SHEBAS RECLAIMING SPACES: YEMENI WOMEN POLITICAL
PARTICIPATION IN THE PEACE PROCESS (2014-2019)

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Dedication

To the women of Yemen…

Abstract

This thesis explores Yemeni women's political participation in the peace process in the 2014-2015 conflict. Using Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA), this study analyzes seven interviews with women who were/are politically active formally and/or active at the grassroot level (2014–2019). This thesis also uses FCDA to analyze UNSCR 1325 and YNAP to examine the dichotomous language used in official documents that maintain women's exclusion in peace processes. Findings reveal that perpetuating women as passive and powerless in combination with the prevailing patriarchal culture in Yemen that frames war as a man's game, has justified women's explicit and implicit exclusion from the peace process and politics in the present. This exclusion is maintained by sexist narratives by Yemeni men in power and the international community involved in Yemen. Further, the analysis identifies that, associating women with children deprives women of agency and portrays women as weak and in need of protection. Further, transformative change and gender equality will not be achieved without addressing structural inequality.

Keywords: Yemen, women, UNSCR 1325, YNAP, political participation, peace process.

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Contents

List of Abbreviations

AQAP	Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula
ATT	Arms Trade Treaty
CARPO	Center for Applied Research in Partnership with the Orient
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
FCDA	Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis
FPR	Feminist Peace Research
GAC	Global Affairs Canada
GBV	Gender-based Violence
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
GEE	Group of Eminent Experts
GPC	General People's Congress
HRW	Human Right Watch
IS	Islamic State
ICTY	The International Criminal Tribunal for Former Yugoslavia
ICTR	The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda
IHL	International Humanitarian Law
INGO	International Governmental Organization
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
NAP	National Action Plan
ND	National Dialogue
NDC	National Dialogue Conference
NGO	Non-Governmental Organizations
NUPP	Nasserite Unionist Public Party
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PDRY	People's Democratic Republic of Yemen
PTI	Peace Track Initiative
STC	Southern Transitional Council
SGBV	Sexual and Gender-based Violence
UAE	United Arab Emirates
USA	United States of America
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
WB	World Bank
WEF	World Economic Forum
WFP	World Food Program
WILPF	Women's International League for Peace and Freedom
WPS	Women Peace and Security
WTAG	Women Technical Advisory Group
WSN	Women Solidarity Network
WVP	Women Voices of Peace

YLDF   Youth Leadership Development Fund
YPC   Yemen Polling Center
YAR   Yemen Arab Republic
YNAP   Yemeni National Action Plan
YPC   Yemen Policy Center
YSP   Yemeni Socialist Party

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Research Overview

This thesis traces Yemeni women's political participation in the peace process from 2014 to 2019, using Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA) to examine seven interviews with women who are politically active formally and/or informally (i.e., at the grassroot level). This research project documents and discusses multiple dimensions of Yemeni women's political participation in the Yemeni peace process. It also examines, using FCDA, United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 and the Yemeni National Action Plan (YNAP). This research also offers policy recommendations from the seven women and myself, to the Yemeni government, the United Nations (UN), and the international community to enhance women's political participation in the peace process in hopes for more inclusive peace talks. This thesis has been written to situate research as a theory of change that can both educate and introduce change as a first step towards enhancing women's political participation in the Yemeni peace process.

Yemen has been in a full-scale civil war since September 2014 and under a Saudi-led coalition military intervention since March 2015. The Yemeni conflict has been classified by the UN as the "world's worst humanitarian crisis", with more than 20 million people suffering from hunger and malnutrition (UN News, 2021). The UN has also warned that, as of 2021, Yemen is on the brink of a "full-scale famine" (Human Rights Watch, 2021). The country has had several disease outbreaks, for example, cholera and diphtheria, and recently COVID-19 has aggravated the situation, especially given that there is an almost non-existent health infrastructure and only a third of the health professionals with crisis management knowledge and 40% are not equipped with skills of disaster preparedness (Alsabri, 2021). Furthermore, the peace process in Yemen

was nearly abandoned since the start of the pandemic in 2020. There have been a few attempts at resolutions and peace talks but with no ground-level or political advancement. This war has affected all Yemenis inside and outside of Yemen, and it has affected every governorate and district in the country. Yemen is entering its eighth year of the war, and the offensive military approach has plunged the country into a humanitarian crisis where, as of 2021, 3 million people have been displaced, including 1.58 million children (UNICEF, 2021, p.2).

This crisis highlights the need for new approaches to peace talks. Although there have been some gains, there are still no long-lasting solutions. The two-party approach[1] adopted in mediation thus far has failed to include all parties to the conflict, and it may not be working anymore, as there are more than two parties involved in the conflict (Salisbury, 2020). Therefore, it is important to expand the range of parties involved in the peace talks to include civil society, and to establish effective coordination between international policy makers in regard to the division of labor to ensure post-conflict progress (Salisbury, 2020). This thesis highlights the urgent need for Yemen to adopt an inclusive approach to peace, that is attentive to women's active participation in the peace process and post-conflict restructuring.

1.2 Background on Yemen

Yemen is located in Western Asia on the corner of the Arabian Peninsula. It is bordered by Saudi Arabia from the north, Oman from the east, the Red Sea from the west, and the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean from the south. Yemen is home to approximately 30 million people living in 22 governorates as of 2019 (World Bank, 2019). Its strategic location has influenced its history, culture, and politics and is an important factor in the current conflict. Yemen is well-

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[1] Negotiations between the internationally recognized government and its backers including Saudi Arabia and the Houthi armed group.

known for Bab Al-Mandab Strait. Bab Al-Mandab is the strait where Asia and Africa are linked, and different regional and global powers have long been involved in Yemen for its important strategic location affecting international trade. Robert D. Burrowes (2010) states is important for international trade, as it is a gateway to the Suez Canal and the rest of the world. The strait became a "lifeline" for the British Empire, when it was occupying Aden (1839–1963), especially after the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 (p. 304). Imports from the east part of the British colony, and oil reaching the northern hemisphere, had to all go through it (Burrowes, 2010). During the 18th century, the British and the Ottomans dissected Yemen into north Yemen and south Yemen. With time, this created two contrasting political systems, cultures, beliefs, values, and histories (Burrowes, 1991).

Yemen, officially known as The Republic of Yemen, came into existence when Yemen Arab Republic (YAR)—the northern part of Yemen—and People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY)—the southern part of Yemen—reunited on May 22, 1990, under President Ali Abdullah Saleh leading the General People's Congress Party (GPC) (Burrowes, 1991). Each country, before reunification, had centralized governmental systems and were governed by one party: the GPC in the north and the Yemeni Socialist Party (YSP) in the south (Al-Yemeni, 2003). Ahmed Al-Yemeni (2003) states that when both countries gained independence in the 1960s[2], they suffered from destabilization, internal power struggles, slow economic growth rates, and poor human rights records. It is important to note that he political culture of the North, i.e., tribal elite rule, overpowered the political culture of the South (Karakir, 2018).

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[2] YAR became a republic after centuries of monarchy rule in 1962, and PDRY gained independence from British colonialism in 1967.

1.3 The Political Situation of Yemen after the Reunification

Despite the struggles Yemen faced after reunification, mainly economic repercussions from the 1991 Gulf War, the country seemed capable of transitioning into an emerging democracy (Al-Yemeni, 2003). A multi-party system was introduced during the reunification process, which opened doors for many Yemenis, including women, to participate in politics and join political parties (Yadav, 2009). Yemen's political parties, for instance the YSP and an Islamic reform party known as Al-Islah, were diverse and "ideologically divergent" (p. 38). Meanwhile, religious political parties in Egypt and Tunisia were marginalized from political participation in any elections and other political activities if they had opposing views to the ruling party (Al-Yemeni, 2003, p. 18). In Egypt, for example, the authoritarian regime of Hosny Mubarak imprisoned those with opposing political ideologies, particularly Islamists and leftists (Al Arabiya, 2011). The progression of political freedoms and the diverse spectrum of political parties after reunification gave people hope about their political and civil rights. According to Yadav (2009), "The fact that political parties as ideologically divergent as the YSP and Al-Islah could contend for the support of the population on the basis of free and equal suffrage was indeed something remarkable in the region" (p. 40). However, the people's hopes were short lived when, in 1994, a civil war broke out between the former armies of YAR and PDRY. Eventually, YAR took control of the country, and the YSP almost disappeared, losing power and popularity with the exile of its leadership. Meanwhile, Al-Islah gained more popularity, which decreased political party diversity (Yadav, 2009). Al-Islah created a coalition with what remained of the YSP and the leftist party to counterbalance the power of Saleh's party. This coalition had an unstable foundation due to opposed political ideologies, and there were always suspicions around Al-Islah, especially from women activists, who declared that the party

contributed to confining and limiting spaces for women in political parties due to its "conservative approach toward gender roles and ties to the tribal system" (p. 41). After the 1994 war, the government restricted political freedoms and intimidated its opponents, which damaged the trust between the parties. However, women's political participation still grew in Yemen after reunification.

1.4 Women's Political Situation in Post-Unified Yemen

Yemeni women were granted suffrage[3] before Yemen's reunification, receiving voting rights in 1967 in PDRY and 1970 in YAR. During the 1997 presidential elections, they participated as voters and as candidates, and two women were elected to parliament, Ouras Sultan Nagi and Olof Saeed Bakhabeera, which was a step forward for women at that time, even though both of them were from one party (GPC). Another indicator of women becoming more involved in politics was their increasing participation in national elections as voters since the reunification (Al-Yemeni, 2003). Nevertheless, Al-Yemeni states that Islah's women committee grew in numbers, and, after the reunification, it was "considered to be the best, most qualified, and the most active and effective, compared to its counterparts in other political parties" (p. 51). Although women had more opportunities to participate in politics and contribute to drafting and passing laws, they were still underrepresented in parties and politics, which remained elitist and unilateral within the male educated elite of the ruling party (Mahdi et al., 2007). Yadav adds that there was a trend of more women joining politics, but the parties welcomed them primarily as voters and ignored or explicitly rejected them as candidates. Most of the women who ran for parliament or local office did so as independent candidates (Yadav, 2009). Furthermore, all senior positions of all parties were entirely filled by men (Al-Yemeni, 2003). This reflects the

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[3] Gaining the right to vote in political elections.

parties' intention and seriousness regarding including women as voters for the party rather than as candidates or potential leaders. It can be concluded that political parties in Yemen mobilized women for numbers and not for a genuine belief in gender equality.

Despite the putative increase in political participation, women still faced significant challenges in health, economic, and educational status in Yemen. Nadia Al-Sakkaf (2019) states that Yemeni women, unlike those from neighboring monarchies, such as Saudi Arabia, and despite Yemen's underdevelopment, enjoyed political rights and were able to hold positions of power (Al-Sakkaf, 2019). Although the number of women as both voters and candidates increased, women's development remained the lowest in the region. For example, in 2009 only 35% of women could read and write compared to 73% of men (Yadav, p. 38). Additionally, prenatal and birth care for women remained inadequate, especially for women in rural areas. In 2012, seven women died every day during childbirth (Al-Raiby, 2012). In terms of human development distribution to women, in 2017 the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) ranked Yemen as third to last, reflecting women's inaccessibility to governmental services (Al-Sakkaf, 2019). All these inequalities were coupled with traditional gender roles that further hinder women's participation in the peace process, confining them to the private sphere.

1.5 Women's Development in Post-Unified Yemen

Yemen is a conservative tribal society where women's economic development is hindered by structural societal norms and patriarchal culture (Al-Sakkaf, 2019). Yemen's prevailing conservative society is sustained by the country's tribal traditions, including patriarchal legal systems, and the state religion, Islam. Together, they enforce gender roles, placing men in the public sphere and women in the private sphere, and are reflected in state laws (OECD Development Center, 2014). For example, early marriage is a significant issue that

stands in the way of women's political participation in Yemen. Girls as young as nine are married to older men. If these girls survive forced sexual encounters, early pregnancies, and early delivery, they are bound to heavy housework and childcare. These problems are exacerbated by poverty and conflict. Article 40 of the Yemeni Personal Status Code legally recognizes the husband as the head of the household and obliges a wife to "obey her husband" (Yemen Personal Penal Code, p. 189, 1999). The Personal Penal Code also forces women/wives to never leave their homes without the permission of their male figure of the household/husbands (p. 189). After the 2015 war, there was an increase in families who forced their daughters into marriage to mitigate the difficult economic situation (Colburn, 2021). A United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) survey in 2013 in Yemen recorded that 32% of women stated that they were married before the age of 18, and 9% before the age of 15 (UNFPA, 2016).

In addition, there are several indicators that have been used to assess gender inequality by the World Economic Forum (WEF). The WEF Global Gender Gap Index has placed Yemen last for fourteen consecutive years (2006–2020). To assess the overarching gender gap, it measures four factors— "Economic Participation and Opportunity, Educational Attainment, Health and Survival, and Political Empowerment"—and "marks developments regarding closing/tightening the gender gaps" (WEF, 2021, p. 5). The WEF has also created a Women's Economic Opportunities Index' to measure 26 indicators[4]; Yemen was ranked 112th out of 113 countries overall (Al-Sakkaf, 2019).

Women in Yemen face unique challenges because of their gender, and these challenges are complicated because of the war. These indicators in conjunction with Patriarchal state laws provide an overarching snapshot of inequity in Yemen pointing to the need for an inclusive

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[4] The 26 indicators of the index are under five main categories, 1) Labour policy and practice 2) Access to finance 3) Education and training 4) Women's legal and social status 5) General business environment.

political process that is capable of addressing gender inequity. However, what they fail to show is the resilience of the women who have not only lived these inequities firsthand but who are also actively engaged in the political work necessary to both survive, challenge, and change them. This is the contribution of this thesis.

1.6 Yemeni Women Political Activism during the Arab Spring and the Start of the NDC

Before Yemen's war started in September 2014, women in Yemen saw a glimpse of hope during 2011's Arab Spring protests that resulted in the National Dialogue Conference (NDC) in 2014. Yemenis, inspired by the Arab Spring in Tunisia and Egypt, took the streets in February 2011, calling for an end to Saleh's 33-year regime. Women were at the frontlines, organizing protests, dominating social media, and spending days and nights in Change Square in the capital, as well as other major cities in Yemen like, Aden and Taiz[5]. Yemenis, men, and women, came together, calling for change, rights, dignity, and freedom. Women challenged taboos, such as staying out late in the Square, mingling with men in a public political space, and joined an unprecedented political space conversing and collaborating with men as equal citizens (WILFP, 2017). As a result, activists characterized women's participation in 2011 as the "golden time for women's participation in the public sphere" (Colburn, 2021, p. 31).

Unfortunately, a civil war broke out in May 2011 between Saleh's loyal forces and opposition forces, mostly from the Islah party, which had joined the protests. A Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)-brokered deal was signed in 2012, through which Saleh secured his immunity by handing over the power to his vice president, who would serve as the president of a transitional government for a stipulated two years. The transitional government was charged with creating a dialogue platform (NDC) for all segments of society to discuss political and economic

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[5] Change Square was where Yemenis set up tents to carry out their peaceful protests Saleh's government.

issues and write a new constitution (Day, 2013). Women, despite their prominent role in the protests that led to deal, were excluded from diplomatic and political circles and agreements. Here, women appear only to be included in politics only when numbers are needed. There was only one woman—Amat Al-Razaq Humad, who was the assistant general secretary of the General People's Congress at the time—attending the sessions that led to the GCC-brokered deal. All those who signed the deal were men. Additionally, between 2011 and 2015, there was only one woman[6] in parliament (Al-Ammar et al., 2019). Despite their absence from the GCC-brokered deal, women were active at the grassroots level. They mobilized and lobbied to be part of the NDC, and they secured 30% of the seats (Nasser, 2018). In 2013, women were also able to secure a 30% quota for women in all state authorities (IPTI, 2018). Unfortunately, the NDC's progress was disrupted by the Houthi militia's[7] invasion of the capital in September 2014. There was a draft constitution written by members of the NDC but was not put to a referendum (IPTI, 2018). When the Houthi took over the capital, Saudi Arabia and its allies launched a war in Yemen that remains ongoing in 2022.

1.7 The Main Player in the 2015 Conflict

The Houthi's control over the capital, Sana'a, is considered a security threat by Saudi Arabia. As a result, and with the support of the US, a Saudi-led coalition of ten countries[8] issued an air-strike campaign with the goal of restoring the legitimate government of Yemen on March 26th, 2015. This is also parallel to a full-scale internal conflict between different parties. The current war in Yemen is a result of a long history of political instability and it involves a lot of key players.

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[6] Ouras Sultan Nagi, who served until her death in 2015

[7] The Houthi militia, also known as Ansar Allah (Supporters of God), is an armed religious militia created in 2004 by Hassan Badr Al-Deen Al-Houthi.

[8] Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Saudi, Morocco, Pakistan, Qatar, Sudan, UAE.

Saleh's three-decade long rule was based on building alliances with tribes, political parties and external powers against common enemies. He manipulated these political alliances, and he even described ruling Yemen as "dancing on the heads of snakes"[9] (Karakir, 2018). Saleh's rule was full of corruption, poverty, economic challenges, and a leadership exclusive to a small circle of business-political elite (Swietek, 2017). Although it was known that Saleh based his power on alliances, it was still a surprise when Saleh put his hand in Houthis' hand when they took over the capital in 2014, especially given the fact that he was in a six-year war (2004-2010)[10] with them (Lackner, 2017). However, in 2017, the alliance crashed after Saleh's televised statement that he was willing to negotiate with Saudi Arabia. After that, Saleh was killed by the Houthis on December 4th, 2017, and his death marked the end of an era in Yemen and the region as Saleh was the last Arab nationalist leader (Lackner, 2017). In addition to Saudi Arabia, Saleh and Houthis as main players in the conflict, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) also had a major role in Yemen's conflict.

The UAE was among the 10 countries involved in the 2015 air-strike campaign. However, the UAE's goals in this war are different from those of Saudi Arabia. Al-Qassab (2018) states the UAE has ambitious goals of expansion in Yemen's southern part since it is the southern entrance of the Red Sea. The UAE planned for its expansion by building its military bases in Yemen. Further, the UAE control Socotra Island[11] and have built alliances with the Yemeni military forces who now have more alliance with the UAE than the legitimate government (Al-Qassab, 2018). Saudi Arabia and the UAE's different goals in Yemen led to

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[9] Saleh said that to Author Victoria Clark in an interview which she later wrote a book about Saleh's life called Yemen: Dancing on the Heads of Snakes

[10] This war did not last for six years continuously. It was called the six-year war because there were six wars between Saleh, allied with Saudi then, and the Houthis that happened in the span of six years.

[11] For its trade importance and beauty as this island is describes as the most alienated island in the world with over 300 unique animals and plants.

tension and as a result, in August 2019, the UAE loyal forces of the STC took over Aden, the interim capital of Yemen (Al-Muslimi, 2019). Al-Muslimi, therefore, suggests that history will repeat itself and that Saudi Arabia and UAE's grave mistakes in Yemen will be seen as a waste in the near future. Amidst all political alliances and military advancements, Yemeni people remain under war, siege, poverty and dire humanitarian conditions.

Yemen's war has been characterized as a proxy war between Saudi Arabia and Iran over their control in the Middle East region. Swietek (2017) argues that Yemen is an arena to regional powers, Saudi Arabia and Iran, fighting over their spheres of influence. Clausen (2015) argues that Saudi Arabia's air strike campaign on Yemen is a response to "…Iran meddling in Saudi's backyard" (p. 17). The war in Yemen has become further internationalized so that the rivalry between Saudi Arabia and Iran sometimes also involves the US directly and indirectly (Swietek, 2017). Baron, et al. (2017), argue that Gulf countries and US policy have framed the Houthis to be pawns of Iran, without taking into consideration the local dynamics the Houthis play in the conflict. The Houthis are a Yemeni group, and although they might be inspired by Iran politically, they have their own governing and leadership approach. Alienating the Houthis would result in pushing them to Tehran more and further complicating the war in Yemen (Baron et al., 2017). In addition, it has been reported that the Houthis receive some monetary funding from Iran, though the major influence is revolutionary political ideology (Karakir, 2018).

On the other hand, Karakir disagrees that the war in Yemen can be explained as a proxy war of two rivals in the region. Instead, Karakir states that while there are clear Saudi and Iranian influence on Yemen's conflict, it is not a proxy war. A proxy war requires similar commitments in the country and in the case of Yemen, Iran is focused on its allies in Lebanon, Syria and Iraq and it does not have enough resources to have a similar or equal sphere of influence as Saudi

Arabia (Karakir, 2018). Further, the war in Yemen is multifaceted and there are more than these two major players. Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), the Islamic State (IS), the Hirak Al-Janoubi[12] and other parties driven by political and/or religious agendas are involved in Yemen's war, hence looking at Yemen's conflict as a proxy war oversimplifies and reduces the dimensions of the conflict (Karakir, 2018).

Yemen's complicated political instability and long conflict history suggests that there are many reasons that led Yemen to where it is today. It is with no doubt that the sectarian divide is used to fuel the war, that the reunification damage is still there, and that Saudi and Iran are fighting a proxy war over influence in the region, however, it is nearly impossible to explain Yemen's war as due one reason alone.

1.8 Yemeni Women under the War

This section will discuss Yemeni women's situation under the war. It will mainly discuss the economic and social impact since the political aspect will be covered in the coming chapters. This section aims at exploring the dimensions of the disproportionate impact of the war on women keeping in mind that women are not passive agents of war that are only characterized as victims or vulnerable. The intent of this section is to highlight the consequences of the war on Yemeni women.

Prevailing gender norms have dictated that women experience war differently than men. As a result, women in Yemen are disproportionately impacted both economically and socially by the war, especially those who have lost their breadwinners.[13] Ahlam Sofan states that "…women are subjected to gender-based violence due to becoming the heads of households, due to

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[12] Southern Movement.
[13] The male figure of the house (husband, father, brother…etc.)

psychological pressure as a result of the war, the level of displacement, the lack of adequate housing and consequent lack of privacy, the level of poverty and consequent food insecurity" (UNFPA, 2015). Yemeni women do not only have to deal with the consequences of the war on an already impoverished country, but many of them also face the consequences of vulnerable masculinities during the war.

Yemen has a grave early-child marriage where girls as young as nine get married to older men. Early marriage is gender-based violence as it threats girls' lives and wellbeing, and it exposes them to sexual violence, maternal mortality, physical and mental vulnerabilities, poverty, and restricted education (Richter, 2022). The conflict has aggravated child marriage where it is dealt with as a symptom and a cause. Richter (2022) states the child marriage in Yemen is utilized as an economic tool where fathers marry off their children to get the dowry. Richter also argues that "…the biological role women play in building the nation makes them more vulnerable during conflict" (Richter, p. 15). Unfortunately, less and less attention is being paid towards young girls getting married with the chaos of the conflict.

Further, the high percentage of illiteracy coupled with the patriarchal social norms in Yemen have further affected women's status. Yemen has the lowest percentage of women in the labor force in the world (Al-Ammar & Patchett, 2019). In addition, recruitment for paid jobs in Yemen is usually done through personal networks, "disadvantaging women who are restricted to the private sphere" (p. 4). Women are also excluded from politics and the NDC negotiations, despite playing dominant roles in 2011 during the street protests and sit-ins.

This research, therefore, aims to shed light on the connection between these inequities and their exclusion from the peace process. Because these inequities were exacerbated and not caused by war alone, achieving meaningful peace cannot succeed without their inclusion.

Women are not the only group excluded from the peace talks: young people and non-politically affiliated persons are as well. The war, in its essence, was created by military men with guns and power, and the peace talks are also carried out by men involved in the war. As such, persistent gender inequity remains unaddressed in the political processes designed to end the war.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

It is without a doubt that Yemeni women's political participation in the peace process is an under-researched topic in both the media and academia. Nevertheless, there is important research regarding gender and the ongoing war in Yemen, and how it affects women and girls in particular. Much of the published research concerns early marriage, sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), and how women's leadership and experiences in the economy, education, and health changed during the war. However, there remains a research gap in Yemeni women's political participation, specifically in the peace process.

This literature review encompasses secondary sources, including reports published mainly by national and international organizations, academic research papers, and other scholarly sources. The majority of the literature review is on Yemen, and most of the sources I used are in English, but there are few in Arabic and they are all cited in the bibliography. I have used the University of Lethbridge's library website to find sources, as well as online scholarly databases, such as JSTOR, and Taylor and Francis Group. Additionally, I used international organizations' published reports and research, including the UN, the World Bank (WB), and the WEF. I have also examined Arab and Yemeni published research, both in English and Arabic, from research centres such as The Sana'a Center for Strategic Studies, Peace Track Initiative (PTI), and Yemen Policy Center (YPC).

It is noteworthy that data access in Yemen is limited for several reasons. Firstly, there is a lack of previous research on the topic. Secondly, Yemen is currently at war; as a result, most studies cannot speak to the effect of women's efforts and advocacy during the war. Finally, there is little documentation regarding what women are doing at the local level in Yemen, where they

are active the most. Abu Esba (Personal Communication, February 16, 2021) stated that women's efforts at the local level are not only undocumented, but their effectiveness is unmeasured, especially during the 2020 pandemic, when humanitarian work became more invisible.

The purpose of this literature review is to acknowledge the research that has been done regarding women's participation in peace processes in general and on Yemeni women's participation in peace processes in particular. Furthermore, the literature review will facilitate developing new ideas on existing literature for future research and explore women's political participation status in peace processes.

2.2 Theoretical Approaches to Analyzing Women's Political Participation in Peace Processes

This section has three sub-sections discussing theoretical approaches and arguments around women's political participation and why it is important. The first sub-section discusses the different definitions of peace and conflict from a feminist perspective, and it lays out the definitions of peace and conflict that this thesis follows. The second sub-section discusses gender inequality and the disproportionate consequences of war on women and girls, including SGBV, rape, and sexual violence. The third sub-section discusses why women's inclusion in the peace process is important.

2.2.1 Peace and Conflict in Feminism

Peace and conflict have been defined by many scholars in different fields, and the debate around the definition of peace and how to maintain it, as well as the definition of war and what causes it, remains of interest and is still controversial to many scholars. Although peace can be simply defined as the absence of war, this definition is not holistic. In *Understanding Conflict*

and War: The Just Peace (1981), Rummel says that the definition of peace changes from one culture to another. The Western definition of peace, which is found in the New Testament and derived from a Greek word, is simply the absence of war, and it is the basic dictionary definition, as well as that used by early international relations scholars to establish the foundation of the definition (Rummel, 1981). On the other hand, in Eastern cultures, peace is mainly understood as the state of justice, the rule of law and civil governance, as well as the balance of powers (Rummel, 1981).[14] Although both definitions include important elements, for instance the absence of violence, rule of law, justice, and balance of power, they both neglect integral elements to social peace, including food, and human security, political participation, equal economic opportunities, or gender equality as elements of peace. Because these definitions are nation-state focused, they do not consider human development factors. Arguably, one reason why women are excluded from peace processes is because the definition of security during peace processes is usually state-oriented rather than human-oriented; although human-oriented understanding of peace has often led to a more sustainable peace in other contexts (O'Reilly et al., 2015).

State-oriented understandings of peace and security tend to focus on military and national security during and after the conflict; meanwhile, feminist scholars recognize peace as a process. Women, and young people usually bring forth a bottom-up understanding rather than the top-down approach that has long dominated peacebuilding processes, security studies, and international relations. Gender equality is undermined during peacebuilding and post conflict reconstruction as a development indicator, although feminist scholars view peace and security more inclusively. Hudson (2009) argues that peace from a gender perspective provides a bottom-

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[14] The author does not explain what/where he exactly meant by Eastern and Western cultures.

up approach and recognizes the power relations at play in the gender inequalities manifested during and after a conflict. Further, gender mainstreaming[15] should not only be included in reintegration, reconstruction and post conflict settlements, but also during the early stages of negotiations (Hudson, 2009).

Feminist scholars have witnessed their ideas and activism being sidelined while traditional approaches to security have failed. Thus, they created a feminist approach to peace research. Wibben et al. (2019) state that feminist peace research (FPR), a contemporary feminist approach to peace, goes beyond the understanding of peace and war as dichotomies, analyzing race, gender, sex, and class relations as power systems that affect peace and conflict. FPR perceives peace as a process that should constantly build "relationships of mutuality in multiple worlds" to achieve peace and justice (p. 87). It also examines gender unequal relations and violence during conflict, as well as reconciliatory measure. This broader perspective of peace acknowledges the different aspects of the conflict and provides holistic approaches to post-conflict reconstruction to avoid future conflicts.

Furthermore, FPR scholars are not only concerned with the disproportionate effect of war violence on women, but they also engage in analyzing everyday violence such as domestic abuse (Wibben & Donahoe, 2020). Wibben et al. (2019) states that FPR, like feminism, is not about gender as dichotomies but rather about the "…entanglement of femininities and masculinities" (p. 87).

This research defines peace in line with FPR's definition of peace as it is concerned with violence against women during the war, and with their exclusion from the peace process as a kind of violence, and it highlights militarized masculinity against women during wars. Further,

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[15] A strategy to include gender sensitive policies and approach in public policies, laws… etc.

Wibben et al. (2019) states that feminist knowledge production helps to decolonize knowledge by decentering dominant forms of knowledge production. As a researcher, I therefore have an active role to play in this process. Barnes (2018) states that alternative knowledge production reveals and helps dismantle power relations that are otherwise accepted as truth. This thesis is part of the project of dismantling unequal power relations between men and women during war that conceptualize conflict as a man's responsibility to solve while restricting women to the private sphere and conceptualizing them as weak and in need of protection.

In *Gendering Global Conflict Toward a Feminist Theory of War* (2013), Sjoberg argues that scholars might agree on the meaning of conflict in that conflicts are characterized by violence and human rights violations; however, the approaches to the study of peace and conflict remain contrasting, even among feminist scholars themselves. Sjoberg states that all feminist approaches to understanding conflict acknowledge gender as a fundamental lens. Additionally, there is a wide agreement that gender power structures significantly impact internal and global politics (Sjoberg, 2013).

2.2.2 Conflict and Gender Inequality

Unfortunately, and despite their increased presence in politics internationally, women's participation in peacebuilding remains an anomaly and not a norm. As a result, understanding the relationships between gender equality and peace and examining the role that women and other marginalized groups can play in peacebuilding is of fundamental importance. In this thesis, it is my contention that gender plays a key role in understanding peace durability and post-conflict construction.

Women's and girls' unique experiences and needs during a conflict must be considered, as they are disproportionately affected by conflicts, including increasing rates of SGBV, rape,

and sexual violence as a weapon of war. Nevertheless, it is problematic to perceive women as a homogenous group with the same needs, because it ignores the differences between women and the power dynamics between women themselves, such as class and race (Hudson, 2009). Further, the number of women negotiators and participants in peace processes remains low, despite the growing efforts to gender equality in peace processes.

In a 2008 study of 33 peace processes, Bell (2015) found out that there were only 11 women out of 280 negotiators. Despite the need to rectify this, it is also important to acknowledge that adding women as numbers into peace discussion tables is not the solution to this problem. Numbers do not necessarily reflect the quality of representation, nor do they reflect the roots and sustainability of change. Furthermore, numbers do not mean gender mainstreaming, nor do they show how existing policies are affecting societal power relations between men and women, or how the definitions and set up of decision making is already gendered (Bell, 2015). Additionally, in a report by Inclusive Peace and Transition Initiative (IPTI), Paffenholz et. Al., (2016) state that women have generally been included in peace processes because of pressure from women's groups and networks. The report shows that adding women in the peace process did not necessarily mean an increase in signed peace agreements. It is instead their influence on the process that is important. Paffenholz et. al., highlight that even with the increase in the number of women around negotiation tables, the influence they have can remains minimal. In Yemen for example, Al-Sakkaf (2019) states that women activists in Yemen have been campaigning for a 30% quota in government positions and parliamentary representation since the early 2000s. Despite that being a laudable goal, the advocacy was limited to specific fields. Al-Sakkaf indicates that "the majority of women related advocacy was tied to development projects by the government or those in civil society funded by donors" (p. 48). It could be argued that

pigeon-holding into a limited number of areas affects the overall influence of women on decision making and limits their participation to developmental projects. Currently, it is the case that women are limited to working in humanitarian and developmental projects in Yemen.

Banwell (2012) argues that increased violence against women is a result of patriarchal and masculine expectations through militarization and asserting power and aggression in a conflict setting. This is why if more women are involved in peace processes, it is more likely to reach a settlement. Furthermore, violence is associated with expectations surrounding successful performances of masculinity, which escalate violence against women during wars (Banwell, 2012). Statistics have shown that GBV and intimate partner violence increase by 73% in conflict settings (Murphy et al., 2021). While there is much literature on GBV during conflicts, there is little research regarding Yemen specifically. UNFPA recorded an increase, since the beginning of the war in 2015, by 50% in the case of physical assault, 35% of sexual abuse, 25% of psychological abuse, 17% denial of resources, and 11% of child marriage (Al-Dhamari, 2021). These numbers are from reported cases. It is speculated that women in Yemen are discouraged from reporting GBV incidents fearing further violence, detainment, or even death (Al-Dhamari, 2021).

Furthermore, rape and sexual violence against women in conflict is a major issue that has historically long been ignored as a weapon of war. However, in the 1990's recognizable changes were made in International Humanitarian Law due in large part to the International Criminal Tribunal for Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), in 1993 and 1994 respectively. These tribunals successfully prosecuted perpetrators of rape and sexual violence in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda. Both tribunals heralded a new era for survivors of rape and sexual violence in conflict and highlighted the importance of

international law as a tool of justice (Wachala, 2011). However, it was not until 2008 that the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) adopted Resolution 1820 bluntly stating that rape and sexual violence can constitute "a war crime, a crime against humanity, or a constitutive act with respect to genocide" (UNSCR, 2008).

The resolution also acknowledges how rape and sexual violence can hinder women's involvement in peace processes and conflict resolution (UNSCR, 2008). Using sexual violence as a weapon of war has affected so many women in conflict countries, and the effects of this crime persist long after the war ends. The Group of Eminent Experts (GEE) mentioned in their annual report (2020) that journalists and human rights defenders who were arbitrarily detained in Sanaa and Taiz by the Houthi armed group were subjected to torture and sexual violence, including men and boys who were sexually assaulted. The GEE interviewed Yemeni women who were raped, and they stated that the guards referred to rape as "rehabilitation" and "purification" for their sins and for supporting Houthi armed group war efforts (p. 12). Rape and sexual violence in Yemen's conflict is not discussed enough, but that does not mean that it does not exist. The meaningful and active participation of women in peace processes can therefore bring a wider perspective on the role of gender and sexual violence in war, two significant factors that are often excluded in contemporary conflict resolution strategies.

2.2.3 The Importance of Women's Political Participation in Peace Processes

Despite the range of developments outlined above, the pressing questions remain. Why is women's political participation important during peace talks? How does the post-conflict period change when women are involved in the peace process? Gender equality in peace processes is not a new debate but, as aforementioned, women's political participation remains an exception rather than a norm. Is it enough to argue that women are equal citizens and participants in

societies, yet exclude them as a group disproportionately affected by conflict from the Peace

Process? Is it not their basic right to have a say and be part of peace processes? These questions

are not meant to infer the conclusion that all women are victims of all conflicts, or that all

women are agents of peace. Women are also active participants in conflict and violence. In

addition, many women take jobs that men leave behind when they go to war, and they join

armies as nurses and combatants, and as such, they become integral to sustaining life during the

war (Tickner, 2011). These experiences are important and help to underline the necessity of

women's perspective at the peace table. Women bring a different approach to peace. Hence, why

this thesis is important and unique to the literature, especially to the Yemeni literature.

Despite their necessary voice, women, in different cases, have been pushed away from

peace processes. Nevertheless, women did not give up and became active participants in the

informal level of peacebuilding. O'Reilly et. al. (2015) argue that women have always

participated in peacebuilding and conflict resolution through informal channels[16], but they

remain underrepresented in formal peace processes. Globally, between 1992 and 2011, only 2

percent of recorded chief mediators and 9 percent of recorded negotiators in peace processes

were women. Between 1990 and 2014, only 13 of 130 peace agreements in the world had women

signatories (Krause et al., 2018). The authors use these statistics to argue that organizations must

redefine peace processes beyond talks around a table; peace processes must be inclusive and

diverse, especially because alternative processes have been shown to result in more sustained

peace and better post-conflict reconstruction (O'Reilly et al., 2015). As well, women's presence

not only helps achieve durable peace but also facilitates reaching and implementing agreements.

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[16] Also called Track II Diplomacy: characterized by backchannel spaces with no government
participation/representation

Women's informal participation, however, is not sufficient in the context of policymaking. This is reflected in the dichotomy between formal and informal participation in peace processes.

Official Peace Discussions are generally referred to as formal diplomacy or Track I diplomacy. They include the signing treaties and agreements and are usually aimed at influencing political power (Mapendere, 2002). There are, however, a number of different tracks that all have different impacts on official peace processes. Track II diplomacy refers to the "unofficial, informal interaction between members of adversary groups or nations that aim to develop strategies, to influence public opinion, organize human and material resources in ways that might help resolve their conflict" (Montville, 1991, p. 162). Track II was created to maintain peace negotiations in case Track I diplomacy failed. Track II is important as it sheds a light on the needs of marginalized groups (Mapendere, 2002). There is a Track 1.5 which is a hybrid of Tracks I and II. Track 1.5 diplomacy involves the interaction between official parties of the conflict with the presence of a third party that is not part of the conflict. The aim of Track 1.5 diplomacy is to change the power structures that caused the conflict (Mapendere, 2002). The last of these, Informal participation, or Track III diplomacy, is the grassroot-level horizontal level of diplomacy. This track is where transnational NGO networks and local society work towards peacebuilding and indirectly influencing official or Track I diplomacy (Kraft, 2002). This indirect track is where women most frequently have their only room to operate. Their power here is limited though. Although informal spaces provide women with opportunities for political engagement, there are two issues with restricting women to informal spaces: informal channels do not always influence formal discussions and these efforts are not usually documented (Goetz, 2009). Unfortunately, this can be observed in Yemen's case and will be discussed in the following chapters.

2.3 Women's Political Participation at the NDC (2013-2014)

The NDC is a milestone when discussing Yemeni women's political participation. The Inclusive Peace and Transition Institute (IPTI) (2018) published a case study series report on Yemen, highlighting women's participation in the NDC. The IPTI report argues that several factors, including patriarchal factors and religious and tribal traditions, have negatively affected the status of women in Yemen. First, Yemen is the poorest country in the Middle East and one of the poorest countries in the world, which negatively affects women's participation in politics. Second, Yemen ranked low in the 2016 Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index[17] where the score was 14/100 (Transparency International, 2017). Third, Saleh's authoritarian regime has ruled Yemen since its reunification. He ruled YAR from 1978 before that, and during that time, he has kept marginalized groups, including women, alienated from politics (IPTI, 2018). Moreover, Yemeni law discriminates against women and limits them to the private sphere. The IPTI report states that, according to Yemeni law,

> …a woman's testimony in criminal proceedings is worth half that of a man. Few women come forward to report cases of rape or physical abuse. A woman—frequently the victim of a reported crime—is often prosecuted instead of the man perpetrator. Yemen's penal code provides lenient sentences for those convicted of "honor crimes," the assault or murder of women by family members for alleged immoral behavior. Women are underrepresented in political life. They face obstacles to education, and women's educational level lags far behind that of men (IPTI, 2018, p. 2).

The situation in Yemen supports the argument that conflict increases gender inequity in society. Political activism in 2011 was necessary for women because of Saleh's authoritarian regime and the discriminatory laws that deterred Yemeni women from active and meaningful political participation. Women strongly mobilized and advocated for their inclusion in the NDC.

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[17] The Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) ranks of countries around the world, based on how corrupt their public sectors are perceived to be. The results are given on a scale of 0 to 100, where 0 is highly corrupt and 100 is very clean.

During the early stages of NDC, prominent women activists advocated for women's political rights, including Amal Al-Basha, Rasha Jarhum, Nadia Al-Sakkaf, and Raqiya Humaidan. Their activism was reflected in women's representation in the NDC: "Women were accorded a 30 percent quota within all delegations to the National Dialogue (ND); a separate women's delegation (making up 7 percent of the ND's membership); and a 30 per cent quota on the ND committees" (IPTI, 2018, p. 1). Despite resistance from political parties, women also secured a 30% quota for women in all state authorities in 2013. Not only that, but women also advocated for other civil rights to be included in the NDC resolutions and in the constitution-drafting process, including forbidding discrimination against women in public service and employment, setting the legal age of marriage at 18, and assuring full and equal legal status for women. However, these changes in law have never been ratified due to the ongoing conflict (IPTI, 2018).

The war has also stymied change for women in other ways. Yemen's tribal and patriarchal social norms are key factors in low female labour force participation. Women's pre-NDC participation in formal politics had always been weak and shallow, and political parties resisted their advocacy to participate in the NDC. Women's "strategic coordination", and the support of Jamal Benomar[18], facilitated their participation because his background was in defending human rights (p. 7). The IPTI report argues that women's influence was still moderate because of resistance from the political elite and religious parties. In addition, one of the biggest steps of the NDC was in drafting a new constitution. A major step women achieved due to their presence on the drafting committee was to change the legal marriage age to 18. However, the draft constitution was not ratified due to the war.

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[18] Former UN Special Envoy to Yemen (2011-2014)

The report further states that women were represented in different ways, including through direct representation, consultations, inclusive commissions, and mass action. Women's political participation constitutes women's formal participation in the NDC, their advocacy, and their consultations with the UN Special Envoy Benomar who supported them. Women were also part of the pre- and post-NDC commissions that worked on preparing and implementing NDC outcomes. There were only two women out of twenty-two members during the Post-NDC Inclusive Commission, which is disappointing. Nevertheless, there were four women out of seventeen on the constitution drafting committee, and as a result, the draft constituted "14 articles that reference women. These articles cover women's access to justice, the rights of women, political representation of women, as well as the economic opportunities and welfare of women" (IPTI, 2018, p. 7).

The IPTI report analyzes women's level of influence and discusses the enabling and constraining factors of their political participation. As mentioned earlier, women's participation in the NDC was facilitated by two main factors: women's political participation in the 2011 protests and Benomar's support. Furthermore, existing women's networks and organizations helped lobby and advocate for women's political rights. Several women-led organizations advocated for gender mainstreaming in politics, raising awareness on GBV, and providing psychosocial support for the survivors. "Important movements include the Watan Coalition–Women for Social Peace, founded to promote a gender quota in elections, and the Shaima network, founded to combat violence against women" (p. 10). Women's networks increased after the rejection of women candidates in the 2009 parliamentary elections, which were eventually cancelled as a result of a civil conflict breakout. Nevertheless, religious and political elites, throughout their history in Yemen, have discouraged women's public sphere participation in

general and in politics in particular. This still remains a challenge to women's political activism. Additionally, Yemen's recent conflict played a major role in hindering women's political participation. (IPTI, 2018).

Finally, the report discusses how traditional gender roles both enabled and impeded women's political participation. Different political actors in Yemen used gender roles to attack women who were politically active. In 2011, President Saleh deemed the protests against his rule as "illegal because, among other things, men and women were marching together" (IPTI, 2018, p. 11). Likewise, women were verbally attacked. physically attacked and called out on social media as dishonorable for participating in the NDC and for holding meetings with strange men at night. Policing gender was also used to enhance women's political activism. For example, there is stigma for using violence against women, and so women in Taiz City demanded that they be placed in the front of the protests to protect the protesters behind them. This placed women in the frontlines and helped them be visible to the public and the government. In Sana'a, women burned their veils, a sign of anger in tribal tradition. This pushed tribal leaders to join the protests and accept women's political activism in the Change Square. This pushed the protestors and political leaders to avoid violence. Women's prominent role in the protests influenced non-violent approaches to protesting during the early stages of the 2011 protests (IPTI, 2018).

The 2019 report, *Women in Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding in Yemen*, noted that there are both positive and negative impacts on traditional gender roles during the current conflict, including changing attitudes towards what is known as "appropriate behavior" (Awadh & Shuja'adeen, 2019, p. 2). Despite being excluded from the peace process, women participate at the informal and local level of peacebuilding. The report discusses women's meaningful participation in peacebuilding and showcases the use of customary law to participate in

peacebuilding. Women used their status as the 'weaker gender' to further their participation in peacebuilding: Awadh and Shuja'adeen explain, "In many cases, women engaging in peacebuilding activities have leveraged their socially protected status being categorized as Al-Du'afa (meaning weak and perceived as defenseless or unarmed) to further their peacebuilding and conflict resolution efforts" (p. 2). Al-Du'afa means that women's ideas and efforts are less than men. Another key term that limits women's activity is the term *jahl*, meaning ignorant, "which results in [women's] ideas and opinions being perceived as not well reasoned and thus not listened to" (p. 13). While these concepts explicitly sidelined women, some women used this concept in ways that harnessed its power. For example, they would travel with a targeted male, as Yemeni customary law would not kill a man in the presence of a woman. The report recognizes these interpretations and efforts, arguing that the "impulse to protect women" can be a means to open conversations between the conflict parties (p. 20–21). Due to the conflict, there are local spaces that cannot be accessed by men for their protection, but women can access these spaces to participate in peace building (Awadh & Shuja'adeen, 2019). By using the gender-based limitations on them to support ameliorative purposes in conflict, they are drawing on a long historical tradition. Women in Yemen have always participated in peacebuilding; however, their roles have not been well-documented or acknowledged by the society. Awadh and Shuja'adeen state:

> In tribal areas in the past, there were four ways for a woman to resolve or stop a conflict: 1) cutting her hair; 2) taking off her veil and placing it with the opponents; 3) taking weapons away to stop the fighting; and 4) invoking *tadreek* (suspension of hostilities) a temporary measure to stop fighting in order to seek a third party to arbitrate, or by going to the opposing tribe to ask for *tahkeem* (arbitration) (p. 20).

The report further states that the situation for women and girls has always been very challenging, as Yemen always ranked low on development indexes because of low economic growth.

The war has aggravated these challenges by limiting women's access to services and through increased violence against women. The UNFPA reported an increase in violence against women as a result of the war's pressure (Awadh & Shuja'adeen, 2019; UNFPA, 2015). Economic burdens have also been exacerbated, thus increasing women's inequality. All this, according to Awadh and Shuja'adeen (2019), has resulted in limiting women's access to political participation and weakening the role of civil societies. Women's role in peacebuilding is fragile, and whatever effort women exert to participate and call for their rights is frequently undermined.

One of the most important contemporary studies on Yemeni women's formal political participation was written by Entelak Al-Motwakel, who was also interviewed for this study. Al-Motwakel (2018) participated in a report on women's rights and status in the Arab world. Her section addressed the situation of Yemeni women during the conflict: the legislative status, the humanitarian situation, the social status, opportunities, and challenges facing women in Yemen concerning political participation and representation in the peacebuilding process. She says that Yemeni women are disproportionately affected by this war politically, economically, and psychologically. Al-Motwakel is concerned that women's political activism and achievements in the 2011 protests and the NDC is being forgotten. In 2011, conservative political parties, such as Al-Islah, undermined women's efforts and shamed them for networking with strange men; however, women mobilized and fought for a quota of at least 30% in the NDC. Although all the committees had 30% female representation, the transitional government did not commit to the quota. Al-Motwakel further states that the UN Special Envoys Benomar and Al-Sheikh said that male decision-makers in Yemen did not agree on anything but excluding women, as "this is a wartime and not the time for women's participation" (p. 7). She further adds that gender has to be mainstreamed in the political process and is of unique importance to the peace process more

specifically. Including women in the peace process is crucial because women present diverse issues related to the development of the country and not only military and what are traditionally thought of as security issues. Al-Motwakel (2018) also argues that women have to be addressed and participate in the peace process to ensure a just democracy in the post-conflict process. It is alarming that women's exclusion at the official level will be reflected during the post-conflict phase, which further limits women's political participation and undermines their decade-long efforts. Al-Motwakel states, "The lack of women's participation in the peace process and the exclusion of women's issues in the peace agreement will have a negative impact on their roles beyond post-conflict"[19] (Al-Motwakel, 2018, p. 21).

Additionally, Al-Motwakel (2018) mentions five main reasons why women's participation has been fragile in Yemen throughout the years. Firstly, a patriarchal understanding of gender roles, where women belong to the private sphere and men belong to the public sphere. This creates a distinction between protector and the protected that places women in a subordinate position. Al-Motwakel explains that,

> the role of men in protecting women is rooted in Yemeni culture. The protection of women passes from the guardian, father, brother, or husband to the male guardian in public life. The political field is considered in the "Third World", including Yemen, a dangerous field that exposes the person to many dangers, up to arrest and assassination. From the perspective of protecting women, which is echoed by many leaders, women's political participation is limited by the family or political leaders, and here the liberal, right-wing, religious and tribal parties see eye to eye.

Secondly, extreme religious Wahabism spread to Yemen in the 1980s, which excluded women from public life, emphasizing their natural role in the private space. Although women constitute 42% of the voters, they are still excluded from decision-making through their absence in "guardianship positions" (Al-Motwakel, p. 15). Thirdly, they are excluded by political party

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[19] The quote was translated by me

leaders who are not committed to women's rights, and this helped me in shaping my recommendation in Chapter 7. Fourthly, fighting over power and competing for political seats has sidelined more women from political participation. Lastly, although Yemeni law states that men and women are equal citizens in respect of rights and duties, it does not acknowledge the importance of eliminating discrimination against women, despite Yemen having ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1987. Furthermore, for a law to be passed, it must go through parliament, the majority of which is made up of male members of political parties who don't believe in gender equality or women's political participation. Al-Motwakel states that the male parliament members "lack internal democracy and are dominated by traditional elites who believe in customs, traditions, and intellectual cultures that are still far from recognizing women's rights in all spheres of life"[20] (p. 1).

Al-Motwakel goes on to describe women's political participation during the 2011 Arab Spring and the NDC. She declares that women broke Yemeni patriarchal traditions and joined the Change Square to call for equality, freedom, and dignity. This was not limited to the capital city. Women from all backgrounds and different cities joined the protests, leading both conversations and protests. Al-Motwakel argues that these patriarchal shackles were broken with the help of the family when families moved to live in the Change Square to support the female members of the household. She concluded that the majority of people in Yemen are not opposed to women's political activism; it is, in fact, political parties, especially religious political parties, who do not have the "political will" or the belief in gender equality that is holding back their public political role (p. 15). The 2011 revolution showed the world that Yemen's society accepts

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[20] The quote was translated by me

women's activism, especially given the two queens who historically ruled Yemen[21]. She also mentions that political parties did not necessarily stand against women in 2011, and that is because they needed to mobilize more numbers against Saleh's regime (Al-Motwakel, 2018).

Al-Motwakel further adds that 2011 paved the way for women to participate in the NDC. Women mobilized and lobbied for their right to participate, and despite all the resistance from political parties, women participated at a rate of 29.4%, that is 166 out of 399. This was a revolutionary step for women. Their excitement was reflected in their 92.4% attendance rate compared to only 86.6% of men. Women also created a movement called Amal, which advocates for a 30% quota for women in the government. The movement traveled to different cities to advocate for women's participation in local councils. Women's political activism has therefore resulted in opening spaces for women to lead in political spaces. Al-Motwakel further states that women have achieved relative progress in representation in their leadership bodies, such as the Arab Spring Party in Yemen, which is headed by a woman, and in the Justice and Construction Party, the assistant general secretary of the party is a woman. The Watan Party's general secretary is a woman, and women represent 61% of it. Women also represent 25% of the National Solidarity Party's bodies.

The author proceeds to explain women's political participation during the war. She states that Yemen's modern history (1960s–present) is full of conflict and wars, whether between different tribes, over succession, or between the government and militias. How these wars were settled was either militarily, where the loser retreats for a time and then starts a new conflict, or through non-inclusive peace settlements, which did not address women's role in the conflict or the peace process, except for few indications where women were part of tribal mediation. Al-

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[21] Queen Bilquis ruled from 970-935 BCE and Queen Arwa ruled from 1067-1138

Motwakel mentions research that focuses on Yemeni women's role in non-traditional and tribal mediation. The research argues that when tribal mediation and reconciliation are conducted in a transparent and participatory manner, women are usually included in resolving conflicts. During the mediation process, women participated through a special women's council, and children would typically transmit the women's solutions to the men's council. The issue was also discussed in households in the evening. Women's opinions were respected and transmitted through the father, husband, or brother to the "Peace Council". In other parts of Yemen, women emerged and succeeded in playing the role of mediator for high-priority issues in society (Al-Motwakel, p. 21).

Although the current war still depends on tribal mediation in some cases, especially when there are no international actors present, the role of women is absent or not acknowledged. Women face political violence if they are politically active and working on advocating for women's political participation (Al-Motwakel, 2018). She states that "a number of women leaders have been subjected to verbal violence and defamation that has limited women's participation" (p. 21–22). Despite all that, women are working non-stop at the grassroots level, including civil society, and they have created women's political activism networks, such as Women Voices of Peace (WVP) and Women Solidarity Network (WSN). Nevertheless, the lack of coordination between all the programs and efforts exerted to enhance women's political participation weaken the outcomes of these efforts and programs (Al-Motwakel, 2018).

These difficulties are exacerbated by the fact that there is minimal media coverage and information on the peace processes, specifically regarding women's participation. During the

Geneva I talks, held in June 2015, there was only one woman[22]. Due to pressure from women's networks on the UN and the international community, two women[23] made it to the Geneva II talks in December 2015. The authors show that, despite the oppression they face, women's work has been important and effective where present during Kuwait's talk in 2016. Al-Motwakel (2018) concludes by suggesting developing research in understanding women's influence during formal political participation. The Stockholm peace talks were held in December 2018, and there was only one woman present: Rana Ghanem[24]. Ghanem argued that the government must commit to implementing the NDC outcomes and United Nation's Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2216 as conditions for any agreement. She noted that,

> One of the reasons why I was able to be in the negotiations was my leading position in the Nasserist Party [she has been involved with the Nasserist Party since 1991]. Yemeni political parties' leadership has always been occupied by men and that has reflected itself in the lack of female representation in all these peace talks…This should not be an excuse, though, and the Yemeni government has to fulfil its promise of the 30 percent quota for women." (Nasser, 2018).

As previously mentioned, women in Yemen worked at the grassroots level and in civil society to participate in politics. Baabad and Heinz (2017) wrote a report in collaboration with Safe World, Yemen Polling Centre (YPC), and The Center for Applied Research in Partnership with the Orient (CARPO) on how women in two different governorates — Ibb and Aden — were affected by the war and how they perceive their role in conflict resolution and peace building. They interviewed women in conflict areas from these two cities. In their conclusion, they provided policy recommendations that will help support women-led local initiatives. The authors argue that women have been affected by the war's violence in complex gender-based ways

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[22] Fayqa al-Saeed representing the General People's Congress party. She was the Assistant Secretary General of Civil Society Organizations in Yemen.

[23] Rana Ghanem and Sahar Ghanem

[24] Interviewed in this research.

during war. The report mainly discusses internal displacement as a result of the war and the socioeconomic burden women face when they became breadwinners after losing the male head of the family to the war as both civilian casualties and soldiers (Baabad & Heinz, 2017). They indicate that "[r]egardless of whether women's efforts are promoting or attenuating conflict, they are playing a significant role, alongside men, in shaping their country's trajectory" (p. 19). They nursed the wounded, fed the soldiers, fundraised, and encouraged the men to fight. There are women who contributed to the humanitarian efforts through psychosocial support for the people, first aid, and child protection. They also created women-led humanitarian organizations, such as Food4Humanity. The authors also reported that the conflict has affected gender roles both positively and negatively. Women contributed in ways that would not be acceptable during peaceful times. The women in the study reported that they became "stronger, more resilient and more self-reliant" during the war (p. 2). The negative impacts include security issues and the fear that women would be harmed. Security-related issues also entail children's safety.

Al-Motwakel (2018) dedicates an entire chapter to discussing women's role in working towards peace. The perception of women's role during peace differs between governorates. In Aden, for example, specifically during the 2015 invasion, women fed the soldiers, staffed checkpoints, and even sometimes smuggled arms and carried them when necessary. Baabad and Heinz (2017) state that this is not a new phenomenon for Adeni women, as they are known for having carried guns and for fighting against British colonialism in the 1960s. Moreover, women in Aden were involved at the grassroots level, too, through humanitarian work and "distributing relief assistance to vulnerable cases (including IDPs)" (p. 15). Similarly, women in Ibb provided food and psychosocial support to fighters. However, women in Ibb were not involved in the fighting itself; they were primarily involved in politics. They participated in street protests and

through social media (p. 17). Unlike in Aden, local actors in Ibb are more supportive of women being visible in political spaces. However, the report did not state if they will be supportive when women are in decision-making positions. When the women were asked what they needed to enhance their political participation, they said training workshops, capacity building, and monetary funding (Baabad & Heinz, 2017).

2.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter began by defining peace and conflict in feminist scholarship and the disproportionate effect of wars on women and girls. It also discussed the development of women's political participation in the world, noting that while the numbers of women participating in the political process increased, the numbers remain low, and the influence is still minimal. Further, this chapter also discussed the dimensions of Yemeni women's political participation starting with their activism and participation in the NDC and ending with the formal and informal influence women have on the current war. The next chapter will discuss the research methods and theoretical framework of this thesis.

Chapter 3: Research Methods and Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the research methods used to collect data and the methodology used to analyze the data. The chapter begins by explaining the research design of this thesis, the interview process and the participants. It then moves on to discusses standpoint theory, ethical concerns, and reflexivity. Finally, this chapter discusses the methodology used to analyze the data.

3.2 Research Design

This thesis is concerned with the following questions: 1) What is the current state of women's political involvement in the Yemeni peace process? 2) To what extent are/were women involved in the peace process in Yemen? 3) Which discourses do decision-makers use to exclude/include women from the peace process? 4) What is the role of political parties, if any, in enhancing/discouraging women's political involvement? 5) And, finally, what should be done to enhance women's political participation in Yemen's peace process? Besides secondary sources, these questions were answered by interviewing seven Yemeni women who are politically active, public figures, formally and/or informally, and by using Michelle Lazar's approach to feminist critical discourse analysis (FCDA). This approach enabled me to analyze and understand how these seven women characterized women's political participation in Yemen's peace process, explained the nature and the extent of their participation in the peace talks and the discourse surrounding their participation, and why women must be part of Yemen's peacebuilding process. Furthermore, the seven women were asked to offer policy recommendations in the interview to the different parties involved in the conflict and peace process.

3.2.1 Interviews

Interviews are an efficient option for qualitative research, as they reflect participants' experiences, reality, and views on a specific issue (Lambert & Loiselle, 2007). Further, individual in-depth interviewing provides space for personal experiences and stories, which are important for this thesis. Initially, I wanted to interview 20–30 Yemeni women active in politics in Yemen. However, given the time constraints of the study, the research committee suggested not more than ten and not fewer than five women. So, I eventually decided to interview seven Yemeni women who are politically active and involved in some way in the Yemeni peace process. All the women I interviewed consented to be identified: Bilquis Abu Esba', Entelak Al-Motwakel, Nadia Al-Sakkaf, Olfat Al-Dubai, Rana Ghanem, Rasha Jarhum, and Wameedh Shakir.

3.2.3 Consent Form

The consent form for the interview (Appendix I), the invitation email (Appendix II), and the interview questions (Appendix III) were all reviewed by the Ethical Committee at the University of Lethbridge. Upon receiving Ethical Committee approval, I started conducting the interviews between January 31st and March 2nd, 2021. Each interview lasted between 40 and 90 minutes. I contacted the seven women through encrypted emails or encrypted WhatsApp texts. All interviews occurred via Zoom and were recorded based on interviewee consent. Al-Sakkaf preferred to send an email with her answers and offered a follow-up interview, which we did via Zoom. Five interviews were mainly in Arabic, and two were mainly in English. Arabic is the interviewees' first language, so the interviews in English occasionally oscillated between Arabic language and English language. I saved all interviews in a password-protected hard drive that I kept at my home at all times, and as per the consent form, I will delete the recordings 18 months

after I finish my degree. I transcribed the interviews and used Du Bois's *Basic Symbols for Discourse Transcription* as a reference[25]. Du Bois's transcription reference helped make the transcription process faster, more efficient and easier to go over during the coding process. I sent the transcriptions to the participants for approval. Finally, I analyzed the transcripts using NVIVO Software to help me organize the data and facilitate the analytical process.

3.3 Participants

I selected the seven women I interviewed for two main reasons. Firstly, they have vast experience in political activism and advocating for women's political rights in Yemen, whether formally or at the grassroots level. Secondly, I met some of these women, through social gatherings or volunteering in NGOs, when I lived between Sanaa and Cairo prior to coming to Canada in 2019. I contacted the rest via a snowball sampling method. The women were easy to reach, and they responded quickly, which accelerated the interviewing process. The women were sent an invitation via email or encrypted WhatsApp texts and upon their initial approval, they were sent the consent form. After that, we agreed on a date and time and held the interview via Zoom. Each woman interviewed has different accomplishments and experiences in politics in Yemen, and many of them participated in the peace processes of the ongoing conflict. Respecting their agency, I asked the women I interviewed how they would like to be introduced, and so I have presented these women's titles as they wished to be presented. I have also added their experience according to the Women Experts Database[26] that was created by the Peace Track Initiative (PTI)[27] in collaboration with the Women Solidarity Network (WSN), who collected Yemeni women's CVs and facilitated writing their bios.

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[25] http://transcription.projects.linguistics.ucsb.edu/A02asymbols.pdf
[26] https://www.womensolidaritynetwork.org/women-experts
[27] A Yemeni Canadian initiative that mainly work with feminizing and localizing the peace process in Yemen.

3.3.1 Participants' Profile

Bilquis Abu Esba' is a professor of political science in the political science department at Sana'a University in Yemen. She is also a member of the Women Technical Advisory Group (WTAG) of the UN envoy of Yemen. Entelak Al-Motwakel is a professor of gender studies in the Gender-Development Research and Study Centre under the department of English literature studies at Sana'a University. She is the co-founder and chairperson of the Youth Leadership Development Fund (YLDF), a Yemeni non-governmental organization (NGO) that works on building the capacities of young people in development especially in their own communities. Nadia Al-Sakkaf was the first woman Minister of Information in 2014 during the Government of Competencies that was established as a transitional government until the NDC is completed, and she is politically independent. She is also an independent researcher and a political expert in gender policies in Yemen. Olfat Al-Dubai is a professor of social science at the University of Taiz in Yemen, and she was the representative of women and youth at the NDC for the Islah Party on the transitional justice team. She was also a member of the Constitution Drafting Committee in 2014. Rana Ghanem is the assistant secretary-general of the Nasserite Unionist Public Party (NUPP), and she is also a member of the National Authority for Oversight of the National Dialogue Outcomes. Rasha Jarhum is the co-founder and director of the Peace Track Initiative (PTI), with vast experience in gender, peace, and security. She has briefed the UN Security Council on Yemen and women's rights in efforts to push for peace and women's inclusion in the peace process. Wameedh Shakir is a consultant in gender and peacebuilding, with vast experience in legal protection and protecting women against violence. Four of the women live abroad, while three are still in Yemen.

3.3.2 The Interview Process

I originally planned to conduct most of the interviews face-to-face, as most of the participants are in Cairo and Ottawa, where I reside. Further, face-to-face interviews provide a closer and more personal experience to record vocal tones, hums, and body language (Novick, 2007). However, when COVID-19 was declared a pandemic, it was safer for me and the participants to carry out the interviews online. As I previously mentioned, all interviews took place via Zoom. Three out of the seven participants had their camera open, which enabled me to see facial expressions and reactions, leading me to ask further questions. Three of the participants chose to close their cameras at the beginning or mid-interview for a better internet connection because we faced a lot of disconnections and different technical issues, especially with participants in Yemen and Egypt. One woman chose to have her camera closed when I started recording. Not being able to see the participants reduced non-verbal data analysis and any contextual data that would have contributed to the richness and interpretation of participants' verbal answers (Novick, 2007). That said, I recorded the pauses and hums in the transcripts as best as I could, and although body language and physical context is important in qualitative research, this research is not dependent on participants' behavioral observation. After the interviews, I transcribed them and sent the transcriptions to the interviewees to approve, which they all did.

I kept the channel of communication between the interviewees and myself open, and I reminded participants several times that they can contact me via phone or email if they wanted to follow up on any questions or retract any information that was said during the interview. However, no one contacted me after the interviews.

3.4 Standpoint Theory and Method[28]

Keeping in mind the goal of women's political empowerment and amplifying their voices, it is important to situate the positionality of knowledge production or epistemology. Standpoint method was coined by Sandra Harding between the 1970s and 1980s as a feminist critical theory and social epistemology regarding the relations between knowledge production and practices of power, emphasizing the importance of knowledge production among marginalized populations. Standpoint Method aims at empowering marginalized groups who produce knowledge about, with, and for their own communities, where their social positionality provides knowledge that cannot be necessarily understood by everybody (Harding, 2004). Harding states that the problem with research is not with researcher biases, but rather with researchers' experience differing from those of the people they are researching. I am a Yemeni woman who is not represented in the Yemeni peace talks, and I already have existing assumptions on Yemen's gendered politics and women's political exclusion. My social positionality as a researcher might influence the research outcomes, but this is not necessarily a setback. On the contrary, my emotional ties to the people, the land, and my experiences can strengthen the approach of the research. I lived and I am still living through a shared experience of political exclusion and neglect in an ongoing conflict, and shared experiences amplify the importance of the issue, and they also help in delivering the realities beyond numbers and scientific conclusions. Additionally, my knowledge of the colloquial language facilitated the interviews, and the women were able to use local idioms and expressions. For example, one of the participants said maybe women should mobilize into an army and fight in the war to be included in the peace talks. I understood that the sentence was said jokingly and out of despair.

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[28] Method and theory will be used interchangeably in this section as Sandra Harding perceives Standpoint.

However, this would not be necessarily the case with researchers foreign to the culture and language.

Furthermore, this research amplifies the voices of Yemeni women who are politically active and who are marginalized politically, thus they have a better standpoint and view of their own experiences and their own political participation in the Yemeni peace process. It is only rational that these women can produce accurate knowledge in the area. I also have opened my mind towards unexpected answers and unexpected results from the interviews. My lived and shared experience with Yemeni women's political exclusion from the peace process might be viewed as bias. However, my positionality alongside being a researcher creates a unique perspective on the topic.

Sociologist Patricia Hill Collins coined the term "outsider within" in standpoint theory (Collins, 1986, p. 14). In her research on black domestic workers in white families' houses, she argues that these women have a wide perspective of the dynamics of white households that cannot be seen by black men or even white families themselves. Similarly, black feminist intellectuals "tap this standpoint in producing distinctive analyses of race, class and gender" (p. 15-16). Thus, the state of the outsider within provides a perspective that is obscured from other orthodox approaches (Collins, 1986). Yemeni women who have been sidelined from the Yemeni political scene have a wider and deeper outsider within understanding of politics and the social dynamics of their exclusion from the peace process. Further, FCDA promotes "critical reflexivity as a practice" (Lazar, 2018, p. 374). It is acknowledged that researchers can play an important role in the analysis and interpretation of the research data, hence why reflexivity is important in qualitative research (Berger, 2013). Reflexivity in qualitative research is the process of examining and self-reflecting on the researcher's inward and outward position that might affect

the analysis and knowledge production (Shaw & Gould, 2001). I am an insider to this research, as a Yemeni woman with existing assumptions and knowledge regarding the exclusion of women from peace processes. I am also an outsider, as a woman who did not experience first-hand political exclusion or live through the war. As noted earlier, my social positionality is not a setback, and the seven women's accounts minimize the effect of bias on the data collected.

3.5 Ethical Concerns and Reflexivity

Although I received the approval from the Ethics Committee at the University of Lethbridge, there were personal ethical concerns as a Yemeni woman who is interested in understanding Yemeni women's political marginalization from the peace process in an ongoing conflict. In social sciences, ethical issues are extremely important, especially when working with marginalized populations like Yemeni women in the political space. So, there were different concerns about how my own beliefs, motives, and values would influence this research. The research process has been challenging in this regard, and there were obstacles and issues I needed to examine before going through with the research. Neutrality in research does not exist, and I, as a researcher, acknowledge that my life experience, values, and social and philosophical backgrounds influenced this research and my understanding of the participants' experience.

Firstly, I am cognizant of the fact that my research might be damage-centred research, portraying Yemeni political women—or Yemeni women in general—as helpless and incapable. Tuck (2009) defines damage-centred research as,

> research that intends to document peoples' pain and brokenness to hold those in power accountable for their oppression… [It is flawed] because it is often used to leverage reparations or resources for marginalized communities yet simultaneously reinforces and re-inscribes a one-dimensional notion of these people as depleted, ruined, and hopeless" (p. 409).

Women in Yemen are excluded from political rankings and the peace process. Thus, it is easy to showcase only the humanitarian side of the problem and to overlook the stories of hope. I do not aim for the research to highlight only women's exclusion in Yemen, recognizing that as an easy trap, since my research involves women's oppression in a continuing humanitarian crisis. Yemeni women's political rights are sidelined. Nevertheless, this does not mean that Yemeni women in politics are powerless. Further, it is important to declare that I want to draw the attention to the dire need of humanitarian assistance in Yemen and to the necessity of stopping the war, but I do not want it to be the defining factor of Yemen or this research. The goal of this thesis is to situate the research as a theory of change that intends to educate and implement change as a first step towards enhancing women's political participation in the peace process and, as a result, towards peace. Further, as a Yemeni woman, I am empowered to do research and write on this topic in a way that challenges damage-centred research.

Tuck also argues that damage- centred research "is a pathologizing approach . . . [and] research that operates, even benevolently, from a theory of change that establishes harm or injury in order to achieve reparation" (p. 413) is still considered damage-centred research. Tuck proposes a solution, "an antidote", to avoid falling into damage-centred research; she suggests that researchers should look at "desires" (p. 416–417). Researchers should examine stories of hope and achievements that take attention away from the damage. Calderon (2016) adds that rebelling against damage-centred research can start with evoking celebratory stories, and by doing that, a researcher "maintains ethic of self-surveillance" (p. 13). To counter damage-centred research, I decided to include three questions that shed a light on the women's celebratory moment and powerful stories. The first question was concerned with the interviewed woman's personal effort and how she considers the influence of her own actions. The next question was

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concerned with women's political efforts, and the last question was concerned with women's creative efforts to mitigate violence and help the community. This also includes stories of women who had participated in the political process despite the challenges, women who are part of peace networks, women who created online and social media platforms to initiate dialogue, and women who joined and helped people as humanitarians, as well as providing a platform for these women to speak.

The decision to ask participants to choose the language they are more comfortable with resulted in more authentic expression and tones—although English would have made NVIVO analysis easier for me as a researcher—asking participants to participate in their language of choice is also a step towards respecting women's agency and voice throughout the research process. Further, even before I got to ask the three questions, all seven women mentioned success stories and shared what women are doing to fight against their political exclusion. These women are aware of the marginalization and exclusion Yemeni women face but also that it does not define who we are.

Another potential ethical concern that is more literal and immediate is that I was researching Yemen during the war. It is a sensitive and dangerous field of research. I interviewed women who are living/lived through the ongoing war, and who have seen and heard horrifying war stories. Although in interviewing them, I risked exposing them to stressful events, I was mainly concerned with "ethically important moments" (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004, p. 262). Guillemin and Gillam define ethically important moments as the "difficult, often subtle, and usually unpredictable situations that arise in the practice of doing research" (262). To do this, I had to consider what I would do if an unpredictable incident happened? How am I going to act and react? In one of the interviews, while I was asking question seven, "What steps have women

taken to be involved in the peace process? Did it work?", the woman answered the question for

about three minutes and then suddenly she paused, took a deep breath, and said,

"يا سارة، احنا (النساء) تعبنا حاولنا نعمل كل شي ومافيش شيء يتغير ومش راضيين يقبلونا"[29]

It pained me to hear these words, and I felt guilty to have put this woman in a position

where she felt helpless. At that moment, I had to talk as a Yemeni woman more than a

researcher, and I told her how much both hers and all Yemeni women's efforts are important and

effective, even if they are characterized as informal and even if they are not directly involved in

formal peacebuilding discussions. She thanked me for saying that, and I suggested we take a

break to make tea/eat a snack, and then continue with the interview. Coming from Yemen,

knowing the culture and the religion greatly helped me in that situation.

There is an academic gap in literature in the Arabic language, although there are many

Arab scholars in political science and peacebuilding. Initially, I envisioned translating the Arabic

interviews to English; however, I, with the support of Dr. Hodes, eventually decided to

characterize this thesis as bilingual. This means that I kept the Arabic interviews in Arabic and

coded them without translating or summarizing the main points because I wanted to look at the

codes and themes in their original format. However, the quotes in Arabic that were added to this

thesis were translated by me[30] for the thesis. It is important to note that Rasha Jarhum and Nadia

Al-Sakkaf chose to do their interviews in English, but they added a few Arabic words in between

sentences. So, I added the Arabic words in the transcript in "Arabizi[31]" which is a way to write in

Arabic using English letters and numbers. It has been suggested that I share the transcripts to

make the thesis bilingual, but that requires a new consent form and a new revision by the

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[29] Sara, we [the women] are tired, we have done everything we can, and nothing is changing, they are not listening to us.

[30] Arabic is my mother tongue.

[31] https://talkinarabic.com/arabic-texting/

University's Ethics Committee, because I have indicated in the ethical form that the transcripts will only be shared with the supervisor, if necessary. However, direct quotations from the interview are written in Arabic and translated in the footnotes by me. I chose to do this to reflect the power and agency of the women, especially those who chose to answer and express themselves in the Yemeni dialect. Moreover, upon graduation, I am planning to translate this thesis to Arabic hoping it reaches more readers.

Further, the interviewed women were aware of that and consented to the interview knowing that the transcripts will not be shared except with the supervisor, if necessary. So, it would be unethical to approach the women after conducting the interviews about sharing their transcripts that they initially agreed to not be shared. Moreover, there are time constraints. Unfortunately, NVIVO and other qualitative data analysis software, such as MAXQDA, are not equipped to work with languages written from right to left, such as Arabic and Hebrew. The letters end up disordered, and they become impossible to read. Thus, I manually coded the Arabic interview transcripts and used NVIVO for the two English transcripts, using English for the codes.

3.6 Methodology: Thematic Analysis

I thematically analyzed the collected data from the interviews. Braune and Clarke (2008) argue that thematic analysis is a method used extensively in qualitative research yet rarely recognized. My main aim was to understand how Yemeni women are sidelined from the peace process, according to Yemeni women themselves. Coding the data helped with evaluating the patterns that are related to a specific phenomenon. Braun and Clarke offer a six-phase process on how to do thematic analysis. They suggest 1) becoming actively familiarized with the data, looking for in-depth meanings and patterns, 2) start coding the data, 3) searching for and

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identifying the broader themes from the codes, 4) refining the themes and pinpointing the important ones, 5) defining and naming the themes, and finally 6) writing the research (Braun & Clarke, 2008). I followed the six steps in this research.

The coding process started while transcribing, because the themes were apparent to me when I was listening to the interviews. After the transcription process, I remained reading and re-reading the transcription, as well as collating and separating codes. Furthermore, more codes emerged, and they were all accumulated in one sheet (Appendix IV). Identifying and refining the themes was challenging but with time, I was able to set two central themes; "**Building Walls: Excluding Women from Political Spaces,** and "**We Are Here: Success and Celebratory Stories."** There were four sub-themes under the first central theme, **War Discourse on Women's Political Participation, Trickled Down Discourse on Women's Political Participation, Implicit and Explicit Forms of Exclusion**, and **UN Role in Yemeni Women's Political Participation.**

3.7 Data Analysis Approach

Inspired by Michelle Lazar's approach to Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA), particularly the ideas of "transformation and social emancipation" and "analytical activism," this research uses FCDA to analyze the seven interviews, UNSCR 1325 and the Yemeni National Action Plan (YNAP) to understand women's political participation in Yemen's peace processes (Lazar, 2007, pp. 141,145). This section will discuss the core elements of FCDA as an analysis and its importance to the research.

3.7.1 Data Analysis Approach: Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA)

It is crucial to understand FCDA to create context and to use it as an analytical lens for examining the discourse surrounding women's exclusion in Yemeni peace talks. Michelle Lazar

proposed FCDA as an interdisciplinary field, and she suggests infusing feminism with CDA to identify the complex relationship between ideology, power, and identity in everyday conversations/discourse that maintain gender norms, which she characterizes as "gender relationality" (Lazar, 2007, p. 150). Feminist scholars have always challenged male-dominated disciplines in natural sciences and social sciences that assume neutrality and objectivity in their fields. Similarly, Lazar explains that feminist scholars have long challenged language studies that characterize themselves as neutral and objective, following linguist Deborah Cameron, who stated that language studies have always been implicated in and by patriarchy (2014, p. 143). Male-dominated fields have considered their own interests and classified the fields as neutral, giving them the upper hand both socially and academically.

The main concern of this approach, according to Lazar, is to analyze discourse and language use that sustains power systems and gender hierarchies that privilege men as a social group. Further, gendered discourse perpetuates society's expectations for gender behavior, stemming from the idea that men and women are, by default, different because they are biologically different (Cameron, 2007; Mills & Mullany, 2011). Hence, a crucial question by Lazar is, why is there a need for a feminist CDA, especially considering that CDA has acknowledged feminists' efforts in language analysis?

Lazar states that while CDA acknowledges that discourse shapes and forms social practices, FCDA acknowledges that discourse shapes gendered social practices that are perceived as neutral when, in fact, they are not. However, not all gendered social practices in language are feminist (Lazar, 2007). FCDA perceives gender as a category that shapes one's experience, and there is a need for a gender lens that examines language so we can achieve a just society where gender does not pre-determine one's experience or relations (Lazar, 2005). Furthermore,

Cameron (1998) states that although CDA is progressive, its founders[32] are predominantly white, cis-gendered men. Cameron also states that FCDA was not introduced to converse with the founders of CDA or its principles, but rather to use CDA methods to focus on how gender hierarchies are maintained through language (Cameron, 2007). This idea is particularly important to my research, as the discourse used by men in power during the war justifies Yemeni women's exclusion, and it is perceived as natural given the gender roles between men and women, which will be examined in this thesis. Unfortunately, there are no published resources on the discourse used by Yemeni men in power on women's political participation in the current peace process; but we do have are Yemeni women's first-hand experiences regarding the incidents they faced during the peace process highlighting the impact that sexist discourse has not only on political participation but women's experiences of conflict and peacebuilding.

FCDA is highly influenced by post-structuralist feminism, arguing that discourse is socially constructive, and that discourse is a form of social practice that constitutes power relations (Lazar, 2007; Lazar, 2018). Additionally, Lazar states that FCDA goes beyond adding feminism to CDA. She states, "from the point of view of theory, this means that FCDA not only inherits, historically, its critical impetus from the Frankfurt School via CDA, but is informed by contemporary developments in critical feminist thought" (Lazar, 2018, p. 372). For the purposes of this research, power and power relations will be defined according to FCDA. Holmes (2005) borrows Wodak (1996) and Fletcher's (1996) definition of power as a "systemic characteristic [and] a transformative and non-static feature of interaction" (p. 32). Holmes (2005) adds that power and gender relations are constructed through inconspicuous and "naturalized conversational strategies" (p. 32). It is assumed that Yemeni women's political marginalization is

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[32] Such as Roger Fowler and Teun Van Dijk

maintained by discourse that is assumed to be natural, and by conversation that assigns gender roles during a conflict.

Furthermore, Lazar (2018) identifies five main interconnected pillars in the approach. Firstly, FCDA acknowledges that gender is socially constructed and ideological in nature in ways that define power structures and roles between men and women. Discourse that maintains gender roles in societies are largely perceived as natural and related to men and women's biology. This kind of essentialist discourse is often branded as common sense and is produced and reproduced every day to maintain gender hierarchies. FCDA, however, "considers 'gender' as an ideological structure and practice, which divides people hierarchically into two blocs, based upon the presumed naturalness of sexual difference" (p. 373).

Secondly, power relations and distribution of power are the main concerns in the context of research using FCDA. In other words, power relations resulting from patriarchy privilege men as a social group, and patriarchy, to FCDA, is not a "monolithic system" but rather a phenomenon intersecting with other power-maintaining systems, such as colonialism, capitalism, heteronormativity, and neoliberalism (p. 373). FCDA acknowledges that generalizing the word 'women' is problematic and inequality is experienced differently among women around the world, especially given the intersections of class, race, sexual orientation, culture, and location (Lazar, 2007). For the purposes of this research, the phrase 'Yemeni women' includes women in politics and, in particular, those who were politically active in 2014 and beyond and discusses the forms of sexism and political exclusion these women faced, especially during the peace talks.

Thirdly, FCDA understands discourse as constitutive of social practices and social practices as constitutive of discourse. It argues that gendered power relations can be (re)produced, discussed, and challenged in social practices, identities, and personal relationships

(Lazar, 2007; Lazar, 2018). Fourthly, critical reflexivity as a practice is an important pillar of FCDA as discussed above.

Lastly, FCDA is interested in analytical activism aiming at social change and a world where gender does not predetermine how people are perceived or the experiences they live (Lazar, 2018). Lazar says that discourse analysis is not only for action but is also an action itself. FCDA seeks to "raise critical consciousness" on gendered discourse for emancipatory goals, and many FCDA scholars form resistance and activist circles (p. 372). Further, Mills and Mullany (2011) argue that feminist theorizing of language aims at changing concepts and understandings that are built through language to achieve feminist goals of emancipation. Social activists use the notion of analytical activism to raise awareness on inequalities that will help in developing social change. Understanding the dire need for peace in Yemen, this analytical tool is ideal for this research. This thesis is a discursive action in itself, aimed at changing concepts and raising awareness on discourse about Yemeni women's contribution to and exclusion from the peace process.

One of the important principles of FCDA is that sexism in discourse can manifest either implicitly or explicitly. Lazar (2018) states, "these meanings [gender relations in discourse] expressed in discourse can be overt, subtle, unequivocal or ambivalent" (p. 374). This principle is important to the research, as the Yemeni women participating in peace talks experience both implicit and explicit sexism. FCDA provides an approach identifying the subtle and obvious sexist discourse around women's political participation. Sustaining unequal relations between men and women requires a society to maintain the stereotypes associated with gendered roles through a myriad of social interactions. Any disruption in these understandings can result in

resistance that might be violent. FCDA creates an analytical framework that unpacks the implicit

forms of sexism that seem natural. As Lazar explains:

> Power relations are a struggle over interests, which are exercised, reflected, maintained, and resisted through a variety of modalities, extents, and degrees of explicitness. Overt forms of gender asymmetry or sexism, traditionally, have included exclusionary gate-keeping social practices, physical violence against women, and sexual harassment and denigration of women. Such overt manifestations of power (or the threat of it) remain a reality for women in many societies, even where there is legislation against blatant gender discrimination. (p. 149).

Another important research focus of FCDA is how private spaces and public spaces are

gendered. It is common, traditionally, that men are associated with the public sphere while

women are associated to the private sphere. Lazar cited Busi Makoni's research on Zimbabwean

immigrant families in the UK. Men felt like they lost their status when they had to perform

household and care responsibilities, especially while the women work. The men perceived their

new roles as subordinate and that their masculinity was being threatened as a consequence of

immigration. The study concluded that the dichotomy between the public and the private sphere

was disrupted with immigration, and it is intersected with other social factors. Makoni states,

"Significantly, the study showed how the dominant gendered norms upholding the public–private

split intersected with racial, cultural and religious identity categories to safeguard the patriarchal

traditions of the informants' place of origin, against perceived Western lifestyles of the host

country" (Lazar, 2018, p. 375). Another study carried out in Vietnam by Nguyen (2011)

demonstrated that while women are encouraged to join men in the public sphere in Vietnam, the

private sphere is still held for the women. Nguyen also found out that encouraging women to join

public spaces stemmed from national agendas for development and not as a result of achieving

equality (Lazar, 2018). Discussions around the private and the public sphere are complicated and

the difference between the two is sometimes blurred. This is important for the research in Yemen

as discussions of men and women's gender roles is central to politics, especially during a conflict because although women are pushed away from the public sphere of politics, they still dominate the care and humanitarian work.

3.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed the methods and theoretical approach to this thesis. It started with explaining the research design and how I went about the choosing the participants, the consent form and the ethical application, and the interview process. This chapter also introduced the profiles of the participants. The chapter then discusses research ethical questions and concerns and introduces Standpoint as a theory and a method that helps to answer these questions. Finally, this chapter lays out what FCDA is and its pillars and why it is important to this research.

Chapter 4: UNSCR 1325 and the Yemeni NAP

4.1 Introduction

This chapter analyzes the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 of

2000 (Appendix V) using NVIVO and FCDA as the theoretical approach. This chapter explains

how this milestone resolution recognizes the importance of women's participation in all levels of

the peace processes. This chapter also lays out the weaknesses and limitations of the resolution,

and how it is not sufficient to gender mainstreaming in international politics and peacebuilding.

Furthermore, this chapter analyzes the Yemeni National Action Plan (YNAP) 2020-2022 of

UNSCR 1325. Initially, I did not plan on analyzing UNSCR 1325 or YNAP; however, during the

interviews, UNSCR 1325 and the UN were mentioned several times by the women I interviewed.

The resolution is considered as a primary reference to women's participation to the peace process

(Al-Dubai, personal communication, 2021; Abu Esba', personal communication, 2021). Hence I

decided to dedicate a chapter to it.

4.2 United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 Overview

During the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, women activists from

around the world mobilized to showcase the changing nature of warfare that caused high number

of civilian casualties during conflicts, how women and girls are disproportionately affected, and

the relation between gender equality and peace sustainability (WILPF, n.d.). The 23rd Special

session of the General Assembly reaffirmed the commitments made in the Beijing Declaration

and Platform for Action, which led to the production of UNSCR 1325. It goes without saying

that UNSCR 1325 was also a result of a long way of activism and advocacy on gender equality

in conflict resolution. The resolution came as a response to feminist scholarship, advocates,

activists and academicians who identified the challenges of gender representation in security and

international relations, as well as the different experiences men and women have in conflicts. Civil societies' activism also sheds a light on the importance of gender equality in conflict setting (George & Shepherd, 2016).

UNSCR 1325 is the first Women Peace and Security (WPS) resolution and the first internationally recognized framework—which was adopted on October 31st, 2000—to promote gender equality, ensure women's safety during conflicts, and advocate for women's participation in peace processes (UNSCR, 2000; Arostegui, 2013). The resolution is binding to all UN member states, and it refers to women's rights protection during a conflict. Arostegui argues that the resolution is "a synthesis of existing international law on the rights and protection of women in conflict, and transition provides a powerful tool to build inclusive and sustainable peace and security" (Arostegui, 2013, p. 536). The resolution also affirms the importance of women's meaningful participation in preventing and resolving conflicts in all the peacebuilding levels (George& Shepherd, 2016). Moreover, the resolution calls for gender mainstreaming into peacekeeping operations (UNSCR 1325, 2000). UNSCR 1325 is considered, to some extent, a victory for women around the world, especially those living in conflicts, and it makes gender relevant to all of the UN Security Council's resolutions (Rehn & Sirleaf, 2002). In fact, parallel to the resolution, there has been more research and coverage on the importance of gender equality in conflict resolution and peace sustainability.

Additionally, the resolution lays out four main pillars: participation, protection, prevention, relief and recovery. Participation calls for women's political leadership in decision-making in all the levels of peacebuilding, while protection calls for women's and girls' bodies to be protected during conflicts and not to be used as weapons of war which is problematic as will be discussed later in the chapter. The third pillar; prevention, stresses taking measures and building strategies

to prevent SGBV against women and girls in conflicts. Finally, the fourth pillar calls for relief and recovery to the survivors of conflicts, including SGBV survivors, and ensuring access to humanitarian assistance (George& Shepherd, 2016; ESCWA, 2017). Although UNSCR 1325 is an exceptional resolution and was vital for addressing some gender inequalities in conflict, it has many limitations.

4.3 The Limitations of UNSCR 1325

One of the major limitations of the UNSCR 1325 is its weak implementation mechanisms. The implementation lacks political motivation, funding to women's groups and networks working in peacebuilding and conflict resolution, and specific actions to counter patriarchal norms, and institutional sexism (Anderlini, 2000; Porter, 2003). Pratt and Richter-Devroe (2011) state that, although the Resolution tries to highlight women's efforts and agency in peacebuilding, it fails to address the structural obstacles that limit women's participation. The intersection between gender and social structures including gender-based discrimination and marginalization is ignored. Further, the absence of monitoring and evaluation of the resolution weakens its implementation, as well as producing concrete national actions in line with UNSCR 1325 (Anderlini, 2000). Unfortunately, there is no reporting mechanism or an implementation mandate that can actualize the resolution (Hudson, 2009).

In addition, the Resolution encourages Member States to increase the number of women in peacebuilding without challenging the mainstream patriarchal structure that has long excluded women from peace processes. The first four articles in the UNSCR 1325 call for an increase in the number of women in the peace process; "…*ensure increased representation of women at all decision-making levels in national, regional and international institutions," "…calling for an increase in the participation of women at decision- making levels in conflict resolution and*

peace processes." "...appoint more women as special representatives and envoys...," and to *"expand the role and contribution of women in United Nations field-based operations..."* (UNSCR 1325, 2000, p. 2). Although women's numbers can be important, they do not reflect real representation. Björkdahl and Selimovic (2015) argue that the Resolution is preoccupied with numbers and quotas and ignores real gender mainstreaming in peace processes. UNSCR 1325... "fails to imagine women playing a role in changing the rules of the game or the way in which the game is understood" (p. 318). The Resolution also does not condemn violence and the gendered structure of peace processes that are based on sidelining women and other marginalized groups.

Although UNSCR 1325 was revolutionary in acknowledging rape as a weapon of war and urging states to put an end to impunity for this crime (Article 11), the language used represents women as powerless and weak. This can be captured in several articles of the Resolution. Firstly, the terms *women and children*[33] and *women and girls*[34] are used throughout the document indicating that these two groups are helpless in conflicts perpetuating that they need protection. Puechguirbal (2010) argues that characterizing women as victims and marginalized in association with children not only portrays women as weak but also is essentialist and takes away women's agency. Puechguirbal states, "…women are primarily represented in a narrow essentialist definition that allows male decision-makers to keep them in the subordinated position of victim, thus removing their agency" (p. 173). As mentioned in the methodology chapter, FCDA argues that language is used to maintain patriarchal power structures (Cameron, 2014).

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[33] 'Women and children' was used 4 times in the Resolution
[34] 'Women and girls' was used 13 times in the Resolution

Secondly, the resolution acknowledges that conflicts disproportionately affect women but, it uses the term *special needs*[35] indicating that women are a homogenous group in need of protection. Further, the Resolution uses *gender mainstreaming, gender perspective and gender dimension* as synonymous for women which is problematic, and it weakens UN's efforts to address gender inequality and patriarchal structures in international security and peace processes.

Similarly, Robin Redhead (2007) argues in her research analyzing Amnesty International's campaign on violence against women, that the campaign is disconnected from reality because it fails to explain violence from a gendered context. Redhead states that the campaign conflates sex and gender, and she calls this the sex-gender problematic which leads to portraying women as victims and "…reducing the marker 'woman' to an elaboration of sex" (p. 219). She concludes that the campaign stigmatizes men as perpetrators and women as victims (Redhead, 2007). Similarly, UNSCR 1325[36] uses the term women as a homogenous group reducing women to their sex without acknowledging women's agency in conflict setting. The Resolution also portrays men and women as dichotomous terms of a protector and in need of protection respectively moving away from explaining the gendered context and structures of peace and conflict.

Additionally, another limitation of the resolution is that it fails to include men and boys who experience wartime rape and sexual violence or children who are born as a result of sexual violence in conflicts, despite the resolution's immense focus on women as victims of sexual violence in conflict (Theidon, 2018). Theidon cites Stemple (2009), who says that in the preamble of the resolution, boys are included in children; however, when the conversation starts on wartime rape and sexual violence, the language shifts to women and girls and completely

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[35] 'Special needs' was used 4 times in the Resolution
[36] UNSCR 1325 and YNAP were analyzed in chapter 4.

excludes men and boys. The resolution also fails to mention why gender mainstreaming is important overall, and not only to women. Article 13[37] is the only article where men are mentioned, and they are referred to as "males". It is fascinating that the words male and female were used instead of men and women in the referring to combatants.

4.4 Yemeni National Action Plan

In 2016, 76 Yemeni women representing civil society and the government drafted the National Agenda for Women, Peace, and Security, which, among of other things, called for developing the YNAP (Appendix VI) to UNSCR 1325. The Resolution's national plans are used as a guide by different countries to enhance women's participation and create a context-specific plan. Yemeni women from different backgrounds met in online sessions facilitated by Rasha Jarhum[38] (Mansour et al., 2020). In 2020, during the resolution's 20th anniversary, Yemen published its NAP (2020–2022) and became the fifth country in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region to develop a NAP.

In the preface of the YNAP written by Ibtihaj Al-Kamal, Former Minister of Social Affairs and Labor of Yemen, she states that the Yemeni government acknowledges that women are not victims of this war only, but also in their role as an "important factor in causing change, defusing conflicts and their role in building communities that [are] based on equality, social justice and achieving human dignity" (p. 1). Although it is refreshing to see attempts at stepping away from characterizing women as victims in conflicts, there are different challenges. For instance, the preface, and most of the plan, continues to mention the importance of women's protection more than women's participation and efforts. In fact, the plan mentions three main justifications why a

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[37] "Encourages all those involved in the planning for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration to consider the different needs of female and male ex-combatants and to take into account the needs of their dependants" (UNSCR 1325, 2000)

[38] Director and Co-founder of Peace Track Initiative, Rasha Jarhum, was interviewed in this study.

NAP is important for protecting women in Yemen. Firstly, Yemen has been suffering from a war that led to more than half the population becoming in need of humanitarian assistance highlighting that women and children are the most affected group by the war. Secondly, the increasing number of internally displaced people in Yemen, again highlights that women and children constitute the higher number. Finally, the refugee influx to Yemen from the Horn of Africa had made many refugee women vulnerable to conflict (YNAP, 2020). Although it is crucial to identify how the conflict setting makes marginalized groups more vulnerable, there should be more justification to a national plan than only protecting women and children. Like the UNSCR 1325, this language weakens women's agency.

Moreover, the plan mentions that it is important to protect women from Houthis violence without acknowledging the other parties involved. Although I acknowledge that a government will not name itself as the perpetrator of violence against its citizens in a national document, it is important to note that the plan does not include any strategies or plans for the government to include women in all the levels in decision making especially after the appointment of the 2020 government without women. Referring back to FCDA, this language maintains power structures by emphasizing the binary structure and the differences between men and women as social groups (Lazar, 2018). Not only that, but Lazar also mentions how gender is used as an "interpretive category" that justifies oppressive structures and social practices (Lazar, 2007, p. 145). Repeating that women are in need of protection and that they are the weaker sex justifies the gendered relation between men and women as protector and protected in conflict settings. Similar to the UNSCR 1325, the YNAP collocates women and children[39], and women and girls[40] together which, as mentioned above, perpetuates woman as powerless and in need of protection.

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[39] 'Women and children' was used 4 times and 'women and kids' was used once in the YNAP.
[40] 'Women and girls' was used 34 times in the YNAP.

The Women's National Committee (WNC) in Yemen, created in 1996, was a government entity mandated to develop women's policies, but when the war erupted in 2015, the WNC could not operate and was split between the internationally recognized Yemeni government and the de-facto Houthi government (Mansour et al., 2020). The YNAP has 45 outcomes (Appendix VI), some of which are similar to the NDC outcomes in the sense that they aim at women's meaningful political participation (YNAP, 2020). YNAP acknowledges women's weak political participation in decision-making and the peace processes (YNAP, 2020); however, as mentioned above it does not mention the government's responsibility in excluding women from the peace process, and it does not propose a plan to enhance women's political participation in Yemen or expand the gendered nature of the current political space. Awadh (2020), argues that YNAP is a flawed document because civil society organizations were not involved or consulted during its development, there is no implementation approach, it is limited to research and raising awareness (which minimizes the plan's effectiveness), and because the YNAP fails to mention other legally binding frameworks, such as the CEDAW and the Beijing Platform for Action. Research and raising awareness are essential approaches to enhancing women's political participation in peace processes. Nevertheless, they are approaches that remain exclusive to any influence and/or decision-making. Lazar states that in modern societies, power relations are maintained by more sophisticated and subtle discourse such as approaches that include research on women but continue to exclude their participation in decision making (Lazar, 2007).

Further, Awadh states that the NAP does not acknowledge women's efforts during the war. She states, "there was no mention of women's role in disarmament activities, reintegration operations, transitional justice and compensation for victims of the conflict" (Awadh, 2020). Although YNAP lacks important elements, it is a good start for Yemeni women's political

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participation and can be developed in the future. The current YNAP end in 2022, and there are

ongoing efforts and mobilization to draft an updated plan

4.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter laid out what UNSCR 1325 and YNAP are, and their limitations are. It also

discussed how the language used in both documents reproduce gender inequality and perpetuates

women as the weaker gender. It can be concluded that transformative change and women's

meaningful participation cannot be achieved if language that maintains political structures is not

questioned.

Chapter 5: Study Findings

5.1 Introduction

This chapter will present the data collected from the seven interviews and explain the process of coding and theming, as well as the emerging themes that appeared during the interviews and/or during the analysis process. Presenting the qualitative data from the interviews will help with setting the context and setting so that effective policies can be produced. Setting the 9 questions was a result of long time reading and exploring of what is missing.

5.2 Situating Myself as a Researcher

As stated in chapter 3, situating oneself in qualitative research can highlight how lived experience and values can influence the research process and the findings. This research was looked at from a combined experience, as a political science student and women and gender studies student, as a Feminist Peace Project Officer in a Yemeni Canadian civil society working on localizing and feminizing the peace process[41]. The analysis of the research captures the experience I have over the years as I am uniquely situated in this qualitative research. I am also informed on daily basis about Yemen's news. Throughout this research, I rigorously situated myself as a Yemeni woman in diaspora and highlight the education and professional experiences to the best of my ability. That said, this research is a live document of experiences, and I am hoping it does not remain in shelves.

5.3 Interview Questions

There were nine main questions including an introductory question on how the women would like to be introduced in this thesis and a final question asking if the participants would like to add anything to their answers. There were also sub-questions when more information or

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[41] Peace Track Initiative's mission https://www.peacetrackinitiative.org/

clarification was needed. Since Nadia Al-Sakkaf preferred to answer via email and then have a follow-up interview, there were more sub-questions during her interview. It is important to note that not all questions were asked in the same order as shown in appendix III. To keep the conversations coherent, I tried to ask the question in an order that is more relatable to answers to the previous question.

5.3.1 Question One

The first question was "How would you describe Yemeni women's political involvement in Yemen today? And why?"[42]. I chose to say today rather than specify a time period to give space for the answers to include women's political participation in the Arab Spring of 2011, the NDC and the peace process after the 2014-2015 war. Two interviewees did not mention the Arab Spring nor the NDC and only focused on women's political participation after the war, one participant mentioned the NDC only, another mentioned the political participation of 2011 only, while three mentioned both. One of the women who mentioned both the NDC and the Arab Spring, also mentioned how women's political participation looked before Yemen's unification in 1990. They all emphasized that women's political rights and participation were better before the 2014-2015 war.

Further, the women highlighted that the role of the government, Yemeni political parties, and the international community, including the UN, in excluding women from the political spaces and the peace process, which will be tackled more in questions three and five. The government was mentioned in 5 interviews, the political parties were mentioned in 4 interviews, while the international community and the UN were mentioned in two interviews.

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[42] كيف تصفي المشاركة السياسية للمرأة اليوم ولماذا؟

Additionally, women's political participation was described in negative terms like

ضئيلة[45]، إنحسرت[43]، تراجعت[44]، very disappointing, and lacking. Describing the current women's

political participation was also rhetorical and it reflected how extremely limited political spaces

are for women after the war. For example, Shakir (personal communication, 2021, Feb. 3) stated,

"هذا الفضاء] السياسي] أصبح ضيق ومخنوق وبالتالي أول من يسقط هم النساء والشباب على الرغم من أنه كان في توجه نحو

الاتساع في ٢٠١١ لكن اتت الحرب والغته"[46]

Ghanem (personal communication, 2021, Jan. 31) said,

"...وكان هذا التشكيل (تشكيل الحكومة اليمنية من غير نساء في 2020) صادم بالنسبة للنساء."[47]

5.3.2 Question Two

Question two[48] was concerned with the participants' experience in the political space and

the peace process. The question was tailored according to what each woman was active in. It is

important to note that these are not the only spaces that the participants were active in, but these

were the spaces they are well-known for and that are related to this research. Some participants

were part of the 2016 Kuwait delegation (Rasha Jarhum, Entelak Al-Motwakel), others were part

of the 2018 Stockholm peace talks whether as delegates affiliated to a party (Rana Ghanem) or as

part of the WTAG (Bilquis Abu Esba, Olfat Al-Dubai), but they also mentioned other

experiences they lived through. There were also participants of the NDC (Nadia Al-Sakkaf and

Entelak Al-Motwakel, Wameedh Shakir), and Nadia Al-Sakkaf as the first woman Minister of

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[43] Limited

[44] Fell back

[45] Very little or insignificant

[46] The space [political] is now limited and so women and young people were the first to be excluded. Although there was growing political activity during the Arab Spring in 2011, the war wiped that out.

[47] ...and this formation (the formation of the Yemeni government without women in 2020) was shocking for women."

[48] How was/is your experience working with/attending xxx conference/initiative/peace process?
كيف كانت تجربتك عندما شاركتي في مؤتمر.../اشتغلتي مع...؟

Information in 2013. Most of the participants were in the NDC and this was highlighted during the interviews, their participation in the NDC was mentioned in almost every answer. Those who were not part of the NDC, also mentioned the NDC in their answers.

Answers to question two emphasized several things in Yemen's political scene. Firstly, Yemen's patriarchal attitudes towards women in the political space. Nadia Al-Sakkaf talked about her experience as the first female Minister of Information in 2014. She said she found herself working against a complicated patriarchal system where she had to assert herself among other ministers in the cabinet as well as her employees despite her being at the top of the Ministry. "I would find resistance from my colleagues in the cabinet, and I would find resistance from my subordinates" (Al-Sakkaf, personal communication, 2021, Mar. 2). She also added,

> …I have a strong character, so I was able to ya3ni[49] *hand gestures of asserting power* ad3as[50] *smiling* and say do this, do that. I know other women who found themselves in positions of power were unable to do the same as I did. (2 seconds) so, again these are like (2 seconds) these are exceptions, and exceptions do not create change. If you were to quote me on a particular line use this, women's parti… Yemeni women's participation in politics is actually an exception rather than a rule and exception does not create change.

Secondly, answers to this question emphasized women's participation in the NDC throughout the interviews as this was the first platform that some women truly had a voice in a political space. Al-Sakkaf said that it was an amazing experience that gathered Yemenis from political and cultural background participating in a "phenomenal political experience". However, she added that the NDC happened in isolation of reality; where women can compete and negotiate politically, but there was still conflict and negotiations over basic rights. Additionally, Al-Motwakel (personal communication, 2021, Feb. 2) argued that the higher the political position, the more sexist they are towards women in politics. She said that during the NDC and

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[49] This can be literally translated to "meaning" but it is used to explain things in different ways or used like "umm".
[50] This can be literally translated to stepping on, but it is used to explain insisting and asserting power.

while they were discussing the 30% representation quota, all working groups agreed except for the working group on State Building and Constitution-Principles and Foundations that consisted of the political elite[51] in Yemen. Thus, she argued that women's political participation is accepted by the society and the problem lays in the political will. The Yemeni society is not foreign to women leaders as Yemen historically was ruled by two queens, and they take pride in that, women in villages work side by side men and interact with each other on daily basis, and wives hold their husbands' hands in public. However, she stated, you rarely see that in the city because of sexist policies and a patriarchal culture spread by men in power.

Thirdly, answers to question two highlighted the limitation on women's political participation from the international community and the UN Envoy Office to Yemen. Al-Duabi (personal communication, 2021, Feb. 12) told me in the interview that during Geneva II talks and when she was still part of the WTAG, she spoke out against the international community because they were not able to reopen safe roads access in Taiz governorate. She said,

بعد ما اتحدثت عن تعز قلت لهم اللي عمله المجتمع الدولي هذا كله مالوش اي قيمة في ظل استمرار دعم عمان وقطر للحوثيين، في ظل استمرار الدعم اول شي هذا خلاف بين المكونات الي على مستوى الإقليم. والامر الثاني انه العملية تحتاج الى انه لابد يعودوا الى مخرجات الحوار الوطني وانا كنت مصرة على النقطة هذه وأنها هي الحل الضامن لليمنيين جميعاً[52]

She added that the Gender Advisor to the UN Envoy Office got upset after she attacked the international community as they support the UN Envoy Office, and after that incident she concluded two things. The UN Envoy Office blame women for their political opinions and secondly, the advisory group was more of a capacity building group than a group bringing women experts to facilitate the peace negotiations. The UN envoy to Yemen then, Martin

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[51] She used the colloquial word الفلاطحة السياسيين which means people in the highest ranking of decision-making
[52] I told them that all the efforts done by the international community has no value as long as Qatar and Oman provide support to the Houthis. This first of all causes conflict between regional powers involved in Yemen, the second thing is that there is a need to go back to the outcomes of the NDC and I emphasized on this point because it is the guaranteed solution for all Yemenis.

Griffiths, did not take the women's advice, Al-Dubai concluded (personal communication, 2021, Feb. 12). It is important to mention that Al-Dubai received a letter excusing her from her duties with the Advisory Group after the incident.

Further, Al-Motwakel (personal communication, 2021, Feb. 2) also argued that the WTAG is a step back in terms of women's political rights because they moved from having an active political role in the NDC to being advisers only. However, Abu Esba disagreed arguing that WTAG was an important shift for women's participation because there is an advisory group close to the UN envoy that can influence decisions. Not only that but the WTAG is a needed step for Yemen's new circumstances and the involvement of the international community in the conflict requires a new and modern approach to negotiations and peacebuilding. This also helps to build on existing political experiences and this is new and has not done before except in Syria, Abu Esba stated.

Abu Esba listed the pros and cons of WTAG. She said the WTAG took a very long time to identify its code of conduct and the nature of the relationship between the women and the UN Envoy. The other obstacle is that the women that were chosen were resisted from other women. She said,

كان في دعم كثير للمجموعة الاستشارية للامانة لكن ايضاً كان في نقد. النقد احياناً يجي ايضاً من ناحية انه انا مش في المجموعة الاستشارية اذا هذه المجموعة الاستشارية ما تعملش اي شي...طبعاً نحن جلسنا فترة واتجاوزنا هذه الامور طبعاً هذه المجموعة الاستشارية قدها موجودة واي شي ممكن نقدمه عيكون من خلال هذه المجموعة[53]

Abu Esba adds that that the role of the WTAG in Stockholm talks was positive and "very, very, very, important"[54]. it was the first time that women were to be involved in an international and a high-level peace talk. Women in the WTAG came from different backgrounds and they all

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[53] "There was a lot of support for the WTAG but, there was also criticism. The criticism came from people who criticized the WTAG simply for not being included. Of course, after a while we went through that and if there is anything we can provide, it will be through the WTAG"

[54] "مشاركتنا في ستوكهولم كانت تجربة ايجابية ومهمة جداً جداً جداً"

presented consultation to the UN envoy depending on their political expertise, oral or written. WTAG came the first time to Geneve II[55] talks and so during Stockholm, people already knew there were women attending and so there was less resistance. However, women were not allowed to attend the opening ceremony nor the closing ceremony of the peace talk. Abu Esba continues saying that at the time they were okay with it because they were hoping that the conflict parties would reach a settlement that is good for the country, and later women would talk about the details.

Alternatively, Rana Ghanem (personal communication, 2021, Jan. 31) said that although she was the only woman present during the Stockholm talks, she did not face any problems or discrimination. In fact, she said she was respected given her position as the Assistant Secretary of the Yemeni Popular Nasserist Party. However, she highlighted the importance of women's political participation in the peace process stating that had there been more women in Stockholm 2018, the lobbying towards providing services would have been stronger. Instead, the agreement was narrow and limited to military advancements.

Finally, Ghanem (personal communication, 2021, Jan. 31) said that the international community did not impose pressure on Yemeni conflict parties to enhance women's political participation in the peace process. Ghanem said that there was pressure from the international community on the government and the Houthis to sign Al-Hodeidah Agreement despite its flaws. She asserts that this was shocking because when the international community wants to impose something, they can put pressure on the parties, but when the issue is not a priority, then nothing is done. This was something she experienced firsthand in Stockholm, Ghanem said.

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[55] Geneva II talks did not complete because the Houthis did not come.

5.3.3 Question Three

Question three asks throughout the years, the number of women participating in the peace processes has declined. Why do you think that happened?[56] There were common answers combined as follows: political and economic reasons, the war is not a women's issue, the international community, women's networks.

5.3.3.1 Political and Economic Reasons

During the interview, Jarhum (personal communication, 2021, Feb. 8) said that excluding women from political space is due to a combination of patriarchy, economic and political reasons. She then listed the reasons given by the international community and the UN emphasizing that they are all patriarchal reasons. She stated that some of the reasons were logistical. She said,

> …at some point they told me that they do not have chairs and that was in Stockholm @laughing@ yes, they told me that, they were like where would they sit? Where would they sit? And also, they brought women as advisers [WTAG] and they did not let them in the ceremony, not in the opening ceremony and not in the closing ceremony (Jarhum, Personal communication, 2021, Feb. 8)

Jarhum further explained that the Prime Minister of the 2020 government, Maeen Abdulmalik, said they asked the parties to nominate ministers for the cabinet three different times and no party nominated women. Additionally, she said it is also a fight over resources and money. She suggests that the international community can fund a ministry that appoints a woman, and they can choose a ministry that does not affect the sovereignty of the country like the ministry of Human Rights. She then asserts that women should not be limited to this ministry, but this is a good first step. Jarhum concludes her answer saying that the reasons are patriarchal.

A repeated answer to question three was the absence of political will to include women in peace processes and enhance their meaningful participation. Al-Sakkaf stated that the conflict disrupted the NDC, and parties involved in the conflict are not committed to either gender equality or women's political empowerment to have women on their lists. Further, Al-Motwakel agreed, and she stated that the society accepts women in political spaces but there is no political will to enhance women's political participation.

5.3.3.2 The War is not a Women's Issue

There were a number of women who said that the Yemeni parties involved in the peace talks said that conflict times are not the time for women. Al-Motwakel said that she heard this sentence so many times that she even started to hear it from the international community. Additionally, Abu Esba stated that the patriarchal society in Yemen is used to excluding women from politics during wars. She adds that the parties involved in the war are new to the political scene and they have no experience with women's rights and women in politics. This is also reflected in political parties because the space for partisan women is narrow especially now that the parties themselves have divided into smaller factions. Thus, when partisan women were asked by women activists to lobby and pressure parties to include them in all political activities, they said it is impossible because members of the parties are scattered in different countries which complicated the communication between women and their respective parties. Abu Esba adds that partisan women did not hold high positions and so it was difficult for them to be included. She stated that Rana Ghanem, for example, made it to the Stockholm talks because the Secretary General was not able to make it and not because she is a woman. She concludes that political parties in Yemen are the main door that can help women reach decision-making positions or peace negotiations. However, Abu Esba articulated that some partisan women will

reflect the party's ideology. Thus, there is a need for a women's independent delegation that can reflect the needs of the majority of Yemeni women and reflect the needs of the people.

Jarhum further said that Yemeni women's legitimacy is always questioned. She explained that during Kuwait's talks, women were continuously asked who they were. "We were asked who are we? And who are we representing? And the funny thing is that women in the delegation were well-known women who worked in the government and civil societies, and it is very condescending and patronizing. But also comes from patriarchy, these [reasons] are all unjustified."

5.3.3.3 The International Community

In addition to what Al-Motwakel said about similar sexist narrative from ambassadors, Jarhum said, that some of the international community involved in the conflict and/or the peace process do not believe that Yemeni women should be involved in peace negotiations. She said that a European diplomat told her women are not qualified to be around the table and they are not gun holders. She then showed him a picture of a Houthi woman in battle, and she left.

The international community played a role in enhancing women's political participation but that stopped when the war started in 2014-2015. Al-Sakkaf said donor-led projects were the backbone of women's empowerment but they "…disappeared and this means that the women were left to fend off both discriminatory biases at the social level, and uncommitted politicians at the elite level on their own" (Nadia Al-Sakkaf, personal communication, 2021, Mar. 2)

Al-Dubai said that the main narrative by political parties is that this is not the right time for women, it is a war. Women unfortunately did not fight political parties enough for their rights, stated Al-Dubai. She said you can see this narrative more adopted by the Houthis. She then stated that during the 2020 government first visit to Aden, an explosion happened. A man

then told her that they are afraid for women to go through this trauma. She laughed and said: I

told him, so you rallied women when you needed numbers during the Arab Spring when there

were bombs and bullets, but you are afraid for women to hold ministerial positions. Al-Dubai

added that political activities in Yemen require staying until midnight and joining men in Qat

chewing sessions, and women need to do that.

Finally, Abu Esba emphasized that international community support for including women

in the peace process is a necessity. She said that the UN Envoy Jamal Bin Omar facilitated

women's participation in the NDC when he pressured parties to add women's name to their list if

they wanted to be included in the conference. She frankly stated that women will not be able to

meaningfully participate in the peace process unless there is pressure from the international

community on Yemeni political parties. Al-Motwakel agrees with Abu Esba that there is a need

to pressure political parties to include women in the peace process. She mentions that Jamal Bin

Omar said that "most Yemenis agree only on the issue of women, which is excluding women."[57]

Al-Motwakel referred me to a report she wrote[58] indicating the reasons why women are

excluded, and she added that the political will to include women is non-existent withing the

government not the political parties.

5.3.3.4 Women's Networks

Finally, Al-Sakkaf and Shakir said that Yemeni women 's networks are not strong

enough to lobby women's political participation. Additionally, Al-Motwakel stated that some

men in power told her that women's networks are weak, and women need to be one front before

requesting their participation in the peace process. Al-Motwakel replied that women's political

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[57] لا يتفق اليمنيون غالبية الا في موضوع النساء, اي مشاركتهن
[58] Added to the literature review.

participation is not a women's issue, it is a social justice issue to build a just state. She further

added since men were one front for you to ask women to be one front. Al-Dubai agreed with this

point and added that partisan women need to network and lobby stronger in demanding their

political rights from the party.

Furthermore, Al-Dubai and Al-Sakkaf state that women's networks' sphere of influence

is ineffective, and networking between women is weak (Al-Dubai, 2021; Al-Sakkaf, 2021).

There is a lack of efficient lobbying for women's political rights, and women need training in

this field (Al-Dubai, 2021). Women's networks are not funded enough to balance and push back

their exclusion. Women's networks, nonetheless, have contributed to peace building in different

and creative ways, as will be discussed later in the chapter.

5.3.4 Question Four

Question four asks, can the legislative and policy reforms of 2013 (30% women of any

committee formation) help in including more women in the peace process? How?[59] Shakir stated

that there is gender mainstreaming, and gender integration policies in the UN, but applying them

in countries is complicated because they need a mission, and preparing missions can take up to

two years. She said that political parties in Yemen have always said that they will support

women's political rights and women's quota, but they have never applied it. She continued

saying that it is women activists, women's networks, and civil society's role to advocate and

present proposals on changing written laws into structural change and procedures that can form

political parties. There should be institutional procedures, institutional change, practices, and the

strengthening of knowledge and skills. She then jokingly wished there was no quota because

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[59] هل سيساعد مبدأ التمثيل والشمولية المتفق عليه في مؤتمر الحوار (٪30 نساء على الأقل في تشكيل أي لجنة) بإدراج النساء في عمليات
السلام؟ وكيف؟

trying to apply a quota with an absentee government is "mission impossible" (Shakir, Personal communication, 2021). Al-Dubai agreed, and she stated that the NDC is a reference to peace talks in Yemen and there were plans to create an oversight body for the implementation of the outcomes of the national dialogue, and this can be done now to maintain women's representation in peace processes.

Further, Al-Sakkaf stated that quota is important to some extent, but it cannot enhance women's participation alone. She emphasized the importance of changing society's behaviors and attitudes which can then be reflected in women's political participation. In addition, women are active in tribal mediation, and they have strong mediation skills to diffuse conflicts. She also mentions that research shows that women's political participation in the peace process can make peace last up to 15 years longer.

> Representation does not directly mean influence or power. You can have women at the table, but they may not have the power and sometimes even the desire to push forward women's needs and priorities. We need both the quota system to ensure that women are there at a critical mass and we need structural and psycho-social measures to ensure the social institutions are also changed to create a more enabling environment for women's involvement in the peace process among other processes. (Nadia Al-Sakkaf, personal communication, 2021)

I then asked what she meant by a more enabling environment for women, and she said that providing logistical support for women to attend the peace process can create a more enabling environment. For example, bringing the male guardian with her, providing transportation, arranging morning meetings away from Qat chewing sessions. She added that if she personally were invited to a Qat session, she would not be comfortable because she would feel excluded surrounded by a masculine setting discussing peace.

Moreover, Ghanem stated that the internationally recognized Yemeni government considers the NDC as a reference to political settlement in Yemen, yet it does not apply it which

led to the government lose its credibility. She then said, women always tend to impose the law and seek for a legitimate government because it is… "safer for women than nothing, for all citizens let alone women, women do not go back to weapons do not go back to a militia do not go back to chaos. Women eventually will go back to the law, the constitution[60]."

5.4.5 Question Five and Six

Question five is concerned with how political parties played a role in excluding women from political spaces[61]. Abu Esba said that some women who had access to the peace negotiations met with the political parties, and women in Sanaa met with the Houthis and all the parties stated that they are with women's political participation and that it is important for peacebuilding. However, when it came down to it, women remained excluded. Abu Esba said that they also approached the STC asking why they are not including women, but they did not answer. Moreover, both Al-Sakkaf and Al-Motwakel said that the political parties are not committed to women's political rights and the fragmentation of political parties has dropped women's priorities. Al-Sakkaf said, "political parties were the first to let down their women leaders in the first place and the entire women's community by extension. Ghanem said that political parties do not have a strategy on including women, so when it comes to representation women are not remembered, … women are not present in the political mindset of Yemeni decisionmakers" (Ghanem, Personal communication, 2021).

Shakir stated that women in political parties before 2013 were stronger because there was a stronger civil society presence and women were needed as numbers during elections. However, now it is weak. Abu Esba agreed and said that political parties are now fragile and divided. The

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[60] هذا أأمن للنساء من لاشي، لكل المواطنين فما بالنا النساء، النساء لا تحتكم للسلاح لا تحتكم لميليشيا لاتحتكم للفوضى. النساء ستحتكم في الاخير للقانون والمرجعيات الدستورية.
[61] What role did the different parties have in excluding women in the peace process?
ماهي الأدوار التي لعبتها الأحزاب السياسية في ابعاد المرأة عن عملية السلام اليمنية؟

GPC is now three factions and women are excluded from these factions and so they do not know who to speak with or approach, and this is the case for all the political parties in Yemen. Al-Sakkaf further adds that there is a structural issue. i.e., women are not put in the agenda from the early stages of peace talks preparations

Moreover, Rasha Jarhum stated that political parties are "old and dictators" and they do not have any gender strategies in their bylaws (Rasha Jarhum, Personal communication, 2021). Jarhum also said that the parties, since Yemen's unity, are not interested in empowering women politically but they use them to serve their political agenda. Jarhum remembers when she was among women who were lobbying for safe age marriage in 2009-2010 and Al-Islah Party sent a women's delegation wearing all black and "waving the Quran in our faces" when we wanted the law to pass. She then said that this changed during the NDC when people had long periods of conversations and she mentioned a woman from the Islah Party who was a doctor and against safe age marriage but then was convinced. Rasha asked me if I know why that happened and then continued to say, "This is called the devil's shift… we devilize the other person who we do not agree with but when you are in the same space, this devil shift happens because they are discussing with people face to face, and any miscommunication is removed" (Rasha Jarhum, Personal communication, 2021).

Question five and six are related because during formulating the questions, I assumed answers to question five would be a criticism to political parties and I wanted to explore if women's efforts are apparent outside political parties. So, question six asks what is the impact of individual roles outside political parties? [62] However, since Rana Ghanem is affiliated with the Nasserites Party, I was curious to know how influential her role is inside the political party.

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[62] ماهي رؤيتك لمدى تأثير دورك الفردي خارج الاحزاب السياسية؟

Ghanem said that when there are women in high political positions, it encourages other women to do the same, and vice versa. She said when there are no women in high political positions, politics is portrayed as "dangerous" for women (Rana Ghanem, Personal communication, 2021).

Al-Dubai said that she has been told that she constitutes through her writings and constructive criticism towards the government, something similar to a political party. Similarly, Shakir said that she mainly works as a researcher and a consultant and that is sometimes reflected even in governmental policies. She stated that if there are 1,000 women consulting international agencies, there will be change.

Jarhum highlighted the work PTI does with enhancing women's political participation. She said they support women in Track I by advocating for women's participation as independent delegation or by lobbying parties to respect the no-less than 30% representation quota. PTI also support Track II consultations by collecting consultations from women experts and sharing them with UN-led mediation process or governments hosting the peace talks. Finally, PTI also supports women working in peacebuilding at the community level. Rasha said that the Riyadh Agreement contained articles that resonated with the consultations they provided, for example, the article on removing military depots from cities.

Abu Esba stated that because partisan women's status is fragile now, independent women are leading on women's political participation. She emphasized that partisan women do work. She added that independent women have a more general perspective.

5.4.6 Question Seven and Eight

Both questions seven[63] and eight[64] discussed women's efforts to be involved in the peace process. All seven women highlighted women's efforts on the local level and political level to enhance women's political participation despite all the challenges. Abu Esba stated that women are working harder towards peacebuilding because a lot of men are in the frontlines and involved in the conflict or are not able to talk because repercussions are tighter against men.

Finally question nine asked for the recommendation addressed to the conflict parties, and they are all added at the end of chapter 7.

5.5 The Coding Process

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[63] What steps have women taken to be involved in the peace process? Did it work?

ماذا فعلن النساء اليمنيات للمشاركة في عملية السلام؟ هل نجحن؟

[64] What other creative efforts did Yemeni women do to be part of the peace process and voice their opinions?

ماهي الجهود الإبداعية الأخرى التي بذلتها المرأة اليمنية لتكون مشاركة في عملية السلام؟

Chapter 6: Data Analysis

6.1 Introduction

This chapter analyzes the seven interviews and discusses the themes that emerged from them. This thesis sought to explore to what extent women are/were involved in the peace process, how they are being excluded from political participation between 2015 and 2019, and the narratives that maintain this exclusion. The findings are categorized into themes, according to the codes created in NVIVO for the interviews. There were twenty-eight codes overall that surfaced during the coding process (Appendix IV). Some of the codes emerged from the questions themselves, others surfaced during the interviews, but the majority of the codes were clear during the coding and analysis process in NVIVO. For example, the main code that emerged from question one was describing women's current political participation. Further there were codes that were common throughout the interview like, care aspect, NDC participation, and women exclusion from the peace process. The numbers of codes grew until the transcripts were thoroughly analyzed. I collated the similar codes and then came up with themes. The codes (Appendix IV) helped me identify two main themes, Building Walls: Excluding Women from Political Spaces, and Success Celebratory Stories. There are also subthemes under the first theme: War Discourse on Women's Political Participation, Trickle Down Discourse on Women's Political Participation, Implicit and Explicit Forms of Exclusion, and UN and the YNAP Language. These themes are important for understanding the seven women's experiences and stories about their political participation and the overarching status of women's political participation in Yemen since the start of the conflict.

6.2 Outlining Women's Current Political Participation in Yemen

It is important to first showcase Yemeni women's political participation according to the seven women. All seven women stated that women's political participation is almost non-existent and has deteriorated since the beginning of the 2014-2015 war and the disruption of the NDC in 2014, especially at high levels of decision-making. Al-Sakkaf said that the political process and political parties in Yemen are now "random, unconstitutional and manipulated by individuals according to their personal convictions rather than regulations or structures" (Al-Sakkaf, personal communication, 2021). Abu Esba' shares a similar thought, stating that top-level members of political parties can remain in the party for up to 40 years without any rotation or fair elections (Abu Esba, personal communication, 2021).

Al-Sakkaf argues against the deterioration in women's political presence caused by the war only. She says that Yemen has been showcased as a democracy to appeal to Western funding, and that women's political participation has always been shallow. For her, social and cultural limitations are particularly important here. According to Al-Sakkaf, Yemeni women have had the right to vote in Yemen, but they do not have the right to choose their husband or take a job without their husband's permission (Al-Sakkaf, personal communication, 2021). Thus, Yemeni women's rights and opportunities do not necessarily reflect women's reality living in a static legal and religious status. Al-Motwakel, however, stated that the society is used to women in power especially given that Yemen was historically ruled by two queens. This will be tackled in the analysis on the role of the UN and the international community.

While women's exclusion in the peace talks is recent in Yemen's case, Jarhum explained that women's exclusion from the political scene is not a recent phenomenon. She stated that pre-unity, 11% of the parliament were women in the South, as well as one dedicated chair for the

Women's Union; however, "the first thing that happened when the two countries came together was that the men united in sacrificing women's rights" (Jarhum, personal communication, 2021). Jarhum added that women's exclusion is reflected in the newly formed Yemeni government in December 2020, which had no women at all, including the President's Advisory Council, despite all the lobbying and campaigning from women (Jarhum, 2021). This was the first time in two decades that we have witnessed a Yemeni government without a single woman (Jalal, 2021; Al-Harithi, 2021). Many women launched a campaign called No Women, No Government, under the hashtag #NoWomenNoGovernment on social media. However, nothing changed in the government although the president came out and said that it was a mistake (Al-Dubai, personal communication, 2021). The campaign constituted a strong front and demand, and Al-Dubai is hoping that this means no government or committee will be formed without women.

During the formation of the government in 2020, internationally-recognized President Mansour and the three big parties—Al-Islah, the GPC and Southern Transition Council[65] (STC)—had four nominations each, and no one nominated a woman, although the lists were revised three times. This reflects their lack of awareness towards women's political rights and their irresponsibility towards partisan women memberships, and the lack of awareness towards gender equality in politics (Al-Sakkaf, 2021; Abu Esba, 2021). Ghanem adds that women are not present in the political mindset of Yemeni policy makers during peace, and this gets worse during wars (Ghanem, 2021). Al-Dubai stated that she contacted someone in government and asked why there were not any women in the cabinet, to which he simply responded that they forgot. "Imagine! That is what he said to me: he forgot us!" said Al-Dubai, laughing (Al-Dubai,

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[65] Discussed in the introduction chapter.

2021). Abu Esba said she heard the same narrative to which she replied it is impossible for someone to forget 52% of the population (Abu Esba. Personal communication, 2021).

Further, Al-Motwakel said that women's representation is almost non-existent now in Yemen, and that the main parties in the war are ensuring that because it [to include women] would be an indicator of welcoming different factions into the peace process, and the parties are not ready for that (Al-Motwakel, personal communication, 2021). Women's exclusion from the government not only violates Yemeni women's political rights but also disregards the 30% quota of women's representation in government stated in the NDC Outcome Document.

It is with no doubt that women's political participation in high levels of decision making, and peace processes is non-existent. Moreover, it can be argued that Yemeni women's political participation has been superficial, and this superficial image broke down when the war started. In addition to the lack of responsibility and lack of belief in gender equality, women's political rights are disregarded and even mocked during wars. The lack of impunity and the absence of consequences is what drives men in power to frankly say they forgot to include women in forming a government. Having that said, it is obvious that women are being pushed from all political spaces and it is important to know why and how this is happening.

6.3 Central Theme #1: Building Walls: Excluding Women from Political Spaces

6.3.1 Overview

To understand why women in Yemen are sidelined during the peace processes, I examined the seven women's experiences in politics. I asked them why they think the number of women participating in the peace processes has declined since the conflict began, and what role the different conflict parties as well as the international community and the UN had, if any, in women's political participation in the peace process.

6.3.2 Sub-theme: War Discourse on Women's Political Participation

During the interviews, I realized that some answers to why women are excluded from political spaces involved political reasoning, as discussed earlier in chapter 5, referring to the power vacuum that Yemen is experiencing in terms of the lack of influence faced by women's networks, as well as the weaknesses of male-dominated and dictator political parties. Moreover, there were reasons given by the men in power, including the international community and the UN that are not necessarily reasonable and can be analyzed as discourse that maintains women's exclusion and patriarchal gender roles in peace processes.

The conflict has infringed on Yemeni people's human rights, including their political rights, by pushing women and other marginalized groups, such as young people and civil society, away from the peace process. One reason Yemeni women were excluded from politics was that people in power are not committed to gender equality and women's empowerment and do not perceive that gender equality is important in the peace process (Al-Motwakel, personal communication, 2021). Moreover, there were reasons for women's exclusion from politics that the seven women heard about or directly experienced while advocating for women's inclusion or when they were present during the peace talks. Abu Esba states that there is a patriarchal culture in Yemen that believes war is a man's game. A top-level Yemeni man said, when asked about women's participation, "This is not the time for women; we are at war now" (Abu Esba, 2021). Further, Al-Motwakel and Al-Dubai stated that men in power claimed that women want to participate in peace talks and be part of the government to have power and hold governmental positions. Ghanem also stated that while she heard it only once, this constituted a gate-keeping discourse that has been reiterated multiple times by different actors to justify excluding women from politics and peace talks (Ghanem, 2021). This concludes two main ideas; women are being

excluded by a repetitive narrative that war is not the right time for women to be involved in politics by Yemeni men in power and the international community. Additionally, this narrative suggests that women want to be politically active to gain money and power. This will be discussed in detail in the next section.

6.3.3 Sub-theme: Trickled Down Discourse on Women's Political Participation

The discourse excluding women from political spaces is not limited to Yemeni men in power, this discourse is repetitive and has trickled down to the international community as well. Al-Motwakel stated that the discourse of excluding women is not only shared by Yemenis but also maintained by international community actors involved in Yemen's conflict and Yemen's peace talks. She mentions an interview with a male, European ambassador, where she realized that the language he used was similar to the language used by Yemeni male politicians. "There are too many chefs, and they all are cooking in the same kitchen" (Al-Mutawakel, 2021). Another similar example is Jarhum's experience with a top-level foreign diplomat. She explains,

> I was told by a European Western international diplomat when I was on a visit in London for an event. …He said what do you want? [asking about women's demands in peace processes], I said I want women to have an independent delegation to be part of the peace process. And he said, the women are not qualified to be in the peace process. He shocked me (3 second pause) why? Because his government is supporting the UN financially for Yemeni women to participate; this is their mandate, and he is not really convinced [about] us to be around the table. He said gun holders are around the table, I then showed him the video of a Houthi woman with the guns and the parades, and I told him we are already doing everything as women. These are all patriarchal reasons, and I just eventually left (Jarhum, personal communication, 2021).

The discourse maintaining women's exclusion reveal several arguments. Firstly, the discourse of men in power against women's inclusion is a dangerous one. It maintains gender roles that place women as the protected and men as the protectors which justifies gatekeeping and violence against women in political spaces. Enloe (2014) argues that it is commonly understood that we live in a dangerous world, especially after the 9/11 attacks, and this idea

dominates men as the protectors while subordinating women and portraying them in need of protection. Those in need of protection cannot assess the danger, so they should be kept in private spaces, and these are usually women and children in a conflict setting. "Men living in a dangerous world are commonly imagined to be the natural protectors. Women living in a dangerous world allegedly are those who need protection" (Enloe, p. 30). A similar rhetoric can be comprehended from this infamous saying, 'This is not the time for women; we are at war now,' where women are pushed from politics and decision-making because they cannot assess the war nor have an active role in the peace process. This discourse is also repetitive, a discursive strategy that emphasizes the exclusion and makes it legitimate.

Secondly, this discourse used by foreign men involved in Yemen's war or peace talks, who claim to be sponsoring the peace process in Yemen, is problematic, not only because they have the ability and power to pressure Yemeni political parties to include women and they do not, but also because this discourse is embedded in resolutions concerning women in wars, i.e., UNSCR 1325. As discussed in chapter 4, the Resolution has used women and girls, and women and children synonymously which strips women from any agency and power and portray women as a homogenous group that is incapable of handling war. UNSCR 1325 is not a comprehensive document and has no implementation strategy thereby highlighting that transformative change and gender equality will not be achieved without addressing structural inequality and the gendered context of peace and conflict.

Moreover, FCDA argues that power relations are maintained to sustain gender hierarchies and positions of power. "Power relations are a struggle over interests, which are exercised, reflected, maintained, and resisted through a variety of modalities, extents, and degrees of explicitness" (Lazar, 2007, p. 148). These examples reflect that women's exclusion is maintained

explicitly by both domestic and international actors. One of the tactics to render women irrelevant is to set an image that they are invisible during peace and conflict (Tickner, 2001). It could be argued that this also affects women's post conflict political participation as well.

It is with no doubt that the international community is profiting from the war in Yemen at the expense of Yemeni people suffering and dying in a brutal war. The international community is profiting, making billions of dollars from weapons sold to conflict parties, especially to Saudi and the UAE. Trump's first overseas trip as president was to Saudi Arabia and they signed a $110 billion arms agreement that would create "Hundreds of million dollars in investments in the Unites states and jobs, jobs, jobs" (Hartung, 2022). It is clear that American economic prosperity was far more important than Yemeni lives. Republican Senator Rand Paul said in an interview with the CNN,

> So, for you this [arms sale] is a moral issue? Because you know, there is a lot of jobs at stake. Certainly, if a lot of these defense contractors stop selling war planes, other sophisticated equipment to Saudi Arabia, there is going to be a significant loss of jobs, of revenue here in the United States. That is secondary from your standpoint? (Jilani and Emmons, 2016).

Trump's policy was short-term economic profit will override concerns over human rights elsewhere. The sales also continued after Jamal Khashoggi's murder in the Saudi Embassy in Istanbul (Hartung, 2022). It is important to note that Biden announced a different strategy for the Middle East that does not support offensive measure in Yemen. However, a dispute arose concerning what offensive vs. defensive arms sales are and a $24 billion arms sale with the UAE was passed (Hartung, 2022).

Moreover, Canada is also among the countries that sold arms to Saudi Arabia. Although Canada joined the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) in 2019, Global Affairs Canada (GAC) published a report stating that arms sales to Saudi Arabia do not violate International Humanitarian Law

(IHL). Amnesty International and Project Ploughshares (2021), however, published a report[66] stating otherwise. The report showcases the contradiction of GAC's report on whether the weapons were used by the coalition against Yemeni civilians. GAC's report does not suggest future recommendations to mitigate the diversion of Canadian arms exports, but superficially mentions risks related to specific weapons (No Credible Evidence, 2021).

To conclude, the international community is benefiting from the war in Yemen, and they are not ready to pressure ending the war when there are billions of dollars pumping into their economies. Further, it could be argued that the international community does not genuinely believe in gender political equality nor inclusive peace processes and their effectiveness in peacebuilding. When the warring parties in Yemen have the guns on the battlefield and power around the table, then women's political participation is not a pressing issue. When the international community is ready to leave Yemen, we will see more initiatives to include women, young people, and civil society around the negotiation table.

6.3.4 Sub-theme: Implicit and Explicit Forms of Exclusion

As discussed earlier, FCDA is interested in implicit and explicit forms of gendered language in discourse. Lazar states that FCDA is not only interested in identifying the implicit and explicit forms of sexism, but also exposing them to understand the language and specifics of sexist discourse and gendered power relations. Exposing language and hidden meanings in discourse can help bring attention to women's political exclusion and hopefully put pressure on the international community and political parties to include women and understand how women impact peace processes. The so-called "commonsense gender roles" that confine women to the private sphere and men to the public sphere must therefore be challenged and denaturalized

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[66] Titled "No Credible Evidence": Canada's flawed analysis of arms exports to Saudi Arabia".

(Speer, 2005). Yemeni women's expertise or experience as gun holders is not taken seriously, and their capabilities are not considered efficient during the peace process because of their gender. Abu Esba stated that WTAG members were not allowed to be at the opening ceremony or the closing ceremony of the Stockholm talks (Abu Esba', 2021). This is an overt form of exclusion. Abu Esba' also mentions how no explanation was given to them on why they were not allowed in the ceremonies. Although this was frustrating, Abu Esba said they agreed and did not escalate the issue hoping that maybe the parties would be able to reach an agreement.

Implicit forms of exclusion are as dangerous as explicit forms in the sense that they can influence social attitudes towards women without being obvious about it. For example, if people get used to not seeing women in political positions, they will thereby begin to perceive this as normal. Al-Sakkaf recognizes the importance of women's political participation and acknowledges the consequences of its absence; she is extremely concerned with what she called the "psycho-social measure" (Al-Sakkaf, 2021) of women's exclusion. She states that psycho-social measures can change attitudes, based on set beliefs regarding what is acceptable from a woman and what a woman is capable of, which in turn changes behaviors. She suggests that governmental institutions need psycho-social measures to create a more enabling environment for women to work. Al-Sakkaf adds an example and asks what do people have in mind when they think of a tribal mediation? She says usually it is an armed male with high tribal status, but, in reality, a lot of women in Yemen participate in tribal mediation, usually indirectly, by delivering their resolutions to the men negotiating and diffusing situations. Women talk to their families, talk in local mediation councils[67], and when the situation gets complicated, some

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[67] These are councils made to solve conflict via customary law.

women cut a chunk of their hair or open their veil, which contributes to mitigating conflict situations (Al-Sakkaf, 2021).

Six of the women declared that they are concerned with women in politics being forgotten over time. Ghanem described women's exclusion as "alarming" (Ghanem, 2021). People are forgetting that women are and have historically been conflict mediators, ministers, ambassadors, and even working in public spaces, because they are deliberately pushed to the private spaces and being erased from political positions/public life. This is both a form of overt and covert exclusion, where the lines are blurred between explicit and implicit forms of sexism. Although women are being erased from the peace process, the psychosocial effect on the people happens unconsciously. The 'protecting women' discourse is a form of implicit sexism because sidelining women is sugarcoated and publicized as protection. However, the lines are blurred because women are deliberately being erased (explicit) through implicit forms of discrimination that are naturalized through implicature in a discourse that essentializes the roles of men as protectors and women as in need of protection through the public and private spheres.

The main discourse used by Yemeni men in power is that Yemen is going through war, and this is not the time for women and women's rights. This rhetoric has pushed women away from politics and the peace process, implying that those men are the ones who can deal with the dangerousness and seriousness of the conflict. This perpetuates women as victims thereby reinforcing traditional gender roles and pushes women to the private sphere. As previously mentioned, women are disproportionately affected by the war, but that does not necessarily translate to all women in the conflict being victims and needing protection. Since this rhetoric is undocumented, and the men in power would not state it in media but still use it as a justification to protect women from the violence and ugliness of the war, I consider it an implicit form of

exclusion. Moreover, and as argued in chapter 4, both the UNSCR 1325 and YNAP documents that are designed to enhance women's political participation and address women's disproportionate effect of wars, use the same gendered language to maintain power relations.

Another way that women have been marginalized in this war is in their increased relation to smaller-scale, ameliorative work. Al-Duabi asserted that women in Yemen "returned" to their previous roles (i.e., humanitarian work) when they were pushed back from politics after the war (Al-Dubai, personal communication, 2021). Shakir adds that political parties have always recruited women into the civil sector and away from formal politics and decision-making (Shakir, personal communication, 2021). This invokes two important thoughts: women's exclusion from politics and the peace talks reflects the shallow political participation before the 2011 revolution, and that women in Yemen were pushed back to provide care work to their communities (i.e., traditional female role that is confined to the private sphere). In addition, Abu Esba says that many women joined humanitarian and social work because of the dire economic situation and the absence of governmental salaries for years. Not only that, but previous spaces where women used to be politically active are not available anymore, or they are under the control of a political force that refuses women's political participation. Abu Esba says that in Sana'a, for example, women found themselves against a militia that ordered women to not work in public spaces, such as restaurants, or to purchase contraceptive pills unless the husband consents. So, Abu Esba wonders, if women cannot get their basic rights, how can they have a vital role in politics? (Abu Esba, 2021)[68].

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[68] This decision from the Houthi armed group focused on women working in cafes and restaurants. Although it is not clear why, this decision was not fully implemented, and women started working in restaurants and cafes.

Gender is a social construct that has been shaped for centuries by assigning certain traits to men and opposite traits to women (Lazar, 1997). The same goes with gender roles during a conflict, men are usually the combatants/protectors, while women provide support with food and amenities and are being protected. Much of the scholarship published on gender and conflict argues that gender roles post-conflict become more flexible, and women's rights improve, especially if there is a democratization process that opens political spaces for women's participation (O'Reilly et al., 2015). However, what is being neglected in some of the research is how women's changes to women's gender roles during the conflict lead to increased levels of domestic abuse and sexual violence against women not only during but after the conflict particularly when soldiers/combatants come home to changed gender roles or to economic equity as a result of the war (O'Reilly et al., 2015).

6.3.5 Sub-theme: UN Role in Yemeni Women's Political Participation [69]

Another reason for excluding women is the lack of the UN and the international community's support and advocacy for women's inclusion in the political sphere. As stated earlier, during the NDC, Yemeni women mobilized and advocated for at least 30% representation in all committees. The support of the UN Special Envoy—then, Jamal Benomar—facilitated women's involvement in the NDC, and he imposed a 30% representation quota on political parties. Benomar comes from a gender aware human rights background, and that is why he believed in equal representation and exerted effort to mobilize for this issue (Abu Esba, 2021; Al-Dubai, 2021; Ghanem, 2021; Jarhum, 2021). Abu Esba also added that it is a necessity to have pressure from the international community because over the past seven years, women have "exhausted all their efforts" (Abu Esba, 2021). Ghanem was the only woman present during the

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[69] See chapter 4 for the analysis of UNSCR 1325 and YNAP in women's political participation.

Stockholm talks in 2018, and she said that she was disappointed when she experienced firsthand the international community pressure on parties to sign the Al-Hodeida Agreement (Appendix VII) after the Houthis threatened to burn Al-Hodeida port[70] down. She concluded from this experience that the international community, political pressure, and diplomacy can make changes, so why not pressure the parties to involve women in the peace process? (Ghanem, 2021). It can be argued that the UN lacks an approach to gender equality in politics as an entity, and is instead based on personal effort like Ben Omar's during the NDC.

Furthermore, as stated in chapter 5, Al-Dubai was discharged from the advisory group when she gave her political opinion on opening roads in Taiz. It can be argued that the UN-led Advisory Group want women who will be apolitical and only provide advice towards peacebuilding. Additionally, the UN two-party approach to conflict resolution ignores the other factors and parties involved in the war, including women. The international Crisis Group Middle East Report of 2021, states that the internationally recognized government remains unpopular and that the Houthi is controlling cities by force which does not necessarily mean that people accept them, so both parties do not represent a full range of people or their interests and hence the two-party approach to peacebuilding in Yemen is failing miserably. Al-Refai stated in the report that,

> Women are being pulled out of the public sphere slowly and quietly, and no one realizes that in ten years perhaps there will be no more women in the public sphere. … The women of the old elite will stay outside Yemen forever, and the younger ones inside the country are not sufficiently supported and do not have the required skill set and power relations to insert themselves [into political life] (International Crisis Group, 2021)

It has been eight years since the war began and eight years of peace talks and agreements between the parties involved. However, there is little to no development on the ground. Yemeni

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[70] This is the main port where food, goods and aids reach Yemen to sieged areas.

women were excluded during these eight years in different ways, not only from the peace process and governmental posts but also from decision-making surrounding both war and peace. During these years, the exclusion of women did not gain enough magnitude to be addressed by local, regional, and international parties involved in the peace process. The participation of women is looked at as a luxury rather than a right. If anything, there has been little attention paid towards this grave mistake. Participation of women has declined throughout the years. In Kuwait's negotiations in 2016, there were eight women; then during Stockholm Peace Consultations in 2018, there was only one woman, while there were no women during the Riyadh Agreement in early 2020 (Nasser, 2018; Jarhum, 2019).

An important conclusion is that the international community and the UN have long been supporters of women's rights in Yemen, and it all ended with the beginning of the war reflecting its superficial implementation. Yemeni men in power, the international community and the UN approaches to peace including UNSCR 1325 all play a role in omitting women's agency and depicting women as passive, weak and in need of protection during wars.

It is worthy to note that while the UN was criticized during the interviews, all seven women also mentioned UN efforts to enhance women's inclusion, including creating The Group of Nine plus One[71] networks that originated in April 2015, and their work on enhancing women's participation and facilitating gender equality (Al-Mutwakel, personal communication, 2021). It could be argued that the Nine Plus One Groups are a successful model because they engage civil society and the local community.

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[71] A coalition of Yemeni women's organizations and networks supporting the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325.

6.5 Covid and Yemeni Women's Political Participation

Today, in 2021, it is impossible to discuss social practices without mentioning how COVID-19 reshapes the view of the world. For Yemeni women, especially women living outside urban cities, it left a positive impact, as they could attend online meetings and seminars, while still being in their homes, (although this was hampered by poor internet connection). A lot of women in Yemen cannot travel unless they have *a mahram*[72]*,* and with the war, it became more difficult for women to travel (Abu Esba, 2021). Abu Esba asserts that although the pandemic opened a door for women to rejoin politics and for new women to join the political scene, this is still not political activism, and it has no effect on the decision-making/formal level of politics. Women were able to attend online meetings and conferences, but after that they were left without feedback or any information on whether their online activism influenced the process, if at all. As the discourse reveals in both domestic and international arenas, it is rhetorically structured as man-made conflict where women are erased and forced to pay the price through their invisibility. They are not only disproportionality affected by the war but also sidelined from politics and participating in decision-making and the peace process.

Before beginning the discussion on Yemeni women's success and celebratory stories, it is important to mention that for me, as someone who is working closely to advocate for Yemeni women's political rights, all the mentioned above forms of exclusion are violence against women. I understand that violence against women is usually connotated with physical violence, however, the term violence is broad, and it includes denying women their political rights.

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[72] Male family member that has the right to act as a guardian for a woman.

6.6 Central Theme #2: We Are Here: Success and Celebratory Stories

In this section, I will highlight the efforts and initiatives that women in Yemen did to claim their space and be participants in peacebuilding. I will highlight what has been mentioned in the interviews, mainly answers to questions eight and nine, and the initiatives I am familiar with as a Feminist Peace Project Officer with PTI. As stated in chapter 5, I have a unique relationship to this research where I am not only involved in this research as a master's student but also as someone who is working in Yemeni feminist peacebuilding.

All seven women stated that Yemeni women joined and created local organizations that focus on peacebuilding and humanitarian aid from the local level. Despite their unacknowledged efforts, women are present, and they are playing an important role in conflict resolution. Abu Esba started by saying that women are not a homogenous group and they come from different cultural and political backgrounds but when it came to peacebuilding and conflict resolution efforts, they all work together towards that (Abu Esba, personal communication, 2021). Al-Dubai stated that women and young people from Yemen quickly created networks when the war started to join experiences and efforts towards conflict resolution. She talked about the Women of Taiz for Life Initiative that was the first initiative to publicly present to the local authority the importance of forming a committee to negotiate with the Houthis regarding opening a safe road to let food and services through, while activists were talking about a political escalation and a complete break of the siege, which was not feasible at the time. Al-Dubai continued saying that they presented a paper to the UN Envoy Office, to ambassadors and other local initiatives, and their work to open a safe road in Taiz is still active.

Further, Jarhum and Al-Dubai mentions PTI[73] work in three main areas: Inclusive Peace, Protection and Feminist Knowledge Leadership. Al-Dubai specifically mentions the Feminist Knowledge Leadership, that focuses on strengthening women's capacity to present policy papers, research, and op-eds, and publish them in international research centers and newspapers to amplify their voices. Jarhum adds that PTI positioned itself as a Track II partner to the UN Envoy Office although they are not always welcome, and they usually pressure the Office to invite them. She said that after forming the 2020 government, ambassadors visiting Aden did not meet with any of the women, "…there is a trend of completely excluding women after this new government has been formed. We need to fight harder and be vicious and they need to see the ugly side of us" (Jarhum, personal communication, 2021). It could be argued that the explicit exclusion of women increased impunity and the lack of responsibility to acknowledge women's political rights.

Additionally, Al-Sakkaf mentioned women's networks like the Women's Solidarity Network and the Political Women's Alliance. She also mentioned the WTAG, and the Yemeni Women Pact created by the UN Women (Al-Sakkaf, personal communication, 2021). Shakir stated that women are active in a combination of humanitarian and service delivery, and advocacy and social cohesion (Shakir, personal communication, 2021). A great development to this research is to look at structural inequalities like poverty and salary interruption and how it is affecting women and women's initiatives.

Ghanem wanted to start by honoring women who passed away working in peacebuilding, like Reham Badr who was killed in Taiz delivering food aid. She then mentioned Bushra Al-Maktari who toured Yemen listening to and writing people's stories to document the suffering of

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[73] Read more here: https://www.peacetrackinitiative.org/

Yemeni people and she was able to reach remote areas. She also named women working in the legal field, Eshraq Al-Maktari an investigative judge in the National Committee for Investigation of Human Rights Violations who documented violations against Yemenis. Finally, she mentioned the Abductees' Mothers Association (Ghanem, personal communication, 2021).

Abductees' Mothers Association also known as The Mothers of Abductees, is a local civil society organization that was formed by women relatives of those who have been arbitrarily detained. It includes women human rights activists who negotiate the release of arbitrarily abducted people and publish reports on statistics and wellbeing of the abductees (Abductees' Mothers Association, 2019). This initiative is led by Amat Al-Salam Al-Haj who herself was abducted in 2015 but then released a few months after that. She still received threats and illegal investigations until she fled to Aden in 2017 (Alasimah Online, 2022). It is important to acknowledge that the Abductees' Mothers Association released around 1,000 abductees which is something the government failed to do (Abductees' Mothers Association, 2019). It could be argued that local initiatives are far more effective than the government and the UN who struggle to reach remote areas.

Although the first question specifically asks about the status of women's political participation and reveals the exclusions, erasures, and suppression of the patriarchal discourse, five out of the seven women stated in the interviews that women in Yemen had either changed their field from formal politics to humanitarian and social work or founded their own organizations to help their communities, for example, Food4Humanity and Wogood for Human Security. As previously mentioned, this can be seen as evidence of the pushback of women from top-level decision making to humanitarian and community aid, a shift that might be perceived to mirror a transition from the public to the private spheres. But when women were sidelined from

politics and formal peacebuilding, joining the humanitarian sector and civil societies was a way

that women could be active at the so-called informal level of peacebuilding, also known as Track

III.

The main obstacle with informal peacebuilding participation is that local initiatives

remain excluded from formal spaces which continues to complicate the initiatives' efforts. It is

important to acknowledge that it is an easy trap to fall into undermining women's work on the

community level, which I was close to. Certainly, women's efforts in peacebuilding through

humanitarian work or local mediation is of high value and it works on a bottom-up approach that

evidently is more sustainable. Some of these organizations were able to reach remote areas and

document stories and legal violations, others are putting more pressure on warring conflict

parties to claim their spaces.

Chapter 7: Conclusion and Recommendation

7.1 Summary

The thesis started with an introduction chapter that laid out a historical narrative of

Yemen's political history and the key players in the war. It also discussed women's political

participation evolution from the reunification until the Arab Spring of 2011. After that, the

literature review chapter introduced general and Yemeni-specific research done on the topic. The

chapter set out the feminist definition of peace and conflict that goes beyond security and

military advancements, and stresses on the importance of gender equality in peacebuilding and

conflict resolution. The chapter then details women's political participation in the NDC and

concludes that international funding pressured for women's participation to which women view

the NDC as the only platform of real political participation. In the NDC, women mobilized and

were able to influence decision-making and hold high positions, due to the charged environment of hope after 2011 and the help of UN Special Envoy then, Jamal Bin Omar, who presented an ultimatum to parties; they either include women in their representation or they will be eliminated from the discussions.

In chapter 3, the research design and theoretical approach were discussed. The chapter starts by laying out the details of the research design and then moves to ethical questions and concerns and how these have been addressed. The *outsider within* approach to Standpoint theory helped me focus this research on amplifying the voices of the women and shed a light on their experiences in politics and the peace process. The chapter later establishes FCDA; the theory used to analyze the interviews, UNSCR 1325 and YNAP. FCDA primarily focuses on exposing language patterns that sustain patriarchal power relations that advantage men and disadvantage women based on their gender. Chapter 4 then analyzes UNSCR 1325 and YNAP and showed how the gendered language of each deprives women of agency and represents women as weak and in need of protection. It concluded that UNSCR 1325 is not a comprehensive document and has no implementation strategy thereby highlighting that transformative change and gender equality will not be achieved without addressing structural inequality, beginning with both the UNSCR 1325 and YNAP.

Chapter 5 then presented the data collected from the nine questions asked in seven interviews. After that, chapter 6 analyzes the seven interviews using FCDA. It first outlines seven women's current political participation concluding that women are sidelined, and they have been since the beginning of the war. Despite the 30% quota issued in the NDC, women are still sidelined. Further, it is concluded that there is a discourse perpetuated by men in power that that mirrors the language used in both the UNSCR 1325 and the YNAP and reproduces the

narrative that women are powerless and in need of protection. Additionally, the prevailing patriarchal culture in Yemen that war is a man's game, has justified women's exclusion from the peace process and politics. Findings also reveal that this discourse was not limited to Yemeni men in power, but it also trickled down to diplomats who stuck to a failed two-party approach to peacebuilding.

Moreover, chapter 6 also lays out the different implicit and explicit exclusion of the women. Exclusion tactics include gatekeeping and openly pushing women out from any official processes or decision-making levels. Even when women were present, their participation was limited, for example, by asking them not to attend opening and closing ceremonies during the peace negotiations. It can be argued that the 'protecting women' discourse is a form of implicit sexism because sidelining women is sugarcoated and publicized as protection. However, the lines are blurred because women are deliberately being erased (explicit) but the effect of this erasure is implicit.

The chapter concludes by sharing celebratory stories of women working against all odds. Women established developmental and humanitarian organization that immensely help Yemenis affected by the war. These organizations were able to reach remote places that international NGOs were not able to reach. They also were able to negotiate opening roads and releasing detainees that the government failed to achieve. Their efforts remain continuous, and this thesis attempts to shed a light on the importance of these efforts, and that the women are present and will always be present.

7.2 Policy Recommendations

This thesis intends to offer policy recommendations derived from the women who were interviewed to the Yemeni government, the United Nations (UN), and the international

community to enhance women's political participation in the peace process in hopes for more inclusive peace talks. This research explores women's exclusion from the Yemeni peace process and the discourse used to maintain this exclusion. It also analyzed UNSCR 1325 and YNAP to further investigate how Yemeni women's exclusion is maintained at the structural level through international resolutions and domestic policy instruments. This research also showcases the explicit and implicit forms of political exclusion Yemeni women face. It demonstrates that Yemeni male decisionmakers perceive the war as dangerous, giving masculinity the primacy and men the role of protectors, while women are subordinated.

Further, the interviews show that women's political participation has declined throughout the years and their activism is being forgotten. Women in Yemen were ministers, ambassadors, and parliament members, local mediators and their exclusion from peace talks and the formation of the government is alarming. It is a step backwards to the already devastated country. This research also shows that the closer the women are to local level peacebuilding, the more effective their roles and efforts and they have tremendous influence on peacebuilding from a bottom-up approach. Furthermore, women in tribal areas in Yemen still play a major role in mediation. They use customary law to provide protection, facilitate conversation, and diffuse conflict. These roles must be documented and covered in the media to keep women in the public sphere at the forefront of people's minds.

Yemen is in an ongoing war, and the people need immediate humanitarian assistance. There is no better time for Yemen to have women around the peace talks and a more inclusive peace process, in general. For seven years, Yemen has known nothing but war, violence, and non-existent authority. It is important to work towards advocating for women's participation in

Yemen's peace process and to strive to make it a norm rather than an exception. Women unfortunately continue to be solely represented in gendered terms.

This thesis is inspired by the emancipatory aspect and social transformation of FCDA and sees developing a policy recommendation as an ideal step towards that emancipation and social transformation. I have given the time and space for the seven women to voice the policy recommendations they believe can change the status quo. The question was concerned with what policy recommendations these seven women offer—given their extensive political experience—to the government, the UN, and the international community, and women's networks to enhance women's political participation in the peace process.

To the Yemeni government,

Commit to NDC outcomes that state any political committee formation should have at least 30% women,

Create a national committee to ensure that all governmental issues include women,

Raise awareness and political will about the importance of implementing previous laws and agreements on women's political participation,

Involve women in any governmental committee and post women in top-level decision making

To the UN and the international community,

Pressure political parties to include women in the peace process based on NDC outcomes and UNSC 1325 by assigning the presence of a specific number of women from each political party, as well as women who are independent,

Build trust between the international community and the parties involved and between the parties involved themselves, including women,

Create a women's empowerment policy and an action plan aiming to promote representation and influence in decision making, both inside and outside the parties.

Create accountability measures to ensure the parties commitment, and issue regular progress reports,

To the Yemeni political parties,

Offer training and rehabilitation for women within the parties to reintegrate them into politics,

To Yemeni women's networks,

Encourage non-affiliated women to become politically active, as they can reflect the voice of the citizens,

Strengthen women's networks in a way to create a lobby that can pressure parties to include women in the peace talks,

Train women on legal oversight to serve on the Legal Oversight Committee of the NDC,

Encourage women to join political parties, as they are channels to get to the peace talks.

7.3 Researcher's Policy Recommendations

To the Yemeni government,

Include women in government positions and high-level decision making,

Include independent women, youth, and men around negotiation tables,

Mainstream gender equality in the Yemeni law,

To the UN and the international community,

Create inclusive peace negotiation model away from the two-party approach,

Pressure parties to include partisan women in peace negotiation delegations and government appointees,

Empower Yemeni people to choose the design of the negotiation and peacebuilding,

Expand on the WTAG duties to include a more empowering position for women,

To the Yemeni political parties,

Mainstream gender and gender equality into the parties' bylaws and strategies,

 To Yemeni women's networks,

Study and publish how transformative and structural change can come with the peace process,

Study the success of women's political participation in the NDC and create a parallel model that

finishes what was started along with the peace process,

Strengthen the capacity of partisan women,

Document women's efforts and how these efforts contribute to peacebuilding,

Publish a communique that highlights women's exclusion throughout the years since the

beginning of the war,

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Appendix I

The Consent Form to the Interview

Dear _____,

My name is Sara Al-Mahbshi, and I am a Yemeni master's student at the University of Lethbridge in Canada. You are kindly being invited to participate in an interview for a research study on Yemeni women's political participation during the ongoing war. Participation is completely voluntary. There is no compensation for participating in this study, however; your participation will be a valuable addition to the research. The research will focus on the period 2014-2019. The purpose of the study is to document Yemeni women's involvement in politics since the start of the conflict in 2014. The research also aims to offer policy recommendations to governments involved in the peace process on the benefits of engaging women in future peace talks. The data collected will be used to complete the required thesis project for an MA in Women and Gender Studies. Research findings will also be presented at academic conferences, and prepared for journal articles, and other educational resources. A copy of the final thesis report will be publicly available through the University of Lethbridge Library. The interview will take about 60-90 minutes of your time. The interview can take place via Zoom, Skype, Wire, or any other platform that you prefer as long as it can be password protected. With your permission, the interview will be audio recorded and your name and position will be mentioned in the thesis, as well as quotes. No email/phone number or location will be shared. If you do not prefer to be recorded, extensive typed notes will be taken during the interview. If you prefer to remain anonymous as a precaution to not put your job/position in jeopardy, your name, title, and personal information will not be shared, and you will be assigned a pseudonym. Direct quotes from your interview will only be shared with your permission.

Please note that you have the right to withdraw at any point of the study up until the submission of the final thesis on May 31st, 2021. If you choose to withdraw, all information collected from your interview will be destroyed immediately. You can also choose not to answer any questions or retract any information. Please note that there are there are other potential participants who have been contacted and choosing not to participate in this study will not compromise conducting the research.

The device I will be using during the interview is password protected. All information collected will be stored in a password protected and an encrypted hard drive that will remain in my residence all the time. All information collected will be destroyed after 18 months upon the completion of my degree.

There are no direct benefits to you from participating in this study; however, you will be contributing to understanding Yemeni women's political involvement and filling an academic gap.

Since you are living/have lived through the war in Yemen, there might be some psychological effects that you may experience in the course of the interview. You may choose not to answer any questions or to withdraw completely from the study without providing any reasons if you wish. If you choose to withdraw, all information collected from your interview will be destroyed immediately.

Should you feel the need for psychological assistance after the interview, this list might be useful:

- Family Counselling and Development Foundation in Yemen: +967 1-418-403

- The UNFPA Psychological and Family Counseling Center Hotline in Yemen: 136

- Family Counselling and Development Foundation in Egypt: +20 2-2455-6060

This research project has been reviewed for ethical acceptability and approved by the University of Lethbridge Human Participant Research Committee.

Please go through the attached consent form and affix your signature. If you are unable to provide an online signature, an email with your agreement to the consent form will suffice.

If you need more information or would like to review the interview's summary report, feel free to contact me at almahbshis@uleth.ca or (+1) 587-821-4655, or my supervisor Dr. Glenda Bonifacio on glenda.bonifacio@uleth.ca. Questions regarding your rights as a participant in this research may be addressed to the Office of Research Ethics, University of Lethbridge (Phone: (+1) 403-329- 2747 or email: research.services@uleth.ca.

I have read the above information regarding this research study on Yemeni women's political involvement (2014-2019), and consent to participate in this study.

Printed Name of Participant: _____

Signature: _____

Date _____

I consent to be interviewed by: ☐ Skype   ☐ Zoom   ☐ Wire   ☐ Other

I consent to being audio recorded: ☐ Yes   ☐ No

I consent to my name and title being used: ☐ Yes   ☐ No

I consent to direct quotes being used with the understanding that I will be allowed to review each quote for approval or disapproval: ☐ Yes   ☐ No

I would like to receive a copy of the report or summary of key findings: ☐ Yes   ☐ No

Printed Name of Researcher: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix II

Invitation Email

Dear _____,

My name is Sara Al-Mahbshi, and I am a Yemeni master's student at the University of Lethbridge in Canada. You are kindly being invited to participate in an interview for a research study on Yemeni women's political participation from 2014 to 2019. The purpose of the study is to document Yemeni women's involvement in politics since the start of the conflict in 2014. It also aims to offer policy recommendations to governments involved in the current peace process on the benefits of engaging women in future peace talks. The data collected will be used in the completion of the required thesis project for an MA in Women and Gender Studies at the University of Lethbridge. Research findings will also be presented at academic conferences, and prepared for journal articles, and other educational resources. Please note that there are there are other potential participants who have been contacted and choosing not to participate in this study will not compromise conducting the research.

The interview will take about 60-90 minutes of your time. The interview can take place via Zoom, Skype, Wire or any other platform that you prefer as long as it can be password protected. With your permission, the interview will be audio recorded. If you do not prefer to be recorded, extensive typed notes will be taken during the interview. If you are interested in participating in this study, please read through the attached consent form. Participation is completely voluntary. There is no compensation for participating in this study, however; your participation will be a valuable addition to the research.

If you have any questions or need more information, feel free to contact me on
almahbshis@uleth.ca.

Regards,

Sara

Appendix III

Interview Questions

How would you introduced to be defined in the research?

كيف تحبي اعرف عنك في البحث؟

1. How would you describe Yemeni women's political involvement in Yemen today? why?

كيف تصفي المشاركة السياسية للمرأة اليوم في اليمن؟ ولماذا؟

2. How was your experience working with/attending xx conference/initiative/peace process?

كيف كانت تجربتك عندما شاركتي في مؤتمر.../اشتغلتي مع...؟

3. Throughout the years, the number of women participating in the peace processes have declined. Why do you think that happened?

من بداية الحرب قل عدد النساء في عمليات السلام اخرها كانت في الرياض 2019. لماذا تعتقدين هذا حصل؟

4. Can the legislative and policy reforms of 2013 (30% women of any committee formation) help in including more women in the peace process? How?

هل سيساعد مبدأ التمثيل والشمولية المتفق عليه في مؤتمر الحوار (30٪ نساء على الأقل في تشكيل أي لجنة) بإدراج النساء في عمليات السلام؟ وكيف؟

5. What role did the different parties have in excluding women in the peace process?

ماهي الأدوار التي لعبتها الأحزاب السياسية في ابعاد المرأة عن عملية السلام اليمنية؟

6. What is the impact of individual roles outside political parties?

ماهي رؤيتك لمدى تأثير دورك الفردي خارج الاحزاب السياسية؟

7. What steps have women taken to be involved in the peace process? Did it work?

ماذا فعلن النساء اليمنيات للمشاركة في عملية السلام؟ هل نجحن؟

8. What other creative efforts did Yemeni women do to be part of the peace process and voice their opinions?

ماهي الجهود الإبداعية الأخرى التي بذلتها المرأة اليمنية لتكون مشاركة في عملية السلام؟

9. What are your recommendations to the different political parties and the UN on involving more women in the peace processes?

ماهي توصياتك للأطراف السياسية والأمم المتحدة بشأن إشراك النساء اليمنيات في عملية السلام؟

Would you like to add something? هل تحبي تضيفي شي؟

Appendix IV

List of all the Codes

- Care Aspect

- COVID-19 and Women's Political Participation

- Current Political Process

- Discrepancies between the public and the private

- Fear of Political Participation

- Formal Peace Process Experience

- Impact outside Political affiliations

- International community role

- International funding role

- NDC Participation

- NDC Quota System

- Past women political participation experiences

- Political parties in the NDC

- Political parties excluding women

- Psycho-social measures of political participation

- Recommendations

- UN role in women participation

- War and peace discourse

- Women exclusion from the peace process

- Women in the grassroot level

- Women network challenges

- Women creative efforts

- Women's political participation in 2011

- Women's unique challenges in political participation

- Women Unique Responsibility

- Importance of women's inclusion in political processes

- Women Network Efforts

- Women's Impact inside Political Parties

Appendix V

United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325

Security Council

Resolution 1325 (2000)

Adopted by the Security Council at its 4213th meeting, on 31 October 2000

The Security Council,

Recalling its resolutions 1261 (1999) of 25 August 1999, 1265 (1999) of 17 September 1999, 1296 (2000) of 19 April 2000 and 1314 (2000) of 11 August 2000, as well as relevant statements of its President, and *recalling also* the statement of its President to the press on the occasion of the United Nations Day for Women's Rights and International Peace (International Women's Day) of 8 March 2000 (SC/6816),

Recalling also the commitments of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (A/52/231) as well as those contained in the outcome document of the twenty-third Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: Gender Equality, Development and Peace for the Twenty-First Century" (A/S-23/10/Rev.1), in particular those concerning women and armed conflict,

Bearing in mind the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the primary responsibility of the Security Council under the Charter for the maintenance of international peace and security,

Expressing concern that civilians, particularly women and children, account for the vast majority of those adversely affected by armed conflict, including as refugees and internally displaced persons, and increasingly are targeted by combatants and armed elements, and *recognizing* the consequent impact this has on durable peace and reconciliation,

Reaffirming the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peace-building, and *stressing* the importance of their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security, and the need to increase their role in decision-making with regard to conflict prevention and resolution,

Reaffirming also the need to implement fully international humanitarian and human rights law that protects the rights of women and girls during and after conflicts,

Emphasizing the need for all parties to ensure that mine clearance and mine awareness programmes take into account the special needs of women and girls,

Recognizing the urgent need to mainstream a gender perspective into peacekeeping operations, and in this regard *noting* the Windhoek Declaration and the Namibia Plan of Action on Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective in Multidimensional Peace Support Operations (S/2000/693),

Recognizing also the importance of the recommendation contained in the statement of its President to the press of 8 March 2000 for specialized training for all peacekeeping personnel on the protection, special needs and human rights of women and children in conflict situations,

Recognizing that an understanding of the impact of armed conflict on women and girls, effective institutional arrangements to guarantee their protection and full participation in the peace process can significantly contribute to the maintenance and promotion of international peace and security,

Noting the need to consolidate data on the impact of armed conflict on women and girls,

1.   *Urges* Member States to ensure increased representation of women at all decision-making levels in national, regional and international institutions and mechanisms for the prevention, management, and resolution of conflict;

2.   *Encourages* the Secretary-General to implement his strategic plan of action (A/49/587) calling for an increase in the participation of women at decision-making levels in conflict resolution and peace processes;

3.   *Urges* the Secretary-General to appoint more women as special representatives and envoys to pursue good offices on his behalf, and in this regard *calls on* Member States to provide candidates to the Secretary-General, for inclusion in a regularly updated centralized roster;

4.   *Further urges* the Secretary-General to seek to expand the role and contribution of women in United Nations field-based operations, and especially among military observers, civilian police, human rights and humanitarian personnel;

5.   *Expresses* its willingness to incorporate a gender perspective into peacekeeping operations, and *urges* the Secretary-General to ensure that, where appropriate, field operations include a gender component;

6.   *Requests* the Secretary-General to provide to Member States training guidelines and materials on the protection, rights and the particular needs of women, as well as on the importance of involving women in all peacekeeping and peace-building measures, *invites* Member States to incorporate these elements as well as HIV/AIDS awareness training into their national training programmes for military and civilian police personnel in preparation for deployment, and *further requests* the Secretary-General to ensure that civilian personnel of peacekeeping operations receive similar training;

7.   *Urges* Member States to increase their voluntary financial, technical and logistical support for gender-sensitive training efforts, including those undertaken by relevant funds and programmes, inter alia, the United Nations Fund for Women and United Nations Children's Fund, and by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and other relevant bodies;

2

8. *Calls on* all actors involved, when negotiating and implementing peace agreements, to adopt a gender perspective, including, inter alia:

(a) The special needs of women and girls during repatriation and resettlement and for rehabilitation, reintegration and post-conflict reconstruction;

(b) Measures that support local women's peace initiatives and indigenous processes for conflict resolution, and that involve women in all of the implementation mechanisms of the peace agreements;

(c) Measures that ensure the protection of and respect for human rights of women and girls, particularly as they relate to the constitution, the electoral system, the police and the judiciary;

9. *Calls upon* all parties to armed conflict to respect fully international law applicable to the rights and protection of women and girls, especially as civilians, in particular the obligations applicable to them under the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the Additional Protocols thereto of 1977, the Refugee Convention of 1951 and the Protocol thereto of 1967, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women of 1979 and the Optional Protocol thereto of 1999 and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989 and the two Optional Protocols thereto of 25 May 2000, and to bear in mind the relevant provisions of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court;

10. *Calls on* all parties to armed conflict to take special measures to protect women and girls from gender-based violence, particularly rape and other forms of sexual abuse, and all other forms of violence in situations of armed conflict;

11. *Emphasizes* the responsibility of all States to put an end to impunity and to prosecute those responsible for genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes including those relating to sexual and other violence against women and girls, and in this regard *stresses* the need to exclude these crimes, where feasible from amnesty provisions;

12. *Calls upon* all parties to armed conflict to respect the civilian and humanitarian character of refugee camps and settlements, and to take into account the particular needs of women and girls, including in their design, and recalls its resolutions 1208 (1998) of 19 November 1998 and 1296 (2000) of 19 April 2000;

13. *Encourages* all those involved in the planning for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration to consider the different needs of female and male ex-combatants and to take into account the needs of their dependants;

14. *Reaffirms* its readiness, whenever measures are adopted under Article 41 of the Charter of the United Nations, to give consideration to their potential impact on the civilian population, bearing in mind the special needs of women and girls, in order to consider appropriate humanitarian exemptions;

15. *Expresses* its willingness to ensure that Security Council missions take into account gender considerations and the rights of women, including through consultation with local and international women's groups;

16. *Invites* the Secretary-General to carry out a study on the impact of armed conflict on women and girls, the role of women in peace-building and the gender dimensions of peace processes and conflict resolution, and *further invites* him to

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submit a report to the Security Council on the results of this study and to make this available to all Member States of the United Nations;

17.   *Requests* the Secretary-General, where appropriate, to include in his reporting to the Security Council progress on gender mainstreaming throughout peacekeeping missions and all other aspects relating to women and girls;

18.   *Decides* to remain actively seized of the matter.

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Appendix VI

Yemeni National Action Plan

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Republic of Yemen
Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor

National plan to implement Security Council Resolution 1325
Women, security and peace
2020 – 2022

Appendix VII

Al-Hodiedah Agreement

Security Council

Resolution 2586 (2021)

Adopted by the Security Council at its 8819th meeting, on 14 July 2021

The Security Council,

Recalling its resolutions 2014 (2011), 2051 (2012), 2140 (2014), 2175 (2014), 2201 (2015), 2204 (2015), 2216 (2015), 2266 (2016), 2342 (2017), 2402 (2018), 2451 (2018), 2452 (2019), 2481 (2019), 2505 (2020), 2511 (2020), 2534 (2020), and 2564 (2021) and the Statements of its President of 15 February 2013, 29 August 2014, 22 March 2015, 25 April 2016, 15 June 2017 and 15 March 2018 concerning Yemen,

Recognising armed conflict exacerbates the COVID-19 pandemic and calling for implementation of the ceasefire call in resolutions 2532 (2020) and 2565 (2021),

Having considered the letters of the Secretary-General to the President of the Security Council of 31 December 2018, 12 June 2019, 14 October 2019, 15 June 2020, and 3 June 2021 which were submitted pursuant to its past resolutions,

Reaffirming its strong commitment to the unity, sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity of Yemen and its commitment to stand by the people of Yemen,

Reaffirming its endorsement of the agreement reached in Sweden by the Government of Yemen and the Houthis on the City of Hodeidah and the Ports of Hodeidah, Salif and Ras Issa (the Hodeidah Agreement), and reiterating its call on the parties to work cooperatively to implement all its provisions,

Reiterating its call upon the parties to work towards the stability of Hodeidah including through cooperation in the Redeployment Coordination Committee (RCC) and with the United Nations Mission to support the Hodeidah Agreement (UNMHA), and *stressing* the importance of the functioning of the RCC and its joint mechanisms to implement the Hodeidah Agreement,

1. *Decides* to extend until 15 July 2022 the mandate of UNMHA to support the implementation of the Agreement on the City of Hodeidah and Ports of Hodeidah, Salif and Ras Issa as set out in the Stockholm Agreement, circulated as S/2018/1134;

2. *Decides further* that, to support the parties in implementing their commitments in accordance with the Hodeidah Agreement, UNMHA shall undertake the following mandate:

    (a)   to lead, and support the functioning of, the RCC, assisted by a secretariat staffed by United Nations personnel, to oversee the governorate-wide ceasefire, redeployment of forces, and mine action operations;

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(b)   to monitor the compliance of the parties to the ceasefire in Hodeidah governorate and the mutual redeployment of forces from the city of Hodeidah and the ports of Hodeidah, Salif and Ras Issa;

(c)   to work with the parties so that the security of the city of Hodeidah and the ports of Hodeidah, Salif, and Ras Issa is assured by local security forces in accordance with Yemeni law; and

(d)   to facilitate and coordinate United Nations support to assist the parties to fully implement the Hodeidah Agreement;

3.   *Reiterates* its approval of the proposals of the Secretary-General on the composition and operational aspects of UNMHA set out in the annex to his letter of 31 December 2018 to the President of the Council, and notes that the Mission will be headed by the Chair of the RCC at Assistant-Secretary-General level, reporting to the Secretary-General through the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Yemen and the Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs;

4.   *Underlines* the importance of close collaboration and coordination between all United Nations entities operating in Yemen in order to prevent duplication of effort and to maximise the leveraging of existing resources, including the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen (OSESGY), the Resident/Humanitarian Co-ordinator and the UN Country Team in Yemen, UNMHA and the UN Verification and Inspection Mechanism (UNVIM);

5.   *Requests* the Secretary-General to fully deploy UNMHA expeditiously, taking into account the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and *calls on* the parties to the Hodeidah Agreement to support the United Nations as set out in S/2019/28, including by ensuring the safety, security, and health of UNMHA personnel and the unhindered and expeditious movement into and within Yemen of UNMHA personnel and equipment, provisions and essential supplies, and *demands* an end to the hindrances to the movement of UNMHA personnel in Hodeidah governorate, particularly in conflict-affected districts, and *expresses support* for the efforts by UNMHA to reactivate the RCC and its joint mechanisms to implement the Hodeidah Agreement and to meet the access needs of all parties and be equally responsive to their requests;

6.   *Requests* Member States, particularly neighbouring States, to support the United Nations as required for the implementation of UNMHA's mandate;

7.   *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the Security Council on a monthly basis on progress regarding the implementation of this resolution, including on any obstructions to the effective operation of UNMHA caused by any party; and on resolution 2451 (2018), including on any non-compliance by any party;

8.   *Further requests* the Secretary-General to present to the Council a further review of UNMHA, at least one month before UNMHA's mandate is due to expire;

9.   *Decides* to remain actively seized of the matter.