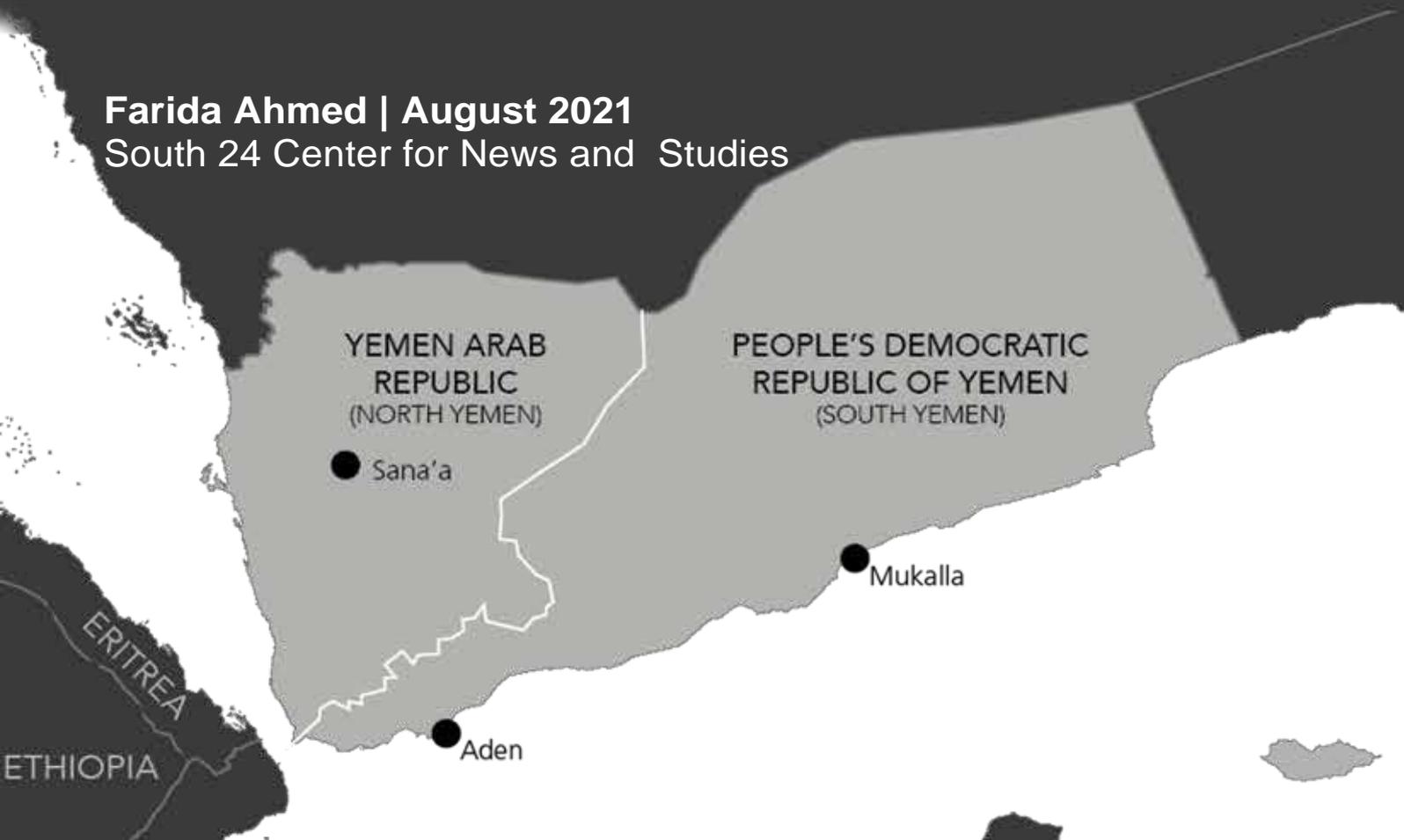


The Southern Reality Between Discord and Consensus

A Vision in History, Politics and Society

South Yemen
1960 – 2021

Farida Ahmed | August 2021
South 24 Center for News and Studies



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(The opinions expressed in this study represent the author)

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Summary

Understanding the reality of South Yemen is currently of urgent importance. In spite of the discord and consensus aspects among the Southerners through different historical stages, and the great political influence caused by the interrelation, there are deeper ties and a state of national richness that has found their way in a society of variable cultural, social and economic characteristics as well as other fields. Such a thing requires maintenance and observance. It becomes clear that the coherent religious identity in South, based upon coexistence and harmony has not been affected by the sharp sectarian dimension during the latest Yemeni War, which turned by some Yemeni parties, such as the Islah party, ideologically affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood, and the Iranian-backed Houthis, to a religious and sectarian conflict.

Main points

-The elite system in North Yemen, including politicians, experts, researchers, analysts and others, always depicts South in the shape of endless conflict hotbed, and that any agreement among its political powers will be fragile. The image of disagreement in the Jan. 1986 War has been reduced and being repeatedly cited all time in a consumed and exaggerated way.

-The same North Yemen elite's turning a blind eye to the wars that involved North starting from the military events in the 1950s and 1960s, the 1970s middle regions wars, the 1994- War by the former Yemeni regime against South, the Saada 6 wars, to the latest 2015 War until the time of writing, is a kind of dodging propaganda trying to portray South Yemen's future, in case of restoring the state, as a consecutive conflict scene to reach a conclusion that the southern stability relies upon the continuation of its unity with North. This contradicts the political and military facts which prove that the worst waves of South Yemen's conflicts, worse than the Jan 1986 events, came from North or as a result of it.

-The depiction of southerners as being in permanent dispute and disagreement is a policy adopted by the Yemeni regime. This propaganda method has fed those who benefit from its heritage, especially the Yemeni parties and other political powers who oppose the Southerners' project to restore their state and gain their independence, top of which is the Islah party ideologically which is affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood.

-The southern experience after independence from British colonialism was undoubtedly a bitter one marred by some mistakes. However, it has no sense to present or portray this era in a picture full of conspiracies and personal grudges, ignoring the positive aspects and achievements made by the former South state at different levels.

- Certainly, one should not overlook the historical facts caused by deep conflicts which have been rooted inside the southern memory. However, this shouldn't be a reason to focus on its disadvantages all the time and to ignore consensual recent events, such as the public squares and the southern coherence whose demands were represented through the peaceful "Southern movement" in 2007, or their consensual view about the possible threats of Al Qaeda and Isis, or their agreement after the 2015 War to stand in the same trench against the Houthis, as many Southerners dubbed this as "Second Invasion", in a reference to the "First Invasion" during the 1994 War.
- The current Southern Dialogue, under the management of the STC is a good initiative to open horizons for a wider and more inclusive consensus across the southern governorates.
- The best southern approach is to find a new civilized vision that deals with the diversity fact on various levels, and to employ it within the context of enriching the coexistence, social peace and national unity among all regions, within the big inclusive frame represented in the state.
- The establishment of an independent state, in the shape of "a federation" would constitute a legal, logical and proportional frame that suits the importance and the status of each southern governorate from one side and maintains the unity and the coherence of the state from the other one.

In lights of the study's conclusion, a number of recommendations have been set as follow:

First: to the internal bodies

- to engage in a (southern internal) dialogue, and to converge the views of disputing parties, including those who don't believe in the South's independence as an urgent solution in this troubled stage of the Yemeni history, and this milestone phase in the southern history, for unifying their ranks and renouncing their internal disputes, as well as the replacement of the dialogue language instead of the language of weapons.
- The endorsement of a unified southern vision agreed upon by all political parties constitutes enormous importance for arranging, stabilizing and securing the southern political situation.
- The federal shape of a future southern state would constitute a legal and logical frame for the southern status, securing the maintenance of the stature and the history of each governorate in addition to its social and cultural singularity.
- The formation of a unified military force and the amalgamate of the current southern forces under a unified southern army is an important factor to strengthen the southern military influence over its territories.

- To continue fighting the “terrorist” organizations, Al Qaeda and Isis by the southern military forces, which has proven reliable in fighting it, would limit their operations and activities in South.
- Recognizing the right of southern people to restore their state as a main guarantee would help in the future in reunifying the torn North among its fighting groups, or at least, to help in directing efforts to restore the state in North, and to begin a (northern-northern) dialogue regarding the regional grievances there.

Secondly: to external parties

- Completing the negotiation process regarding ending the Yemeni war, with regional and international sponsorship, for ripening a comprehensive political settlement among the disputing parties is urgent to avoid entering a more dangerous and complicated stage.
- The regional and international position of the geopolitical southern location which is connected with the Horn of Africa, the Red Sea and the Arabian Sea requires more regional and international awareness of protection and care to avoid any future threats or challenges in the region.
- Supporting the southern military forces, which have proved reliable in liberating their territories from the Houthi hands, and eliminating the Qaeda across wide southern areas, by the two Elites in Hadhramaut and Shabwa, as well as the Security Belts in Lahij, Aden and Abyan requires regional and international interest, in addition to urgent support for those forces to complete their tasks.
- Those, Arabs or foreigners, who are interested in the Yemeni affairs, should read events and explore the facts in a thorough way, without any bias or reduction, and to extract the information from their original sources and real witnesses, as well as enhancing their historical awareness of the region, the roots, the motives and the dimensions of its conflicts, and the reasons behind the return and the recurrence of violence there.

Thanks and appreciation:

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Introduction

South Yemen witnessed a series of consecutive events and crises which constituted a milestone turning point in its history at different political, military, economic and social levels. The study focused on the period of establishing South Arabia since the beginning of 1960s, and the following historic political stages, including the establishment of an independent state in South after the departure of the British colonizer in 1967, and joining the Yemeni Unity later in 1990. Although the importance of the earlier stages, the chronology of the next events that brought South to its current shape today directly relates to most contemporary crises, top of which are the effects caused by the 1994 War, as a result of increasing the sharpness of disputes and conflicts among the unity partners in the first years of the unified state. This ultimately had dictated its appalling end according to the southerners' views. The beginning of correcting the southern track after the emergence of the southern issue due to the 1994 War, and its subsequent demands and visions by the components of the Southern Movement limits its developments to call for restoring the southern state and reclaiming its identity and land, as well as choosing its most proper system after gaining its independence constitutes a very important aspect, especially after the eruption of the latest 2015 Yemeni War, which destroyed the remaining bridges between South and North after the Houthi control on the capital Sana'a, and the following intervention of the Arab Coalition due to that coup, in addition to the subsequent repercussions caused by Yemeni parties that oppose the southerners' project to restore their state, especially the Muslim Brotherhood- affiliated, Islah Party. This has affected the war path which has been transformed toward the South rather than liberating the Yemeni capital, Sanaa.

Choosing the title of this study was urgent due to the current nature of the situation after the latest Yemeni conflict in 2015. Moreover, a long negotiations process among the disputing parties, and the ineffective government have largely disappointed a lot of southerners who believe that ending the deteriorating situation in Yemen, that has affected South, won't occur without the arrangement of the southern home's political situation through opening comprehensive prospects for dialogue, in partnership with all active and involving southern parties without exception.

The research paper was divided into three main axes, the first of which is related to giving historical glimpse to what happened in South since the 1960s until its independence from the British colonialism, and the establishment of the Southern State, known as the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, until its unity with the Yemen Arab Republic in 1990. The second axis is related to the political reality and its effect on the discord and agreement among the southerners across different stages. That third and last axis focuses on the southern society, and its identical, social and cultural variety, as well as the tribal composition and the religious identity, which constituted an important factor for the South's stability, especially after the 2015 War.

Therefore, the discussion in this paper focuses on a main trouble related to the effect of the southern realty with all its historical, political and social dimensions on the discord and the consensus among southerners, and to what extent, common meeting points among the disputing parties can be created to help building a more stable and secure future in South. The paper will try to answer these questions and others through adopting the analytical descriptive method based on studying a phenomenon as it is.

General Background

The location of South Yemen (1967-1990)

the area located in the southwest Arabian Peninsula, which includes Hadhramaut and Al Mahrah, adjacent to Oman from the east, till Bab Almandab, from the west. It consists of 6 governorates which are Aden, Lahij, Abyan, Shabwa, Hadhramaut and Al Mahrah. Its area is about 360000 square kilometers. It is bordered on the north by Saudi Arabia and northern Yemen, on the west by the Bab al-Mandab Strait, on the south by the Gulf of Aden and the Arabian Sea, and on the east by the Sultanate of Oman. ⁽¹⁾

A number of islands belong to South Yemen, top of which is Socotra, which is 125 km long and 42 km wide, as well as Perim Island (Mayyun) on the Bab AL Mandab Strait's entry, with an area of 13 KM², in addition to some smaller islands in the Gulf of Aden.

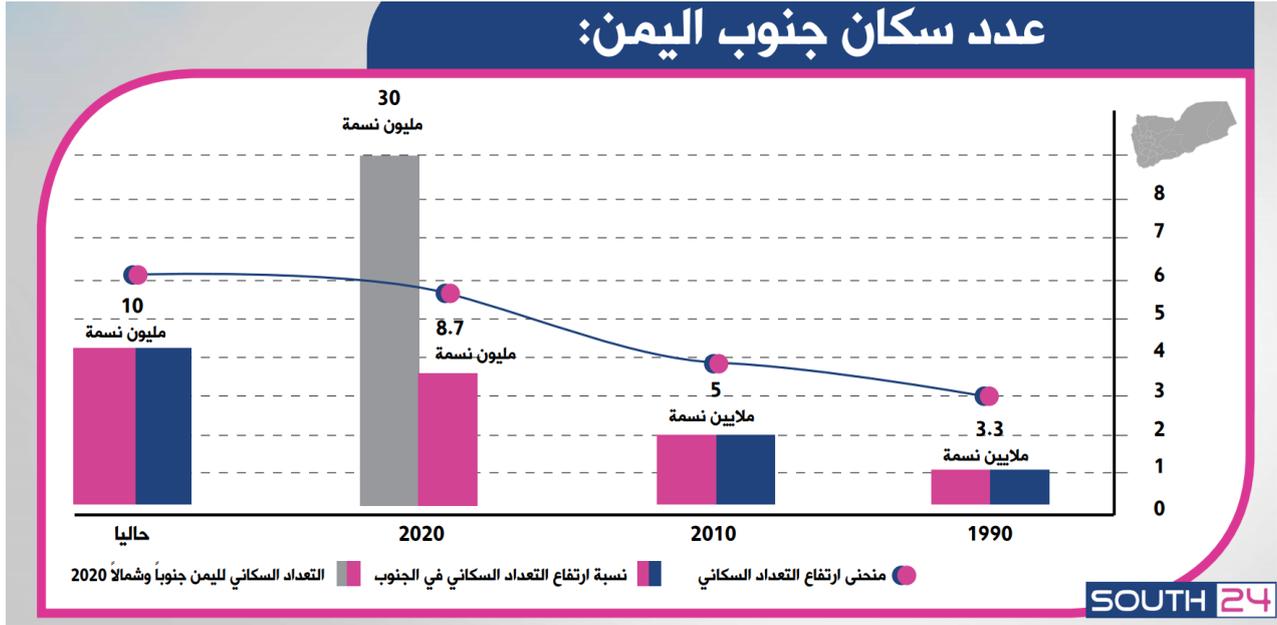
At the strategic level, the location of South Yemen is very important due to its connection to the Bab AlMandab Strait, through which international shipping lines pass near the shores of Aden and Lahij, as well as the concentration of oil and gas resources in Shabwa and Hadhramaut.

Population of South Yemen

Prior to 1990, South Yemen had a population of 3.3 million. Following the declaration of unity with North Yemen, and according to the official population census for the year 2010, the population of the southern governorates reached about 5 million.

While the population of the south and north reached nearly 30 million in 2020, according to World Bank figures, the proportion of the population structure of the south, which is 29%, confirms that the actual size of the indigenous population is 8.7 million people until 2020.

With the increasing number of refugees coming from the Horn of Africa, and the high rate of mass exodus from North Yemen, caused by the last years of the war, the estimated number of the population inside South Yemen, is about 10 million people.



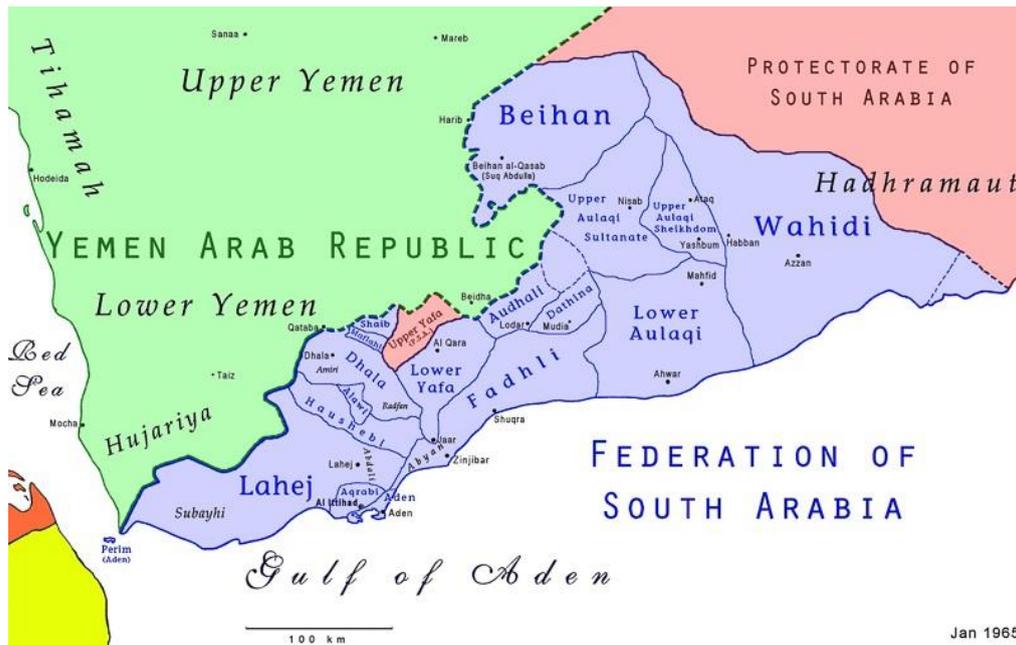
South Yemen's population based on estimated figures from the World Bank (South24)

First, a historical glimpse about South

Politically, the name South Arabia refers to the area extended from Bab Al Mandab and the Gulf of Aden at the west, to Oman's borders at the east. It is bordered by Yemen and the KSA at the north, and the Arabian Sea at the South. It consists of the district of Aden, the Western Protectorate, the Eastern Protectorate, and its affiliated islands. ⁽²⁾

The Southerners league adopted this name since 1947 instead of the so- called "The colony and protectorates of Aden" to confirm the region's Arabian affiliation, and to remind people by such a fact, as well as eliminating the sense of division, and the unification of the southerners feeling of affiliation to one state, and that all should share the efforts to end the British rule. ⁽³⁾

Along with the colony of Aden, the administrative division of South Arabia included eastern and western Aden States.



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Western Aden States: they included the Lahij Sultanate (Abdali Sultanate), which was the main state of the Western Aden Protectorate, with its capital, Al Houta, The Sabiha Tribes, which became later a part of Lahij Sultanate, the Fadhli Sultanate, which included half of the fertile Region of Abyan with its capital Zinjibar, Aqrabi Sheikhdome, which was a small state adjacent to the Colony of Ade with its capital, Beir Ahmed, The Upper Aulaqi Sultanate with its capital is Al Saeed, the Upper Aulaqi Sultanate and its capital Ahwar, the Emirate of Beihan with and its capital Beihan, the Lower Yafa Sultanate and its capital Ja'ar, the Upper Yafa Sultanate, which is divided into a number of independent divisions that mostly have separate deals with the British government, the Audhali Sultanate with its capital, Lawdar, the Haushabi Sultanate with its capital, Museimir, the Alawi Sheikhdome, the Emirate of Dhala with its capital, Al Dhala. The Emirate of Dhala included Jabal Jihaf, Belad Alqutaibi and Radfan, the Sheikhdome of Shaib with its capital, Al Awabel, and Dathina, with its capital Mudiyah. ⁽⁴⁾

Eastern Aden states: It included Qu'aiti Sultanate of Shihr and Mukalla, the Kathiri State of Seiyun with its capital, Seiyun, the Sultanate of Qishn and Soqotra, Qishn region, the home of the Mahra Tribe, with its capital, Hadiboh which is located on the northern shore of Soqotra, the Wahidi Sultanate which had two Sultans, one in Balhaf, and the other in Beir Ali, and the two had deals with the British government. ⁽⁵⁾

“Federation of the Emirates of the South was the first federal project that aimed to unify the southern tribes, enhance their role, achieve stability and security and to enable the southern emirates from drawing a common vision for their political and economical fate which suits their new status.

Moreover, the greatest looming danger for the British government was the extension of the revolutionary momentum in many Arab countries, particularly in Egypt, and the enthusiasm transferred to other countries, including North Yemen and South Arabia. Indeed, the British strategy began to shrink with the emergence of the second national project, the establishment of Federation of South Arabia in the beginning of 1963, after Aden's joining the Emirates Federation which unified the region in the late 1950s. This came in the wake of an initiative launched by a group of protectorates' rulers, including Sharif Bayhan, Fadhli vice sultan, Sultan Audhali, the Lower Yafa Sultan, Prince of Dhala and Sheikh of Upper Aulaqi to hold talks about the Union Project. They were able to endorse a final version.

It can be said that the "Federation of South Arabia" project came from the realization of the leaders and sheikhs of the tribes of the southern regions, that their regions, despite their status and importance, will remain weak as long as they remain separate from each other, and that the only way to protect their independence from neighboring Yemen in the long run was the union, while preserving the status and privacy of each region, especially since the union was subjected to some raids and attacks on the protectorate from time to time, especially the border areas with Yemen.

The various external and internal circumstances in the 1960s prompted the formation of a national liberation movement to lead the struggle against British colonialism. The National Liberation Front was established in 1963. The front's activity included most of the southern regions. In 1966, a rival front was formed under the name of "Front for the Liberation of Occupied South Yemen" consisting of the People's Socialist Party, the South Arabia League, the South Liberation Organization. ⁽⁶⁾

The two fronts (the National Front and the Liberation Front) didn't agree with each other and had deep disputes. The confrontation was decided in favor of the National Front, led by Mohammed Qahtan Alshaabi, then it gained a formal British recognition as Britain invited it to participate in negotiations in Geneva that started on Nov. 20th 1967 before achieving independence on November 30th at the same year. The People's Southern Republic of Yemen was declared as an independent Arab republic. Its name was modified, in the era of President Salim Rubai, to the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen in 1971. South Yemen started then to implement a left-wing economic program, with a big support by the then Soviet Union.

North Yemen hadn't been in a better status before the 1962 Revolution, during the Imamate rule, as it remained socially, economically and culturally isolated for a long time, to the extent that until 1950, while world was studying the possibility of reaching moon, there was no electricity or broadcast in North Yemen till after the end of World War II, as the British launched a broadcast station in Aden that was heard only by 3 persons who had radio devices at the time including Iman Ahmed, the Badr Crown Prince, and Judge Ahmed Al Hadarani. ⁽⁷⁾ After the 1962 Revolution. The first two Presidents of North Yemen, Abdullah Al Salal and Abdulrahman Al Eryani, had been overthrown in 1967 and 1974 respectively. In 1977, President Ibrahim Al Hamdi, who succeeded Al Eryani, was assassinated, the same fate of his successor Ahmed Al Ghashmi only 9 months after taking office. This paved the way for the rise of Ali Abdullah Saleh who ascended to power in 1978.

Moreover, the central regions' wars in North Yemen, known as "the Front War", in the 1980s, was one of the deadliest between the Sana'a regime and rival elements of the Democratic National Front. It spanned nearly five years between the two parties, as the Social Party in South Yemen had supported the front, due to the deterioration of the living situations and the spread of injustice in the central regions.

Back to South Yemen, particularly to Jan 13rd 1986, conflict erupted between the two wings of the ruling Yemeni Socialist Party, which ended with the control of the wing led by Ali Salim Al Bidh against the other wing led by President Ali Nasser Mohammed, who sought refuge abroad. As a result of the conflict, hundreds of civilians and military personnel have sought refuge in North Yemen, including the current Yemeni President, Abd Rabbuh Mansour Hadi. This conflict was considered a black point in the political history of South.

It should be said that the internal conflicts in North Yemen, and South Yemen, from a comprehensive view, varied according to the nature of its motives or political and social accumulations, as well as the internal compositions of these societies. The conflict had not been restricted to South Yemen away from North, or vice versa. The conflicts in North may exceed South for several reasons, including religious, doctrinal and regional ones which will be discussed later in this paper.

A union on the end road

On May 22nd 1990, Ali Salem Al Bidh, the then General Secretary of the Yemeni Socialist Party of the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen reached an agreement with the then President of Yemen Arab Republic Ali Abdullah Saleh to make Integration unity between the two states. It was signed in the capital Aden at the time, as many northern and southern Yemeni politicians considered the deal a quick and an unexpected surprise.

One of the most notable allegations was that the southerners resorted to unity for reasons related to the collapse of the Soviet Union, the backer of the South's economy. This lacks accuracy as the northern partner was aspiring to establish a unity with South "due to the notable economic development in the infrastructure, and the whole productive fields, the agricultural, the industrial and the commercial ones. Such development had been achieved due to the socialist Soviet support, in the shape of aids, privileges, consultations, expertise, and because of the concentration of wealth in South Yemen which created a further motif in the northern pursuit to unify with South". ⁽⁸⁾

Additionally, the southern state "made a lot of achievements in security, social justice and human building, and provided job, qualification, training, and training opportunities, as well as free education from the primary stage to university. It also established a comprehensive system for technical education, known as "Polytechnic". It paid attention to culture, art, sports, youth and knowledge building, and guaranteed women's full social, civil and political rights. The Family Law was an example for the social progress on this road, the Law guaranteed career promotion according to the people's qualifications without any kind of discrimination. It established a health system that

had included all citizens, as well as building large new road networks along and across the country. It built bridges and dams to save water, distributed agricultural lands, provided clean drinking water, electricity, postal services and communications. It established a system for internal trade, developed the port of Aden in a comprehensive way, provided coastal services to fishermen, and established civil airports in Hadhramaut, Mahra and Shabwa, in addition to developing Aden Airport, and gradually started building houses for citizens.”⁽⁹⁾ All these reasons and the previous ones were important motives for achieving unity with South.

In light of the establishment of the 1990 unity, a presidential council was formed according to the agreement, which stipulated that a president and a vice president would be elected through a joint parliamentary session between North and the South. Indeed, Ali Abdullah Saleh was elected as the President of the council, and Ali Salem al-Bidh as the Vice President. However, the division became clear on several levels, including financial budgets and some independent decisions, as well as the survival of the armed and security forces as well as the official currencies in two structurally separate entities.

During that period, clashes and tensions occurred between the two parties, allowing Ali Abdullah Saleh to restore his alliance with the tribal and religious powers, represented in The Yemeni Congregation for Reform (the Islah Party), the MB's branch in Yemen, to constitute a counterweight to the Socialist Party, and as an auxiliary to the General People's Congress Party, headed by Ali Abdullah Saleh, and to pretend opposition on the surface, but deep inside, they are one entity, according to the Memoirs of Sheikh Abdullah Bin Hussein Al Ahmar about the establishment of the party.⁽¹⁰⁾ Moreover, the northern religious forces were not in tandem with the idea of the Yemeni unity, as they believed that South Yemen is marxist and extension to the Soviet Union. The level of tension increased resulted in a series of assassination for southern political and military cadres, that reached 158 assassination case between 1991-1993.⁽¹¹⁾ Some jihadist elements had been accused of committing them, especially that this period witnessed the return of groups of Jihadists from Afghanistan to Yemen. However, it was not the only party involved in such assassinations, as the complexities of the transitional period made it difficult to determine the identity of the involving parties.⁽¹²⁾

The parliamentary election was held in 1993, amid a tense atmosphere and exchanging accusations of fraud and manipulation among the rival parties, Considering the cooperation between the General People's Congress and the Islah party against the Yemeni Socialist Party, due to the reduction of the socialist representatives in the parliament compared with the Congress Party's representatives who dominates the majority of seats, followed by the Islah Party, then the Socialist Party.

Following the escalation of disputes, the failure in solving the political crisis, and the strike by a number of the Socialist leaders, including the Vice President Ali Salim Al Bidh in Aden, the crisis reached a temporary end by signing on the “Document of Pledge and Accord” in January 1994. However, the clashes had been quickly renewed during the first months after this, and developed into a military war between the northern and southern forces that began on April 28th 1994. One of

the most important slogans raised by the northern forces was (the Unity or Death) following a flaming speech in the Al Sabeen Square by President Ali Abdullah Saleh who expressed his anomalous generous readiness to sacrifice one million martyrs to keep the unity. He fiercely attacked whom he called “Advocates of separation”.⁽¹³⁾ Along with his ally the Islah Party, Saleh got the help of jihadists in the war which they deemed as a sacred war between Muslims and infidels. The religious scholar, Abdul Wahab Al-Dailami, the member of the Islah, issued a fatwa that allows killing civilians, women and children in South Yemen and violates their blood and money.⁽¹⁴⁾ The fatwa sparked a widespread local and Arab responses, including the then Grand Mufti of Egypt Mohammed Sayed Tantawy who said: “this fatwa fuels the war and contributes in killing innocent people, although Islam forbids killing Muslims under any circumstances”.⁽¹⁵⁾ The Saudi Sheikh Abdulaziz Bin Baz also denounced it and described its author as being “not eligible for issuing fatwas”.

This war had a mix of overlapping and tangled effects and catastrophic complicated repercussions on the unity state. Its influence on South Yemen was more severe, which produced the southern issue.⁽¹⁶⁾ July 7th, 2007 was the beginning of the Southern Movement, which embraced and represented the issue through Southern Military Veterans Associations, as well as the earlier emergence of movements and entities since 1994, to highlight the worsening situation, the effects and the outcome of the war, and the new rule pattern after that amid the one ruling party for more than 30 years, in spite of a political diversity on the surface.

Secondly: the effect of the political reality on South

The exclusion and marginalization of the political unity’s partner and its exclusion from the ruling equation, as well as the consequences and devastating effects of the 1994 war on the various political, economic and social levels imposed a new political reality. The South’s refusal of this reality began by some southern movements and factions, including the “Mawj Movement”, “the Socialist party’s Reform the Path of Unity”, “Hatm Movement”, “the National Bloc”, “the People’s Committees”, “the Southern governorates’ People Forum” “The Independents”, “Taj Movements” and “the Association of Retired Veterans and Civilians. This was concluded by the establishment of the peaceful National Southern Movement which absorbed all people’s social categories and components including the majority of those of southern roots inside the Yemeni parties. The Tolerance and Reconciliation Movement, which was launched from Radfan Charitable Association, constituted a rich and proper environment for this.⁽¹⁷⁾ the activities, the factions and the events of the Southern Movement inside and outside South Yemen were extended. Top of which was the Supreme Council of the Peaceful Movement for South’s liberation and Independence, the Supreme Council of the Peaceful Revolutions, and other components, each of which played a role that came in favor of the South issue.

The southern togetherness and coherence since 2007 till the latest Yemeni 2015 Civil War drew a real picture of cooperation in the face of the complicated and thorny southern crisis. this came in

spite of the attempts of the Yemeni government to pressure its leaders during the rule of President Saleh, through arbitrary arrests, torture, shooting of demonstrators with live bullets, and the killing of hundreds of unarmed southerners in popular protests, that began with demands to modify unity path. However, the cruel and violent response by the regime raised the ceiling of demands to include independence and restoring the old southern state, the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, to the pre-1990 borders.

There were repeated attempts to drive a wedge among southerners through the official government media outlets, foreign affiliations, accusations against the leaders of the Southern Movement, as well as the invocation of the armed conflict on January 13th, 1986, among the wings of the Socialist Party on every formal occasion. The aim behind highlighting this was to thwart any southern consensus or rapprochement, and in particular the "reconciliation and tolerance process", which took place on January 13, 2006, to create a solid ground and confidence factor upon which the Southern Movement is based. For example, Ahmed Omar bin Farid, one of the founders of the Reconciliation and Tolerance Project, said about this: "After the meeting in the Radfan Association in 2006, which sponsored the Reconciliation and Tolerance event, the authority closed the association, followed by official media attack against the Reconciliation and Tolerance Project. This phenomenon was very strange, but they did so due to their realization about the danger of this project for its national dimension which threatens their goals and ambitions." ⁽¹⁸⁾

The southerners found it necessary to establish a strong peaceful movement, to close the page of the past, which was one of the reasons for the leaders of the socialist regime rushing towards an "uncalculated unity", that facilitated the task of Yemeni regime in Sana'a, to invade the unique progressive state in southern Arabia by military force in 1994, by exploiting the recent dispute between its political elites at the time, and to expel its rulers into exile dismantling state institutions and assuming their complete control over them. ⁽¹⁹⁾

In February 2011, after the outbreak of the popular uprising within the Arab Spring revolutions, some southern forces announced their joining the option of the revolution, including some of the movement's factions, which considered the revolution an advanced extension of their struggle. there was a discrepancy that became clear later between these forces, regarding their drive behind rushing towards option of the revolution, between those who considered it a strategic option for change and reforming the situation, such as the political parties and other political forces in North, and those who viewed it as a temporary tactical option to overthrow the regime or weaken it in order to facilitate the achievement of its goal later. ⁽²⁰⁾ However, General Ali Mohsen Al Ahmar's decision to join the revolution ⁽²¹⁾ with a number of military leaders, and the Yemeni Islah party's leading the revolution scenes prompted the southern voices supporting the Yemeni revolution to retreat and withdraw, in return for the rise of their voices and their return to the Southern Movement arenas, completely independent of the 2011 revolution squares. they believed that Ali Mohsen Al Ahmar was the second man after Saleh in the country, who led the 1994 war on the south, in addition to the historical hostility between most southerners and the Islah Party, whose members were Saleh's main allies in the 1994 War, along with Al Ahmar and the jihadist elements.

Stages between discord and consensus

The most prominent challenges facing the southern issue after 2007 was the lack of a prominent political holder representing the various southern components in consensus, to present the fair cause before the international bodies interested in the Yemeni issue. The gradual occurrence of this trend was normal in light of the attempts of the Ali Abdullah Saleh's regime to hit the movement from inside, in addition to its failed attempts to attract the movement's leaders with money, and the following disputes over leadership, representation, and seniority entitlement, or even some differences within the framework of the theoretical foundations of the southern issue, as some classify it as a historical rooted issue back to the post-1967, while others believe that it has emerged as a result of the 1994 summer War.

Moreover, the components of the Southern Movement suffered from regional and international isolation in terms of not interacting with them or dealing with their leaders. The doors of media outlets, in the local, regional and international level remained closed for them, except some shy coverage occasionally when Sana'a's authorities went deep in its repression of the Southern Movement. For the southerners, this was not fair, that is why they attempted to break this media blackout by launching "Aden" TV channel from London on Feb 11th, 2009, which was self-financed by some southerners abroad. This had provoked Saleh's regime which robbed the same channel frequency and changed it to the name "Yamania". After strenuous efforts by the channel's officials, they launched "Aden Life" Channel on May 27th, 2010, which had better capabilities, and covered most southern protests. ⁽²²⁾

On contrast, the Yemeni revolution in 2011 enjoyed media support and coverage at the regional and international levels, because it had been linked to the revolutions of the countries of the region such as Tunisia, Egypt and Libya, which also received great international attention, as a historic, decisive and important moment in the Middle East region, and the whole world. However, this did not help the revolution in Yemen or its counterparts in the Arab countries, to have unified leadership that bring it together or represent its movement, as they were fragmented and divided against itself. The Yemeni components were fighting each other at the levels of representation, leadership, and platforms. This means that this situation created by the momentary conditions was not limited to the Southern Movement, but the northern elites exaggeratedly focus on its multiple factions and disputes.

Additionally, the multiple and self-divided Yemeni components were moving with the support of external funders who had great influence over them in terms of imposing the political and humanitarian agendas associated with the revolution. For example, Tawakkol Karman, one of the most important activists of the Yemeni revolution in 2011, who is a member of the Islah Party, and a Nobel Peace Prize laureate, transformed from a person who suffered from financial crises in 2010, to a millionaire who runs institutions that spend millions of dollars with Qatari funding. ⁽²³⁾ After the revolution, it has run a wide network of poor Yemeni activists in more than one country. One of the evidence that also proves Qatar's support for the components of the revolution in Yemen is the leaked phone call between the Qatari intelligence officer, "Nasser Al Marri", during which he asked

asking Hussein Al Ahmar, one of the sons of the well known tribal sheikh Abdullah Bin Hussein Al-Ahmar, and one of those who joined the Yemeni revolution later, to thwart the Gulf initiative that came to solve the crisis in Yemen. ⁽²⁴⁾ During the call, Hussein Al Ahmar suggested to the Qataris that he was in control of the squares of the revolution.

As for the Gulf initiative, it was not a satisfactory bet for many forces of the Southern Movement, as it did not mention the Southern issue and the Southern Movement except in two paragraphs: The first, under the National Dialogue Conference, while the second is to deal with southern issue in a way that leads to a just national solution and maintains Yemen's unity, stability and security. ⁽²⁵⁾ In other words, the initiative confined the solution to the southern issue under the roof of unity, which many southerners believe that it has invalid basis, and that its legitimacy ended with the outbreak of the 1994 war on South. The justification for the refusal was also that the issue of the south is supposed to be based on dialogue (two political parties), and not a group of parties, and what the national dialogue represented was not appropriate for this particularity. This is what most of the Southern Movement forces later expressed that they are not interested in the National Dialogue, whose first sessions began on March 13th, 2013, and continued for ten months, until January 25th, 2014. A limited number of southern leaders participated, including the leader, Mohammed Ali Ahmed, who later declared his complete withdrawal from the conference completely, rejecting the conference presidency's "creating splits within the component of the Southern Movement participating in the dialogue." ⁽²⁶⁾

Accordingly, it can be said that the northern elite's attempt to constantly highlight the internal southern disputes, and invoke them to the local, regional and international media, while ignoring the deep-rooted North-North differences; Including the Saada issue and its six wars that later developed into a coup against power in September 2014, or ignoring the grievances of the people of Tihama, and other issues, he suggests a clear intention to reduce the southern voice which is a reminder of the repression by the Saleh's regime in the beginning of its inception, but in a lighter version, as seen by southerners. This annulled any potential opportunity for change, apart from few northerners' realization about the importance of not ignoring the southern issue and its cornerstone, the Southern Movement, and giving the issue its due clear interpretation to those who do not understand it, or confronting those who try to distort it and divert its course.

The same applies to the international community, in which southerners are framed as involved in an endless struggle. This ambiguous approach hinders dealing with southerners in the most sensitive issues in Yemen (the issue of the south), while exporting inaccurate visions and ideas by many northern elites through their research centers, media outlets, or via biased influencers on social media platforms, especially those whose political and strategic interests' conflict with the southerners who demand the restoration of the southern state to before the borders of 1990. These visions are taken by foreign parties or Western experts as absolute facts and definitive sources that can be relied upon in spite of their lack of accuracy. The southerners proved that they have many phases of mutual agreement among them, regardless of the differences in the past or the current disputes created by the war conditions, which are common in every phase of Yemeni modern history, at the northern and southern levels. However, the first stage of southern solidarity and

consensus were during the launch of the Southern Movement and its parallel work among the internal and external components alike in one and streamlined line, expressing the unity of aim and fate, even through different means, even in the lack of a single entity that unites them.

The southerners also share their view of the danger posed by the presence of "terrorist" groups in Yemen. They always confirm that South is a repulsive environment for al-Qaeda, ISIS and any religious groups based on violence. Especially since more than 70% of the AQAP are of Arab, European and other nationalities. ⁽²⁷⁾ Southerners see that they are the most serious in fighting Al Qaeda, even those who belong to the previous Yemeni government before the Houthi "coup" against the state in 2014. For example: Major General Salem Ali Qatan, commander of the Southern Military Region, led a successful war against Al Qaeda In 2012, which prompted its militants to flee their strongholds in the governorates of Abyan and Shabwa, especially Zinjibar, the capital of the governorate of Abyan, and the neighboring city of Jaar, which led to his loss of life during a suicide bombing in Aden, carried out by a Somali suicide bomber from the organization. ⁽²⁸⁾ Major General Mahmoud Al Subaihi, commander of the Fourth Military Region, also led another successful campaign against Al Qaeda in the Al Mahfad district in Abyan governorate in 2014, and was targeted by more than one assassination attempt as a result. ⁽²⁹⁾ Both military commanders belong to the southern provinces.

On the level of consensus and disagreement, southerners believe that "everyone agrees that the south was occupied, plundered, oppressed, displaced and marginalized, and that its history was distorted, its generations were neglected, suffered under poverty, and deprived of all its human rights. The majority agreed upon the right of southern people to restore its state, identity and position among peoples and institutions. However, everyone fears everyone, especially politicians, and accordingly it can be said that the most important tools that must be focused on to ensure greater rapprochement between southerners and achieve greater common interests, start with building state institutions and providing them with national competencies with experience, vision and ability to achieve." ⁽³⁰⁾

Others also believe that "despite the extent of the damage inflicted on South over the past years, it made the points of consensus to be the strongest and the most present, as is a natural result of the political and economic entitlements that the people of the south await in the next stage, and an inevitable result of the size of the conspiracy, betrayal and treachery that they had been subjected to in the past when they emotionally adhered to national project even at the expense of their original identity." ⁽³¹⁾

Components of the Post- 2015 war in Yemen 2015

Many political components have emerged after the recent war in Yemen 2015, at the northern and southern levels, following the Houthi coup on September 21st, 2014, against the state, and their continued attacks to control areas in South after the fall of several areas in northern Yemen, and after the outbreak of the Decisive Storm on March 25th, 2015.

The battles of liberation in the capital, Aden, and the southern governorates created a new reality, and produced with them field leaders including supporters of the Southern Movement and some belonging to Salafi groups, along with various civilian groups to fight in a row against what they called the "second occupation" of the south, after the 1994 war. The joining of the Southern Movement forces constituted an important political gain for Hadi's government, in front of the international community to convince it of its political ability to absorb all political parties and enhance the cohesion of the internal front.

However, the reality and dynamics of the military forces in most of the southern regions began to change, which created cycles of successive events, enabling some southern forces to form the most important political component that emerged after the war, represented by the STC, which seeks the independence of South Yemen, and WHICH headed by Aidarous Al Zubaidi. The STC constitutes an important force factor in the balance of power on the ground, and it is difficult to ignore its political and military presence as a main party in the Yemeni war equation. Its main strength is based on the widespread popularity base it enjoys in the southern governorates, a feature that enabled it to be one of the best political components at the organizational and administrative level at home and abroad. Additionally, it controls a wide geography in South Yemen, including the capital, Aden, coast of Hadhramaut, Socotra and parts of Shabwa, Abyan, and the entire governorates of Al Dhale and Lahij. ⁽³²⁾

Moreover, the STC is a political entity which represents the demands of a large segment of the southern people whose movement began in 2007, represented by the Southern Movement. Although the Southern Movement includes a number of other southern components under its umbrella, the STC possessed the broadest and most acceptable and interactive popular base with the political issue after the war, given the clarity of its vision and objectives, in addition to the military power it possesses, represented by the Security Belts in Aden, Lahij and Abyan, and the two Elites in Hadhramaut and Shabwa. Which have proven successful in maintaining security and stability; in the places under its influence. For example: The report of the international expert group in 2019 praised the role of the Security Belt Forces and the Shabwani and Hadrami Elites in combating terrorism, describing them as "the most active forces in the fight against Al Qaeda and ISIS in the Arabian Peninsula." ⁽³³⁾ This is another merit that strengthens the position of the STC, which is trying to impose a strong security authority, seeking to neutralize the south from chaos and conflict - as it constantly announces -.

It can be said that the diversity of the political spectrum under the STC's umbrella, from the leaders of Yemeni parties such as the Socialist Party, the League and the Conference, and other social and tribal figures in the south, is an advantage for the Southern Transitional, a fact that weakens the claims that it does not accept diversity. On the other hand, some southerners believe that the STC is not the only representative of the south, even if it is at the forefront of the political scene or subjected to pressure alone. They believe that "the STC's attempt to monopolize the representation of South through a particular political faction is the root of the problem that has led the south, since its establishment, to war and instability, and that the south is a homeland for all, and no one has the right to impose a political choice on the rest." ⁽³⁴⁾ Other southerners believe that "The STC is a popularly acceptable component, compared to the components that emerged due to momentary circumstances, with reference to the Southern National Coalition which arose during a period of political quotas after the political tension that occurred in late January 2018 in the interim capital, Aden, between the Bin Daghr government and the STC. The coalition expected to dismiss Ben Dagher from the prime ministership, in light of its continuous failure and poor performance, to guarantee seats in any formation consisting of the south's share in the new government." ⁽³⁵⁾

As for the position of the southern components, it may seem that the method of formation and establishment is not of the same importance of performance and the impact it has, whether at the internal or external level, as the ability and influence internally is achieved by providing the interests of society, top of which is the provision of basic services that enable southern Society to perform its functions, in addition to maintaining security and stability. It is this influence that automatically imposes the popular presence of this or that component. As for the external influence, it is achieved through the ability to communicate with the regional and international communities on the basis of diplomacy, intelligence and good presentation; For the interests that the leaders of the south can achieve abroad if they restore their state, even if we take an estimation the demands of the highest percentage in the south for this solution.

Third: Society in the South

Society in southern Yemen constitutes a diverse mixture of local identities, ideas, and cultures, which it acquired from its earlier civilizations in southern Arabia. The southern society, of course, expresses itself as other Arab societies did with its customs, traditions and customs, which sometimes change with the change of circumstances surrounding him and the factors associated with them, whether political, economic, social, religious, etc.

The forced melting pot policies and the marginalization to which the south was subjected to after the 1990 Yemeni unity, and the accompanying monopolization of power and violent practices, contributed to the dissolution of the southern identity and its privacy, and the absence of the spirit of belonging to its social, intellectual and cultural legacies.

This was not confined to the period that followed the Yemeni unity only, but related also to previous ones, like the general political situation in the Arab world at the beginning of the 1950s, and the national tide that crystallized with it a new reality in the region, the south was affected by its various political systems of government, as well as many Arab countries.

Local identities and their diversity

Identity is linked to the whole features that distinguish people and groups, and is linked to a system of historical events that in turn define the social and cultural roles of each society. No society could achieve progress unless the individual is aware of the importance of self and belonging to this identity.

“The diversity of local identities in any society is an advantage that helps it compete to achieve the greatest amount of success in various fields. Moreover, the diversity of identities is the main entrance to reduce racism in all its forms and types, as the more the society consists of different races, races, colors, religions and sects, this contributes to building more maturity and acceptance of the other”.⁽³⁶⁾

Additionally, “The diverse identities in any country are a factor of enrichment and diversity, as the multiplicity of dialects, customs, and geographical and agricultural climates are all considered a positive aspect within a state that guarantees justice and equality. As for the differences, they are often caused by the lack of justice and the weakness of state institutions which guarantee rights”.⁽³⁷⁾

In South Yemen, each governorate is characterized by different characteristics, but the collective sense of belonging to the land and a common destiny; It remains the strongest link. It does not mean that the diversity of local identities and their different characteristics is a factor that leads to a lower percentage of consensus, but on the contrary, This is what largely distinguishes the internal structure of each region in the south, as this distinction must be taken into account and preserved, especially since solving national and other issues results in the efforts of individuals, which requires the existence of this diversity and difference in visions and ideas, based on the diversity of cultural and social characteristics in the southern society, which translates into solutions that are in the interest of these issues, and above all for the benefit of society as a whole.

The multiple local identities and characteristics in South that its citizens have acquired throughout history was a true reflection of the cultural and historical heritage enjoyed by the people of the south, which they acquired due to their openness to the world, as they have been known for trade and moving around world, especially the countries of East Asia.

Thus, they have been influenced and by other cultures and affected them at the same time. ⁽³⁸⁾ The advantage that South has had for centuries is ethnic, religious, and intellectual diversity; It has achieved most of the southern and northern successes at the level of the sultanates and the southern emirates before independence and even after. ⁽³⁹⁾

The capital, Aden, has been a living and clear model for the ethnic, religious and intellectual diversity. Ethnicities such as Yemenis, Hadhramis, Somalia, Persians, Indians, Pakistanis, etc..., and religions such as Islam, which is the dominant one; and Judaism, Christianity, Buddhism, and the different sects of many religions, in addition to the various political, cultural and religious ideas, which formed a diverse and coherent fabric that was able one day, thanks to the prevailing laws and high awareness, to make it a strong competitor to the oldest civilizations and cultures in the region such as Egypt, Iraq and Algeria and others. ⁽⁴⁰⁾

As for the linguistic diversity in the south, Al Mahra and Socotra, for example, are mostly distinguished, besides the strategic location and the picturesque nature, by their ancient unwritten Semitic language, "Although the common origin of the languages, the Mahri language began to make its way in one direction, and Socotra in other direction with the passage of years and isolation. The two languages remain under the general umbrella of the ancient South Arabian languages. ⁽⁴¹⁾

Based on the above, it can be said that promoting regional divisions and conflicts in South, which are based on political differences between elites; linking it to the historical dimension and the multi-characteristic social and cultural diversity; Which is considered an advantage, as previously indicated, and in a way that reduces the status of one region compared with others, is extremely dangerous when public opinion is misled and collective awareness is formed in this way, which fuels conflicts and hatred. This intentionally aims at societal collapse and instability over time.

It should also be said that talking about southern divisions in such an exaggerated way; without looking at the whole picture of the disputes within the involving parties in the Yemeni crisis and its complexities; which formed a direct correlation, especially after the outbreak of the 2015 War, which emerged due to many variables, including the absence of the state, financial nutrition, external polarization and others. Measuring these divisions from one side while ignoring the other is unfair and illogical.

In his book, "Democracy in Plural Societies: A Comparative Exploration", Arend Lijphart wrote: "After dictatorial rule, deep divisions appear between sectors of the population amid the lack of a unifying consensus for them, and the voices calling for balance and equality rise. Those problems and demands that the societal components advocate mainly relate to identity and the state political and economic demands. ⁽⁴²⁾ This seems natural, and is happening in Yemen now as a result of the former central pattern of governance.

In regard to the southern vision for the majority of them, they present their perceptions of solving the south issue according to what they see fit for them, independently of what the northern elites propose. This solution has to do with social diversity in the south, as the solution (a southern federal state) is supposed to guarantee the administrative independence of each governorate, ensuring that its affairs are legally exercised related to its social and cultural specificity. At the same time, the larger entity represented by the state of the south, is allowed to exercise its powers in accordance with common interests. Many southern leaders expressed their vision for a solution through adopting the former federal system. This was clear in several speeches delivered by Mr. Ali Salem Al Bidh and Abdul Rahman Al Jafri at a festival held in Mukalla on April 27th 2014 ⁽⁴³⁾, In addition to speeches delivered by the STC President, Aidarous Al-Zubaidi, on more than one occasion, about the establishment of a new federal state after the independence of the south, achieving justice in the distribution of power and wealth and national partnership in decision-making. ⁽⁴⁴⁾

Keeping each governorate's cultural and social identity, including the customs, patterns of behavior and values is important in the context that preserves each governorate's privacy. For example, there were objections to the outcomes of the National Dialogue Conference that approved the regions, when the South was divided into two regions, Aden and Hadramaut. As the division did not take into account the historical dimension and status of each governorate; When some strategic southern provinces were included in the two regions, it also connected the oil provinces with each other, leaving the poor and densely populated provinces in a separate region, which could pave the way for future conflicts if this form of the system was adopted. Therefore, the dominant narrative for southern leaders have been about how to shape of the future southern state, as a (federal system) based upon six governorates, and the island of Socotra is added to it as a seventh governorate, as a fair solution that maintains each region's privacy and affiliations, within the framework of one state.

Accordingly, it can be said that benefiting from this diversity and social privacy will not come, unless it is built on several foundations, "the first of which is a constitution that grants full and comprehensive rights to all segments of society without discrimination or prejudice against one group without the other, in addition to real awareness institutions that use the platforms of religion, education and the media. To serve the idea and build generations according to its importance and ability to serve individuals and groups within society, by benefiting from the skills, capabilities and talents of each of the groups that make up the society, while using vivid examples in the diverse societies that, through their diversity, were able to lead the societies and countries of the world."⁽⁴⁵⁾

Therefore, the best approach, which is represented in the southern case, is to find a new civilized vision that deals with the reality of diversity at various levels, and employs it in the context of enriching the concept of coexistence, community peace and national unity between each region and the other, within the framework of the great comprehensive entity represented by the state. The time of abolishing minorities and merging them into a major privacy by means of coercive and repressive means has passed. This new vision, based on past experiences in South, is likely what southerners seek to work on, by finding common ground that would create a hypothetical federal state in the future, preserving for each region its options, status, and importance.

Southern tribal formation

The tribe appeared in southern and Arab society in general before the emergence of modern country formations and geographical and political borders, as it represented the comprehensive entity for each group or homogeneous human gathering led by a tribal sheikh. The tribe played important roles throughout history as one of the pressure groups affecting the successive political regimes in the south in all its political, economic and social aspects. In addition, the tribal governance in South showed the extent of its importance and feasibility in securing their areas and reducing the impact of the conflict on their local communities after the outbreak of the recent war in Yemen 2015.

As for the historical period during the British presence in the south, the nature of British direct policy with the tribes was flexible, based on treaties and allegiances with sultans, princes and tribal leaders according to the position of each of them, to win the tribes' favor and attract their leaders. However, the British policy relied upon the "Divide and Conquer" principle, among the tribes, because they saw a great benefit of this policy in deepening the gap and spreading differences between the tribes, so as not to form a strong, united national front that threatens their presence there.

As for the ruling era of the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, the tribes had little influence ⁽⁴⁶⁾ compared with their influence in North Yemen, yet the southern tribes were exploited by the regime in the early stages of independence, in order to consolidate their authority at that time. The regime has also reduced its role and made it lose part of its entities and authority for the benefit of state agencies and institutions. This seems to have allowed a state of relative stability in southern society, and brought about relative progress in the economic and social fields. ⁽⁴⁷⁾

After the Yemeni unity in 1990, the regime of former President Ali Abdullah Saleh worked for two decades to buy broad tribal loyalties at the level of the southern governorates, after their dim role in the former southern state. This came at the expense of the unity of the tribal and societal fabric as one of the goals of ensuring the domination and dominance of the autocratic regime, in addition to ensuring not to stand against his corruption. The Saleh's regime spread chaos, ignorance, conflicts and revived revenge among the people of the different governorates of the south, and among the people of the same governorate, to confuse them and distract them from following up on the affairs of their governorates and meeting their needs, especially the oil governorates, and to thwart any

change or progress that would advance them. He was benefiting from them and draining its capabilities and wealth by exploiting tribesmen and involving some of them in looting and securing oil and gas sites in favor of his authorities.

Despite the Sana'a regime's attempt to export a different culture in the south, "the tribal society tended to love peace and its tendency for order and law, as a result of many cultural and social factors. In addition to the religious tendency and the role of the peaceful Sufi doctrine far from politics and religious extremism, there are other factors including the contact of the people of the south with other peoples and cultures as a result of multiple migrations; their acquaintance with different systems in the countries of expatriation, and their attempt to apply them in their regions, and this helped the southerners in the ability to separate the tribe as a symbiotic social system, and between the state as a system of government."⁽⁴⁸⁾

For instance, "Shabwa Governorate, despite its complex social and tribal structure, and despite its ancient tribal conflicts, in addition to the above mentioned factors, about the attempts of the Sana'a regime to break up the social fabric and stir up regional and tribal strife, today the conflict in Shabwa has turned into a conflict between (two projects), a southern liberation project, and a northern one that resumes what the former regime's (occupation) path, as many southerners call it, and that despite the attempt to invoke regionalism and tribal fanaticism towards this conflict, these calls do not go beyond websites, media platforms and the yellow journalism, the social relations in Shabwa and the ties of kinship between the tribes are dominant."⁽⁴⁹⁾

In light of that, it can be said that achieving stability and strengthening the unity of the southern ranks must take into account the importance of the tribal formation of society, to transform this element that forms the basis of society in the south, into a positive feature that achieves the desirable national goals, and blocks the way for projects against tribal cohesion, which seek to exploit the gap that exists in the relationship between the political and tribal components; with the aim of transforming the tribe into a negative influence on national projects; especially the one that seeks to create southern accord and alignment, and divert it from positive participation in realizing the aspirations and hopes of southerners.

It is possible to work in this framework on several aspects:

- Working to secure and protect the governorates in the south, a role played by the southern tribes to limit the influence of the Houthi control after the fall of the state in 2014, as the tribes maintained the cohesion of their local communities and ran their areas on their own.
- Promoting the tribes in the south and increasing their awareness of the danger of "terrorist" groups, especially (Al Qaeda and ISIS), which have presence in areas such as Abyan, Shabwa, and other northern governorates, and reporting on these groups in order to punish anyone who covers t, harbors or protects them.
- Coordination with international organizations to secure relief convoys and the passage of foreign aid and to participate in achieving the targets without interruption or obstruction.

Religious identity

Religious identity is a pattern that is formed on the basis of belonging to a religious belief, represented by a religious sect, group, or doctrine. Religion is the decisive factor in building and forming this type of identity. The relationship of religious identity to religion is extended through sacred texts. ⁽⁵⁰⁾

In north and south Yemen, and although the dominant religion is Islam, it did not know religious differences based on sectarianism except after the Islamic revolution in Iran, which sought to export its revolution, on the strict Khomeinist way, to the Arab countries in the early 1980. In northern Yemen, the Zaidi sect constitutes a large proportion, In addition to a smaller percentage of followers of the Shafi'i doctrine. AS for South, the entire people there follow the Shafi'i doctrine. Despite the emergence of these differences and sectarian fanaticism in a relatively lighter way, it crystallized and appeared in its dangerous form only after the Arab Spring that ravaged the Arab region in 2011. Sectarian divisions developed with it to the point of fighting, and Yemen was among those affected.

For South, although the components of identity in it are based on cultural, social, ethnic and linguistic diversity, the components of religious identity were deeper and closer in relations; Especially since Islam is the dominant religion along with other religions in lower proportions, such as: Christianity and Hinduism in Aden, and Judaism that was in Habban Shabwa; Before its disappearance with the immigration of Jews to Palestine in what was known as Operation "Bosat Al-Reeh" in 1948.

The religious tolerance and coexistence in the south, before and after British colonialism, are what most distinguished the southerners, to the extent that the inter-conflicts that erupted after independence later were not motivated by religious motives, but were rather due to political or sometimes tribal disparities. The Hadhramis, before that, with their migrations to Southeast Asia, the islands of Africa, and others, left prominent fingerprints in spreading the tolerant Islamic advocacy and working in trade. ⁽⁵¹⁾

It should be said that the southern consensus was based on acceptance of this mix and religious diversity on its soil. After the recent war in Yemen in 2015, It was based on the monotheism of the dominant religious identity, represented by Shafi'i Islam against the Shiite (Twelver) ⁽⁵²⁾ tide, to which the Houthis turned on the opposite side. Although the southerners mainly fought their war in defense of their land away from the religious-sectarian considerations taken by other religious groups and parties in the face of the Houthis, they have been forced to enter this war.

Even if some considered it a sectarian war, it is primarily national and fateful. For them, the national loyalty will not be replaced by religious affiliation unlike the rest of the warring parties in Yemen on both sides; Whether from the Houthis or the Yemeni Islah party - Ideologically affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood.

Moreover, the conflict, which took on a sectarian dimension in North Yemen, did not affect the relationship between the so-called "sada" ⁽⁵³⁾ in the south and other southerners, as the relationship

between them remains harmonious and compatible. It did not subdue to the form that the situation intolerance and discrimination in North Yemen against those who do not belong to what is known as the so-called (Sada" or (the Hashemites), or against minorities "such as the Baha'is, for example, who were deprived of their freedom by the Houthis and arrested in a manner that violates the legal due procedures." (54)

Conclusion

Through the Three axes, the paper highlighted what is happening in the renewed reality in the south, and the paths that linked it in the past, whether before independence from British colonialism in 1967, or following the establishment of an independent and united states in the south for three decades, and the establishment of political unity between the states of the Yemen Arab Republic and the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen in 1990, and what is related to these tracks from contemporary historical events; especially after the 1994 war; the emergence of the Southern Movement and the subsequent events of the 2011 Arab Spring; which affected Yemen, and the following fall of the state due to the rise of the Houthis in 2014. All these interconnected and complex historical, political and social tracks have proven, beyond any doubt, that the general situation in North and South, especially in the current war situation, still lacks any progress at the military and political level in Yemen for nearly 7 years, and even at the level of stopping the war and starting a comprehensive settlement and peace process among the involving parties. It has proven that what Yemen has reached threatens a dangerous and advanced level of conflict, which if not resolved by the parties. Local, regional and international, its consequences and repercussions will be dire for North and South Yemen. And on the various parties to the crisis without exception.

The features of the southern reality and the lively approaches to the historical, political and social paths which were reviewed in the study between what was and what is at the present time, and whose aspects appeared in disagreement at times and consensus at other times among the southerners, indicating that it has become necessary to correct the situation (internal southern), by seeking to bring the views closer between the parties, only in favor of helping South or get out of this crisis, Through an inter-Southern dialogue.

It is likely that the activities of this dialogue began from the moment of writing the paper, as the STC sent an invitation through a Southern National Dialogue Committee announced on June 28th, to the various southern forces without exception, whether they support the independence of the south or not, in order to reach a formula of action and common denominators, that determine the future of southern Yemen in light of the challenges it faces.

Accordingly, the study came out with a number of results, the most important of which are:

- The failure to find a final solution to the crisis in a country mired in war, such as Yemen in its north and south; for nearly seven years, threatens an evolving and dangerous level of conflict.
- Looking at the historical and political path. It has been proven that the outbreak of the 1994 war between North and South Yemen, and the serious repercussions it resulted in, dropped the meaning of political unity between the two partners, a situation that contributed to extending grievances to demands for gaining independence South. And the return to the pre 1990 borders.
- The southern conflict based on regionalism, promoted by the elites in northern Yemen, has not existed throughout the modern and contemporary history of South, as the conflicts between southerners were political and at the level of power only, and sometimes they invoke sectarian slurs.
- The stages of southern political consensus are currently numerous, compared to the past discord, such as southern fusion in the Southern Movement in 2007, the fight in one trench against the Houthis in 2015, and the fight against “terrorist” organizations such as (Al-Qaeda and ISIS), part of which is located in the south, through the southern military forces.
- The various local identities and characteristics of social, cultural, and others, which southerners have gained throughout history, are what most distinguishes the internal structure of the south, and it is important to maintain and observe them.
- The tribe have played the most prominent role of protecting local communities after the fall of the state with the rise of the Houthis in 2014, as they kept their areas together from collapse and administered them themselves.
- Tolerance and religious coexistence in South, before and after British colonialism, is what most distinguished southerners, as it has been proven that the conflicts that erupted among them at different historical stages were not motivated by religious motives, but rather by political or sometimes tribal disparities.
- The southerners fought their war and liberated their areas in 2015 and thereafter, for national and fateful considerations, not sectarian ones, as did some religious forces, such as the Yemeni Islah Party or the Houthis.

Recommendations

In lights of the study's conclusion, a number of recommendations have been set as follow:

First: to the internal bodies

- to engage in a (southern internal) dialogue, and to converge the views of disputing parties, including those who don't believe in the South's independence as an urgent solution in this troubled stage of the Yemeni history, and this milestone phase in the southern history, for unifying their ranks and renouncing their internal disputes, as well as the replacement of the dialogue language instead of the language of weapons.
- The endorsement of a unified southern vision agreed upon by all political parties constitutes enormous importance for arranging, stabilizing and securing the southern political situation.
- The federal shape of a future southern state would constitute a legal and logical frame for the southern status, securing the maintenance of the stature and the history of each governorate in addition to its social and cultural singularity.
- The formation of a unified military force and the amalgamate of the current southern forces under a unified southern army is an important factor to strengthen the southern military influence over its territories.
- to continue fighting the "terrorist" organizations, Al Qaeda and Isis by the southern military forces, which has proven reliable in fighting it, would limit their operations and activities in South.

Recognizing the right of southern people to restore their state as a main guarantee would help in the future in reunifying the torn North among its fighting groups, or at least, to help in directing efforts to restore the state in North, and to begin a (northern-northern) dialogue regarding the regional grievances there.

Secondly: to external parties

- Completing the negotiation process regarding ending the Yemeni war, with regional and international sponsorship, for ripening a comprehensive political settlement among the disputing parties is urgent to avoid entering a more dangerous and complicated stage.
- The regional and international position of the geopolitical southern location which is connected with the Horn of Africa, the Red Sea and the Arabian Sea requires more regional and international awareness of protection and care to avoid any future threats or challenges in the region.

- Supporting the southern military forces, which have proved reliable in liberating their territories from the Houthi hands, and eliminating the Qaeda across wide southern areas, by the two Elites in Hadhramaut and Shabwa, as well as the Security Belts in Lahij, Aden and Abyan requires regional and international interest, and urgent support for those forces to complete their tasks.
- Those, Arabs or foreigners, who are interested in the Yemeni affairs, should read events and explore the facts in a thorough way, without any bias or reduction, and to extract the information from their original sources and real witnesses, as well as enhancing their historical awareness of the region, the roots, the motives and the dimensions of its conflicts, and the reasons behind the return and the recurrence of violence there.

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