



A young child protests in Yemen against the ruling class.

Inclusive Political Settlements

New Insights from Yemen’s National Dialogue

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Periods of exceptionally high social and political conflict present an opportunity for the fundamental remaking of a society. These conflicts are often resolved outside normal political institutions—whether through expanded police powers due to the declaration of a state of emergency, outright military victory in a civil war, the collapse of the old political order, or through the renegotiation of the political order by peace agreement, a political transition, or both. Since the 1990s, negotiated settlements have become important vehicles to renegotiate the social contract of countries. More recently, negotiation processes that provide for the inclusion of additional actors (e.g., civil society, political hardliners, women’s groups, religious organizations, etc.) aside from the primary political—often armed—parties have become more common. National Dialogues (sometimes called National Conferences) are a highly inclusive negotiation format, involving large segments of civil society, politicians, and experts, and are usually convened in order to negotiate major political reforms or peace in complex and fragmented conflict environments, or to draft a new constitution.

The objective of this article is to analyze the Comprehensive National Dialogue Conference for a New Yemen held between 2013 and 2014. The article begins with a summary of the theory and practice of inclusive negotiations. We then describe briefly the context and process of the Yemeni National Dialogue Conference (NDC), including the challenges and successes of the process. Finally, we analyze these challenges and success factors with reference to the findings of the “Broadening Participation” project at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies.

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Inclusive Negotiations in Theory and Practice

Mediation practitioners generally argue that broadening participation in negotiations unnecessarily complicates the process of reaching an agreement by increasing the number of positions represented in negotiations. However, new research from the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva challenges this narrative with evidence.² Studying 40 qualitative in-depth cases of inclusive negotiations from 1990 to 2013, this research shows that inclusive processes have a far higher likelihood of agreements being reached and implemented. However, this only holds if additionally included actors had significant influence on the process. This finding also challenges previous simple correlations which hold that a mere increase in the number of actors will lead to more peace.

Inclusive negotiations are usually held in order to increase general public support, or to gain the buy-in of a particular constituency. Mediators and external actors also push for inclusion for normative reasons. Actors may be included out of a commitment to democratic values of participation, or a commitment to the human right to participate, both in general and for particular groups, such as the commitment to the inclusion of women by all UN agencies pursuant to UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325, adopted in 2000. It is important to note that, unlike other actors, women are almost never included for pragmatic reasons. Instead, women's inclusion only occurs through the advocacy and support of women's organizations within a country (as can be seen in the recent peace process in Colombia), or due to external pressure from

the international community (as in the Yemeni NDC).

Another important reason to pursue inclusive negotiation processes is that they can offer a way to address the underlying causes of conflict, particularly the dimension of exclusion. Research has clearly demonstrated that exclusion—in particular, exclusion based around issues of ethnic, religious, or cultural identity—is one of the most important factors associated with overall violence,³ civil war,⁴ state failure,⁵ and economic underdevelopment.⁶ This is particularly pertinent to the National Dialogue format, which is often implemented at pivotal moments—windows of opportunity—for inclusive political reforms, and in response to disenchantment with the prevailing exclusive political order. Little is known about how some societies are able to reach stable, inclusive, political settlements, while others experience decades of social conflict over access to an exclusionary form of power. In particular, the relationship between inclusive political negotiations and subsequent political practice and institutionalization is poorly understood.

Inclusive negotiations occasionally lead to more liberal and democratic political practice, as seen in the political transition and constitution writing process in South Africa between 1990 and 1997; whereas, in other cases, they can provoke decidedly illiberal and repressive reactions. Converting inclusive political negotiations to ongoing inclusive political practice is a particular challenge for women, who often struggle to ensure the recognition and representation promised in peace and transition agreements. The recently concluded aforementioned multi-year research project entitled “Broadening Participation in Political Negotiations and Implementation” sheds light

on the dynamics allowing some inclusive negotiations to generate inclusive social contracts, while others find their influence severely constrained, or their inclusive program vetoed by powerful elites or recalcitrant armed groups.

The Broadening Participation project found that for included actors to be able to change the nature of the political settlement through an inclusive negotiation process, several essential components must be addressed. Included actors must have some significant degree of influence over the negotiations. Influence requires included actors to have the capacity to make their preferences heard during a negotiation process, and ensure the appearance of those preferences in any resulting agreement or political configuration. It also requires that the negotiations not be derailed, ignored, or superseded by national elites, regional powers, or armed groups.

This is no doubt an exacting set of preconditions, and inclusive negotiation processes frequently fail to achieve the hopes of their supporters. However, cases such as Northern Ireland—where the Good Friday and St. Andrews Agreements, which included broadly representative constituencies through political parties with widespread electoral support, put an end to decades of bloody and divisive conflict—show that a lasting and inclusive peace is not an unattainable goal.

National Dialogues are an inclusive negotiation format usually pursued in cases where the entire social contract is to be rethought and renegotiated. Unlike negotiation formats that pursue broader inclusion through consultations or referenda, National Dialogues generally bring a wide variety of societal actors to sit at the same table as powerful political elites, including representatives of political parties and armed groups. National Dialogues are,

therefore, often vested with the hope that they can address the dimension of exclusion underlying a conflict, and renegotiate a more inclusive social contract or political settlement. National Dialogues have recently been held in Tunisia and Yemen, but have previously appeared under different names in different contexts, such as Round Table Negotiations (in Central Europe after 1989) or National Conferences (in West Africa in the early 1990s), where they have been used to find common ground on the future direction of the country.

National Dialogue in Yemen

The Yemeni National Dialogue Conference (NDC), held from March 18, 2013 to January 21, 2014, hoped to bring about a peaceful transformation of the civil strife precipitated by the Arab Spring protests and the resignation of the former President Ali Abdullah Saleh, but suffered from longstanding problems of poor governance and social and political exclusion. Alongside general geographic, gender, economic, and demographic causes of exclusion, exclusion issues related to the 1990 unification of the Republic of Yemen—comprised of the Yemen Arab Republic (in the north) and the People’s Democratic Republic of Yemen (in the south)—played an important role. The unequal terms of the unification, which combined two very different polities with well-entrenched political leaderships under a centralized government, rapidly led to a civil war, which was won by the Northern forces led by President Saleh in 1994. After the civil war, the marginalization of the South, as compared to the North, became more egregious. In addition, an essentially Zaydi Shia political confederacy from northwest Yemen, known as Ansar Allah (the “Supporters of God,” a.k.a. “the

Houthis,” after their late founder Hussein Badreddin al-Houthi), built a substantial base of supporters among those disenchanted with the corruption of the Saleh government and the economic marginalization of the north-western area around Sa’ada. This led to six rounds of major fighting between Houthi and central government forces between 2004 and 2011.

The hope, at least among international supporters of the NDC, including the United Nations, as well as core constituencies of the protests, such as women and youth, was that the NDC would bring about a new, inclusive political settlement for Yemen. The Yemeni NDC was concluded in January 2014, touted by UN Special Advisor on Yemen Jamal Benomar as “a model for comprehensive national dialogue, based on transparency, inclusivity, and active and meaningful participation of all political and social constituencies.”⁷ Yet, by late 2014, the country began spiraling into factional violence followed by a war involving neighboring Saudi Arabia and other countries from the region.

So why was the successfully-concluded Yemeni NDC not successfully implemented? The NDC was meant to be an inclusive and participatory response to the primarily elite deal negotiated and agreed to in November 2011 between northern, southern, and central elites, presided over by the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). After a massive wave of protests in 2011, the November deal saw the resignation of President Saleh, his replacement by his deputy, Abd Rabbu Mansour Hadi, and the formation of a Government of National Unity led by opposition groups, known as the Joint Meeting Party (JMP), and the General People’s Congress (GPC, Saleh and Hadi’s Party which had dominated politics in Yemen for decades). These deals reflected the preexisting configuration of elite politics in Yemen and excluded important constituencies central to the Arab Spring protests, including young people and women. However, this is not always a factor that prevents sustainable and inclusive solutions to political change from occurring. Exclusive elite deals have been followed by the successful implementation of inclusive transition processes in other countries, as seen, for



Ibrahim Qasim

Air strike in Sana'a

example, in the Solomon Islands from 2000 to 2013. This highlights the importance of articulating an inclusive *implementation* process in the initial, exclusive deal. In this regard, the NDC was started with the right goal. It was intended to be representative of the country's demographics, and not only of the politically powerful.

A Promising Design

To understand the successes of the NDC and the failure to implement them, we will first look at the NDC's process design followed by an analysis of the context in which the NDC took place. The Broadening Participation project identified the following design elements as crucial factors for successful achievement and implementation of such a transition process: the mandate of a Dialogue; the procedures put in place to select participants, conduct the dialogue, and make decisions; and the available support structures. How were these elements addressed in the Yemeni case?

The mandate of a National Dialogue refers to the specific objectives of the negotiation process, as well as the degree of authority delegated to the dialogue. The Gulf Cooperation Council Agreement, which set out the transition process in Yemen, mandated that the Yemeni NDC initiate an "open conversation about the future of the country."⁸ It was not mandated to draft or approve a new constitution. The GCC Agreement seems to suggest that the NDC findings would be taken into account as recommendations by the Constitutional Drafting Commission (CDC); in fact, this was what happened in practice, though the agreement was not explicit about how and to what extent the CDC would take into account the findings of the NDC. When the CDC was sworn in, they had to swear that

they would take into account all recommendations of the NDC in drafting the constitution and that the constitution would not go against any of the recommendations.

In terms of selection criteria for participation, the NDC operated on the basis of quotas, with 40 seats each allocated to youth, women, and civil society (i.e., each group would constitute 7.08 percent—and, together, 21+ percent—of the 565 NDC delegates), which were intended to be independent constituencies (though in practice this did not always occur). In addition, the (other) various political factions were to include representation of 50 percent southerners, 30 percent women, and 20 percent youth.⁹ All constituencies, even the predominantly northern-based Houthis, consented to these quota provisions as they conferred the moral weight of the status of national (rather than regional) political actors.

The Houthis received 35 seats; Islah, a political party formerly in the opposition, received 50; and al Hiraak, also known as the Southern Movement, received 85 seats. By comparison, the GPC received 112, and an additional 62 seats were allocated at President Hadi's discretion. These discretionary seats were used by Hadi to include important political figures in Yemen who did not fit into one of the main political parties, including tribal elders, senior civil servants, and members of the judiciary. It is important to note that all parties consented to the initial allocation of delegate spots to the NDC, so there is no evidence to suggest that the disparity in dialogue seats had any impact on the process.

The Yemeni NDC was an extensively inclusive body, though women and youth groups nonetheless felt unfairly marginalized by quotas less than what they had hoped for, and accused the process of having been

hijacked by traditional political elites. Selection of the independent constituencies was done by the Technical Preparatory Committee (TPC) for the Comprehensive National Dialogue Conference, which advertised throughout the country, saying there was going to be a number of seats reserved for each group. People then applied to be part of the conference, and there was a remarkable response with around 10,000 applications received in just two weeks.

Though some applications were clearly connected to better-known conflict and political parties, others were more genuinely representative of civil society and social networks. Given the proliferation of civil society groups and actors seeking access to the negotiations, as well as security issues and the deliberate attempts of some armed groups to access negotiations under the civil society banner, it was hard to determine the “independence” of some actors from conflict parties or others who were already represented. A TPC subcommittee of 10 went through the applications attempting to achieve representation from all 21 Governorates, as well as demographic balance and diverse geographic representation so as to ensure the widest degree of diversity and inclusion. The subcommittee selection process was conducted on a highly personal basis, and involved reading through applications and looking for family names that the committee members recognized from certain regions. The committee then looked deeper into these individuals, by calling personal contacts in these cities or regions to ask about the legitimacy of these individuals as civil society actors. Nevertheless, it is important to note that efforts to ensure the autonomy of independent constituencies were far from perfect, and the

political parties and other elites had a lot of say in the selection of the independents.

Decisionmaking procedures—the formal structure through which decisions are taken and a final outcome is reached—are a key factor in the design of negotiations. Decisionmaking procedures can negate the benefits of inclusion by sidelining included actors or marginalizing their contributions. For example, in almost all of the National Dialogues studied in the Broadening Participation project, despite widespread consultation with all groups, ultimate decision-making power rested with a small group of already powerful actors. The Yemeni NDC was unusual in this respect, in that decisionmaking was both based on consensus and binding. In terms of decisionmaking, the NDC was divided into nine Working Groups (WGs). While each WG could organize its own agenda and conduct of discussions, decisionmaking was to be by NDC “consensus” defined, in the first round, as no more than 10 percent of delegates objecting, and, should there be need for a second round, by a vote of 75 percent in favor. Seventy-five percent of the members of the “the Southern Issue” working group were “southerners,” 50 percent of whom were from the Southern Hiraq constituency—an effort aimed at ensuring that southerners concurred with any decision specifically affecting their status and situation.

Another important process factor identified by the Broadening Participation project was the presence of support structures for included actors. The Political Development Forum, a small Yemeni NGO, set up a joint “1.5 track”¹⁰ forum, entitled the “National Dialogue Support Program,” together with the Berghof Foundation, in order to facilitate dialogue between stakeholders after the signing

of the GCC Initiative Agreement. Their National Dialogue Support Program can be considered track 1.5, as it enjoyed high-level participation, including several former Yemeni Prime Ministers. Moreover, it set up various local dialogue networks, which were later utilized by the NDC working groups for regional public meetings.

Considering these factors, the Yemeni NDC seemed well set up to allow included actors to have substantial influence. Indeed, women, youth, and civil society constituencies, had they operated as cohesive blocs, would have had veto power over the consensus position for each of the WGs, except for the WG on the Southern Issue. This is an unusually high degree of influence to be given to such constituencies, as compared to other National Dialogues. The Broadening Participation project, through researching 22 cases, found that National Dialogues often struggle to make the transition from consultations and recommendations to concrete policy action because of a lack of clear decisionmaking procedures. This allows already powerful elites to simply ignore the outcomes of National Dialogues, or undermine them in the implementation stage.

The NDC was brought to a close on January 21, 2014. Hadi's decision to close the dialogue occurred in the context of a longer than expected dialogue process and the assassination of Ahmed Sharaf al-Din, a law professor and member of the Houthi delegation, on the final day of the conference, prompting the withdrawal of Houthi delegates. The Yemeni NDC's recommendations, which numbered over 1,800, included a variety of inclusive policies. While some have criticized the vision of a federal structure in which the South only received two states to the North's four, this was nevertheless a landmark achievement of

power-sharing in the region and in Yemen. The commitment to equal North/South representation in the parliament and the military was also an important inclusive policy. In addition, women and other delegates in favor of a gender quota in the Yemeni government were able to secure the endorsement of a recommendation in the NDC Outcome Document that at least 30 percent of those serving in all levels of government be women.

The recommendations of the NDC were then submitted to the Constitutional Drafting Committee (CDC), which was smaller and less inclusive than the NDC. Hadi allocated the 17 seats in the committee personally, and most seats went to representatives of Islah and the GPC parties, while the Houthis were excluded. Prior to the CDC, Hadi convened a small committee to settle the issue of the federal structure of the Yemeni state. This became a subject of extensive debate and dispute in the Southern Working Group and resulted in the establishment of a 16-person North-South committee (also known as the 8+8) to resolve the deadlock.¹¹ The North-South committee was also unable to resolve the dispute about the structure of a federal Yemeni state; however, it was able to secure an in-principle commitment to federalism. The federal structure subsequently proposed by Hadi's specially convened committee did not grant the Houthis' political strongholds in the Governorates of Amran, Sa'ada, and Dhamar, access to Yemen's oil and gas resources, or access to the sea.¹² The Houthis perceived this as yet another move to marginalize them; they responded with an insurgency against the central government and seized the capital of Sana'a in September of 2014.

As of late 2015, Yemen is divided between multiple claimants to executive authority: the

Houthis, who currently occupy the capital Sana'a, a coalition made up of the exiled Hadi government, as well as a variety of international backers including Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Egypt. The Houthis forces are supported by Iran and are currently allied with militia groups loyal to former president Saleh. The conflict between these factions has already claimed nearly 6,000 lives and caused a humanitarian crisis in Southern Yemen. Peace talks between the two sides may soon take place in Geneva, accompanied by a ceasefire.

Challenges to an Inclusive Settlement and Its Implementation

How, with this in mind, can we evaluate the successes and failures of the Yemeni NDC, in the context of the overall transition process? The experience of the Yemeni NDC reveals important lessons about the difficulty of converting inclusive dialogues and negotiations into an inclusive and sustainable political settlement. Inclusive agreements may fail in the implementation phase and generally do so due to either weaknesses in the design of the process, or adverse context factors which have not been offset in the negotiations. Problems arose for the NDC at three points. First, the NDC had some internal process design flaws. Second, the overarching transition process, of which the NDC was a part, was insufficiently inclusive. Third, there were a number of adverse contextual factors that were exacerbated by or not addressed in the transition process. The main contextual factors that were not addressed were the lack of full cooperation and commitment of major political elites in the country, the political interests of regional actors, as well as diminishing public support over time.

Despite the good overall process design, there were a number of process flaws. First, despite the quota system, Southern representation was problematic: the al Hiraak faction was treated as a political party in the selection procedures for the NDC, analogous to the GPC; whereas, in reality it is more of a leaderless political movement. Due to the difficulties in applying an internal nomination process in a factionalized and acephalous movement, the al Hiraak constituency was in effect chosen by Hadi.¹³ This substantially undermined the legitimacy of Southern representation in the NDC. It also meant that the al Hiraak representatives that signed the North-South committee's "just solution"—a document affirming a commitment to a federal structure of the Yemeni state—were not in a position to guarantee the support of the entire al Hiraak movement, as the "hardliners" represented the majority of the South, whereas the "moderates" were close to Hadi.

Second, included actors did not use the full extent of the influence they were given. Even though the "independent" included actors in the Yemeni NDC (young people, women, and civil society) technically constituted a potential veto bloc, they were unable to agree on more than a narrow range of issues during the negotiations. This limited the capacity of these groups to wield influence over the negotiations. Given that the "independent" actors arrived only shortly before the beginning of the process and came from all over the country with different political backgrounds, the formation of genuine "constituencies" with common interests was difficult. The Broadening Participation project found that the capacity of included actors to reach a common position on issues of importance depends on the overall level of capacity and

preparedness of included actors, as well as the existence of social polarization or (non-)cohesion. Nevertheless, common positioning can be supported by the provision of preparatory workshops that bring together diverse groups of included actors. Such workshops did in fact occur in the lead-up to the Yemeni NDC; however, they were of a very short duration. This is, unfortunately, a common feature of preparatory workshops, in which a wide variety of diverse actors are asked to build trust and cohesion in a period ranging from a single afternoon to a week. Another weakness in process design relates to the selection of representatives of the independent constituencies, as political factions worked hard to stack these constituencies with their own supporters (apparently with at least some success).

Third, the level of discretion afforded to Hadi in the process may have facilitated a strategic miscalculation: the marginalization of the Houthis in the post-NDC federal structure of the state.¹⁴ It is possible that had the NDC itself maintained control over the design of the federal structure of the Yemeni state, despite the difficulties experienced in reaching compromise on this issue, the marginalization of the Houthis might have been avoided. Additionally, the prior allocation of delegates by the Technical Committee to Prepare for the Comprehensive National Dialogue Conference had the effect of fixing the relative power of the various armed parties within the NDC, completely independent of the changing realities of military power on the ground.



Al Jazeera English

Yemeni protestors, August 2011.

Fourth, the designers of the process may have been overly focused on the NDC, at the expense of the broader political transition context. In the approximately three years between Saleh's resignation and the conclusion of the NDC, most of the important political positions in the country remained divided among the former elites. This was a product of the elite GCC Agreement. President Hadi was Saleh's former deputy, and the transitional government was divided between Saleh's GPC and the former opposition coalition, with its most prominent member being al-Islah, a firm ally of the Saleh regime for decades. In stark contrast with the National Dialogue process, neither the non-elite political factions (the Houthis, al Hiraak, etc.) nor the independent constituencies were given a role in the transitional government. Hadi's transitional government was reportedly more corrupt and dysfunctional than even that of the Saleh regime.¹⁵ Infighting between governing factions meant services were not delivered, contributing to growing public alienation from the central government and the increasing power of alternative governing structures throughout the country, including the Houthis.¹⁶ This experience illustrates the importance of thinking holistically about process design and context in political transitions. Even considering the extensively inclusive negotiation process taking place in the NDC, the experience of the majority of Yemenis between 2011 and 2014 was of everyday governance, not of ambitious political negotiations. A transitional arrangement which excluded most constituencies aside from the political elite and continued the same corrupt governing practices that had precipitated the collapse of the previous regime was unlikely to be able to maintain the confidence of the population over three years.

The political influence of regional actors is decisive for peace and transition processes and has often been more important than that of other international actors.¹⁷ This is especially true when regional actors feel that their core national interests are at stake. The Yemeni NDC was itself a regional initiative formed in a partnership between the United Nations, which was concerned about the potential for a weakened and fractured Yemeni state becoming a haven for extremist organizations, and the six countries of the regional Gulf Cooperation Council. This regional coalition had two important negative impacts on the process. First, during the early stages of the transition, the Gulf States were more focused on political unrest at home—as well on the more strategically important countries of Egypt, Iraq, and Syria—and remained less than involved in the ongoing process in Yemen. Second, major regional power Saudi Arabia had two goals in the transition that added complexity to the negotiations. Saudi Arabia has an uneasy relationship with its own Shia minority population, and with Shia powers in the region, and was anxious about the emergence of a Zaydi Shia Houthi-governed federal region bordering its own Shia-majority territories in the South. The Houthi insurgency also became entangled in the longstanding contest between Iran and Saudi Arabia for regional influence.

Conclusion

The Yemeni NDC is a landmark National Dialogue due to its substantial and careful elaboration, the high initial hopes for its success, and its highly inclusive design and process in a context where political exclusion had been a longstanding norm. The Yemeni NDC is also a prominent reference point in the

experience of many peacebuilding professionals. Beyond Yemen, the National Dialogue format remains prominent and continues to be vested with hope as a way of achieving a more inclusive political settlement in a variety of contexts, with national dialogue projects being proposed or underway in Myanmar, the Central African Republic, Sudan, Nigeria, Ukraine, and Lebanon. Therefore, it is important to arrive at a clear picture of what went wrong in the Yemeni NDC, as well as of its strengths. The most important question is whether a differently designed National Dialogue process, or an alternative negotiation format, could have produced a stable and more democratic political settlement in Yemen. This article illustrates that there were several core points of contention among the major armed parties to the negotiations. These were related to the issues of federalism versus secession, and the regional distribution of power in the new Yemeni state. We argue that the design of the dialogue and the overall process was not sufficient to allow the various factions in Yemen to reach a consensus on these issues. In addition, the focus on a highly inclusive National Dialogue was not accompanied by attention to the dysfunctional and elite nature of ongoing government in Yemen, which cost the transition process public support.

These weaknesses aside, the outcomes of the Yemeni NDC remain an important moral weight in the country, and the 2014 constitution is likely to be an important aspect of any future political transition. It is crucial to safeguard the gains of the process as next steps to come in Yemen. Further, the Yemeni NDC process demonstrates that the empowerment of actors marginalized for decades is a long-term project that often encounters setbacks in the

short-term. The focus of attention should, therefore, be on creating not only the process, but also the political conditions (i.e., the power) for influential participation of marginalized actors. Hence, continued efforts to support the vitality of Yemeni civil society and democratic constituencies still have the potential to bear fruit. **PRISM**

Notes

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² Results are drawn from the project "Broadening Participation in Political Negotiations and Implementation" (2011-2015). The data from the project is now housed at the Inclusive Peace and Transitions Initiative also at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies. The case study phase of the project was conducted in cooperation with Dr. Esra Çuhadar at Bilkent University in Ankara; case study research additionally benefitted from a cooperation with Tufts University in Boston. A special word of thanks goes to the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue and Conciliation Resources for ongoing advice to the project.

³ Frances Stewart, *Horizontal inequalities as a cause of conflict: a review of CRISE findings* (Oxford: Centre for Research on Inequality, Human Security and Ethnicity at Oxford University, 2010).

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⁵ Alina Rocha Menocal, *Inclusive political settlements: evidence, gaps, and challenges of institutional transformation* (Birmingham: International Development Department at the University of Birmingham, 2015): 13.

⁶ Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson, *Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity and Poverty* (New York: Crown Business, 2012).

⁷ "Senior UN official congratulates Yemen on concluding National Dialogue," *UN News Centre*, January 21, 2014, <<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=46975#.VIR2KHArQgs>>.

⁸ “Agreement on the implementation mechanism for the transition process in Yemen in accordance with the initiative of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC),” unofficial translation of the original Arabic text, Paragraph 15.G (2011). <http://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/YE_111205_Agreement%20on%20the%20implementation%20mechanism%20for%20the%20transition.pdf>.

⁹ Individuals could contribute to multiple quotas. Hence, one person could be young, female, and a southerner, and would be able to contribute to each of the allocated quotas. Therefore, theoretically, there could be as many as 50 percent “non-quota” seats.

¹⁰ High-level problem-solving workshops (track 1.5) typically bring together representatives close to the leaders of the conflict parties. These workshops can take place prior to, or in parallel with, official negotiations and they generally aim to help parties reach compromises on positions that had previously been viewed as non-negotiable.

¹¹ The possibility of special committees within the working groups was provided for in the architecture of the NDC.

¹² Noel Brehony, “Yemen and the Huthis: Genesis of the 2015 Crisis,” *Asian Affairs* 46, no. 2 (2015): 243.

¹³ Interview conducted by Thania Paffenholz and Nick Ross with John Parker, a member of the UN Standby Team of Mediation Experts.

¹⁴ Interview conducted by Thania Paffenholz and Nick Ross with a member of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development who is familiar with the situation on the ground in Yemen and wished to remain anonymous.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Thania Paffenholz, “Civil Society and Peacebuilding,” in *Civil Society and Peacebuilding: A Critical Assessment*, ed. Thania Paffenholz (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2010), 43-64; Thania Paffenholz, “Briefing Paper: Broadening Participation Project,” The Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies’ Centre on Conflict, Development, and Peacebuilding (March 2015), <<http://graduateinstitute.ch/files/live/sites/iheid/files/sites/ccdp/shared/Docs/Publications/briefingpaper-broader%20participation.pdf>>.

Photos

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