportions. The World Bank's *Water Strategy* for Yemen, published in 1997, conveyed a bleak message: 'Yemen...stands out amongst countries in water crisis...because of the gravity of the problem – in no country in the world is the rate of exhaustion of aquifers proceeding so fast, in no country in the world is the capital city of the nation literally going to run out of water in a decade'¹⁸¹. Senior Yemeni politicians seemed oddly oblivious. But by the late-1990s, the water sector had become a key political battleground, pitching the state – with its IDA-inspired vision for future management of the water crisis – against parochial forms of organisation that continued to adhere to local arrangements based on customary law.

Theoretical Considerations

'Utilitarian' integrating power is the most inclusive of Etzioni's types, and provides a useful framework for understanding water management in Yemen, where the key issues have been at once institutional, technical, legal and – ultimately – normative. Etzioni defines utilitarian power in the following terms: '*utilitarian assets* include economic possessions, technical and administrative capabilities, manpower etc. *Utilitarian power* is generated when these assets of a unit are allocated or exchanged in such a fashion as to allow it to bring another unit to comply with norms it upholds, or which the system upholds for its members'¹⁸².

In this case study, I examine how technical-bureaucratic assets were employed by the states in North and South in an attempt to impose divergent norms in the water sector pre-1990, in the face of 'traditional' norms that were usually highly localised, defined by customary legal judgements and tribal negotiation. We see how these varying norms came into conflict in the transition period, given the peculiar institutional immovability characteristic of this phase. Finally, I chart the way in which state-society contest re-emerged as the dominant feature, post-1994.

A Brief Introduction to the Basics of the Water Management in Yemen

In describing Yemen's water sector, we may usefully make a distinction between urban and rural management. Whereas in urban areas management has tended increasingly to adopt international norms associated with centralised technical-bureaucratic structures, in rural areas the situation is much more complex. Firstly, water specialists juxtapose *surface* (i.e. rain, river or floodwater) with *groundwater* resources. Surface water was historically subject to local management based on customary law (*urf*) and the *shari'a* (although as we shall see, there were some deviations from this norm in the South). This was of necessity, since local arrangements are best positioned to respond to sudden rainfall or flooding, and harness potentially huge water dividends from them. Groundwater usage, on the other hand, depends on mechanised extraction, with the suggestion of greater central control, not least because the cost of buying the required equipment is prohibitive. Mechanised groundwater extraction – as elsewhere in the Third World – emerged as a

¹⁸¹ World Bank 1997: i.

¹⁸² Etzioni 2001: 38.

significant phenomenon in the two Yemens in the 1970s with the import of new technologies. Its comparative novelty means that customary law mechanisms to regulate it have yet to emerge. Secondly, the broad division between these two kinds of water resource is complicated by their interaction with principles of land tenure, which – as we shall see – were significantly different in the North and South pre-unification.

The Situation in the North pre-1990

Legal concerns: defining norms

The official position on water use in the YAR was strongly influenced by the constitutional status of the *sharīʿa* as the basis for all legislation. It was hard to divorce from the land on which it was found. All surface and groundwater on *waqf* lands was considered *res communis* – i.e. for the benefit of the Muslim community; water on *mawāt* or *mirrī* (public land) was considered *res nullius* (‘right of no one’) and was in practice controlled by the state; that on private property was the province of the landowner. Water flowing in streams or small irrigation channels was under joint ownership, and its allocation subject to local negotiation or customary law. While the state could hope to exercise some control over extraction from private land, especially where privately-owned wells tapped into larger aquifers shared by many users, its ability to do so was limited not just by the absence of technical-bureaucratic capacity, but also by the lack of clearly defined by-laws governing groundwater extraction¹⁸³.

In these circumstances, locally negotiated settlements for the allocation of water resources based on *ʿurf* proved astoundingly resilient. In Wādī Zabīd in the mid-1980s, for example, IDAs found that the existing surface water distribution system was based on stipulations provided by an Imāmic ruling made some 220 years earlier, and that despite successive attempts to challenge this provision, it had remained intact since. In a belated attempt to win back centralised control over water management norms in the mid-1980s, the government announced the gradual transition of jurisdiction over these issues from the Supreme *Sharīʿa* Court established after the revolution in 1962, to a newly formed People’s Court. How far this attempt to forge a transfer of authority from *shaykh al-sharīʿa* to state bureaucrat was successful is open to question.

Technical-bureaucratic assets

If the state’s legal position on water rights was marked by profound confusion, the technical-bureaucratic system that evolved to enforce it in urban and rural areas was chaotic. The fundamental problem was a lack of over-arching control. It was not until 1981 that a Higher Water Council (HWC) was established to provide generalised coordination of urban and rural water supplies, and it proved utterly ineffectual, never once convening in the more than ten years of its existence¹⁸⁴. As a result, the institutional system was highly fragmented by the mid-1980s. Water management concerns were divided between the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources (MAWR), the Ministry of Oil and Mineral Resources (MOMR) and the Ministry of Electricity and Water (MEW), each with different – sometimes conflicting – priorities, and representing specific political interests and stakeholders. MAWR

¹⁸³ Mullick 1987: 43-7.

¹⁸⁴ Ward in Mahdi et al, forthcoming: 4

advocated the rights of the farmers who accounted for 90% of the YAR's water consumption, and because of the importance of economic assets tied to the agriculture sector, tended to dominate the water management agenda. MEW's concerns with day-to-day urban water consumption, especially for domestic use, were marginalised¹⁸⁵.

The effects of institutional fragmentation were keenly felt in urban areas, where the water supply system was poor, and was worsened by increasing rural-urban migration and a population explosion during the 1980s¹⁸⁶. In 1977, an IDA mission to Sana'a found significant evidence of contamination of underground water resources because of the weakness of urban sewerage systems, and likelihood of significant public health problems as a result was deemed high¹⁸⁷. In most instances, what reliable urban supply existed was the result of project implementation at local level, but cooperative involvement in the towns was limited. The LDAs played an important role in the construction of water systems in a few urban areas (especially around Ta'izz) from the early 1970s, but elsewhere were barely visible.

Rural problems

Paradoxically, rural water supply was in some areas quite efficient. This was principally due to cooperative activity. State technical-bureaucratic capacity was again weak, particularly so in the highlands. Where present, MAWR provided rudimentary monitoring of irrigation networks, but its systems of management came in for potent criticism from IDA missions to the North during the 1980s, with one describing it as 'weak' and arguing that it had made 'only limited progress in improving and coordinating the collection of data on water resources, and has so far not succeeded in establishing consultative arrangements with other water users...to ensure a rational allocation of scarce resources'¹⁸⁸. Furthermore, it offered no provisions at all for water for *domestic* use, which relied, in time-honoured fashion, on hand dug wells.

The LDAs were thus key actors in rural areas by the late 1970s. Their success stemmed from a high degree of financial and administrative independence, relying on local tax-levying as well as voluntary contributions from remittance workers abroad¹⁸⁹. From the late 1970s, the cooperatives also enjoyed substantial support from international donors that increasingly saw in them an exportable model for community-based participation in development projects. The results of their activities were plainly visible. By 1978, LDAs had completed the construction of 1,545 local water supply systems. Their financial success was such that the government incorporated them into its five-year plan of 1977-81, under which 1,713 water projects were completed nationwide; a Ministry of Local Administration report published some years later estimated that cooperative-run projects cut costs by as much as 40-50%¹⁹⁰. Although declining remittances meant that the newly renamed

¹⁸⁵ Lichtenthäler 2003: 209.

¹⁸⁶ Carapico 1998: 40; Leveau et al 1999: 269.

¹⁸⁷ Nyrop et al 1977: 181.

¹⁸⁸ FAO 1980: 18.

¹⁸⁹ Al-Saidi 1992.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*: 35-6, 57.

LDDCs contributed only 755 water supply projects nationwide between 1987 and 1989, their overall impact on domestic water provision in rural areas was huge¹⁹¹.

The success of the cooperatives brought with it some serious problems, however. Foremost among these were unregulated groundwater extraction practices. In the absence of either a state-defined legal framework or adequate customary law provisions, rank profiteering was the rule, with an explosion in the number of drilled water extraction wells during the 1970s and 1980s to support agricultural expansion¹⁹². The policies of the state-run Cooperative and Agricultural Development Bank proved counter-productive, effectively sanctioning unsustainable practices through unregulated loan provisions; in 1984, 47% of the Bank's medium-term loans went towards the purchase of irrigation pumps¹⁹³. The fundamental problem, however, was the size of remittance revenues accruing to LDAs during the oil boom, which enabled local figures to purchase costly drilling rigs and pumping equipment independently. Massive groundwater extraction was strongly motivated by *qāt* cultivation, a highly profitable enterprise. This mild narcotic, chewed by Yemenis across class, tribe and gender divides, can be induced to bud throughout the year under intensive irrigation, and its increased cultivation during the later 1980s was a key factor in the depletion of groundwater resources.

By the mid to late-1980s, development professionals warned openly of impending problems caused by uncontrolled water extraction. A joint UN-FAO report published in June 1987 contended that 'empirical evidence...confirmed that uncontrolled over-pumping was the main reason for the swift fall in the water table in [highlighted rural] areas. The surveys also indicated that the management of rural development projects in these areas had no power over equipment dealers, the drilling operations or the extraction of groundwater'¹⁹⁴. The same mission recorded alarming annual water table declines of between 0.5 and 1.5m in the middle Tihāmah, and 2 to 3m in Radāc respectively¹⁹⁵.

The Situation in the South pre-1990

Legal concerns: defining norms

Patterns of land ownership in the South pre-independence were similar to those that reigned in the North. The Socialist regime labelled this period 'feudal', with land owned by wealthy private interests tended by sharecroppers and peasants using basic agricultural technologies. Though there were some changes with the advent of diesel pumps from the 1950s, few private landowners could afford this kind of technology. Control of water resources, as in the North, was complex, and dominated by customary law provisions. Floodwater distributed along surface canals fell under the control of paid and unpaid supervisors, nominated by community headmen or local landowners. Well water was under the control of the landowner (who paid for the

¹⁹¹ *Ibid*: 61

¹⁹² Later figures are difficult to obtain, but do exist for the period 1970-6; an FAO-World Bank report published in 1980 showed that the number of pump units in the YAR had risen from 1264 in 1970 to 2384 in 1973, and 3951 by 1976. See FAO-World Bank 1980: 4.

¹⁹³ UNESCWA-FAO 1987: 20

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid*: 19

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid*: 19

well to be dug) and could be sold to neighbouring plots for irrigation. Water for drinking was by common consent freely available¹⁹⁶.

The government made explicit its intention to overturn this land ownership and water rights scheme from the issuing of its first Land Reform Law in 1968, stipulating that individual land ownership be limited to 25 feddans irrigated, or 50 feddans non-irrigated. Though its implementation was stalled by intra-party dispute, this law prepared the ground for the Agrarian Reform Law of 1970, which ‘confiscated without compensation all lands and properties of the former rulers, their ministers and other clients as well as lands which they had given as gifts’¹⁹⁷. Leading members of the regime encouraged peasants to forcibly ‘reclaim’ land from wealthy barons in armed rural *intifādhāt* during the early 1970s. Crucially, the new law stipulated that ‘main water sources and irrigation installations shall be deemed the property of the state’¹⁹⁸. This was an important judgement at variance with the confusion in the North, where the proper authority of state and customary provisions based on the *shari‘a* had yet to be defined. With no established connection between land ownership and water rights, the state was free to exert a much stronger hand in water management.

How comprehensive the changes effected under this Law were in practice is open to question. Private land ownership remained prevalent throughout the socialist period; in 1980, a full ten years after the promulgation of the Law, agricultural production from private land constituted 52% of the total, compared with a mere 16% from publicly owned land (state farms) and 32% from the agricultural cooperatives¹⁹⁹. Moreover, cooperative farms were not all that they seemed, tending to disguise semi-private land ownership in practice if not in theory. This reality undermined the credibility of figures released in the mid-1980s that suggested a clear change in the pattern of land-ownership. Moreover, customary legal control over surface water continued to be strong, despite the state’s attempts to assert its control. While the state made much fare of the imposition of apparently new norms in water management, the extent to which this was able to override localised societal norms is doubtful.

Land ownership	1980 (Actual)	1985 (estimate)	1990 (target)
Cultivated land	150.09	155.05	189.96
State farms	19.76	16.01	26.55
Cooperatives	87.30	94.72	114.33
Private	43.03	44.32	49.08

Land ownership in the PDRY, in 1000s of feddans (Source: FAO 1985: 52)

Technical-bureaucratic assets and histories

With such a radical transformation planned in the approach to water management in the South, the state adopted an active programme of institutional expansion that was in some respects more successful than its counterpart in the North. It was perhaps fortunate to inherit an effective British-built system for basic supply and sanitation in

¹⁹⁶ Lackner 1986: 171-2.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid*: 173.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid*: 173.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid*: 157.

the major urban centres – around Aden and Mukallā’ in particular. The Public Water Corporation (PWC), established in 1970, quickly took over the management of urban supplies for domestic use in these areas where, by 1980, 30% of households enjoyed piped water, but in others, especially those the British had ignored, water supply remained ‘poor and polluted’, and reliant on local forms of cooperative social organisation²⁰⁰. Moreover, sewerage and disposal was not regarded as a function of the PWC, but instead left to Local People’s Councils, resulting in patchy service provision in areas where access was difficult²⁰¹.

	Northern governorates		Southern governorates		Total country	
	1990	2010	1990	2010	1990	2010
Year	1990	2010	1990	2010	1990	2010
Agriculture	1577	1991	1123	1337	2700	3328
Manufacturing and mining	14	44	17	46	31	90
Municipal	119	426	49	126	168	552
Total	1710	2461	1189	1509	2899	3970

Table shows water usage in Mm³/yr (Source: Van der Gun and Ahmed 1995: 103)

Nevertheless, water coverage in the South at unification *was* more extensive than in the North – as the table above suggests – despite the substantial population discrepancy between the two Yemens. Water connectivity in urban areas was impressive: where in Aden and Mukallā’ 94% and 90% of their respective inhabitants enjoyed access to piped water, the equivalent figures in Sana’a and Ta’izz were 62% and 89%²⁰².

Rural difficulties

State penetration in rural areas in the South was better established than in the North. It was governed by the Ministry of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform (MAAR), which had important ideological functions, including management of the Bedouin Development Project, designed to improve basic water supplies in support of Bedouin agriculture, while simultaneously encouraging settlement around re-habilitated cisterns and newly-drilled wells²⁰³. Its responsibilities did *not* include provision of water for domestic use, however. Water for domestic consumption continued to be drawn from local wells or water tanks in the 1980s, despite the allocation of 6.5% of public spending under the Third Development Plan for the improvement of piping systems. The general impression was that, as in the North, ‘efficient on-farm water utilisation and management have yet to be achieved. Measures for conserving water and associated resources are extremely limited’²⁰⁴.

Matters were complicated by a system that, ideologically speaking, professed the importance of state-ownership but which – as we have seen – permitted extensive private land ownership, especially after 1986. Water continued to be governed to a large degree by local *‘urf* provisions, and in the South, *shari‘a* provisions derived from *fatwas* issued by Shāfi‘ī scholars. Relationships between various aspects of

²⁰⁰ Nyrop at el 1977: 128.

²⁰¹ Lackner 1986: 166.

²⁰² Van der Gun and Ahmed 1995: 102.

²⁰³ Lackner 1986: 112-3.

²⁰⁴ FAO 1985: viii.

customary and religious water law were complex, and tended to be resolved in response to local circumstances; state bodies had little role to play²⁰⁵.

Where the state exerted significantly more control than its Northern counterpart was over groundwater extraction and crop-selection. As the regime effectively controlled imports and exports from the PDRY, drilling equipment could only be purchased through the Ministry of Agriculture, or loaned from it at the Machinery Rental Stations (MRS) established by the government in 1971 to overcome labour shortages and the high cost of maintaining draught animals²⁰⁶. Furthermore, *qāt* consumption was controlled in most areas (and banned altogether in Hadramawt and al-Mahrah) by law from 1981²⁰⁷. Strict control over crop-selection was observed to ensure viability of production. Groundwater extraction on the scale observed in the North was not a feature in the South pre-1990. There were pockets where very different practices were observed, notably in areas of Lahj and Abyan bordering the YAR, where private land ownership was most prevalent, and where *qāt* cultivation continued to be the most profitable source of income, but this was not a general pattern.

The Transition Period

Changing norms

Unification brought together two very different legal-administrative approaches to water management. We have seen that in the North, attempts by the state to impose re-defined water management norms had by 1990 proven an almost total failure, in part because of the lack of clarity in by-laws attached to water legislation defining its legal status, but also because of significant technical-bureaucratic weakness in *both* urban and rural areas. In the South, on the other hand, the Agrarian Reform Law of 1970 imposed important changes in water management norms – despite the continuing prevalence of private land ownership – complemented by more effective technical-bureaucratic assets that exerted considerable control over groundwater extraction in rural areas. What was remarkable about the transition period was the ease with which ‘Northern’ norms displaced those associated with the South in this sector.

The reversal of the Agrarian Reform Law in the Southern governorates by Presidential Decree in 1991 marked a major change, and coincided with the appointment of the GPC’s Sādiq Amīn Abu Ra’s as Minister of Agriculture and Water. With state property rights overturned, many of those who had held land tenure before the Southern *intifādhāt* in the early 1970s returned to reclaim land from which they had been forcibly evicted. Some 24,000 PDRY-era farmers were removed from their land²⁰⁸. Although the decree provided for a compensatory 5 feddans of land for each dispossessed farmer, implementation was distinctly uneven with evictions widespread and compensation rarely provided. Remarkably, most reclamations occurred peacefully. Land tenure documents drafted well before the establishment of the PDRY changed hands as previous owners re-asserted their claims within the terms

²⁰⁵ Maktari 1971. This is one of the few comprehensive overviews of water rights in the Yemens; unfortunately, it was published in 1971, and it is difficult to be certain of arrangements thereafter.

²⁰⁶ FAO 1985: 19.

²⁰⁷ Lackner 1986: 120.

²⁰⁸ International Development Agency 1997: 15.

of *urf*²⁰⁹. In some, however, it was violent – particularly in areas of Hadramawt, where the enduring presence of social stratification based on the pre-independence model of *sāda*, feudal landowner and peasants seemed to spur a particularly vigorous re-assertion of the old order.

Confusion over water rights was now profound. At root – just as it had been in the YAR – this was an issue of whether water was regarded as state property or *sharī'a*-defined public good. Conflicting legislation clouded the issue further. A new, UNDP-backed Water Law promulgated in 1990 advocated state-ownership, but was never properly implemented. A constitutional stipulation that water should be regarded as state property followed, but its efficacy was weak; the constitution of 1991 contained only 1 article out of 131 relating directly to water management, and without dedicated legislation and accompanying by-laws, legal clout was limited. The more comprehensive Civil Law of 1994, containing 30 articles on various aspects of land and water rights, went some way to addressing this lack of depth, but changed basic legal understandings once again: water was now seen as *res nullius*, in line with the *sharī'a*. This destructive piece of legislation – a reflection of the growing power of Islāh in the political sphere – showed little evidence of consultation with development professionals, or with the local communities it was intended to serve²¹⁰.

Weakening bureaucratic control and ongoing rural difficulties

The subvention of ‘Southern’ norms in the transition period was mirrored by institutional collapse in the Southern governorates. Where previously the state’s control over rural groundwater extraction had been strong, it now evaporated as private rig owners moved southwards in search of further profits²¹¹. Well-drilling increased at an exponential rate as Southern farmers looked to support new types of cash crop production. A particular problem was emerging inequality resulting from the new legal consensus on land ownership. Drilling required the ownership of land; once sunk, water from the well became the property of the land owner, and key water assets were thus vested in the hands of a relatively small number of landowners with the private wealth to buy or rent drilling equipment. Those who could not afford to sink their own wells had to purchase water from these landowners at inflated rates²¹².

Elsewhere there was stasis, with little reform of institutional structures inherited from the pre-unification period. There was, if anything, greater fragmentation. A new system for rural water management and sanitation was put in place in 1992 by Presidential Decree with the creation of the General Authority for Rural Electricity and Water (GAREW), but GAREW’s remit was unclear, and it was badly underfunded, receiving a mere 5% of the total overseas development funding available for water sector capacity building. It had important functions – controlling groundwater extraction and ensuring the continued safety of groundwater systems – but lacked the capacity to perform either. Officials preferred instead to delegate functions to local communities²¹³.

The limitations of the unified state’s control in rural areas were also reflected in the explosion in *qāt* cultivation in rural areas after 1990s. This was motivated largely by

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*: 15.

²¹⁰ Lichtenthäler 2003: 211.

²¹¹ Interview with Helen Lackner, Oxford, January 15th 2007.

²¹² Ward in Mahdi et al, forthcoming: 7.

²¹³ Republic of Yemen 1996: 17.

the ready, and increasing, profits that could be made from cultivation of the crop: up to 24 Yemeni Rials per m³ of water used, compared with just 5.76 for the next most profitable crop, grapes²¹⁴. Figures such as this justified the astronomical cost of transporting water by tanker from already fragile groundwater sources (at over \$1/m³)²¹⁵. Between 1990 and 1994, the area turned over to *qāt* cultivation increased from 77,000 to 87,000ha, and in some areas it was now the dominant crop. In Wadi Dahr, 80% of local cultivation was *qāt*²¹⁶.

Political Compromise, 1994-2000: the limits of state control

Changing Norms? Strengthening technical-bureaucratic assets?

The conclusion of the Civil War might have marked a watershed. That it did not illustrates not only the extent to which ‘Northern’ norms had come to govern water management nationwide, but also the importance of an intensifying battle between the ‘state’ and various power centres in ‘society’. This occurred despite – or perhaps because of – increasing concerns over the extent of the country’s water problems. In 1995, Yemen’s third city, Ta’izz, fell victim to a water crisis in which residents received water only once every 40 days²¹⁷.

The promulgation of a revised draft Water Law in 1995 represented an attempt to resolve some of the legal confusion of the transition period. At first glance, the National Water Resources Authority (NWRA) established under the draft law also represented a significant effort by the state to address long-standing management issues, bringing all existing ministries handling water resources under central control for the first time. In the event, however, these changes entrenched existing problems.

By making no reference to the *shari‘a* and viewing water as ‘public property’ managed by the state, the draft law continued the long-standing failure to take account of Islamic interpretations that might bridge the gap to customary law at local level. In effect, ‘state’ and ‘society’ continued to operate within different legal discourses. The impact was particularly detrimental for groundwater management, where *shari‘a* provisions continued to dictate that private landowners could dispose of water from drilled wells as they pleased. The additional failure to put the draft law into legislation meant that government bureaucracy remained toothless; beyond a loosely related Environmental Protection Law passed in 1995 it had no substantive legal framework from which to work.

NWRA also suffered from the same old problems: a failure to coherently divide of responsibilities between ministries; weak constraints on the over-bearing power of the Ministry of Agriculture; and no real penetration in rural areas. Reforming existing ministries was a tricky exercise: many had associations with leading political figures and stakeholders anxious to maintain favourable business and agricultural profit margins. GAREW, the subject of several reviews during the late 1990s, maintained its institutional structure despite ample evidence of its failures²¹⁸. In rural areas, NWRA could not control crop selection. Coastal farmers seeking bumper profits

²¹⁴ Ward 2000: 17.

²¹⁵ Ward in Mahdi et al, forthcoming: 3.

²¹⁶ Ward 2000: 8.

²¹⁷ World Bank 1997: 2.

²¹⁸ Republic of Yemen 1996.

switched to highly profitable but unsustainable crops such as bananas and mangoes during the mid- to late-1990s, despite the devastating impact this had on groundwater aquifers.

Tension and negotiated compromise in rural areas: a case from the Ta'izz region

Enduring difficulties in this disputed sector were amply illustrated by conflicts between government officials and farmers in the Hābir and al-Haymah region of Ta'izz governorate. This dispute had a long history, stretching back to 1976 when engineers attached to the government water body, NWSA, began exploratory drilling in the area in search of groundwater supplies for Ta'izz City, already suffering acute water shortages. The drilling began after an agreement between government officials and the local *shaykh* – without wider local consultation – from which the *shaykh* stood to profit substantially. Local farmers were unaware of the likely effects that water extraction from government-dug wells would have. By the late 1980s, NWSA had drilled 30 wells rather than the originally agreed 7, and most of the farmers' wells had dried up²¹⁹. There followed a series of protests as a result of which the government eventually agreed to a compensation package²²⁰.

In the early 1990s, the dispute turned violent. When, in June 1992, the government again sent in exploratory drilling teams, locals responded by dismantling state-maintained water relay equipment at a nearby well. The government's response was characteristically heavy-handed, sending in Army units to restore order. As armed locals fled into the mountains, there were allegations that the Army had taken schoolchildren hostage to elicit a climb-down. Army commanders then rejected locally-brokered agreements to bring the stand-off to an end, and it was not until the governor of Sana'a himself intervened that the parties were persuaded to stand down.

In 1993, President Sālih addressed what had by now become something of a *cause célèbre*, publicly declaring that the *shaykhs* of Hābir and al-Haymah would accept government drilling 'either by custom or violence'. The direct intervention of the President seemed on this occasion to have decided the matter in favour of the state, for local leaders agreed at first to allow drilling to resume. When this finally occurred in 1995 however, government engineers were unceremoniously thrown off the land. The governor of Ta'izz sent in Army units, who this time faced by women and children from al-Haymah hurling stones. Intervention by the governor of Ibb and local *shaykhs* brought under control a situation that might easily have escalated. A tentative resolution was forged in 1997 when, with training and assistance from a NGO, local farmers formed a community association to regulate groundwater extraction. The *shaykh* was deliberately excluded from this arrangement. Farmers were able – on their own terms – to negotiate an improved settlement for water transfer with municipal officials from the City of Ta'izz and NWRA technocrats²²¹.

This was at root a dispute over the remit of the state. For local farmers, the lack of consultation on the part of local government officials in al-Haymah and Hābir was demonstrative of an attempt by the state to 'steal' water to which it had no legal right. Local farmers did not recognise the legal authority of the state – as embodied by NWSA and later NWRA – and objected vehemently to the backhand manner in which

²¹⁹ Riaz 2002: 90.

²²⁰ Ward in Mahdi et al, forthcoming: 19.

²²¹ *Ibid.*: 20.

an independent agreement had been reached with the local *shaykh*. Moreover, the central government's disregard for local attempts to broker a solution to the dispute – on a number of occasions – seemed indicative of a determination to ride roughshod over local political concerns²²². The *shaykh*'s complicity in this arrangement led farmers to seek an alternative intermediary for negotiations, and a resolution was reached only when municipal officials showed a willingness to engage on a *local* level over water transfer rights.

Conclusion

In his study of local water management systems in Sa^odah in the far North of Yemen, Gerhard Lichtenthäler wrote extensively of an emerging 'political ecology' governing approaches to acute water stress in the 1990s²²³. In fact, local dimensions of water management had long been highly politicised, and at times the subject of armed confrontation. What was distinctive about the later 1990s was increasing *national-level* politicisation as IDAs pressured the government to acknowledge the gravity of the water shortage problem and take urgent rectifying action.

The problems that emerged reflected fundamental divergences over governing norms. On one hand, the state sought to integrate the population into a unified community based on a new legal framework for water management derived from an emerging IDA consensus. However, it did so from a basis of profound legal-conceptual confusion, and relied for implementation on a weak institutional apparatus in both urban and rural areas. The perception soon emerged at local level that the government apparatus was 'both corrupt and lack[ed] credit as an honourable partner'²²⁴. The result was a strong re-assertion of localised utilitarian power especially in the South, governed by forms of organisation that at times revolved around traditional centres of authority, but at others involved the creation of wholly new frameworks for cooperation. All of these, however, derived their utilitarian power from a strong sense of the importance of *ʿurf* and the *shariʿa* which the state's legal framework ultimately could not displace. Development professionals might have been unanimous in their view that tackling the country's water crisis required local *and* national level coordination, but by 2000 such coordination seemed a distant prospect.

²²² See Handley 2001: 151-2 for an in-depth discussion of this case.

²²³ Lichtenthäler 2003: 1.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*: 212.

6. Defining a New National Discourse in the Education Sector

Introduction

In an open introduction published in South Yemeni school textbooks in the early 1980s, ^cAlī Nāsir Muhammad wrote of the central role of education in the ‘construction and moulding of nationalist personages, advanced and progressive in all aspects’²²⁵. Statements of this kind reflected the extraordinary importance the Southern regime attached to education as an ideological weapon. They were mirrored by similar – though less effusive – statements north of the border. One could be forgiven for thinking, then, that education might emerge as a key battle-ground in the post-unification period, as each camp sought to stamp its authority on a highly politicised field in which not just utilitarian, but crucially *identitive*, assets were at stake. No such North-South contest emerged. In this field as in the water sector, Southern structures collapsed with remarkable rapidity. The more salient contest throughout the post-unification period was over the kind and degree of curricular ‘Islamicisation’ that would follow.

Theoretical Considerations

We have seen that Etzioni regards utilitarian and coercive powers primarily as vehicles for bringing units to comply with pre-defined *norms*. The peculiar importance of identitive power lies in its capacity to reinforce particular *values* or *symbol systems*: ‘*Identitive assets* is used to refer to characteristics of a unit of units that might be used to build up an identitive power...the assets are turned into power when a member unit or the system (through its representatives) succeeds in establishing that a particular course of action which it wishes other units or all member units to follow is consistent with, or an expression of, the values to which the participants of these units are committed’²²⁶. As Etzioni then clarifies, ‘identitive potentials are usually values or symbols, built up by educational and religious institutions, national rituals, and other mechanisms’²²⁷. In the discussion that follows, I analyse the ways in which new, state-defined value systems were constructed in North and South, and then the unified Republic, and examine a range of societal challenges to them.

The Situation in the North pre-1990

Robert Burrowes has written of increasing openness to outside influence in the educational field in the North well before the fall of the Imamate, exemplified by a stream of Yemeni students seeking advanced tuition abroad. By the 1960, he argues, ‘the trickle of educational emigrants had swelled into a torrent, the number of secondary and university students abroad doubling between 1958 and 1961, reaching well over a thousand’²²⁸. The idea that the emigration of a thousand students might constitute a ‘torrent’ gives some indication of the condition of the state education system when Imām Badr was eventually toppled in 1962. Characterised by extremely limited state institutional coverage, especially outside the major urban strongholds of

²²⁵ See for example: PDRY Ministry of Education 1983.

²²⁶ Etzioni 2001: 39.

²²⁷ *Ibid*: 39.

²²⁸ Burrowes 1987: 21.

the Imamate, the country lacked any kind of educational infrastructure. Resources were overwhelmingly concentrated on Imām Yahya’s flagship *Madrasa ‘Ilmiyya* in Sana’a, attended by all those who aspired to senior posts in government²²⁹. This institution was championed by Yahya as a model of ‘rationalised’ pedagogy, contrasting with teaching methods in the extensive network of Qur’anic *kuttābs* that had long been the primary vehicle for educational provision in the North²³⁰.

Expanding utilitarian-identitive assets

There was thus fertile ground for Egyptian involvement in the education sector after 1962, and their technocratic influence was huge. An Egyptian fact-finding mission arrived as early as 1963, shortly after the establishment of the Ministry of Education, and sanctioned the construction of schools in Sana’a, Ta’izz and Hudayda. A second, more substantial delegation arrived in June of the same year with comprehensive directives on how education should be structured, including provisions for the use of Egyptian textbooks in schools²³¹. This was the beginning of what would become substantial external influence over the education sector in the YAR. It was not until 1969 that the Northern government was able to incorporate a limited number of Yemeni-produced textbooks into the educational system²³².

Policy statements enshrined in the Public Education Law of 1974 (drawn up with Egyptian assistance) were affirmed in practice by massive infrastructural expansion under the First and Second Five Year Plans (1970-75 and 1975-1980). This was most obvious in basic education, where enrolments increased substantially during the 1970s and 1980s. Between 1970-1 and 1975-6, primary level enrolment increased by 186% from a meagre initial total of 88,217 across the whole country, and by 1980-1, some 415,000 children were enrolled. By 1990, this figure had reached nearly 1.3m²³³. These improvements nevertheless could not disguise essential limitations of state penetration.

Firstly, state investment in the education sector was low, holding steady at around 12% of annual capital expenditure during the early to mid-1980s, compared with 25% on defence²³⁴. In rural areas it was virtually non-existent, exacerbating urban-rural divisions. The LDAs were responsible not only for around two thirds of the annual capital investment in this sector during the remittance boom, but also for most rural education construction projects²³⁵. As remittance revenues declined in the mid- to late-1980s, rural education projects suffered badly, and local communities were largely left to maintain facilities for themselves. In many rural areas, Qur’anic *kuttābs* therefore continued to be hugely influential. It was hardly surprising, then, that attendance at primary school was never made obligatory – a tacit acknowledgement that the capacity required to provide teaching for all those eligible simply did not exist. At unification, primary enrolment in rural areas stood at 52%

²²⁹ Messick 1993: 108ff.

²³⁰ *Ibid*; see also Vom Bruck 2005: 51

²³¹ Ba ‘Abbād 2003: 77-8.

²³² *Ibid*: 83.

²³³ Beatty 1996: 7

²³⁴ EIU 1987: 43.

²³⁵ Beatty 1996: 11.

compared with 82% in urban areas – if anything, a substantial improvement over the previous 15-20 years²³⁶.

Secondly, females remained largely excluded from the education system. At unification, female enrolment constituted 25% of the total at primary level – a vast improvement over the 1970-71 figure of 0.09%, but nevertheless low²³⁷. Low enrolment was a particular problem at secondary and higher levels. In part this was a reflection of enduring social tensions over female access to education – especially in socially conservative rural areas – where newly built facilities catered poorly for female pupils, and the number of female teachers was low²³⁸. Over-crowding was such that co-education was often the norm in rural areas especially in the upper grades – a reality that bred considerable resistance to increased female enrolment.

Thirdly, government control over curricular content was doubtful. The lack of teaching expertise in the YAR after the revolution had encouraged the regime to look abroad, and by 1985 the state employed as many as 23,000 Egyptian teachers in government-run schools. Most of these positions were subsidised by Saudi interests. By the mid-1980s, up to 87% of those teaching in the North Yemeni system came from abroad²³⁹. Control over teaching content was drawn away from the government as foreign-trained teachers – some with proselytising agendas – became the main intermediaries between students and the state. Given that few schools, especially rural primary institutions, could afford the materials required to teach the state curriculum, instruction was often patchy and poorly adjusted to local realities.

It was in this context that a potentially potent challenge to state education began to emerge – from the *ma^ʿāhid ʿilmiyya* (‘Scientific Institutes’). Supported primarily by private capital from Saudi Arabia, Egypt and elsewhere in the Middle East, these institutions first appeared in the early 1970s when the post of Minister of Education was held briefly by ʿAbd al-Majīd al-Zindānī, later a founding member of Islāh²⁴⁰. They expanded rapidly in the late 1970s and early 1980s with tacit state support since they provided a useful bulwark against the rising leftist challenge from the PDRY-backed NDF. The *ma^ʿāhid* were particularly popular in rural areas where the education they offered seemed both to be of a higher standard than state alternatives, and more sensitive to local social realities. They promised better employment opportunities for graduates than those available to students in the Qur’anic *kuttābs*. Financial incentives were also included, providing rural families with subsidies for sending their children to the institutes²⁴¹.

The *ma^ʿāhid* enjoyed an ambiguous legal-administrative status. Initially, they fell under the remit of the Public Ministry for Scientific Education, which aimed to further religious education by extending practical Islamic education into the public education system, and provision of religious textbooks²⁴². This ‘ministry’ was officially part of the Ministry of Education, but its affiliation was uncertain. This marked the first of a

²³⁶ *Ibid*: 9.

²³⁷ *Ibid*: 7-8.

²³⁸ See UNESCO 2007 for extensive discussion of these issues.

²³⁹ El-Mallakh 1986: 39.

²⁴⁰ Schwedler 2006: 143.

²⁴¹ Vom Bruck 1997: 157.

²⁴² Ba ʿAbbād 2003: 182.

succession of state attempts to regulate the *ma'āhid*: an 'administrator' was appointed in 1977 tasked with bringing the curriculum and teaching into line with the state system; a decree in 1980 called for the unification of the *ma'āhid* with the wider state system; and a further decree in 1982 called in more assertive terms for much the same thing²⁴³. But marshalling this vast informal education system proved a difficult undertaking, not least because of important local variations; some of the *ma'āhid* were Wahhābī in orientation, others much more strongly influenced by Zaydī teaching²⁴⁴.

Generating identitive power

The state identitive framework that emerged in the North after the revolution reflected strong overseas influence and political sensitivities arising from the reconciliatory arrangement that brought Republicans and Royalists into government at the end of the Civil War. Statements of educational philosophy by the Iryānī government reveal broad concerns, cutting across the religious, economic, societal, national, pedagogical and gender issues, but the importance attached to the place of Islam in the education system emerges strongly. Of the five main principles outlined for the YAR's education system, the first and most prominent was 'a consideration that Islam provides the intellectual foundations for our education policy and...that the orientation and form of education instil in the Yemeni peoples a faith in their religion as a complete framework for all aspects of life'²⁴⁵.

The emphasis on Islam translated directly into state educational production. Basic religious instruction began at primary school. By the time students reached intermediate level, religious education included in-depth discussion of early Islamic history and instruction in elementary *fiqh*. At secondary level, students branched into *hadīth tafsīr* and other areas of Islamic scholarship. This was a very particular programme of Islamic instruction. Educational production was clearly inspired by the nineteenth-century Zaydī revisionism of Muhammad al-Shawkānī, a Yemeni jurisprudential scholar venerated by the revolutionary regime for his supposedly anti-Imamate stance. But Shawkānī's work was characterised mainly by a rejection of long-standing Zaydī-Shāfi'ī divisions; he used the *hadīth* extensively in his work in the manner of Shāfi'ī scholars, in protest at what he saw as the rigid traditionalism of the Hadawī Zaydism dominant in Imāmic Yemen²⁴⁶. The North Yemeni state now exploited Shawkānī's status to push an 'official' Islam that eschewed sectarian divisions in a country whose population was divided between Zaydīs and Shāfi'īs.

State educational production during this period was strongly Arab nationalist in tone, but was explicitly *not* Arab socialist. This was Arab nationalism founded on an overtly Islamic heritage. The Iryānī government's statement of principles included an affirmation of 'concern for the Arabic language and belief in Arab unity and the preservation of glorious Arab Islamic heritage'²⁴⁷, and this comes across clearly in chapter headings in a primary level book published in 1987, which talks of Yemen as 'a part of the Arab nation', and as being a 'nation of followers (*ansār*) and openers' – purveyors of the Islamic *da'wa*. In a final year primary textbook entitled 'Yemeni History of the Middle Ages', the emphasis is less on 'the emergence of the Islamic

²⁴³ *Ibid.*: 183.

²⁴⁴ Email correspondence with Helen Lackner, April 2007.

²⁴⁵ Ba' Abbād 2003: 82.

²⁴⁶ Haykel 2003.

²⁴⁷ Ba' Abbād 2003: 81.

da'wa', so much as 'the role of the Yemenis in the Islamic battles of expansion', and others that reinforce the sense of a Yemeni nationalism intimately tied with the wider Islamic *umma*²⁴⁸. Finally, in discussions of the ties that bind the Arab nation, several textbooks talk about the primary importance of 'Islamic faith...the Arabic language – the language of the Qur'ān, and the connection of culture – Islamic culture'²⁴⁹.

Distinctively, this was combined with a sense of a Yemeni state founded on the principle of consultative democracy. Once again this was explicitly Islamic in tone: the language of *shūra* – rather than *dimokrātiyya* – is widespread in much of the educational production from this period²⁵⁰. The point was to draw a distinction between 'despotic' Imāmic rule in the North pre-1962 and the conditions that emerged thereafter. There is a strong sense that the Imamate created a tiered society in which the people suffered badly from a lack of development and *takhalluf* ('backwardness'). Instead, North Yemenis should look to their new Republican leadership for development and modernisation.

The trans-*madhhab* form of educational production during this period demonstrated an attempt by the state to impose an 'official' brand of Islamic teaching. In doing so, it sought to marginalise a rising challenge from the *ma'āhid* – some of which now taught a Wahhābī curriculum – while simultaneously undermining the traditional authority of social groupings associated with the Imamate. Curricular development was accompanied by legal changes: in 1978, a genuine attempt was made to regulate the activities of the *ma'āhid*. By ministerial decree, they could provide legal (*sharī'a*) instruction, 'scientific' education (on the model then practiced under the national curriculum), and teach particular forms literature²⁵¹. The *ma'āhid* would have freedom of instruction in only the first of these. The problem – as ever – was implementing capacity. State officials simply could not enforce legal changes imposed at the centre in the rural areas in which the *ma'āhid* were most popular.

The Situation in the South pre-1990

Expanding utilitarian-identitive assets

The government in the South inherited a fragmented legacy from its colonial forebears. In Aden, the British left an established education system revolving around the prestigious Aden College, but had ignored the interior, and educational coverage in the Western Protectorates was virtually non-existent. Educational provision outside Aden depended on locally-administered benevolent societies²⁵², although in Hadramawt, educational development was extensive with most schools either followed *kuttāb* pedagogical methods, or an adapted Sudanese curriculum²⁵³. Immediate post-independence changes included a transition from English to Arabic as the primary language of tuition, and brought in support from Egypt, Algeria, Iraq and Syria to help set a new curriculum and provide teaching manpower. There was recognition very early on of the importance of *domestic* teacher training, however, in

²⁴⁸ YAR Ministry of Education 1984.

²⁴⁹ YAR Ministry of Education 1987: 78.

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁵¹ Ba 'Abbād 2003: 184

²⁵² Lackner 1986: 134.

²⁵³ Ba 'Abbād 2003: 116.

contrast to the North; funding was set aside for the establishment of a college for this purpose in Aden as early as 1970²⁵⁴.

The first Education Law of 1972 drove sweeping changes in the South. This law sanctioned the establishment of an Education Council supervising changes in the system, the Ministry of Education, and the appointment of a public representative for education²⁵⁵. It also set the socialist transformative agenda that dictated developments in this key sector up to 1990. It was followed, in September 1975, by a conference on education organised by the ruling party at which core issues were thrashed out. The education system was completely re-organised; old divisions were replaced by 8-year 'unity schools' at the equivalent of primary level, and 4 years of secondary school. A revised teacher training system now allowed secondary school leavers to be fast-tracked into teaching at unity school level. Thirdly, vocational colleges were established to provide 2 year, post-secondary school apprenticeships. Finally – and perhaps most significantly of all – was the commitment from the state to eradicate illiteracy across the South.

The state's commitment to educational development in both urban and rural areas was real, unlike its counterpart in the North. Annual expenditure in the first 5-year plan of 1973-77 was equivalent to 7.4% of GDP in this sector alone, compared with a then global average of around 4% for LEDCs²⁵⁶. Institutional expansion was reinforced by coercion and punitive measures entrenched in law, though it is not clear how far these were enforced. Firstly, the state made enrolment in primary education compulsory for all those who were eligible²⁵⁷. Secondly, all public establishments were required by law to offer literacy classes for adult employees from 1980, and by the mid-1980s the knowing employment of illiterate workers had also been barred²⁵⁸.

By the late-1970s, the effects of these policies were becoming clear. Where in 1970-1, primary level enrolment had been a little under 130,000, by 1975-6 it had increased by 57% to around 204,000. The coercive aspect of state policy seemed to help tackle the issue of female enrolment at primary, which stood at 20% of total intake in 1970-1 but had risen to 33% by 1975-6²⁵⁹. Identitive assets also formed a key part of the state's 'anti-tribalisation' agenda. The establishment of 'Bedouin schools' in the South might ostensibly have been part of the government's efforts to 'provide all Yemenis with access to educational opportunities', but it also had an important function, sedentarising nomadic populations outside state-control and indoctrinating them²⁶⁰. Bedouin children were brought into a boarding school-like environment in which they were taught in accordance with the state curriculum, but were also provided with 'military education, pre-vocational training including agriculture, and some social activities'²⁶¹.

²⁵⁴ *Ibid*: 117.

²⁵⁵ *Ibid*: 117.

²⁵⁶ World Bank 1979: 47. 7.4% of GDP was equivalent to YD 35m, or approximately \$12m by exchange rates from the period.

²⁵⁷ Interview with Helen Lackner, Oxford, January 15th 2007.

²⁵⁸ Lackner 1986: 137.

²⁵⁹ Beatty 1996: 7.

²⁶⁰ Email correspondence with Renaud Detalle, February 2007.

²⁶¹ World Bank 1979: 50.

There were difficulties – notably strong opposition to moves towards female emancipation, sometimes reinforced by virulent radio broadcasts to this effect from Saudi Arabia²⁶². There was also evidence to suggest that educational programmes that drew women away from the home frequently met with opposition in rural areas during the 1980s²⁶³. In general, though, the state faced little challenge from parochial forms of education in its efforts to institute its social transformative agenda, and certainly nothing to compare with its counterpart in the North. Even those authors who express some doubt as to the degree of state penetration in the South agree that ‘education has been secularised’, and acknowledge that while the Qur’ān continued to be taught in schools in the PDRY, this occurred within the framework of ‘liberation theology’, in which Islam was portrayed as ‘simply a social and political, rather than spiritual, system’²⁶⁴. Hadramawt remained something of an exception with many children attending Qur’anic school at weekends, but there was no emergent informal sector to compare with the *ma‘āhid* in the North, for all the Saudi attempts to foster opposition²⁶⁵.

Questions of identitive power: constructing a socialist-transformative discourse

Since the state’s social transformative agenda called for the production of a ‘rational, socialist’ society, and the creation of a ‘new Yemeni man’, the education system was a top priority²⁶⁶. Clause 4 of the Education Law of 1972 proclaimed that ‘the national democratic education system in the Republic aims for the preparation of the...peoples with the necessary means for the construction of Socialism on the basis of the principles of world Socialism, and considers this the most important of its concerns...’²⁶⁷. Similarly, clause 8 talked of the ‘construction of the personality of a good citizen in the student’, such a citizen being ‘dedicated heart and soul to work in the cause of the people...[showing] support for revolutionary progress in society...preparedness at all times to combat imperialism and regressive thought and action...’²⁶⁸.

The strength of the regime’s ideological concern is immediately apparent in school textbooks produced during this period. In a secondary textbook on *falsafa*, the discussion ranges widely from ‘the role of the Socialist world-view’, to the ‘essences of Capitalism’ and ‘the historical importance of the peasant class’²⁶⁹. Unusually, the South’s own revolution, and indeed Yemeni nationalism more generally, are marginalised; there is no particular sense of South Yemen’s importance other than as a small element of what might be called a third wave of socialist revolution worldwide. The emphasis is instead on the Soviet experience, which is placed in the first and most important wave of socialist development; the second is taken to begin in 1945, and encompass early anti-colonial campaigns, while the third (in which the revolutions in *both* North and South are included) begins in the early 1950s and is presumed to herald the ‘collapse of world Capitalism’²⁷⁰. In all this, the PDRY is presented – surprisingly – as a small cog.

²⁶² Halliday 1979: 9.

²⁶³ Cigar 1985: 48.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*: 45.

²⁶⁵ Interview with Belqīs ‘Abdallah al-Tibbī, Sana‘a, December 19th 2007.

²⁶⁶ Cigar 1990: 185.

²⁶⁷ Ba ‘Abbād 2003: 118.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*: 119.

²⁶⁹ PDRY Ministry of Education (n.d.)[a].

²⁷⁰ PDRY Ministry of Education (n.d.)[b]: 17-18.

Rather than the narrow pan-Arab and Yemeni nationalist concerns characteristic of state educational production in the North, the suggestion here was of the importance of individual and societal contributions to *worldwide* socialist revolution. The model socialist individual should be imbued with the characteristics of morality, work ethic and commitment to the socialist cause, and not specifically tied to South Yemeni society. In a grammar textbook published in 1983, the selection of passages is clearly intended to make a point; discussion ranges from the importance of work to the behaviour of students in class, the importance of properly exploiting the opportunities provided by the summer holiday, involvement in school activities, and finally the relationship between man and knowledge²⁷¹. This vein of thought is clearer still in an article entitled 'Into Battle' by a leading pre-war Yemeni socialist thinker, °Abdallah Bādhīb, who talks of fighting the 'deceivers' and 'traders in the freedoms of men' with the very characteristics the socialist regime sought to instil in its citizens²⁷².

Finally, the form of Islam favoured by the South Yemeni state was of a very circumscribed kind. Reference is made to the Battle of °Ayn Jalūt of 1260 at which the Egyptian Mamlūks reversed the colonising incursions of the Mongols, and the image of Islam as an anti-colonial force is prevalent. Elsewhere, though, the choice of model figures suggests an attempt to debase traditional centres of Islamic authority and even emphasise the Hellenic philosophical tradition in Islamic history. We find passages written by Taha Husayn, an Egyptian literary figure noted for his profound scepticism towards traditional seats of Islamic learning such as al-Azhar; and we find a passage on the 10th century poet, Abu Al-°alā' Ahmad ibn °Abdallah al-Ma°arrī, whose *Risālat al-Ghufrān* attracted widespread criticism in its time for apparently parodying the Qur'ān. The emphasis on early Islamic history, traditionist forms of Islamic learning and scholarship characteristic of the YAR's production is nowhere to be seen.

The Transition Period

Utilitarian-identitive assets: a qualified victory for Northern concerns

We have seen that education was arguably a higher priority for the regime in the South than for its counterpart in the North. Expenditure in the PDRY was substantially higher than in the YAR as a percentage of GDP, and by all accounts the Southern regime registered greater success in terms of expansion of state educational capacity. When in the transition period consideration turned to bureaucratic integration, first impressions suggested a division of interests between two entrenched, rival parties. Indeed, Charles Dunbar contends that 'divisions were particularly sharp in bodies such as the Education Ministry, where Northern and Southern ideas differed sharply on fundamental substantive issues such as curriculum'²⁷³.

The reality was very different. For all the pretence of accommodation of Northern *and* Southern interests, matters in this crucial field were decided decisively in favour of the Northern regime from the outset. The most basic manifestation of this

²⁷¹ PDRY Ministry of Education 1983.

²⁷² PDRY Ministry of Education 1987.

²⁷³ Dunbar 1992: 462.

profound shift was the partisan distribution of ministerial portfolios in the post-unification cabinet: *Awqāf* and Guidance, Education, Culture and Youth and Sports all went to representatives from the Northern GPC, while the YSP was left with control only of Higher Education. The YSP's influence over policymaking in basic education, the field in which it had made the greatest progress since 1967, would be minimal²⁷⁴.

By 1993, following the first legislative elections, the marginalisation of Southern interests was complete. The Higher Education portfolio was subsumed under Education, which fell to Abu Bakr al-Qirbī, a 'GPC man with Islamist credentials'²⁷⁵. Other crucial Southern utilitarian, coercive and identitive assets that had made significant contributions reinforcing educational norms in the PDRY were also forfeited. An important, symbolic example was the repeal of the law governing compulsory primary school attendance in the PDRY. This probably contributed to a sudden and significant decline in female enrolment in the Southern provinces, especially Lahj, Dhāli^c and Hadramawt²⁷⁶.

The clear winners were Islāh and supporters of the *ma^cāhid*. Just as the YSP focused on ensuring the security of their flagship Bedouin schools from reforms that might threaten their independence, so Islāh seized upon the *ma^cāhid* as symbolic of their own burgeoning political power and role in Yemeni society, and the question of control over semi-private educational institutions emerged as a major point of contention between the main parties. YSP leaders objected to the growing presence of institutions they regarded as unruly; the GPC on the other hand seemed tacitly to encourage them, despite supporting a bill in 1992 calling for their integration into the mainstream education system²⁷⁷. Ultimately, the numbers spoke for themselves: enrolment in the *ma^cāhid* rose substantially during this period, reflecting increasing demand not just for the kind but also the quality of education they provided. The state system simply could not compete with the incentives available to parents who sent their children to a *ma^chad*, including free books and uniforms for pupils²⁷⁸.

The state also found itself overtaken by wider political events. A number of Gulf states withdrew financial support for foreign nationals working as teachers in Yemen after the foreign policy fiasco over the invasion of Kuwait. The effect in Northern governorates, where state education had long depended on foreign manpower, was disastrous. Overnight, the Ministry of Education found itself managing a massive manpower shortage. Fragile teacher training systems could not cope. The loss of expatriate teachers also meant a sharp drop in standards in an education system already labelled weak and poorly tailored to students' needs by a number of international development agencies. The *ma^cāhid* by contrast, suffered no such problems, because as financially independent institutions they continued to enjoy a stable revenue stream. For many parents in rural areas, the choice between public and private was easy.

²⁷⁴ Cabinet list from <http://www.al-bab.com/yemen/gov/gov2.htm>, accessed February 18th 2007.

²⁷⁵ Dresch and Haykel 1995: 407.

²⁷⁶ Interview with Belqīs ^cAbdallah al-Tibbī, Sana^ca, December 19th 2007.

²⁷⁷ Dresch and Haykel 1995: 410

²⁷⁸ Email correspondence with Helen Lackner, April 2007.

Creating a national discourse for newly unified Yemen: the North dominates

In 1990, the Ministry of Education was faced with the daunting prospect of unifying two radically different curricula. After consultations, a decision was made merely 'to eliminate inappropriate words' and phrases, and the 'very obvious contradictions' for the ensuing academic year, with a view to reviewing the curriculum in its entirety later on²⁷⁹. From an early stage, though, it was clear that values and symbol systems associated with the Northern regime would dominate.

To some extent, this was entrenched in law. The YSP had eventually agreed, after much negotiation, that Islam should constitute the 'main source of legislation' in the constitution submitted to the public for referendum in 1991. Islāh figures, led by al-Zindānī, objected vehemently on the basis that the *sharīʿa* should constitute the *only* basis of legislation, and threatened to boycott the referendum. The matter was resolved in favour of Islāh after the referendum and at the eleventh hour, when the Presidential Council announced that indeed the *sharīʿa* would be regarded as 'the basis and source of all legislation', and that any past or future legislation that went against the Qurʾān or Sunna would be 'null and void'. That the public had accepted a document that was fundamentally different appeared immaterial²⁸⁰.

Constitutional revisions provided a framework for the General Education Law passed in 1992. This laid out the extent of the role that Islam was to play in the unified education system. Beginning with a declaration of 'faith in God and His uniqueness/solitary role in the creation of the universe', the document highlighted the paramount importance of 'belief in Islam as doctrine, legal precept and a complete framework that organises the affairs of life that blesses man and engenders morality in his thought and actions'²⁸¹. The impact on educational production was obvious. At its most basic, this was a visual re-assertion of Islam; gone was the imagery characteristic of socialist production pre-1990, and excerpts from the Qurʾān were liberally distributed throughout texts on everything from grammar and syntax to history and literature, often highlighted in coloured boxes.

The language of religious discourse was everywhere. A primary school literature textbook from 1991 opens with an excerpt from *sūrat al-rūm* – a declaration of faith in Allah and an acknowledgement of His signs. It is followed by an account of a discussion between ʿAlī and one of his companions on the nature of piety, the importance of the *ulamāʾ* in society, and excerpts from Qurʾān including a passage from *sūrat al-raʿd* which advocates observance of Allah, his laws and prayers as a route to heaven²⁸².

There was a sense of an Islamic imperative to work in the cause of the new Yemeni society. In a grammar textbook from 1991, the opening exercise begins with the assertion that 'Allah has granted you a mind, given you freedom and called for you to boldly embark upon the struggle (*maʿrika*) of life...'²⁸³. But there was also a strong sense that Islam was being emphasised as a complete framework for life – a basis for individual behaviour, relations between child and parents, approach to work and so

²⁷⁹ Interview with Belqīs ʿAbdallah al-Tibbī, Sanaʿa, December 19th 2007.

²⁸⁰ Carapico 1998: 138.

¹⁷⁰ Ba ʿAbbād 2003: 134.

²⁸² RoY Ministry of Education 1999[a]

²⁸³ RoY Ministry of Education 1999[b]: 9.

on. Chapters on ‘rules of social conduct’ in primary level textbooks would contain extensive references to the ‘rules of conduct of the Prophet’.

For the first time, we find evidence of a subtle shift away from the anti-sectarian stance characteristic of the YAR. The choice of exemplary figures from Islamic and contemporary Yemeni history is instructive. Immediately after unification, there are references to each of the *rāshidūn* – the so-called ‘rightly-guided’ Caliphs – in sympathetic terms, but by 1993-4, this gives way to a much stronger emphasis on ʿAlī ibn Abī Tālib and two of his four companions, ʿAmmār bin Yāsir and Abu Dhurr al-Ghifārī. These figures have traditionally been held in high esteem by Shiʿis, particularly because ʿAlī is regarded as the only rightful Caliph and first Imam. What was distinctive about this subtle advocacy of Zaydī-Shiʿī historiography was firstly that it involved an implicit rejection of the Shāfiʿism widespread in the South and in some regions of the North, and secondly that it was combined with rejections of Imāmic rule as ‘backward’ (*takhalluf*) and ‘reactionary’ common under the YAR. The implication – as in the YAR – was that traditional loci of Zaydī authority were irreconcilable with modernity and development. The further inference now being invited was that proper synthesis could only be offered by Sālih’s Zaydī-Republican regime, which was not only the rightful guardian of socially equitable Zaydism, but also its defender against Shāfiʿī incursions from the South, and the mercantile classes of Taʿizz and Ibb that had long represented an important power centre outside Sanaʿa’s control.

This rejection of traditional Zaydī authority was countered by emerging Zaydī revivalism in the far North. Here the social power of the *sāda* associated with the Imāmate remained considerable. Bernard Haykel has documented the rise of Zaydī educational establishments from the early 1990s in response to the Wahhābi discourse purveyed by some of the *maʿāhid*. The Zaydī alternative, the *madāris al-ʿilmiyya*, emerged in force in the highlands around Saʿdah, Jawf, Dhamār, Sanaʿa and Mahābisha, and were reinforced by summer schools providing further instruction in Zaydī thought for Yemeni youths²⁸⁴. These proved extremely popular in the highlands, with as many as 12,000 students participating in summer activities in 1994 alone²⁸⁵. The *madāris* also tapped into a wider sense of resentment in the far North at the manner in which Zaydism, and social structures associated with the Imāmate more generally, had been marginalised in the Republican period. Whereas in matters of jurisprudence and Islamic teaching state production was influenced by Shawkānī’s traditionist scholarship and rejection of the Hadawī Zaydism of the far North, Zaydī *madāris* developed a curriculum of their own covering all of the Islamic sciences from grammar to *fiqh* and *ʿilm al-kalām*. This was apparently the first time any attempt had been made to formalise a Zaydī curriculum with standardised texts²⁸⁶.

What Zaydī education did not offer was any clear sense of united Yemen or its position in the wider world. This meant that its appeal was parochial: it could not challenge nationalist state production on level terms. State textbooks advanced a view of Yemen as a unified country intimately linked with a wider Arab-Islamic nation – in marked contrast to the PDRY’s portrayal of South Yemen as a cog in a global Socialist revolution. The attachment of quasi-religious legitimacy to Yemeni

²⁸⁴ Haykel 1995: 20-1.

²⁸⁵ *Ibid*: 20.

²⁸⁶ *Ibid*: 20.

unity was characteristic of educational output at this time. Unity is described as ‘sacred’, and references to it are interspersed with discussions of *tawhīd*. Separatism, or *infisāl*, was castigated in much the same language one might find used to describe *fitna*. This was also a very particular *kind* of unity, constructed on the revolutionary foundations of the 1960s. Just as it had been under the YAR, the terminology here was of *shūra* rather than any sense of the multi-party *dimoqrātiyya* that supposedly defined the new Yemeni reality.

These observations implied an attempt to write Southern history out of mainstream educational discourse, and indeed the significance of the 1963 ‘revolution’ in the South was greatly underplayed. Viewed as a natural consequence of the Republican Revolution of 1962, there is nowhere any sense of intellectual foundations on which it was founded, or of the singular importance of Aden as a haven for the exchange of ideas, especially after 1948. The only contemporary figure to appear regularly in sections entitled ‘Glorious Personalities’ (*shakhsiyyāt khālida*) in primary textbooks is Muhammad al-Zubayrī, a reformist Zaydī scholar of Northern provenance whose role in the revolution in the North was hugely significant, but who was for much of his life opposed to the abolition of the Imāmate²⁸⁷. The role of prominent Southern figures, in particular °Abdallah al-Asnaj, and Muhammad Luqmān – whose influence on both Zubayrī and another scion of the Northern Republican movement, Ahmad Muhammad Nu’mān, was considerable – is ignored. By 1994, then, there could be no doubt that the YSP had forfeited control over identitive assets and power to a Northern coalition of interests that asserted its norms, symbols and value systems in more radical terms than it had done pre-1990.

Negotiating the Education Agenda: 1994-2000

The outcome of the Civil War was a triumph for Islāh, which gained control over key identitive assets in the education sector in return for the support it had shown the GPC-led government during the transition period. In the post-war cabinet announced in October 1994, the portfolios of *Awqāf* and Guidance, and Education fell to Islāh, according this eclectic grouping of political interests extensive control over educational output, in addition to their established influence over the *ma‘āhid*. The last vestiges of Socialist control collapsed with the abolition of the Bedouin Schools, largely at the behest of Islāh, in 1995²⁸⁸. Having exploited Islāh’s identitive appeal to help destroy the YSP as a political force, however, the Sālih regime turned increasingly against its coalition partner.

The ostensible justification was Islāh’s heavy-handed approach to curricular control. This was in large measure the product of an intra-party struggle in which the radical wing under al-Zindāni gradually superseded more moderate tribal-traditionalists led by °Abdallah al-Ahmar in control over education policymaking. Islāh’s radical turn was keenly felt in the higher education system; in 1996, the Ministry of Education temporarily closed down the Faculties of Philosophy and the Social Sciences at the

²⁸⁷ Zubayrī advocated the removal of the Hamīd al-Dīn dynasty, which he believed to have become fatally corrupted. Nevertheless, he wished to see the Imāmate as an *institution* retained, with a *shūra* council providing advice and guidance. See Day 2001: 102 ff.

²⁸⁸ Mermier 1997: 12.

University of Sana'a, accusing them of purveying 'false teachings'. This move was made permanent later in the same year²⁸⁹.

Sālih moved swiftly to undercut Islāh's authority. A Presidential Decree announced in September 1996 called for the closure of *ma'āhid* established in rural areas. It was a demonstration of the sheer complexity of the coalition of interests Islāh encompassed that the then minister of education, 'Abdu 'Alī al-Qubātī, actually sided with Sālih on this issue despite his political affiliation. His position was made so difficult in the ensuing months by Islāh parliamentary colleagues that he eventually resigned from office. In late 1996, the Council of Ministers (now boycotted by Islāh), issued a revised education budget to take account of the closure of the *ma'āhid* at the request of the President, and their fate appeared sealed. Cabinet changes after the 1997 elections, particularly the appointment of Ahmad al-Shāmī (a Zaydī MP from *Hizb al-Haqq*) to *Awqāf* rolled back Islāh's control over Islamic instruction further²⁹⁰.

The government soon found that implementing policy on a national level was more complicated, despite an increasing financial commitment that ensured that by 1999-2000, education expenditure was second only to defence spending²⁹¹. As Council of Ministers' drew up their budget statement in 1996, local officials attempting to enforce the integration of a *ma'had* in al-'Udayn in Ibb governorate into the state system were met with armed opposition from Islāh partisans, and the Army had to be called in to restore order²⁹². Sporadic opposition to closures continued throughout the late 1990s, and Sālih's stance was condemned in some sections of the Yemeni press, where it was seen as a ruse on the part of the GPC-dominated government to extend its control over Islāh's major identitive asset. The state's authority remained particularly limited in higher education – the site of significant private sector expansion from the mid-1990s onwards. The increasing power of Islamist-oriented higher educational establishments, particularly Al-Imān University in Sana'a run by al-Zindānī, meant weakening state control over the education of the preachers to which much of the male population were exposed.

The tension between the government's attempts to undermine traditional Zaydī authority, while at the same time seizing for itself the anti-sectarianism of the Wahhābī-inspired *ma'āhid*, continued in print. As before, references to Zaydī authority were subtle – encoded in historiography or occasional condemnations of the Imāmate's backwardness. Anti-sectarianism was a clearer current, especially in the language of unity – the 'repudiation of division' was seen as a religious duty. By 1996, we find that Islamic instruction had been consolidated into a single range of textbooks entitled *Islamic Pedagogy*, rather than the individual texts on *tafsīr*, *fiqh* and so forth – each with different authors – characteristic of the pre-Civil War period. The new range of books was the culmination of state efforts to impose an authoritative 'official' brand of Islam; a primary school *Islamic Pedagogy* textbook published in 1997, just after the GPC had re-assumed control of the Education Ministry, includes sections on the *hadīth*, *tawhīd*, *fiqh* and stories from the life of the prophet, presented in a clear and codified manner.

²⁸⁹ Mermier 1997: 12. It was subsequently reversed, a further indication of the declining influence of the radical wing of Islah on the policymaking process.

²⁹⁰ Kostiner 1997: 770.

²⁹¹ World Bank 2000: 8, 21.

²⁹² Mermier 1997: 13.

Conclusion

In my introduction to this case study, I talked of an ‘Islamicisation’ of the education sector after 1990. This was, above all, a reflection of the extent to which ‘Southern’ norms, values and symbol systems had been displaced from the policymaking centre; the bureaucratic turf battles recorded by Stephen Day, among others, were notably absent in the education sector. But it was also a reflection of an ongoing battle between central government and various power loci outside its control, around which alternative ideological discourses were being constructed.

In this unexpected sense, the education sector *was* a crucial battlefield, not least because – with a population explosion underway throughout this period – the potential gains from the assertion of influence in this field were massive. From the outset, the state exploited the asset advantage it enjoyed to assert a new vision for unified Yemen as fundamentally defined by faith in a very particular kind of Islam. This was an Islam that was anti-sectarian, yet also reformist Zaydī, for the intention was to override traditional tensions between Zaydīs and Shāfi‘īs, and assert the religious authority of the state in opposition to the traditional power of the *sāda* on which the Imāmate had been founded.

The state encountered substantial opposition, internally and externally, though actors in this field were harder to identify than elsewhere. On one hand, its anti-sectarianism was outflanked by a Wahhābī-inspired movement funded by Saudi interests, and led by Islāh’s ‘Abd al-Majīd al-Zindānī. Zindānī was in some respects the archetypal Islamic modernist, accruing an extensive personal following despite having no formal religious qualifications. For a time, his wing of Islāh enjoyed significant control over central education policymaking. From 1996 onwards, President Sālih tried to seize back the initiative in the education sector by marginalising Islāh in government and forcibly integrating the *ma‘āhid* into the mainstream education system to crush the opposition’s identitive power underfoot. On the other hand, the state’s pointed efforts to undermine the traditional authority of the *sāda* through veiled attacks on the Imāmate roused renewed opposition from Zaydīs in the far North, who responded by formalising their teachings into a curriculum for the first time, and engaging in a revisionist debate over the bases of Hadawī thought²⁹³.

²⁹³ Vom Bruck 1997.

7. Conclusion

In the conclusion to his *History of Modern Yemen*, Paul Dresch describes a government advertising supplement published in *Newsweek* magazine in 1998, entitled 'Poised for growth into the next Millennium', which 'consigns the specificities of Yemeni life to the visual domain of landscape and architecture'²⁹⁴. Domestic realities were indeed vastly different from the harmonious image presented to international audiences. By 2000, the regime faced major challenges in each of the three spheres we have examined: coercive, utilitarian and identitive. This situation was only partly attributable to the limited political legitimacy enjoyed by 'Alī 'Abdallah Sālih and his immediate circle. It reflected wider tension and dispute over the remit of the state to which the regime was intimately, indeed inextricably, tied.

In the coercive field, the state's monopoly over the use of force was tenuous outside the urban power centres of the Sālih regime. This might have suggested a straight contest between the 'state' on one hand and 'society' on the other, but the picture was far more complex, not least because state coercive apparatuses were themselves never homogenous institutions. In the North, the regime had long depended on the coercive assets of allied tribal *shaykhs* to ensure its survival. Political accommodations of this kind were at best tenuous arrangements. Tribal groupings remained a potentially crippling source of coercive opposition to the state, and accommodations came at a price: key government positions were surrendered to influential *shaykhs*, and the regime forfeited control over rural law enforcement. Although attempts at centralisation of coercive power in the PDRY had enjoyed some success pre-1990, state control in this field was fragmented, and fell apart in the political stalemate of the transition period, even in urban areas. This created a window of opportunity for a range of non-state actors, some of which later played important roles in the Civil War. These included emergent Islamist groups such as the so-called 'Afghans', many of which were Saudi-backed. Revived state attempts to assert a coercive monopoly after the Civil War failed. Besides the rising challenge from Islamists of various hues, long-standing opposition from disenfranchised tribal groupings continued, especially in the North and East of the country. In tacit recognition of the limitations of state capacity, officials frequently fell back on local frameworks for accommodation, as tribal figures assumed dispute-resolution functions *in lieu* of the state. On the few occasions when the state did seek direct military action against armed societal actors, it invariably suffered heavy losses. If the lesson of the Civil War had been that coercive showdowns *could* advance political integration in certain circumstances, the regime seemed tacitly to acknowledge that favourable conditions for general assertion of its monopoly simply did not exist.

Efforts to impose centralised, state-defined norms for resource allocation in the water sector fell similarly short, despite an emerging international development consensus by the 1990s that the country's water crisis was reaching near catastrophic proportions. As in the coercive field, this was a reflection not just of the limited political legitimacy of the Sālih regime, but also of differences of opinion over the proper role of the state. State-defined legal norms for water management were consistently rejected at local level, where non-elite actors continued to operate in accordance with *ʿurf* provisions and *shariʿa* law in both North and South. It was only

²⁹⁴ Dresch 2000: 211.

when municipal officials demonstrated a new willingness to negotiate water management norms with local communities in the mid- to late-1990s – introducing the prospect of accommodations between various levels of the state and local interests – that significant progress was made. Crucially – as in the coercive field – the range of actors involved in the water sector belied easy distinctions between ‘centre’ and ‘periphery’, ‘state’ and ‘society’ and so forth. Participants in negotiations with municipal officials might be *shaykhs* or newly-established local interest groups bringing farmers together in consultation with middle and low-level state bureaucrats, some of whom had personal, financial interests in resource allocation.

The regime enjoyed greater success in the identitive field, where the presence of an extensive educational infrastructure in the North and particularly the South in 1990 provided it with ready access to Yemen’s growing youth population. There was nevertheless little sense that the state had become the ‘dominant focus of political identification’ by 2000²⁹⁵. We found evidence of a dynamic process in which curricula constantly evolved in response to growing challenges from educational institutions outside the domain of the state’s control, some of which enjoyed substantial external support – especially from Saudi Arabia. Ministry of Education textbooks advanced claims of political legitimacy on behalf of the Republican regime that were designed to de-base the traditional authority of the *sāda* intimately associated with the Imāmate, and seize the initiative in defining an ‘official’ brand of Islam that was at variance with the output of Islāh’s *ma‘āhid ‘ilmiyya*. They also subtly reinforced the political legitimacy of what might be termed a Republican officer-elite of non-*sayyid* Zaydīs of which ‘Alī ‘Abdallah Sālih was the embodiment, even if he was rarely mentioned by name. When it became clear that these efforts would not be enough to overcome the challenge from semi-private institutions, the regime responded by forcibly integrating the *ma‘āhid* into the mainstream education system, but could do little to reign in an emerging Zaydī revivalist movement in the far Northern province of Sa‘dah. Again, contest in the educational field tended to undermine easy ‘state’-‘society’ dichotomies. The central role played by figures in Islāh in educational policymaking during and immediately after the transition period could not disguise the fact that some of the more radical *ma‘āhid* were also administered by figures tied or affiliated to the party.

In much of this, the ‘North-South divide’ was all but irrelevant, especially after 1990. A mis-leading, simplistic, Cold War-inspired dichotomy, this ‘divide’ poorly reflected considerable complexity at local level, and layered conceptions of identity that featured strong ties of kinship and regional affiliations. Its perceived persistence may be attributed to the overwhelming elite-centrism of many analyses of post-unification Yemen, some viewing the situation through the narrow lenses of Deutsch’s integration theory, hardly any engaging with broader social and political change. In fact, the North-South ‘divide’ collapsed with extraordinary rapidity after 1990 in the utilitarian sphere and particularly the identitive field, where – given the PDRY’s track record of educational investment – we might have expected trenchant ideological dispute. To some extent, this was indicative of the Southern regime’s waning power pre-1990, afflicted by reactions against the revolutionary radicalism of the pre-1978 period, and then – catastrophically – the internecine fighting of 1986. But it was also indicative of a greater degree of structural homogeneity between the two states at

²⁹⁵ Etzioni 2001: 4.

unification than many contemporary analysts were prepared to admit. The field in which the ‘divide’ remained partially intact was the coercive one. As we saw, however, this division quickly degenerated into a complex, multi-factorial fighting in the Civil War of 1994 – a re-shuffling of political cards in which various non-state political actors sought to new positions of prominence. Finally, external intervention in Yemen – whether direct or indirect – tended to ignore strict divisions. Saudi financial aid was just as likely to be targeted at extremist organisations hostile to the Yemeni state post-1990 as at leading tribal figures such as ‘Abdallah al-Ahmar with important stakes in the political *status quo*.

The defining current *both pre- and post-1990* was instead the changing nature of the relationship between the ‘state’ – such as it was – and power centres in ‘society’, for it was in terms of this interaction that contests over the construction of new political communities occurred. By drawing direct comparisons between the situation in North and South from 1978, and then in unified Yemen from 1990, I have tried to show that though the remit of the ‘state’ was everywhere contested, political actors and the forms in which interactions occurred were constantly changing. Tribal mechanisms of accommodation evolved; so too did frameworks of accommodation in the water sector, and the ideological positions of contesting forces in the education sector.

In *Civil Society in Yemen*, Sheila Carapico talked of the ‘dynamic, contested, even contradictory elements’ of the process by which civic spaces came to be defined by a range of political, economic and cultural factors in Yemen²⁹⁶. This is an important insight in the context of political integration. I have advocated a *sociological* understanding of integration in which the subjects of the dynamic interaction between ‘state’ and ‘society’ were of necessity *norms* and *values* rather than formal political institutions, in an environment in which formal state capacity was very limited. There was no better demonstration of this than in the consistent efforts of the Sālih regime to co-opt and exploit local frameworks, tribal, cooperative and others – recognition that these manifestations of state-building from below could perform essential functions of which the state itself was incapable²⁹⁷.

The overwhelming impression by 2000 was of a regime presiding over a country teetering perpetually on the brink of profound social and political fragmentation. Political agency – in this case, integrating power – had been re-situated away from the elites that had brought unification to the point of initiation in May 1990, and lay increasingly in the hands of semi-autonomous political actors, some affiliated with the state, others divorced entirely from it. This applied to everything from local initiatives to foreign policy; we have seen that even the border agreement signed with Saudi Arabia in 2000 was subject to contest. In these circumstances the ‘state’ – such as it was – often seemed a peripheral actor. While non-elite participation of this kind might have heralded the formation of a truly inclusive political community, it proved impossible to establish anything of the kind. We have found ample evidence that the situation in Yemen post-1990 failed to satisfy any of the three key conditions for the existence of a political community outlined by Etzioni. The problem was the perception of an increasing gulf between the Sālih regime and the people it sought to govern, grounded in the essential paradox of the President’s method of rule: seeking,

²⁹⁶ Carapico 1998: 201.

²⁹⁷ Debiel and Klein: Introduction.

on one hand, to forge alliances and negotiate trade-offs, while on the other with exhibiting a strong tendency towards centralisation and personalisation of power. Only the President's crucial alliance with ^cAbdallah al-Ahmar seemed to hold the political *status quo* intact.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Brief Chronology

1962	Revolution on 26 th September overthrows Imām Badr and marks the establishment of a Republic in the North
1967	British leave Aden
1970	National Reconciliation between Republicans and Royalists in the North brings the Civil War to an end
1972	First border war between the two Yemens
1978	Al-Ghashmī murdered in the YAR; Sālih takes over. Sālim Rubay ^{ca} ^c Alī executed in the South; ^c Abd al-Fattāh Isma ^c īl takes over
1979	Second border war between the two Yemens
1980	^c Alī Nāsir Muhammad becomes leader in the South
1986	Fighting erupts in the South; ^c Alī Nāsir is removed from power
1990	Unification announced on May 22 nd
1993	Parliamentary elections install a GPC-Islāh coalition in power
1994	Civil War from April to July in which the North emerges victorious
1997	Parliamentary elections confirm GPC's dominance
1999	Sālih elected to 'first' 5-year term in office
2000	10 th anniversary celebrations of unification

Appendix 2: Interviews Conducted

Ahmad, Walīd: Water Specialist, UNDP, Sana'a, December 19th 2007.

Al-Hijri, Kamāl: Assistant Training Advisor, GTZ, Sana'a, December 14th 2007.

Al-Tibbi, Belqīs ^cAbdallah: Assistant Project Officer, UNICEF Education Team, Sana'a, December 19th 2007

Lackner, Helen: free-lance development professional, Oxford, January 15th 2007.

Bibliography

Media Sources:

Associated Press (AP) news archive
Agence France Presse (AFP) news archive
BBC Summary of World Broadcasts (BBC SWB) archive
The Guardian newspaper
The Independent newspaper
Middle East International (MEI)
The New York Times newspaper
Reuters news archive
Yemen Observer
Yemen Times

Literature in English:

Abu-Amr, Z. M. (1986), *The People's Democratic Republic of Yemen: the transformation of society* (unpublished PhD thesis, Georgetown University)
Al-Haddad, Abdul Rahman (1982), *Cultural Policy in the Yemen Arab Republic* (UNESCO)
Al-Saidi, M. A. (1992), *The Cooperative Movement in Yemen and Issues of Regional Development* (Professors World Peace Academy)
Al-Suwaidi, J. (1995), *The Yemeni war of 1994: Causes and Consequences* (Saqi Books)
Amnesty International (1993), *Unlawful Detention and Unfair Trials of Members of the Former NDF* (Amnesty International)
_____ (1994), *Human Rights Concerns following recent Armed Conflict* (Amnesty International)
_____ (1997), *Ratification without Implementation: the state of human rights in Yemen* (Amnesty International)
Ayubi, N. (1995), *Overstating the Arab State: politics and society in the Middle East* (IB Tauris)
Beatty, S. (1996), *Basic Education for Girls in Yemen: country case study and analysis* (UNESCO)
Bidwell, R. (1983), *The Two Yemens* (Longman and Westview)
Braun, U. (1992), 'Yemen: another case of unification', *Aussenpolitik* 43, pp. 174-84
Burrowes, R. (1987), *The Yemen Arab Republic: the Politics of Development 1962-1986* (Westview Press)
_____ (1988), 'State-building and Political Reconstruction in the Yemen Arab Republic, 1962-77', in Chelkowski, P. and Pranger, R. (eds.), *Ideology and Power in the Middle East* (Duke University Press)
_____ (1989), 'Oil Strike and leadership struggle in South Yemen: 1986 and beyond', *Middle East Journal* 43(3), 437-54
_____ (1991), 'Prelude to Unification: The Yemen Arab Republic, 1962-1990', *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 23, 483-506
_____ (1992), 'The Yemen Arab Republic's Legacy and Yemeni Unification', *Arab Studies Quarterly* 14, 41-69
Carapico, S. (1993), 'The Economic Dimension of Yemeni Unity', *Middle East Report* 184, pp. 9-14
_____ (1994), 'From Ballot-box to Battlefield: The War of the Two Alis', *Middle East Report* 190, pp. 24-7

- _____ (1998), *Civil Society in Yemen: the political economy of activism in modern Arabia* (Cambridge University Press)
- Cigar, N. (1985), 'State and Society in South Yemen', *Problems of Communism* 34(3), 41-58
- _____ (1990), 'Islam and the State in South Yemen: an Uneasy Coexistence', *Middle Eastern Studies* 26(2), pp. 185-203
- Davis, D. and Pereira, A. W. (2003), *Irregular Armed Forces and their Role in Politics and State Formation* (Cambridge University Press)
- Day, S. W. (2001), *Power-sharing and Hegemony: a case study of the United Republic of Yemen* (unpublished PhD thesis, Georgetown University)
- Debiel, T. and Klein, A. (2002), *Fragile Peace: state failure, violence and development in crisis regions* (Zed Books)
- Detalle, R. (1993), 'The Yemeni Elections Up Close', *Middle East Report* 185, pp. 8-12
- Dresch, P. (1989), *Tribes, Government and History in Yemen* (Oxford Clarendon Press)
- _____ (1993), 'A Daily Plebiscite: Nation and State in Yemen', *Revue du Monde Musulman* 67(1), pp. 67-76.
- _____ (2000), *A History of Modern Yemen* (Cambridge University Press)
- Dresch, P. and Haykel, B. (1995), 'Stereotypes and Political Styles: Islamists and Tribesfolk in Yemen', *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 27(4), pp. 405-27
- Dunbar, C. (1992), 'The Unification of Yemen: Process, Politics and Prospects', *Middle East Journal* 46(3), pp. 456-476
- Economist Intelligence Unit (1987), *Country Report: Oman and the Yemens, 1987-8* (EIU)
- _____ (1989), *Country Report: Oman and the Yemens, 1989-90* (EIU)
- El-Mallakh, R. (1986), *The Economic Development of the Yemen Arab Republic* (Croon Helm)
- Enders, K. et al (2002), *Yemen in the 1990s: from unification to economic reform* (International Monetary Fund)
- Etzioni, A., (1961), *A Comparative Analysis of Complex Organisations: on power, involvement, and their correlates* (Free Press of Glencoe)
- _____ (2001), *Political Unification Revisited: on Building Supranational Communities* (Lexington Books)
- FAO (1985), *People's Democratic Republic of Yemen: programming mission* (FAO)
- FAO-World Bank (1980), *Yemen Arab Republic: review of agricultural project priorities* (FAO)
- Gause, F. G. (1989), 'Yemeni Unity – Past and Future', *Middle East Journal* 42(1), 33-47
- _____ (1990), *Yemeni-Saudi Relations: Domestic Structures and Foreign Influences* (Columbia University Press)
- Gray, M. (1998), 'Electoral Politics and the 1997 Elections in Yemen', *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies* 21(3), pp. 31-47
- Haas, E. (1958), *The Uniting of Europe* (Stanford University Press)
- Halliday, F. (1979), 'Yemen's unfinished revolution: socialism in the South', *Middle East Report* 81, pp. 3-20
- _____ (1986), 'Catastrophe in South Yemen: a preliminary assessment', *Middle East Report* 139, pp. 37-9

- _____ (1990), *Revolution and Foreign Policy* (Cambridge University Press)
- _____ (1995), 'The Third Inter-Yemeni War', *Asian Affairs* 26(2), pp. 131-40
- Hancock, M. D. and Welsh, H. A. [eds.] (1994), *German Unification: Processes and Outcomes* (Westview Press)
- Handley, C. D. (2001), *Water stress: some symptoms and causes: a case study of Ta'izz, Yemen* (Ashgate)
- Haykel, B. (1995), 'A Zaydī Revival?', *Yemen Update: Winter/Spring*, pp. 20-1
- Haykel, B. (2003), *Revival and Reform in Islam: the legacy of Muhammad al-Shawkani* (Cambridge University Press)
- Hudson, M. (1991), 'After the Gulf War: prospects for democratisation in the Arab World', *Middle East Journal* 45(3), pp. 407-26
- _____ (1995), 'Bipolarity, Rational Calculation and War in Yemen', in al-Suwaidi, J. (ed.), *The Yemeni war of 1994: Causes and Consequences* (Saqi Books)
- _____ (1999), *Middle East Dilemma: the Politics and Economics of Arab Integration* (IB Tauris)
- International Development Agency (1997), *Yemen: Southern Governorates Development Project* (World Bank)
- International Institute of Strategic Studies (various years), *The Military Balance* (IISS, Brassey's, and later Oxford University Press)
- Ismael, T. Y. and Ismael, J.S. (1986), *PDRYemen: Politics, Economics and Society* (Pinter and Reiner)
- Joffé, G., Hachemi, M. J. and Watkins, E. W. [eds.] (1997), *Yemen Today: Crisis and Solutions* (Caravel)
- Kamrava, M. (2000), 'Military Professionalisation and Civil-Military Relations in the Middle East', *Political Science Quarterly* 115(1), pp. 67-92
- Kostiner, J. (1990), *South Yemen's Revolutionary Strategy, 1970-85: from insurgency to bloc politics* (Jaffee Centre for Strategic Studies)
- _____ (1994), 'Yemen', in Ayalon, A. and Maddy-Weitzman, B. (eds.), *Middle East Contemporary Survey* (Holmes and Meier)
- _____ (1995), 'Yemen', in Maddy-Weitzman, B. (ed.), *Middle East Contemporary Survey* (Holmes and Meier)
- _____ (1996), *Yemen: the Tortuous Quest for Unity, 1990-94*, (Chatham House Papers)
- _____ (1997), 'Yemen', in Maddy-Weitzman, B. (ed.), *Middle East Contemporary Survey* (Holmes and Meier)
- _____ (1998), 'Yemen', in Maddy-Weitzman, B. (ed.), *Middle East Contemporary Survey* (Holmes and Meier)
- _____ (1999), 'Yemen', in Maddy-Weitzman (ed.), *Middle East Contemporary Survey* (Holmes and Meier)
- _____ (2000), 'Yemen', in Maddy-Weitzman (ed.), *Middle East Contemporary Survey* (Holmes and Meier)
- Krieger, L. et al (1985), *The Yemens: country studies* (The American University Press)
- Lackner, H. (1986), *PDRYemen: Outpost of Socialist Development in Arabia* (Ithaca Press)
- Lichtenthäler, G. (2003), *Political Ecology and the Role of Water: environment, society and economy in Northern Yemen* (Ashgate)
- Lindberg, L. (1963), *The Political Dynamics of European Economic Integration* (Stanford University Press)

- Lindberg, L. and Scheingold, S. (1970), *Europe's Would-Be Polity: patterns of change in the European Community* (Prentice-Hall)
- Mahdi, K., Lackner, H. and Würth, A. eds. (forthcoming 2007), *Yemen into the 21st Century: continuity and change* (Ithaca Press)
- Maktari, A. M. A. (1971), *Water Rights and Irrigation Practices in Lahj: a study of the application of customary and shari'a law in South Arabia* (Cambridge University Press)
- Migdal, J. (1988), *Strong Societies and Weak States: State-society relations and state capabilities in the third world* (Princeton University Press)
- Mullick, M. A. (1987), *Socio-economic Aspects of Rural Water Supply and Sanitation: a case study of the YAR* (The Book Guild)
- Nagi, S. (1984), 'The Genesis of the Call for Yemeni Unity', in Pridham, B. R. (ed.), *Contemporary Yemen: Politics and Historical Background* (Croon Helm)
- Nyrop, R. et al (1977), *Area Handbook for the Yemens* (US Government Printing Office)
- Petersen, J. E. (1982), *Yemen: the Search for a Modern State* (Croon Helm)
- Phillips, S. (2005), 'Cracks in the Yemeni System', *Middle East Report Online*, www.merip.org/mero/mero072805.html [accessed March 13th 2007]
- _____ (2006), 'Foreboding About the Future in Yemen', *Middle East Report Online*, www.merip.org/mero/mero040306.html [accessed March 13th 2007]
- Pridham, B. R. [ed.] (1984), *Contemporary Yemen: Politics and Historical Background* (Croon Helm)
- _____ (1985), *Economy, Society and Culture in Contemporary Yemen* (Croon Helm)
- Randall, V. and Theobald, R. (1998), *Political Change and Underdevelopment: a critical introduction to Third World Politics* (MacMillan)
- Republic of Yemen (1996), *GAREW: Rural Water and Sanitation Sector Study* (RoY)
- _____ (1999), *Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Project Study* (RoY)
- Riaz, K. (2002), 'Tackling the issue of rural-urban water transfers in the Ta'izz region, Yemen', *Natural Resources Forum* 26, pp. 89-100
- Rosamond, B. (2003), *Theories of European Integration* (Macmillan)
- Saif, A. A. (1998), *The Politics of Survival and the Structure of Control in Unified Yemen 1990-97*, online at <http://www.al-bab.com/yemen/unity/saif1.htm> (unpublished MA thesis, University of Exeter) [accessed December 17th 2006]
- _____ (2001), *A Legislature in Transition: the Yemeni Parliament* (Asghate)
- Schmitz, C. P. (1997), *State and Market in South Yemen*, (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of California, Berkeley)
- Schwedler, J. (2002), 'Yemen's Unlikely 'Emerging Democracy'', *Journal of Democracy* 12(1), pp. 48-55
- _____ (2006), *Faith in Moderation: Islamist parties in Jordan and Yemen* (Cambridge University Press)
- Sharif, A. H. (1998), 'Weak Institutions and Democracy: the case of the Yemeni Parliament, 1993-97', *Middle East Policy* 9(1), pp. 82-93
- Stanzel, V. (1988), 'Marxism in Arabia: South Yemen Twenty Years After Independence', *Aussenpolitik* 39(3), pp. 265-277
- Stookey, R. W. (1982), *South Yemen: a Marxist Republic in Arabia* (Westview Press)
- UNESCO (1981), *For Literacy, Adult Education and Rural Development in the Yemen Arab Republic* (UNESCO)
- UNESCO (2004), *Education in the Republic of Yemen* (in association with RoY Ministry of Education)

- UNESCO (forthcoming 2007), *The Education of the Girl Child in Yemen: promoting girls' education in order to achieve equal opportunities* (in association with RoY Ministry of Education)
- UNESCWA-FAO (1987), *Yemen Arab Republic: rural development strategy and implementation* (FAO)
- Van der Gun, J. A. M and Ahmed, A. (1995), *The Water Resources of Yemen: a summary and digest of available information* (Report WRAY-35, Yemeni Ministry of Oil and Mineral Resources and Dutch TNO Institute of Applied Geoscience)
- Vom Bruck, G. (1997), 'Disputing Descent-based Authority in the Idiom of Religion: the case of the Republic of Yemen', *Die Welt des Islams* 38(2), pp. 149-91
- _____ (2005), *Islam, Memory, and Morality in Yemen: ruling families in transition* (Palgrave MacMillan)
- Warburton, D. (1995), 'The Conventional War in Yemen', *Arab Studies Journal* 3(1), pp. 20-44
- Ward, C. (2000), *Yemen CDR Building Block: Qāt in Yemen* (World Bank)
- Wedeen, L. (2003), 'Seeing like a citizen, acting like a state: exemplary events in unified Yemen', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 45(4), pp. 680-713
- Weir, S. (1997), 'A Clash of Fundamentalisms: Wahhabism in Yemen', *Middle East Report* 204, pp. 22-6
- Welton, M. (1997) *The Establishment of Northern Hegemony in the Process of Yemeni Unification*, online at <http://www.al-bab.com/yemen/unity/mw0.htm> (unpublished MSc dissertation, SOAS) [accessed February 21st 2007]
- Wenner, M. (1988), 'Ideology versus Pragmatism in South Yemen, 1968-86', in *Ideology and Power in the Middle East*, eds Peter Chelkowski and Robert Pranger (Duke University Press)
- _____ (1993), 'National Integration and National Security: the case of Yemen', pp. 169-85 in Korany, B., Noble, P. and Brynen, R. (eds.), *The Many Faces of National Security in the Arab World* (MacMillan)
- World Bank (1979), *People's Democratic Republic of Yemen: a review of social and economic development* (IBRD/World Bank)
- _____ (1979), *Yemen Arab Republic: development of a traditional economy* (IBRD/World Bank)
- _____ (1995), *Republic of Yemen: dimensions of economic adjustment and structural reform* (World Bank)
- _____ (1997), *Yemen: towards a water strategy* (World Bank)
- _____ (1997), *Southern Governorates Project: appraisal* (World Bank Sana'a Office)
- _____ (1999), *Irrigation Sector Note* (World Bank Sana'a Office)
- _____ (2000), *Republic of Yemen: Comprehensive Development Review, Phase I: Public Sector Management Building Block* (World Bank)
- _____ (2005), *Republic of Yemen: country water resources assistance strategy* (World Bank)

In other European languages:

- Leveau, R., Mermier, F. and Steinbach, U. [eds.] (1999), *Le Yémen contemporain*, Paris: Karthala
- Mermier, F. (1997), 'L'Islam Politique au Yémen ou la 'Tradition' contre les traditions?', *Monde Arabe Maghreb-Machrek* 155, pp. 6-19

In Arabic:

- Ba-[°]Abbād, [°]Alī Hūd (2003), *At-Ta[°]līm fī-l-jumhuriyyat al-yamaniyya: mādayhu, hādhirhu, mustaqbalhu* (Maktabat al-Irshād, Sana'a)
- Al-Ghifārī, Dr [°]Alī [°]Abd al-Quwāh (1998), *Al-Wahda al-Yamaniyya – al-wāqī' wal-mustaqbal* (Kitāb al-Thawābit)
- PDRY Ministry of Education (n.d.[a]), *falsafa lil-saff al-awwal min al-madrasa al-thānawiyya al-[°]amma*
_____ (n.d.[b]), *qadāya al-mujtamā'a*
_____ (1983), *al-nahw wal-sarf lil-saff al-awwal min al-madrasa al-thānawiyya al-[°]amma*
_____ (1987), *al-mutāla'a al-mukhtāra lil-saff al-thānī al-thānawī*
- RoY Ministry of Education (1991), *al-nusūs al-adabiyya al-hadītha lil-saff al-thānī min al-marhala al-[°]dādiyya*
_____ (1994[a]), *al-tarbiyya al-ijtimā'īyya wal-tabī'īyya lil-saff al-rābī' a min al-ta[°]līm al-asāsī*
_____ (1994[b]), *al-tarbiyya al-wataniyya lil-saff al-khāmis min al-ta[°]līm al-asāsī*
_____ (1994[c]), *ibn al-yaman*
_____ (1996[a]), *kitāb al-tarbiyya al-islāmiyya lil-saff al-rābī' a min al-ta[°]līm al-asāsī*
_____ (1996[b]), *al-qirā'a wal-mahfūdhāt lil-saff al-rābī' a min al-ta[°]līm al-asāsī*
_____ (1999[a]), *al-nusūs al-adabiyya al-hadītha*
_____ (1999[b]), *al-nahw lil-saff al-awwal al-thānawī*
_____ (1999[c]), *al-qirā'a lil-saff al-awwal al-thānawī*
- YAR Ministry of Education (1984), *al-tārīkh al-yamani al-wasīt lil-sana al-sādīsa al-ibtidā'īyya*
_____ (1987), *Kirā'a Namūdhijiyya*