CONSOCIATIONALISM AS A PATHWAY TO RESOLVING THE YEMEN CRISIS: EXPLORING POSSIBILITIES AND CONFRONTING CHALLENGES

O CONSOCIATIONALISMO COMO CAMINHO PARA A RESOLUÇÃO DA CRISE NO IÊMEN: EXPLORANDO POSSIBILIDADES E ENFRENTANDO DESAFIOS

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Abstract

The international stage remains characterized by a persistent struggle for hegemony, so wars are inevitable. The conflict emerges through interaction that is characterized by friction and discord resulting from different and irreconcilable interests, and crisis refers to the highest point of a conflict. Crisis, where peace and war meet, most movingly and decisively dramatizes the first characteristic of world politics and furnishes the logical groundwork for the theorizing of that politics. The country possesses long history of religious diversity, regionalism, ethnicity and is currently experiencing a complex set of economic, social, and political challenges. Further, the crisis in Yemen is aggravated by its strategic importance in the Gulf region. Consociationalism is a system of government designed to address conflict and to be shared among diverse ethnic, religious, and linguistic communities in society. This article investigates the potential of consociationalism as a mechanism for marginalization and exclusion on the Yemeni case, and illustrates how trust, absence of functional institutions, and meddling by party's hostile to the process impede the achievement of consociational democracy in Yemen. This paper examines the issues of applying consociational democracy in a fragmented society with particular reference to Yemen.

Keywords: The Yemen Crisis. Importance of Consociationalism in Conflict Resolution.

Resumo

O cenário internacional permanece caracterizado por uma luta persistente pela hegemonia, tornando as guerras inevitáveis. O conflito emerge da interação, caracterizada por atritos e discórdia resultantes de interesses diferentes e irreconciliáveis, e a crise refere-se ao ponto culminante de um conflito. A crise, onde a paz e a guerra se encontram, dramatiza de forma comovente e decisiva a primeira característica da política mundial e fornece a base lógica para a teorização dessa política. O país possui uma longa história de diversidade religiosa, regionalismo e etnicidade, e atualmente enfrenta um conjunto complexo de desafios econômicos, sociais e políticos. Além disso, a crise no Iêmen é agravada por sua importância estratégica na região do Golfo. O consociacionalismo é um sistema de governo concebido para lidar com conflitos e ser compartilhado entre diversas comunidades étnicas, religiosas e linguísticas na sociedade. Este artigo investiga o potencial do consociacionalismo como um mecanismo de marginalização e exclusão no caso iemenita e ilustra como a confiança, a ausência de instituições funcionais e a interferência de partidos hostis ao processo impedem a conquista da democracia consociacional no Iêmen. Este artigo examina as questões da aplicação da democracia consociativa em uma sociedade fragmentada, com particular referência ao Iêmen.

Power-Sharing and Political and Social Cohesion.

Palavras-chave: *A Crise do Iêmen. Importância do Consociativo na Resolução de Conflitos. Partilha de Poder e Coesão Política e Social.*

1 INTRODUCTION

Consociational democracy is an intriguing type of power-sharing government which has been adopted in numerus countries across the globe with varying degrees of success. It is rooted in the framework of integrating other individuals into the government, through enabling other ethnic, religious and language groups to be heard in order to achieve peace and cohesion (Lijphart, A, 1969). In the last view years, the application of consociationalism in many post-conflict countries has attracted attention since such a theory aims to address the issues of division and ethnic conflict. Arendt Lijphart first introduced consociationalism in 1968 and is preoccupied with community building, accommodation, and conflict resolution in divided societies (Hudson,1997). Critics have claimed that the adoption of consociationalism results in political stalemate, and fragmentation. Its proponents say that it promises to create democratic nations in post-conflict divided societies. Northern Ireland has practiced consociationalism and has developed substantial social transformation reflected in policies related to local government, education, employment, and the voluntary sector. This political theory and practice known as consociationalism has become a   popular remedy to deep divisions and ethnic conflicts, especially in post-conflict nations in various parts of the world. Societies (Taylor, R, 2009). Consociationalism recognizes that there are serious fault lines in society and attempts to balance these lines via collective governance mechanisms and frameworks for power distribution. This approach has proven successful in other conflict-affected countries, including Northern Ireland and Lebanon (Fakhoury, T. 2021). Such cases show how consociationalism may be adopted to help resolve to address the underlying causes of conflict and foster stability. With regard to Yemen, one must recognize the difficulties and constraints associated with consociational arrangements. The practice of consociationalism in Yemen will require significant changes to the political system that the country has now (Al Qaoud, H. M., & Begum, H. (2024). The possibilities and challenges of consociationalism need to be considered in a bid to solve

the Yemeni problem. The consociational model has been recommended as a potential mechanism for resolving conflict in Yemen that has led to a lot of misery and displacement (K. M., & Sebola, M. P, 2020). It has successfully been used in stabilizing the causes of conflicts as well as root causes of conflicts in other warring countries like Northern Ireland and Lebanon among others. In Northern Ireland, the historic Belfast Agreement of 1998 created a consociational framework that permitted a transition from war into peace (Sharp, J. M.2020).

In a second study, Adney also states that it is important to control the existing diverse demands regarding such diversity, rather than to convert these divergences into conflict sources. A consociationalism arrangement in Yemen would require wholesale reforms of the existing political system and could not be easily implemented as it would be opposed by those already enjoying its fruits. Nevertheless the advantages of consociationalism in Yemen have not been totally lost. Consociationalism is one method of providing equal representation to everyone in decision-making and overcomes the deep sectarian rifts that take root in Yemeni society (Egel, D, Robinson, E. 2021). The fact that consociationalism can address the diversity of identities and interests in the country is one of the greatest benefits of this approach in solving the Yemen crisis. Moreover, consociationalism would help to build a more representative and inclusive government that would be able to solve the roots of the crisis in Yemen. For the sake of effectively solve the Yemen crisis based on the consociationalism, challenges which emerge should be identified and addressed (Albasoos, H., & Al Hinai, B, 2020). The first challenge is that it is not only the effects of the crisis that need to be dealt with, but the causes have to be dealt with as well. To ensure long-term stability, a holistic approach that will help resolve the political and economic grievances that are the core of the conflict is necessary (Lackner, H. 2020). One of the primary divisions in Yemen is the division of the country into its north and south. The north was a separate state called the Yemen Arab Republic before it reunited with the south in 1990 to become the People Democratic Republic of Yemen. The sense of distance and distrust, which have come about due to this division between the two regions, has intensified the current conflict. Another important division in Yemen is the Houthi group, who consider themselves a revolution but are considered rebels by the other parties in the country and the GCC countries and the government-allied forces in the south. The Houthis are a Zaidi Shia Muslim group who have always

felt marginalized by the national government. This feeling of marginalization has contributed to their insurrection and desire to enjoy greater autonomy. Tribal divisions also constitute another significant part of the Yemeni society. Yemen has many tribes, and each tribe has its leaders and hierarchies.

These tribes frequently act as rivals, and their conflicting interests can escalate into violence. Beyond these historical divisions, the ongoing conflict in Yemen, which began in 2014, has exacerbated societal fragmentation. Violence and instability have led to the development of sectarianism as different groups find themselves defining themselves against each other. The conflict started in the Arab Spring of 2011, when people protested and held uprisings in the entire Arab world, including Yemen. These protests forced the long serving Yemen President Ali Abdullah Saleh resigned after more than 33 years in office. One of the challenges that President Hadi had to handle after his successor was an increasing Houthi insurgency in the north, political division, and economic instability. In 2014, President Hadi had to flee Yemen after the Houhas occupied the capital of the country, Sana. The next year, on behalf of President Hadi, Under the leadership of Saudi Arabia and the UAE, a group of Arab countries entered the war and commenced military operations targeting the Houthis. This conflict has since grown to be a full scale war that has led to untold suffering and bloodshed, particularly in northern Yemen. Yemen is being starved to death and millions of Yemenis are dying of a lack of food and medicine due to the war. Moreover, the conflict has witnessed a series of human rights violations, and the warring parties have resorted to indiscriminate attacks, such as the use of airstrikes, which have claimed the lives of thousands of innocent civilians. The Yemeni conflict does not seem to have any visible conclusion at the present time. The conflict in Yemen is one of the most acute humanitarian and geopolitical threats to the global community today (Shestakova, M. S. 2023). There is difficulty in getting different groups to work as a team towards one objective due linked to a prolonged history of ethnic, regional, and religious diversity, contributing to widespread mistrust. Lack of strong institutions is also a complication in consociationalism as applied in the country. Lacking effective institutional structure, it will be difficult to promote effective power-sharing and safeguard the rights and interests of various social, ethnic, and religious groups. What is more, the Yemeni situation is further complicated by the presence of external actors with vested interests. The

involvement of global and regional powers such as the United States, Saudi Arabia, Iran, and the UAE has intensified the conflict and hindered the search for a resolution. Though consociationalism is a possible solution to the crisis in Yemen, there are challenges to its practice. Consociationalism is faced with several challenges to overcome before they can solve the Yemen problem. The first challenge is that instead of simply dealing with the effects of the crisis, its underlying causes have to be dealt with. Extreme sectarian distinctions within the Yemeni society are one of the primary reasons of the present-day crisis in the country. These hindrances will have to be overcome through a commitment to communication, partnership, and building strong institutions. A sustainable solution to the crisis in Yemen can only be achieved when various groups, the government, and the international community work together in an effort to unite the nation (Salamey, I. 2016).

2 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The article provides a thorough analysis of how consociational democracy can be used to resolve the Yemeni crisis. Because the executive powers can be distributed so that each of the three main communities—Zaidi Shias, Sunnis, and Hadhramis—has a guaranteed share, this research can be carried out within the constitutional framework. The objective of this research is to investigate the potential for consociational democracy and power-sharing mechanisms to resolve the Yemeni crisis, as well as the obstacles that might prevent consociational democracy from being implemented in Yemen. Along with outlining the future prospects and difficulties of resolving the Yemeni crisis through consociational democracy, the study will also suggest the most effective way to implement this system in Yemen. The study's other goal is to find out which theories can be applied to the analysis and resolution of the Yemeni crisis. It is anticipated that the results of this study will assist future mediators in the Yemeni conflict in determining the most effective strategy to employ when attempting to reach a peaceful conclusion. Additionally, it is a unique study conducted by Yemeni researchers and adds to the wealth of knowledge already available on the country's political transition and crisis. The study also looks at how the federal-state solution and the resolution from the National Dialogue Conference were implemented. It is anticipated that the research findings will add to the empirical understanding of how the power-sharing agreement concluded at the National

Dialogue Conference is currently being implemented. It would also determine whether the power-sharing arrangement would be successful in ending the Yemeni crisis and whether the creation of a federal state—the solution reached at the National Dialogue Conference—could be put into practice to provide a long-term solution in Yemen.

2.1 Tracing the historical roots of the Yemen conflict

Before examining how consociationalism can resolve the Yemeni crisis, an in-depth comprehension of the historical context and the determinants that have led to the current crisis is required. Yemen is a country with a long history of economic downturn, sectarian conflict, and political violence. The country has had many regional, religious and tribal splits that have often resulted in war. These divisions were even more apparent when North Yemen and South Yemen joined together to form the Republic of Yemen in 1990. Then followed the accumulation of politics of power and agitations of the various groups following merger that led to successive wars and upheavals. Yemen is the most southern tip of the Arabian Peninsula, and its history dates back to the ancient times. It was fertile and it possessed the resources that had made it the so-called Arabia Felix, Happy Arabia (Bano, M. 2023). Yemen had been among the regions that had converted to Islam in the seventh century and because of this, the nation had a significant role in spreading the religion to the rest of the Arabian Peninsula and even beyond. Throughout the history of its existence, Yemen was governed by a number of different dynasties and empires. Historically, Yemen was ruled by dynasties and empires such as the Himyarites, Sabaeans, Abbasids, and Ottomans. In the nineteenth century, the country was divided into a northern Kingdom of Yemen, and a southern State of Aden. Aden was governed by the British. Following the 1990 unification of North and South Yemen into the Republic of Yemen, the country continued to experience political conflicts and regional disparities. People did not want President Ali Abdullah Saleh to rule forever and since 2011 when the Arab Spring shook Yemen, people were protesting. Saleh later stepped down as president, but his resignation did not stop the bloodshed in the country as various parties tried to gain power. In 2014, the Houthis, a group of Shia Muslims suspected to be supported by Iran, swept the capital Sanaa and a series of other cities.

This eventually led to military intervention by a coalition of states headed by Saudi Arabia and triggered an apocalyptic and protracted war that shattered the country into pieces since 2015 (Hokayem, E., & Roberts, D. B. 2023).Yemen is experiencing a broad spectrum of political, economic and humanitarian stress that threatens not only the stability of the country, but also its future. Central to these issues is the incessant war that has pitted different groups against each other, and led to rampant violence, displacement, and pain. The political power and representatives struggle is one of the most burning problems facing Yemen today (Bonnefoy, L,2012). The country has long been divided by region and sect and has had many groups that have been competing with each other to control the central government and institutions that it supervises (McLean, N.1964). The other big problem is the unstable economic status of the country. Yemen is a country with the highest poverty, unemployment rates and social inequality in the Arab world (Tsalikis, A., & Pedi, R. 2022). These problems have been made worse by the conflict, which has resulted in severe destruction of infrastructure in the country, disruption of trade and investment, and increased food and fuel shortages .

Humanitarian effects have also had a serious impact on the war. Hundreds of thousands of Yemeni citizens need humanitarian aid, and many are affected by food shortages, displacement, and epidemics. Other serious human rights abuses have also been brought about by the war, including the use of child soldiers, extrajudicial murders, free expression and assembly limits. The aforementioned challenges will need to be tackled in a highly multidimensional manner comprising of political, economic, and humanitarian dimensions. Among the most crucial actions, which could have been taken, one must mention increasing the empowerment of humanitarian aid systems, investing in vital facilities, political dialogues and reconciliation, more inclusive governance (Yildirim, Y., and Uzumcu, R. 2021).

2.2 Conceptual overview of consociational democracy

A consociational democracy is a type of political system which aims to address plurality of interests and identities of a particular society, through granting share of power and making decisions between groups. It is regularly used in situations in which social or ethnic differences are so extreme that the establishment of a productive and stable

democratic framework becomes challenging. Arend Lijphart is famously regarded as having contributed greatly to the idea of consociationalism (Lijphart, A. 1977). His seminal 1969 article, "Consociational Democracy," has become the paradigm of explaining and examining arrangements of power-sharing in highly divided societies (Wimmer, A. 2003). In his work, Lijphart focused on the notion that group-representation-based power-sharing arrangements with consensus-building principles can contribute to the management and prevention (mitigation) of conflicts in ethnically or religiously diverse societies (O'Leary, B. 2019). His groundbreaking article of 1969, Consociational Democracy, provided a basis on which power-sharing in strongly divided societies should be understood and analysed. Lijphart argued that in societies marked by ethnic or religious diversity, power-sharing systems rooted in group representation and consensus can effectively contribute to conflict resolution and reduction. Lijphart argued that consociationalism is an effective and viable method to deal with the issues that divided societies face, especially when it comes to minimizing ethnic or religious conflicts and achieving stability and democracy. Unlike the former, consociationalism has been central to comparative politics, and has been exercised in numerous contexts around the world, including in the European Union, the Indian Union, and the United States.

The ability to study major polities and their politics in terms of political dynamics is one of the most valuable additions brought forth by Lijphart concept of consociationalism. Lijphart has made us realize the presence or decline of consociationalism in other nations (Bogaards, M., Helms, L., and Lijphart, A. 2019). The idea of consociationalism by Lijphart has had a specific impact in analysing instances of consociationalism that succeeded and lasted like in Belgium and Switzerland, and failed or fell apart like in Austria or the Netherlands.

Another aspect of the concept of consociationalism developed by Lijphart is an analysis of the distinction between consociational and non-consociational arrangements in rewarding and/or moderating ethnic extremism (Bogaards, M. (2006). Arendt Lijphart has made many contributions to modernisation of the concept of consociationalism since he focused his interests in the systems of power sharing in polarised societies through group representation and consensus making. According to Lijphart, such structures will help to soften tension and conflict, yet, Allowing various ethnic and religious groups to

participate meaningfully in governance fosters inclusiveness and ensures that the political system addresses the collective interests of all segments of society(Bernadaux, C. 2020).

Other characteristics of consociational democracy are inclusive representation, consensus-based, and minority-right protection. This is often associated with establishing institutionalized power sharing channels or institutions like proportional representations, quotas or grand alliances (McGarry, J., & O'Leary, B, 2013). Belgium, Switzerland, and the Netherlands are prominent examples of countries that have adopted consociational democratic systems. These countries have adopted different forms of power-sharing and minority representation in order to control their heterogeneous peoples and ensure the stability of their political systems (Powell Jr, G. B.1979). According to critics of consociational democracy, instead of building a sense of citizenship, consociational democracy may actually increase divisions and support politics based on identity. It is, they also note, sometimes difficult to apply to cases where deep mistrust or hostility exists between various groups or the power disparity prevents the attainment of true consensus (Hueglin, T. 2013).

2.3 Overview of Yemen's political landscape

Yemen is a complex and divided political environment, where different organizations are fighting over leadership and influence due to a long and deadly civil war. The officially sanctioned government of President Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi, supported by a Saudi-led alliance, has most of the south and east of the country, and the north and some of the west under the control of Houthi rebels allied to the Iranians. In addition to major political factions, Yemen's conflict is shaped by the presence of multiple smaller armed and political groups, including southern separatist movements, tribal militias, and transnational jihadist (ISIS). The Houthis, who still control many parts of the north of the country and who regularly attack government troops and civilians, continue to be a significant force in the conflict. They too have set up their own organs of governance like a parallel government at Sanaa. However, the Hadi government headquarters in the southern port of Aden has been unable to gain control over the rest of the country. It has also been criticized because of not responding to the humanitarian crisis facing the country and as a result of human rights violations by its own employees.

The peace talks have not succeeded yet and both parties are already accusing each other of bad faith and unwilling to compromise. The civilian population in Yemen has also taken a huge toll following the war, as millions of people have been displaced, thousands killed and there has been massive humanitarian suffering in Yemen. The global community has raised its eyebrows over what is happening in Yemen, demanding a political resolution and more humanitarian intervention. Peace negotiations and cease-fire efforts have been sluggish and intermittent at the United Nations. In spite of these problems, some recent events give at least some hope to see a future in Yemen. In November 2021, the Hadi government and the separatist group, Southern Transitional Council (STC) agreed to power sharing and this may lead to a much better-established and unified government (Guzansky, Y., & Berti, B. 2013). Yemen was heavily influenced by the Arab Spring, a series of pro-democracy protests that rocked the Middle East in 2011, especially in terms of how it affected the Sunni-Shiite relations and contributed to the escalation of the inter-religious conflicts within the communities (Dhahiri, M. R., & Shahmoradi, H. 2020). As Al-Zaidi and Buhr suggest, the Arab Spring affected Sunni-Shiite relations in Yemen significantly. The paper focuses on how inter-religious tensions between Sunni and Shiite communities have increased across the region during the period after the Arab Spring. The sectarian politics of the conflict in Yemen cannot be overridden. Sectarian divisions have been one of the underlying causes of the conflict in Yemen (Al Qaoud, H. M., and Begum, H, 2024). The Houthis are adherents of the Zaidi branch of Shia Islam, who have been in conflict with Sunni parties in Yemen, particularly the Muslim Brotherhood-aligned Islamist Islah party (King, J. R. 2012). The Houthis have also claimed that the Hadi government discriminated against the Zaidi community in the workplace and other sectors. This has added a sectarian dimension to the conflict because different groups are fighting over resources and power along sectarian lines. Owing to this feeling of persecution, a section of the Zaidi community has grown sympathetic towards the Houthis, which has enabled them to organise military (Alasrar, F. A. 2022). This has also made the war sectarian, due to the interference of external players, especially Iran which has been accused of supporting the Houthi. Ever since 2015, Saudi Arabia has been on the forefront of a military intervention in Yemen to restore the Hadi government as it sees the Houthi as an Iranian proxy. A political solution to the conflict has proved more difficult due to the sectarian nature of the conflict. Great suspicion and

enmity have frequent frustrated attempts to get the divergent groups to the bargaining table. Sectarian tensions must be resolved first before any effort can be made to bring to an end the conflict and establish a stable and peaceful Yemen. This would involve addressing the legitimate grievances of the many religious groups in the country and promoting dialogue and reconciliation between these groups. The other sect conflict is the Houthi-Salafi conflict which started in October 2011 when the Houthis a Zaydi based group that controls the Saadah Governorate alleged that Salafis under accusing the group of smuggling weapons into their religious center in Dammaj, the Yemeni government issued an ultimatum for them to surrender their arms and relinquish control of their military bases in the region. By capturing the capital, Sana'a and several governorates towards the end of 2014, the Houthi group established its control on southern Yemen; they would later capture all the governorates, including Taiz, Al-Bayda, Al-Dhale, Lahj, Aden, and Abyan (Dorlian, S, 2011). Towards the end of 2014, the Houthi faction succeeded in seizing the capital, Sanaa and several governorates in northern Yemen. They consequently extended their reach southwards and finally conquered the rest of the governorates, including Taiz, Al-Bayda, Al-Dhale, Lahj, Aden and Abyan. In certain governorates, people took sides against the Houthis. The level of involvement of local resistance forces in the conflict against the Houthi militia varies across governorates; most of these groups consist of Salafis who had previously clashed with the Houthis in Dammaj. Furthermore, the Yemeni conflict involves multiple local, regional, and international actors and encompasses a wide range of political, religious, and geopolitical dimensions. (Biglari, A. 2022).

2.4 The conflict's international and regional players

The war in Yemen which began in 2014 is the outcome of a group of regional countries struggling to secure strategic benefits in the countryThe conflict is rooted in regional divisions between the north and south, which possess distinct political, economic, and cultural identities. In 2015, Saudi Arabia launched a military intervention to reinstate the internationally recognized government of President Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi (Sharp, J. M. 2020). Saudi Arabia considers Iranian interventions in Yemen to have a destabilizing impact on the region, and thus its primary goal is to prevent it (Brehony,

N. 2020). Several actors with their goals and strategies have been referred to as distinguishing features of the conflict. In addition to initiating a bombing campaign against the Houthi rebels, believed to have Iranian backing, the Saudi led coalition has provided military and logistical assistance to the Yemeni government. Iran is reported to equip and train the rebels although it has denied military participation. Iran considers the war in Yemen to be part of a bigger Middle Eastern hegemony war (Terrill, W. A. (2014). Iran considers the crisis in Yemen as part of a bigger rivalry to the pursuit of regional hegemony in the Middle East against Saudi Arabia. Another regional power that is involved in the conflict in Yemen is the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The UAE has backed a number of groups that pursue this agenda and has aimed at ensuring that Islamist groups do not expand in Yemen. Despite its recent decrease in participation, the UAE has been supplying the Yemeni government with military and logistical assistance as well (Katzman, K. 2016). Qatar is another power in the Yemeni crisis. Qatar refutes Saudi Arabian and ally allegations that it is providing material and financial assistance to Houthi rebels. Qatar is interested in fighting against Saudi Arabia and proving its strength in the area, so it is not surprising that it is involved in the conflict (Baabood, A., & Baabood, A. 2020). Another player in the conflict in Yemen is Turkey. Turkey has tried to broker the war and has given humanitarian aid to the Yemeni government. This is because Turkey is interested in the Yemeni war, as it seeks to counter the influence of Saudi Arabia in the region, and expand its presence in the Middle East (Akpınar, P. 2018). The interventions of regional powers in the Yemeni conflict have both increased the period of the conflict and aggravated the humanitarian condition. Their different interests and aims have opened rifts and upheavals that have made the long-term companionable agreement harder to achieve. Solutions to get them into the negotiation table have been slow and until the regional powers stop their proxies, the conflict will never end.

2.5 International power's role in the Yemeni conflict

Yemen's conflict has garnered significant interest from international actors beyond the Middle East, reflecting its broader geopolitical implication. These countries have been assisting the sides of the conflict militarily, diplomatically, and through humanitarian aid, among other things. The United States is one of the strongest external

powers involved in the war in Yemen. The United States has throughout the conflict been assisting the Saudi-led coalition against the Houthi through intelligence sharing, mid-air refueling, and sales of weapons and ammunition. Moreover, the United States has carried out airstrikes on Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, and this has made Al-Qaeda more active in Yemen because of the unrest. However, the US has been criticized over its role in the war, particularly the death of civilians caused by aerial attacks carried out by the coalition forces. The United Kingdom is another international actor deeply concerned with the situation in Yemen. Alongside the sale of weapons and ammunition, the United Kingdom has also trained and advised coalition forces as part of its military assistance to the Saudi-led alliance but has been criticized particularly over its role in the blockade of Yemen, a measure which has exacerbated the humanitarian crisis in that country(Buys, E., & Garwood-Gowers, A. 2019).

However, the United Kingdom has been criticized for its part in the war, especially its role in the blockade that has deepened Yemen's humanitarian crisis. France is also a party in the Yemeni conflict, particularly because of its arms sales to the Saudi-led coalition. The French government has been supplying Saudi Arabia with military devices including fighter j ets although people are worried that they could be involved in the conflict. In 2019, a French court decided that France was not breaching international law by selling Saudi Arabia firearms; the case is under appeal (Aksenova, M. 2020). The United Nations has been instrumental in holding peace talks between the two parties since the start of the Yemeni conflict. Moreover, UN has been supplying Yemen with humanitarian assistance, which has reduced the adverse impacts of the conflict on the population. Nevertheless, the blockade of Yemen by the Saudi-led coalition has acted as a hindrance to the UN in conducting its relief operations in the country.Nonetheless, the intervention of various foreign countries in the Yemen conflict has really affected the nature of the conflict, as well as the humanitarian crisis in Yemen. The activities of the United States, the United Kingdom, and France as well as the United Nations emphasize the fact of the complexity of resolving conflicts between different groups and international organizations (Khan, M., & Ullah, Z. 2020).

2.6 Consociational democracy as a Yemeni war resolution

A political scientist by the name Arend Lijphart came up with the concept of consociational democracy, which is highly relevant in a society that is highly polarized such as in Yemen. Consociationalism is one way to stabilize the Yemeni War where ethnic, tribal, and sectarian tensions have contributed to the conflict. To ensure that one group does not dominate another, this model highly emphasizes subdivisions between different ethnic or religious groups, with regard to power-sharing. The goal of consociational democracy is to alleviate conflict and ensure cooperation through ensuring that all major groups are represented. A long-term solution is required due to the colossal human suffering and political turmoil caused by the Yemeni war. Consociational democracy is a system of power sharing between different groups in society and it helps different communities coexist in harmony with each other. Mechanisms of power sharing to attempt to even out the interests of various social groups. There are four key components that make up the system segmental autonomy, minority veto, proportional representation, and grand coalition government.

A grand coalition Government is a type of government which is made up of all the key political parties in the state. This is to ensure that no single organisation has a monopoly in the political arena and that all the groups are represented in government. The other necessary element of consociational democracy is proportional representation (Lijphart, A. 1969). This means that political representation is dependent on the percentage of the votes that were cast in support of each political party. This of course ensures that minorities are not locked out of the political process and that everybody is heard (Reilly, B. (2001). This process ensures that the interests of all the groups are considered, and no group is allowed to control decision-making process. Finally, but not the least, segmental autonomy refers to the acknowledgement and protection of linguistic and cultural rights of various groups in society. This way, there is no group that will be concerned about being discriminated against or retaliated against because of their expression of their identity and culture (McCulloch, A., & McGarry, J. 2017).

2.7 The strengths of consociational democracy

The Yemeni War can be solved through consociational democracy due to its numerous benefits. To begin with, it is one method of ensuring that various communities co-exist peacefully as the various groups have a say in the democratic process (Horowitz, D. L. 2000). This assists in reducing conflicts and tensions among the various groups. Secondly, consociational democracy provides a means to end conflicts in a peaceful manner. The minority veto is one of them; here, less represented groups are provided with the opportunity to participate in the decision-making process and is authorized to prevent the execution of actions that are not beneficial to them (Haymond, D. F. 2020). Third, consociational democracy encourages its citizens to participate and own. Feeling that their views are considered and they have a vested interest in political drama, individuals tend to be more interested in the well-being of their country (Dominguez, J. I. 1989). An associational democracy system of checks and balances can help create stability in Yemen because it allows preventing concentration of power in the hands of a few people (Ulzurrun, L. M. D. (2000). This policy will reduce chances of political instabilities and dictatorship. It promotes ownership, participation, conflict management and harmony. Implementation of consociational democracy, however, requires compliance with the principles of power-sharing and respect of social rights. It is suggested that major political parties and the Yemeni government collaborate and explore the potential ways in which consociational democracy can also play a role in the peace and stability of the country.

2.8 Assessing the limitations of consociational power-sharing in Yemen

Consociational democracy is often regarded as a viable method of solving conflicts in divided countries. However, Yemeni conflict has a few problems. Consociational democracy is difficult to achieve in Yemen due to the lack of trust among political factions, the influence of extremist groups and other non-state actors, and the absence of a strong and effective state apparatus. Due to a long history of internal conflict and warfare in the country, there has been mistrust, and it is difficult to establish a system of power sharing that benefits all.

The absence of a functional state complicates the implementation of consociational democracy. Yemen's fragmentation has led to the emergence of competing centers of power, driven by economic collapse, social instability, and weak governance. This fragmentation may therefore make a centralized power sharing arrangement more difficult to establish.

A further problem facing the adoption of consociational democracy in Yemen is the issue of inclusion. Because Germany is a multicultural country with a large number of ethnic and religious communities, individuals might feel disconnected and out of the political process, potentially fueling tensions and leading to further conflict. In conclusion: Despite the success of consociational democracy in resolving conflicts in other divided societies, there can be a number of barriers to its implementation in Yemen, including mistrust between parties, presence of extremist groups and non-state actors, and a weak state.

2.9 Applying consociational democracy to address the Yemeni crisis

Consociational democracy can be adopted to combat the prevailing crisis in Yemen. This includes striking a compromise on the sharing of power on a proportional basis with equitable sharing of power and resources to all warring groups and protecting minority groups such as the Zaydis and the Southerners. This may include the creation of a federal system of government with certain relative independence of the regions (Horowitz, D. L. 1993). A truth and reconciliation commission might deal with the causes of the war and facilitate national healing and reconciliation. This commission would look into historical human rights abuse and pardon those who confess their sins. Also, an independent and fair electoral commission would help in having free and fair elections (Teitel, R. G. 2002). Consociational democracy can be adopted to combat the prevailing crisis in Yemen. This is a body that should be apolitical and given the mandate to monitor the electoral process as well as to address any irregularities. In conclusion, Yemen consociational democracy require power sharing, minority rights, establishment of a truth and reconciliation and independent electoral commission which has bargaining power.

2.10 The challenges in implementing consociational democracy in Yemen

The consociational form of democracy in Yemen is not an easy and simple process that can be achieved by examining a range of political and socio-economic issues. At the political level, the country has many challenges such as mistrust among various groups, polarization of the political system, lack of robust state institutions and the intervention of foreign stakeholders in the conflict.

This instability is a result of the past experiences of political, economic and social marginalization and persecution which has resulted in suspicion and distrust of other groups especially those associated with the center of government. Southern separatist groupings, like the Southern Transitional Council, blame the central government and forces in the North for power and resource monop1oly, and it is hard to find an agreement on how to share the power to be acceptable to all (Serr, M. (2017). Politically, the major challenge affecting the establishment of consociational democracy in Yemen is the political polarization. This war has created significant divisions among the different groups that have become increasingly rooted with time (Arraf, S. 2017). This has led to the disintegration of political space and the development of multiple bases of power which makes it hard to establish one single government that would represent all the different groups.

Another major challenge towards the establishment of consociational democracy in Yemen is the institution of the state. The conflicts, corruption and mismanagement that has resulted in weakening the legitimacy of the country and its ability to apply the rule of law have brought years of devastation in the government structure of the country. Conflicts and even violence are likely to reappear because official institutions cannot solve any conflicts and impose terms of any power-sharing agreement. Risk of entrenching sectarian divides is another political challenge in Yemen. The consociational democracy principle is that various religious or ethnic groups would share power, but if not well formulated this has the potential of enhancing more sectarianism within the nation and more tensions among one group over another rather than promote unity.

Finally, the participation of external actors in the Yemeni conflict is another threat to the establishment of consociational democracy. There are foreign actors, such as regional powers and international organizations, who have their own agenda and interests,

which might not necessarily match the agenda and interests of the Yemeni people. Additional , socioeconomic challenges such as poverty, underdevelopment, and humanitarian crisis present tremendous obstacles to the establishment of consociational democracy in Yemen. Other hindrances to the establishment of Consociational Democracy include corruption and security. They would demand a complex solution that incorporates dealing with the root causes of poverty, promoting good governance and building a stable and secure environment.

The socio-economic conditions in Yemen are highly precarious, marked by pervasive poverty, rampant unemployment, and limited development, which exacerbate political instability and social tensions. This is a difficult climate in Consociational Democracy implementation because economic and social inequality can cause ethnic and religious tension, resulting into conflict. Yemen is currently experiencing a humanitarian crisis because of the war, which brings about devastating displacement and misery. A lack in the ability to supply basic services calls into question the authority of the government and builds confidence among different groups. The other struggle is free and fair elections and constituting a neutral electoral commission due to the security vacuum left by the conflict. Other hindrances to the establishment of Consociational Democracy include corruption and security. These problems cannot be dealt with through a single-dimensional approach, which only focuses on poverty, good governance and the establishment of a stable and secure environment. Consociational democracy in Yemen is a complicated among religious and cultural variations. The Zaydi Shia in the north and the Sunni in the south are very divided and the Zaydi Shia group feels pushed aside and powerless. It has resulted in a conflict that up to now, and therefore it is important to resolve these religious and cultural problems (Mena, R., & Hilhorst, D. 2022). Among the most difficult is to reconcile the religious communities of the country since the Zaydi Shia community feels out of power for a long time, and the Sunni one has been looking at them suspiciously (Kfir, I. 2017). The implementation of consociational democracy requires recognizing the rights of minorities and achieving a power distribution system that considers the demographic situation in the country and take into account the needs and interests of all participants in the conflict.

Another influential obstacle is the cultural gap between the north and the south because the southern parts of the country have been marginalized for a long time and have

never been included in the government (Lackner, H. 2014). To counter this, power sharing arrangements should incorporate the cultural and regional diversity of Yemen and allow inclusiveness and representation at every government level.

Moreover, the ongoing violence and instability in the country prevent the establishment of the required conditions in order to facilitate a successful democratic transition (Lackner, H. 2017). To handle these issues, power sharing deals should recognize the rights of minority groups and encourage diversity and representation in all levels of the government.

The current conflict in Yemen has shaped a highly polarized society and establishing trust and collaboration between various groups and adopting a power-sharing agreement is challenging. The country's fragile stability is further undermined by the presence of non-state armed actors, notably Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and the Islamic State (ISIS), which complicate governance and security efforts. The spread of weaponry in Yemen because of the war has complicated creating a monopoly of force. Regional and international interests in the Yemeni crisis such as Iran and Saudi Arabia have fueled security issues. Because of insufficient trust between factions, a small civil society, insufficient state capacity, external interference, and economic challenges, the implementation of Consociational Democracy in Yemen encounters numerous obstacles (Albasoos, H., & Al Hinai, B. 2020). To avoid these pitfalls, both the international community and the Yemeni government must pull the same strings in ensuring that a stable environment is created where the political talks can be brokered and institutions demanded in Consociational Democracy can be implemented.

3 FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

This research indicates that consociationalism may prove to be an apt instrument in resolving the structural differences and discord within Yemen. It provides a comprehensive system of governance where all stakeholders have the chance to be involved in the process of making decisions. Proportional representation, rights of veto and grand coalitions as forms of power sharing which have been considered in the report, and how these may be modified to suit the Yemeni context to help achieve peace and stability have been discussed. The report also examined the role of external actors

including regional and international organizations in enhancing consociationalism in Yemen.

The study, however, has some challenges in Yemen, such as absence of trust between various groups, absence of common outlook on the future of the country, presence of other players and their conflicting interests and instability of the Yemeni state and the emergence of armed groups.

Future studies should examine how civic society, women, and youth can encourage consociationalism in Yemen, how external actors influence the application of consociationalism in Yemen, the influence of the traditional tribal organization on the establishment of consociationalism, the effectiveness of various consociational processes in resolving the Yemen crisis, and how to implement consociationalism in other conflict-ridden countries in the Middle East and North Africa region.

4 CONCLUSION

Over ten years of crisis have seen political instability, violence, and humanitarian suffering affecting millions in Yemen. International intervention is not enough to eradicate the causes of the conflict, which comprise domestic social divisions and partisanship. This paper indicates that one of the possible solutions to the Yemeni crisis could be consociationalism, which is a type of power-sharing. The paper defines the conceptual frame of consociationalism, its principles, models and advantages and discusses its challenges and criticisms, especially in Yemen. It also discusses the Yemeni situation historically, socially and politically, including major divisions and conflicts, such as ethnic, religious, and regional divisions. The article investigates opportunities and issues of consociationalism application in Yemen and suggests that consociationalism could be used to mediate interests and identities, promote inclusion, and avoid violence and chaos. However, it acknowledges the limitations and difficulties in executing consociationalism such as political goodwill, institutional capacity, and foreign aid. The article concludes that the Yemeni crisis must be approached in a holistic and collaborative effort with all stakeholders.

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All authors contributed equally to the development of this article.

Data availability

All datasets relevant to this study's findings are fully available within the article.

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