Yemeni Cultural Orientation

June 2015

DLIFLC
DEFENSE LANGUAGE INSTITUTE
FOREIGN LANGUAGE CENTER

DLIFLC 1759 Lewis Rd. Bldg 614, Ste. 251
Presidio of Monterey • Monterey, CA 93944
831.242.5119 (DSN-768)

Technology
Integration
Division

Yemeni Cultural Orientation: Contents

Chapter 3: Traditions 44

Tribal group
© (B Barbey) / flickr.com

Chapter 1 Profile

Introduction

Yemen is a Muslim Arab country of strong tribal and religious traditions. The Republic of Yemen has only existed as a state since 1990, when the independent states of North and South Yemen merged. Differences remain pronounced between the two regions. Limited agricultural and water resources threaten Yemen's already weak economy, though it still has robust fishing and shipping industries. Sectarian violence remains a fact of daily life for many Yemenis. State control over daily life keeps Yemen on the international watch lists of human rights organizations.

Geographic Regions and Features

Yemen exhibits stark contrasts in its topography. Desert plains line the long coastline. A rugged and fertile highland region occupies the west. The east is dominated by a high, arid plateau dissected by *wadis*, or valleys, that intermittently flow with water. Desert

Tihama on the Red Sea
© Bernard Gagnon

covers portions of the north. In all, Yemen features five geographic regions.[1, 2]

Coastal Plains

Yemen's extensive coastline is lined with plains that range in width from 8 to 65 km (5 to 40 mi).[3] The hot and humid western coastal plain on the Red Sea is known as the Tihamah. It receives little rainfall, but several *wadis* carry seasonal runoff to the plain from the nearby mountains. These *wadis* support limited agriculture in irrigated plots interspersed throughout the plain's large network of sand dunes.[4] Stony expanses and salt flats (*sabkhas*) also mark the terrain. On its eastern edge, the Tihamah rises sharply into the cliffs and foothills that form the western escarpment of the mountainous interior. The plains lining the southern and eastern coasts (on the Gulf of Aden and the Arabian Sea) are generally narrower than those on the west coast. They are also bounded by a rugged escarpment, which in some places reaches the sea.[5] Fishing industries are based in Yemen's coastal areas. Its major ports are Aden (on the southern coast), Al Hudaydah (on the Tihamah), and Al Mukalla (on the southeastern coast).[6]

The Yemen Mountain Massif

Inland from the Tihamah, the terrain rises sharply to a mountainous highland region that runs north–south along the Red Sea coast and eastward along the southern coast. The western escarpment of the highlands is steep and rugged. Thousands of small villages are situated on rocky outcroppings of this slope, which is cultivated via an elaborate terracing system.[7] The tallest peak in the highlands is known as Jabal an-Nabi Shu'ayb, which reaches 3,760 m (12,336 ft) in the mountains west of the Yemeni capital, Sanaa. East of the western escarpment, the highlands contain rolling plains and basins interspersed among mountains, massifs, and some volcanoes.[8] These plains and basins contain settlements and agriculture, which benefit from a temperate climate, fertile soils, and moderate to abundant rainfall. Because of their advantageous conditions, the highlands are home to the majority of the Yemeni population. At their easternmost edge, the highlands gradually descend into the arid plateau of the east, where the change in climate is stark.[9]

Eastern Plateau and Desert

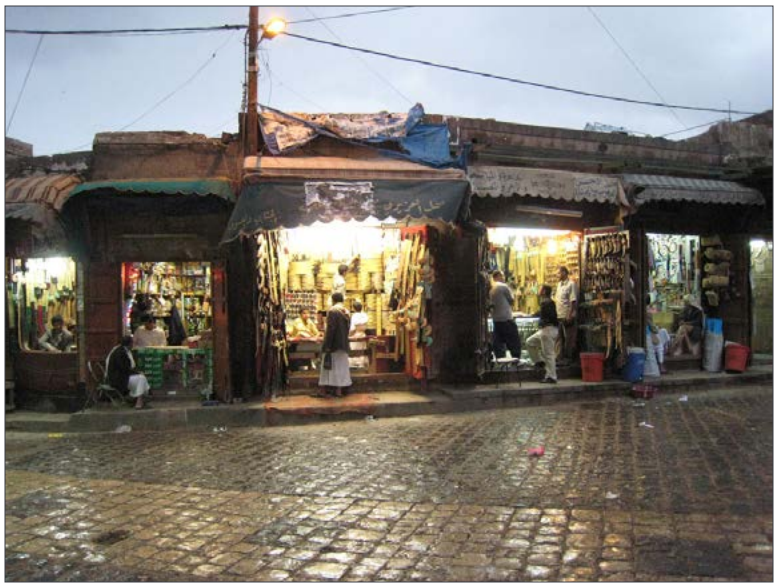
From the highlands, the terrain slopes down into arid plateau and desert. The Ramlat as Sab'atayn, a large sand-dune desert, occupies west-central Yemen, just east of the highlands. The al-Jawl (Jol), an expansive limestone plateau, covers much of central and eastern Yemen.[10, 11] It is dissected by numerous *wadis*, of which the largest and most well-

known is Wadi Hadramawt.[12] This extensive valley runs through the Jawl from central Yemen to the Arabian Sea on the southeastern coast. The seasonal runoff and fertile soils of the upper valley and its branches have long supported settlement and agriculture.[13] The greater region is known as Hadramawt (Hadhramaut). South of Wadi Hadramawt, the al-Jawl reaches a high point of 2,185 m (7,169 ft) in a series of low mountains and hills that run parallel to the coast. The plateau's southern escarpment sharply descends to the coastal plain. North of Wadi Hadramawt, the plateau gradually descends into the southern reaches of the Rub al-Khali, or Empty Quarter, an inhospitable sand desert that covers some 650,000 sq km (250,000 sq mi) of the Arabian Peninsula.[14] Outside of Wadi Hadramawt, much of the eastern region is sparsely populated, with large expanses of unforgiving, desolate terrain.[15, 16]

Socotra Island
© Martin Sojka

Islands

Yemen possesses more than 100 islands in the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden, and the Arabian Sea. Topography and climate conditions vary from island to island; those in the Red Sea generally share the hot and humid conditions of the Tihamah. Many Yemeni islands are rocky and barren, and lack fresh water. Most remain undeveloped, although efforts have been made in recent years to harness their potential as tourist destinations.[17, 18] The islands are strategically important for their locations amid the busy shipping lanes of regional waters. Perim Island is located in the Bab el Mandeb strait. In 2009, Yemeni and French officials issued plans to construct an artificial harbor on the island for mooring boats, to combat regional piracy.[19] A company has also proposed building a bridge across the Bab el Mandeb strait that would use the island as a stopover.[20] Yemen's largest island, Socotra, is located in the Arabian Sea, some 340 km (211 mi) southeast of the Yemeni coast. Measuring approximately 3,600 sq km (1,390 sq mi), the remote island has a mountainous interior surrounded by coastal plains.[21] Travel to the island is greatly hindered during the southwest monsoon.



Storm clouds
© kate_griffin13 / flickr.com

Climate

Climate conditions vary widely according to region and elevation. The highlands experience a temperate climate with dry, mild winters and warm summers that see moderate to abundant rainfall. In Sanaa's central highlands, the average temperature is 14°C (57°F) in January and 22°C (71°F) in July.[22] Occasional frosts and light snowfall may occur at upper elevations during the winter. Spring and summer monsoons bring rain to the highlands in two cycles: March–May and July–September. The western escarpment and southern highlands receive the most rainfall.[23] Precipitation often creates localized storms and can vary considerably across short distances. The coastal plains experience a tropical climate, with low rainfall and high heat and humidity. In this region, temperatures range between 27°C (81°F) and 42°C (108°F).[24] The eastern plateau and deserts are similarly hot and dry. Wadi Hadramawt receives around 5 cm (2 in) of rainfall each year—typically in short, periodic downpours that occasionally cause floods.[25] In the deserts, rain may fall only once every several years. Daytime temperatures in the desert can reach 50°C (122°F), although nights can be cool.[26, 27] Nationwide, rainfall is erratic, frequently resulting in drought.[28] Sandstorms and dust storms fueled by strong northwesterly winds known as *shamal* may sweep through the region in winter and early summer.[29, 30]

Bodies of Water

Yemen is strategically important because of its location along vital shipping lanes of the Arabian Sea, the Gulf of Aden, the Bab al Mandeb Strait, and the Red Sea. They form a network that links the Mediterranean Sea with the Indian Ocean. Integral to global trade, this network is a major route for shipping goods between Europe and Asia, as well as transporting oil from the Persian Gulf to Europe and the U.S.[31, 32] The Bab al Mandeb Strait that links the Gulf of Aden to the Red Sea is only 29 km (18 mi) wide at its narrowest point. It is therefore a chokepoint for traffic in and out of the Red Sea. Regional waters have been increasingly affected by piracy, with many pirates based in nearby Somalia.[33]

Marib Dam
© Bernard Gagnon

Drainage

Yemen has no permanent rivers. Seasonal drainage occurs through *wadis*, which are valleys and dry riverbeds that periodically flow with runoff. *Wadis* run from the highlands and the upper elevations of the eastern plateau to the coastal plains and interior deserts and lowlands. Because the highlands receive the majority of the country's rainfall, the surrounding lowland regions depend upon their runoff.[34] Although Yemen has no lakes, a dam at Marib, on the eastern slope of the highlands, has a capacity of some 400 million cubic meters. Hundreds of smaller dams in the highlands either store water for local use or channel it into increasingly diminishing aquifers.[35]

Sanaa
© Richard Messenger

Major Cities

Sanaa

Sanaa, the capital and largest city of Yemen, is situated in the central highlands at an altitude of more than 2,200 m (7,200 ft). Historically isolated, the city sprawls across a fertile upland basin near the foot of a mountain known as Jabal Nuqum. It has expanded rapidly over the last several decades, growing from a population of around 35,000 in the early 1960s to more than 2 million today.[36] The continual influx of people to the city has caused urban sprawl and strained infrastructure and resources, especially water. Amid a national water crisis, the city could run out of water by 2025—or earlier—if the depletion of local aquifers continues at the current rate.[37] Surrounded by a high wall, the old quarter of the city retains multistoried tower houses that are over 1,000 years old. Historic mosques, bath houses (*hammam*), and traditional marketplaces (*souk*) are also located in this sector.[38] As the nation's capital, the city is home to government offices and workers. Its airport is a major hub for travel in and out of the country.[39]

Aden

The former capital of South Yemen, Aden is a port city situated on a small, volcanic peninsula on the southern coast. Its natural deep-water harbor has long made it an

important shipping and trade center. In the 19th and 20th centuries it was developed as a British protectorate, later becoming a colony. Today, it is the commercial capital of Yemen and a strategic center. Once reputed to be a liberal city, today it has been heavily affected by numerous al-Qaeda attacks.[40] The city comprises several districts, including Ma'alla (the natural harbor) and Crater (the old quarter). The latter district is located on the eastern side of the peninsula, just below Aden's inactive volcano, Jabal Shamsan. To the north, an international airport and former Royal Air Force base is located at Khormaksar.[41, 42] Aden has approximately 589,000 residents.[43]

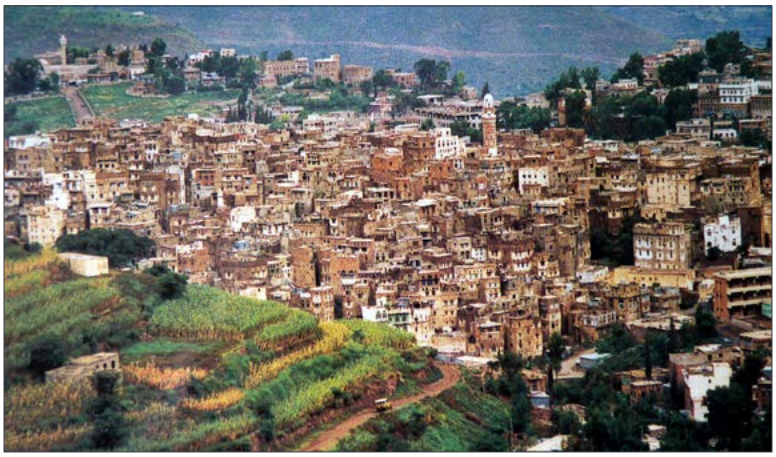
Ta'izz
© eesti / flickr.com

Ta'izz

Ta'izz is located in the fertile and rain-fed southern highlands at an altitude of 1,400 m (4,593 ft). The city served as Yemen's administrative seat from 1948–1962, when Imam Ahmed, the second-to-last Zaydi *imam*, was in power.[44] Ta'izz lies within a temperate agricultural zone where coffee and *qat* (a mild stimulant) are the main crops. It also hosts some light industry and a university-level *madrassah*, or Muslim theological school. The city is a regional transportation hub. It is linked via highway with Aden on the southern coast and the port of Al Hudaydah on the western coast. Another highway runs northward from Ta'izz through the highlands to Sanaa.[45] With a population of 467,000, Ta'izz is Yemen's third-largest city. Over the past few years, blood feuds and religious insurgent violence have become commonplace in the city. Violence began in 2011 as part of protests against then-president Ali Abdulla Saleh. The city periodically erupts in violence, harming its economy and dampening the spirits of its people.[46, 47, 48]

Al Hudaydah (Hodeida)

Al Hudaydah is a major port city on the central coast of the Tihamah. It grew to prominence during Ottoman control, when it served as a point of entry for Ottoman troops.[49] In the 1960s, Al Hudaydah and the surrounding region underwent extensive reconstruction and development with the aid of the Soviet Union, which built a new deep-water port just north of the city. Around the same time, Chinese engineers built an all-weather road linking the city with Sanaa in the highlands. Today, the port remains vital for Yemeni trade and its major exports, coffee and cotton. Fishing is an important local industry, with catch sold in a bustling fish market. Though much of the city has been built over the last several decades, a small (Ottoman) Turkish quarter remains. Al Hudaydah's population is approximately 403,000.[50, 51]



City of Ibb
© Michael Dr Gumtau

Ibb

Ibb is situated in the southern highlands, north of Ta'izz, at an elevation of 2,050 m (6,725 ft). The city and surrounding territory benefit from abundant rainfall and rich volcanic soils, making the region green and agriculturally productive. Crops such as grains, coffee, *qat*, and various fruits and vegetables are grown in terraces lining the hillsides. Animal husbandry is also important to the local economy. The region's rich agricultural produce and animal products are sold in the local *souq*, or marketplace. The old city is walled and filled with tower houses and mosques.[52] The city is home to around 213,000 residents.[53, 54, 55]

Al Mukalla
© Davide / flickr.com

Al Mukalla

Al Mukalla is located on the Gulf of Aden, on the southern coast of the Hadramawt region.[56] It is Hadramawt's administrative seat and largest city, as well as its major commercial hub. The modern city has expanded along the coast for 20 km (12 mi). A series of low mountains surrounds and splits the city into three distinct sections: an old city and eastern and western suburbs.[57] Al Mukalla is the primary port city for southeastern Yemen and is a center for the country's fishing and fish processing industries.[58, 59] The city has a population of approximately 182,000.[60]

History

Yemen's history covers thousands of years. Colonized over time by Arabs, Persians, Ottoman Turks, and the British,—all of whom depended on the trade of Yemen's rich natural resources,—the nation has repeatedly been divided and reunified.[61] The Sassanids or Persians brought Islam, and successive Muslim kingdoms followed. As Islam took hold, several sects competed for power. The Zaydis, a Shi'a sect in northern Yemen that continues today, are notable for their *imamate* that combined religious and political leadership.[62] The Zaydis resisted the control of the Turkish Ottoman Empire during two occupations but were co-opted by the British, who signed treaties with local tribes.[63]

At the end of World War I, the Zaydis controlled northern Yemen, but Britain exerted

control over southern Yemen, using Aden as a base. The north experienced a long civil war over whether the newly declared republic would continue to be controlled by the imamate (supported by Saudi Arabia and Jordan) or the republic (backed by Egypt).[64] Eventually, opposition leaders reconciled and the Yemen Arab Republic (YAR) united under a single banner.[65]

Meanwhile, the British expanded their influence in the south. Previously administered as part of British India, Aden became an official colony in 1937. In the 1960s. an independence movement grew. In early 1966, amid growing unrest, Britain announced its impending withdrawal from the region. A violent power struggle ensued, with the Marxist National Liberation Front (NLF) emerging as the dominant faction. British troops completely withdrew on 29 November 1967. The People's Republic of Yemen was established the next day. After power struggles within the NLF, South Yemen became the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY) on 1 December 1970.[66]

Competing States

The northern YAR and southern PDRY pursued contrasting policies in the 1970s. With the aid of the Soviet Union, the PDRY restructured as a socialist state with a command (government-controlled) economy. The YAR began to modernize, but efforts were hampered by limited resources, social unrest, and political upheaval. Consecutive presidents in 1977 and 1978 were assassinated in the wake of unrest. Ali Abdullah Saleh became president of the YAR in 1978. Tensions and hostilities existed between the YAR and PDRY, including short border wars in 1972 and 1979. After violent civil unrest, a change in leadership occurred in the PDRY in 1986. Haydar Abu Bakr al Attas came to power as PDRY president and Ali Salim al Baydh took over the ruling party, the Yemen Socialist Party (YSP).[67]

Unification: One Yemen State

Gradually, the PDRY and YAR moved toward reconciliation and unification. In 1988, the two governments agreed to disarm and open the border to increased traffic. In May 1990, they developed a draft unity constitution and formally declared a unified Republic of Yemen. Saleh became the president of the republic, with al Baydh serving as vice president and al Attas as prime minister.[68] Sanaa was chosen as the nation's capital, and Aden became the commercial capital. The states merged largely for economic reasons. The PDRY was losing its primary supporter, the Soviet Union, which was decaying and finally dissolved in December 1991. The recent discovery of oil reserves in both countries, including in their unresolved borderland, also compelled them to unite. Yet economic decline soon contributed to unrest and upheaval in unified Yemen. The economy contracted partly because of the loss of remittances from Yemenis working abroad. The government's refusal to support the U.S.-led coalition against Iraq in the Persian Gulf War (1990–1991) led Saudi Arabia and several Gulf States to cut foreign aid and expel several hundred thousand Yemeni workers.[69]

President Ali Abdullah Saleh
© Courtesy of Wikipedia

Conflict and Unrest

Despite a coalition government, parliament was dominated by the General People's Congress (GPC), the north's ruling party. The marginal representation by the Yemen Socialist Party (YSP) soon led to a breakdown in power sharing because Vice President al Bayd left Sanaa for the south. In the spring of 1994, tensions between the north and south erupted in civil war. Al Bayd and other YSP leaders declared secession, but northern troops soon seized Aden, marking the south's defeat and the end of the war. YSP leaders fled, and Saleh, who was reelected president in October 1994, filled his cabinet and ministries with GPC and Yemeni Islah Party (YIP) members.[70] Later, the YIP emerged as the opposition party to the GPC, which dominated the legislative elections of 1997. Two years later Saleh was reelected in Yemen's first presidential election. Throughout this time, power and wealth were increasingly concentrated with the Saleh regime and its network of allies and supporters, which comprised members of the political and tribal elite, the military, and business circles.[71] Meanwhile, despite the influx of oil revenues, the Yemeni economy remained underdeveloped, contributing to widespread deprivation and growing insecurity.[72]

Insurgency Feeds Continuing Unrest

In October 2000, the American naval destroyer U.S.S. Cole was attacked by suicide bombers at Aden's port, killing 17 sailors. The attack caused heightened security concerns in Yemen, where a weak economy and the limited authority of the central government seriously challenged stability. In 2004, an insurgency led by members of the Al Houthi family erupted in the northern governorate of Sadaa. The conflict has since involved several periods of fighting punctuated by occasional cease-fires.[73] A truce brokered in early 2010 ended a period of violent conflict in 2009 that devastated the north and displaced much of the regional population.[74] In 2007, a loosely organized secessionist movement, or "the southern movement," emerged amid worsening economic conditions. Ongoing unrest in the south had largely been driven by the perception that the northern-based government minimized southern interests.[75] Yemen has also experienced a resurgence of terrorist activity led by Yemen-based al-Qaeda operatives, whose presence drew increased attention after the 2012 attack on the U.S. Embassy, in which videos showed security forces allied with the protestors. Yemen-based al-Qaeda called for further attacks in response to the United States

presence there.[76] These security threats have been partly attributed to rampant poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, and resource scarcity.[77]

The Arab Spring of early 2011 challenged the legitimacy of longstanding leaders in the Arab world, including Yemen's president. In June 2011, Ali Abdallah Saleh was severely burned in an attack on the presidential palace. For several months, he received medical treatment in Saudi Arabia. Upon his return to Yemen, he finally signed a transition agreement brokered by the Gulf Cooperation Council in which he gave up his position in exchange for immunity. Yet his successor, Rabbo Mansour Hadi, has been unable to form a functioning government. Ordinary citizens have seen little improvement in their lives since the new government took power.[78] Trust in state authority remains low.[79] In attempting to put down protesters, the Yemeni Armed Forces were stretched thin.[80]

Qat cultivation
© Luca Bruno

Economy

Yemen is the poorest country in the Arab world.[81] The Yemeni economy depends heavily on the extraction and export of its hydrocarbon reserves. Oil production alone accounts for 70–75% of government revenues and 90% of export earnings.[82, 83] Yet production levels have been declining since 2001. Although the government is trying to expand its fledgling natural gas industry, it faces serious and potentially disastrous budgetary shortfalls because of declining oil revenues.[84] The World Bank has estimated that, by 2017, oil revenues will fall to zero as Yemen exhausts its reserves.[85]

Although the government depends on oil revenues, much of the Yemeni population derives a livelihood from agriculture and animal husbandry, especially in rural areas. Price instability and inefficient use of water resources and subsistence wages contribute to rampant poverty and underemployment. The country's limited fertile land has been increasingly planted with cash crops, which are more lucrative than food crops. The major cash crop is *qat* (*Catha edulis*), a shrub whose leaves are widely chewed by Yemenis as a mild stimulant. The expanded production of *qat* has contributed to both food and water insecurity.[86, 87, 88] Aside from oil refining, the country's manufacturing sector is largely limited to small-scale operations that produce goods for the domestic market. Fishing is an important industry for coastal communities. Because Yemen lacks a developed economy and banking sector, many Yemenis earn their living in the informal sector of the economy.[89]

President Mansur al-Hadi
© United Nations Development

Government

Officially, Yemen is a republic with executive, legislative, and judicial branches. The chief of state is the president, elected by popular vote for a 7-year term. A prime minister functions as head of state and is chosen by the president. The president also appoints members to the 111 seats of the Shura Council, which is one of the two chambers of the legislative branch. The second chamber is the House of Representatives, which comprises 301 members who are elected by popular vote to 6-year terms. The judicial branch consists of a Supreme Court (the nation's highest court), as well as appeals courts, district courts, and commercial courts. Supreme Court judges are appointed by a Supreme Judicial Council and serve for life, although they have a mandatory retirement age of 65.[90]

The country is divided into 20 governorates and 1 municipality. Governorates are further divided into districts, sub-districts, and villages. The Local Authority Law, approved in 2000, established popularly elected local councils at the district and governorate levels. These local councils wield significant budgetary and administrative power. They have mostly been dominated by existing elites, usually tribal leaders. Some observers view local councils as a way to incorporate traditional tribal authority into the central government. The authority of the central government remains limited outside of Sanaa and contingent upon the support of certain tribes, many of whom operate independently.[91, 92]

Media

The Yemeni constitution protects the freedom of speech and of the press. Yet Yemen continues to score low on international press freedom indices. Many media outlets are state run; however, since 2011 some private television and press outlets have begun to make inroads. Print media is most popular in the cities because literacy rates remain low, especially in rural areas. Satellite television is becoming more popular, and internet use has risen in recent years. The government influences independent press organizations by imposing annual licensing requirements, subsidizing newspapers, and controlling many printing presses. Surveillance, harassment, imprisonment, and physical attacks on journalists have been frequently reported, and many independent newspapers have been shut down. Under these conditions, independent journalists often self-censor.[93, 94, 95, 96, 97]

Young Yemeni displaced by war
© IRIN Photos

Ethnic Groups and Languages

The Yemeni population is predominantly Arab. Many residents of coastal communities are Afro-Arab or otherwise diverse in culture and ancestry because of a legacy of foreign contact and occupation. Yemen is home to a sizable population of Somali refugees, as well as communities of South Asians (Indians) and Europeans. A small population of Jews lives in the north, but emigration has significantly reduced their number.[98] Arabic is the official language of Yemen and the first language of nearly all Yemeni citizens.[99] Two small ethnic groups speak other languages. The Mahri (Mehri) live in Al Mahrah governorate in the east, near the border with Oman. They speak Mahri. Socotrans, the residents of Socotra, speak Socotri (Soqotri). Members of both these ethnic groups are said to also speak Arabic.[100] But some reports indicate that many Socotrans speak only Socotri.[101] Another ethnic group—the Akhdam—are Arab-speaking Muslims, yet they sit at the bottom of Yemen's social hierarchy. Numbering between 100,000 and 1 million, they live isolated from the rest of Yemen society, and hold occupations that mainstream Yemenis consider too demeaning. The Akhdam call themselves al-Muhamashyn, which translates as "the marginalized ones," and they are currently fighting for equal citizenship rights.[102, 103, 104, 105, 106]

Endnotes

1 R. Lee Hadden, "The Geology of Yemen: An Annotated Bibliography of Yemen's Geology, Geography, and Earth Science," Army Geospatial Center, January 2012.

2 Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, "Irrigation in the Middle East Region in Figures—AQUASTAT Survey 2008: Yemen," 9 April 2009, http://www.fao.org/nr/water/aquastat/countries_regions/YEM/CP_YEM.pdf

3 *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Yemen: Land: Relief and Drainage," 2013, http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/652831/Yemen#toc273072

4 *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Tihamat-al-Yaman," 2013, http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/595650/Tihamat-al-Yaman

5 *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Tihamat-al-Yaman," 2013, http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/595650/Tihamat-al-Yaman

6 *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Yemen: Economy: Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishing," 2013, http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/652831/Yemen/45258/Agriculture-forestry-and-fishing

7 R. Lee Hadden, "The Geology of Yemen: An Annotated Bibliography of Yemen's Geology, Geography, and Earth Science," Army Geospatial Center, January 2012.

8 Volcano Discovery, "Volcanoes of Yemen," 14 November 2013, http://www.volcanodiscovery.com/yemen.html

9 Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, "Irrigation in the Middle East Region in Figures—AQUASTAT Survey 2008: Yemen," 9 April 2009, http://www.fao.org/nr/water/aquastat/countries_regions/YEM/CP_YEM.pdf

10 Ann Hestler and Jo-Ann Spilling, "Chapter One: Geography," in *Cultures of the World: Yemen* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish Benchmark, 2010), 10.

zzz11 Anne-Marie Lézine et al., "Holocene Lakes from Ramlat as-Sab'atayn (Yemen) Illustrate the Impact of Monsoon Activity in Southern Arabia," *Quaternary Research*.50, no. 3 (1998): 290–299, http://faculty.ksu.edu.sa/archaeology/Publications/General/Holocene%20lakes%20from%20Ramat%20as-Sab%E2%80%99atayan%20%28Yemen%29.pdf

12 *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Arabia: The Land: Relief, Drainage, and Soils: Yemen," 2013, http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/31551/Arabia/45278/Geology#toc45279

13 Alice R. Buchalter, "Yemen: Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishing," 19 August 2008, http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Yemen.pdf

14 *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Arabia: The Land: Relief, Drainage, and Soils," 2013, http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/31551/Arabia

15 Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, "Yemen: Population," n.d., http://www.fao.org/countryprofiles/Maps/noaa/en/?iso3=YEM&mapID=610

16 Francesco G. Fedele, "Chapter 16: Early Holocene in the Highlands: Data on the Peopling of the Eastern Yemen Plateau, with a Note on the Pleistocene Evidence," in *The Evolution of Human Populations in Arabia: Paleoenvironments, Prehistory, and Genetics*, ed. Michael D. Petraglia and Jeffrey I. Rose (New York: Springer, 2009), 215–236.

17 Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, "Irrigation in the Middle East Region in Figures—AQUASTAT Survey 2008: Yemen," 9 April 2009, http://www.fao.org/nr/water/aquastat/countries_regions/YEM/CP_YEM.pdf

18 Alan Burdick, "The Wonder Land of Socotra, Yemen," *New York Times*, 25 March 2007, http://www.nytimes.com/2007/03/25/travel/tmagazine/03well.socotra.t.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0

19 Agence France-Presse, "Yemen Plans Port to Help Combat Piracy," *Arab News*, 22 February 2009, http://www.arabnews.com/node/321223

20 *Herald* (Scotland), "Bin Laden's Brother Aims to Bridge the Red Sea," 31 May 2008, http://www.heraldscotland.com/bin-laden-s-brother-aims-to-bridge-the-red-sea-1.829714

21 *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Socotra," 2013, http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/551936/Socotra

22 Francesca DiPiazza, *Yemen in Pictures*, "The Land" (Minneapolis: Lerner Publishing Group, 2008), 12.

23 Alice R. Buchalter, "Yemen: Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishing," 19 August 2008, http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Yemen.pdf

24 Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, "Irrigation in the Middle East Region in Figures—AQUASTAT Survey 2008: Yemen," 9 April 2009, http://www.fao.org/nr/water/aquastat/countries_regions/YEM/CP_YEM.pdf

25 Alice R. Buchalter, "Yemen: Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishing," 19 August 2008, http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Yemen.pdf

26 Global Security, "Yemen Country Study: Climate," n.d., http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/report/call/call_02-8_ch5.htm

27 Daniel McLaughlin, "Chapter 1: Background Information," in *Yemen: The Bradt Travel Guide* (Buckinghamshire, UK: Bradt Travel Guides, 2007), 3.

28 *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Arabia: The Land: Climate," 2013, http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/31551/Arabia/45286/The-Persian-Gulf-lowland#toc45290

29 R. Lee Hadden, "The Geology of Yemen: An Annotated Bibliography of Yemen's Geology, Geography, and Earth Science," Army Geospatial Center, January 2012.

30 *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Arabia: The Land: Climate," 2013, http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/31551/Arabia/45286/The-Persian-Gulf-lowland#toc45290

31 *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Arabian Sea: Economic Aspects: Transportation," 2013, http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/31653/Arabian-Sea/22722/Transportation

32 Energy Information Administration, U.S. Department of Energy, "World Oil Transit Chokepoints: Bab el-Mandab," 22 August 2012, http://www.eia.gov/countries/analysisbriefs/World_Oil_Transit_Chokepoints/wotc.pdf

33 Lauren Ploch et al., "CRS Report for Congress: Piracy off the Horn of Africa," Congressional Research Service, 27 April 2011, http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R40528.pdf

34 William J. Donaldson, "Chapter 1: Introduction: 1.2: The Yemen: A Contextual Overview," in *Sharecropping in the Yemen: A Study of Islamic Theory, Custom, and Pragmatism* (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2000), 6.

35 Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, "Irrigation in the Middle East Region in Figures—AQUASTAT Survey 2008: Yemen," 9 April 2009, http://www.fao.org/nr/water/aquastat/countries_regions/YEM/CP_YEM.pdf

36 *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Sanaa," 2013, http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/521694/Sanaa

37 Alistair Lyon, "Water Crisis Threatens Yemen's Swelling Population," *Reuters*, 30 August 2009, http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSTRE57T0HK20090830

38 *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Sanaa," 2013, http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/521694/Sanaa

39 United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, "Old City of Sana'a," n.d., http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/385

40 Maria Abi Habib, "Aden, Once the Lively Beach Resort of Yemen, Struggles under Sway of Al Qaeda," *Wall Street Journal*, 6 June 2013, http://blogs.wsj.com/middleeast/2013/06/06/aden-once-the-lively-beach-resort-of-yemen-struggles-under-sway-of-al-qaeda/

41 *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Aden," 2013, http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/5647/Aden

42 *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Aden," 2013, http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/5647/Aden

43 Thomas Brinkhoff, "Yemen," City Population, 18 January 2012, http://www.citypopulation.de/Yemen.html

44 Francesca Davis Dipiazza, "The Land," in *Visual Geography Series: Yemen in Pictures* (Minneapolis: Twenty-First Century Books, 2007), 8–19

45 *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Ta'izz," 2013, http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/581002/Taizz

46 Thomas Brinkhoff, "Yemen," City Population, 18 January 2012, http://www.citypopulation.de/Yemen.html

47 Adam Baron, "Once Stable, a Proud Yemeni City Struggles to Hold on amid Violence," *Christian Science Monitor*, 4 October 2013, http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Security-Watch/2013/1004/Once-stable-a-proud-Yemeni-city-struggles-to-

hold-on-amid-violence

48 *Economist*, "A City on Edge," 19 October 2013, http://www.economist.com/news/middle-east-and-africa/21588123-once-seen-yemens-most-sophisticated-city-taiz-bad-way-city-edge

49 Frances Linzee Gordon et al., "Al-Hudayday," in *Arabian Peninsula* (Footscray, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet Publications, 2004), 393.

50 *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Al-Hudaydah," 2013, http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/274657/Al-Hudaydah

51 Yemen Tourism, "Al Hodeidah," n.d., http://www.yementourism.com/tourism2009/destinations/index.php?ELEMENT_ID=2664

52 *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Ibb," 2013, http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/280558/Ibb

53 Thomas Brinkhoff, "Yemen," City Population, 18 January 2012, http://www.citypopulation.de/Yemen.html

54 Lonely Planet, "Introducing Ibb," n.d., http://www.lonelyplanet.com/yemen/southern-yemen/ibb

55 Yemen Tourism, "Ibb," n.d., http://www.yementourism.com/tourism2009/destinations/index.php?ELEMENT_ID=2665

56 Yemen Post, "Yemen Annihilates al-Qaeda in Mukalla Stand-Off," 3 October 2013, http://yemenpost.net/Detail123456789.aspx?SubID=7261

57 Cities Alliance, "Mukalla: Gateway to the Hadramout," 23 July 2008, http://citiesalliance.org/sites/citiesalliance.org/files/mukalla.pdf

58 *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Al-Mukalla," 2013, http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/396652/Al-Mukalla

59 Cities Alliance, "Mukalla: Gateway to the Hadramout," 23 July 2008, http://citiesalliance.org/sites/citiesalliance.org/files/mukalla.pdf

60 Thomas Brinkhoff, "Yemen," City Population, 18 January 2012, http://www.citypopulation.de/Yemen.html

61 Jewish Virtual Library, "Yemen," n.d., http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/vjw/Yemen.html

62 Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, "Country Profile: Yemen: Historical Background," August 2008, http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Yemen.pdf

63 *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Yemen: History: The Age of Imperialism," 2013, http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/652831/Yemen/45273/The-age-of-imperialism

64 Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, "Country Profile: Yemen," August 2008, http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Yemen.pdf

65 Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, "Country Profile: Yemen," August 2008, http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Yemen.pdf

66 Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, "Country Profile: Yemen," August 2008, http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Yemen.pdf

67 *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Yemen: History: Two Yemeni States," 2013, http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/652831/Yemen/45274/Two-Yemeni-states

68 Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, "Country Profile: Yemen," August 2008, http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Yemen.pdf

69 *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Yemen: History: Unification of Yemen," 2013, http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/652831/Yemen/273073/Unification-of-Yemen

70 Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, "Country Profile: Yemen," 2008, http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Yemen.pdf

71 Encyclopædia Britannica, "Yemen: History: Economic Challenges," 2013, http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/652831/Yemen/280865/Economic-challenges

72 Encyclopædia Britannica, "Yemen: History: Unification of Yemen," 2013, http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/652831/Yemen/273073/Unification-of-Yemen

73 Jeremy Sharp, "CRS Report for Congress: Yemen: Background and U.S. Relations," Congressional Research Service, 01 November 2012, http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/RL34170.pdf

74 BBC News, "Yemen Declares Truce with Northern

Rebels," 11 February 2010, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/8511705.stm

75 Stephen Day, "Yemen on the Brink," A Carnegie Paper Series, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Middle East Program, no. 108 (March 2010) http://www.carnegieendowment.org/files/yemen_south_movement.pdf

76 Jeremy Sharp, "CRS Report for Congress: Yemen: Background and U.S. Relations," Congressional Research Service, 01 November 2012, http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/RL34170.pdf

77 IRIN, UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, "Analysis: Yemen's Rebellions Fuelled by Economic Meltdown," 04 February 2010, http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=87996

78 April Longley Ally, "Triage for a Fracturing Yemen," *Foreign Policy*, 31 October 2012, http://mideast.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2012/10/31/triage_for_a_fracturing_yemen

79 Nadwa Al-Dawsari, "Tribal Governance and Stability in Yemen," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace,24 April 2012, http://carnegieendowment.org/2012/04/24/tribal-governance-and-stability-in-yemen

80 Daniel R. DePetris, "What Made Yemen's Saleh Quit?," *Atlantic Sentinel*, 24 November 2011, http://atlanticsentinel.com/2011/11/what-made-yemens-saleh-quit/

81 Encyclopædia Britannica, "Yemen: Economy," 2013, http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/652831/Yemen/45256/Economy

82 Central Intelligence Agency, "Yemen: Economy," in *The World* Factbook, 06 November 2013, https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ym.html

83 Haykal Bafana, "Dark Days Loom ahead for Yemen Oil and Gas," *Yemen Times*, 28 May 2012, http://www.yementimes.com/en/1576/report/906/Dark-days-loom-ahead-for-Yemen-oil-and-gas.htm

84 Energy Information Administration, U.S. Department of Energy, "Countries: Yemen," 20 November 2013, http://www.eia.gov/countries/analysisbriefs/Yemen/yemen.pdf

85 The World Bank, "Facing the Hard Facts in Yemen," 26 September 2012, http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2012/09/26/yemen-talking-points

86 Charles Schmitz, "Building a Better Yemen," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 03 April 2012, http://carnegieendowment.org/2012/04/03/building-better-yemen/bl1c

87 Robert F. Worth, "Thirsty Plant Dries Out Yemen," *The New York Times*, 31 October 2009, http://www.nytimes.com/2009/11/01/world/middleeast/01yemen.html?pagewanted=1&_r=1

88 Encyclopædia Britannica, "Yemen: Agriculture, forestry, and Fishing," 2013, http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/652831/Yemen/45258/Agriculture-forestry-and-fishing

89 Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, "Country Profile: Yemen," 2008, http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Yemen.pdf

90 Central Intelligence Agency, "Yemen: Government," in *The World Factbook*, 06 November 2013, https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ym.html

91 Daniel Egel, "Tribal Diversity, Political Patronage and the Yemeni Decentralization Experiment"(paper for the Center for Global Development, University of California, Berkeley12 January 2010), 22–25, 32–33, http://www.cgdev.org/doc/events/Post-Doc%20Seminars/Daniel_Egel.pdf

92 Central Intelligence Agency, "Yemen: Government," in *The World Factbook*, 06 November 2013, https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ym.html

93 Peter Bouckaert and Christoph Wilcke, "The Problem with Partnering with Yemen," 7 April 2010, Foreign Policy in Focus, Middle East and North Africa, 7 April 2010, http://www.fpif.org/articles/the_problems_of_partnering_with_yemen

94 BBC News, "Yemen Profile: Media," 07 November 2012, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-14704901

95 Freedom House, "Freedom of the Press: Yemen: Freedom of the Press 2013," 2013, http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-press/2013/yemen

96 Reporters without Borders, "Yemen," 01 September 2011, http://en.rsf.org/report-yemen,165.html

97 Central Intelligence Agency, "Yemen: Communications,"

in *The World Factbook*, 06 November 2013, https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ym.html

98 Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. State Department, "Yemen," in *International Religious Freedom Report 2012*, 14 May 2013, http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/208632.pdf

99 Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, "Country Profile: Yemen," 2008, http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Yemen.pdf

100 Water, Environment, Social and Rural Development Department, The World Bank, "Republic of Yemen: Country Social Analysis " 11 January 2006, http://siteresources.worldbank.org/BOLIVIA/Resources/Yemen_CSA.pdf

101 M. Paul Lewis, ed., "Soqotri," *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*, 16th ed. "(Dallas: SIL International, 2009),http://www.ethnologue.com/show_language.asp?code=sqt

102 Robert F. Worth, "Languishing at the Bottom of Yemen's Ladder," *International New York Times*, 27 February 2008, http://www.nytimes.com/2008/02/27/world/middleeast/27yemen.html?_r=1&

103 Encyclopædia Britannica, "Yemen: People: Ethnic Groups," 2013, http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/652831/Yemen/45254/Plant-and-animal-life#toc273076

104 Al Jazeera "The Plight of Yemen's 'Untouchables'" 09 December 2013, http://stream.aljazeera.com/story/plight-yemens-untouchables-0022437

105 BBC News, "In Pictures: Yemen's 'Lowest of the Low'" 10 October 2012, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/in-pictures-19900082

106 IRIN News, "Yemen: Akhdam People Suffer History of Discrimination," 01 November 2005, http://www.irinnews.org/report/25634/yemen-akhdam-people-suffer-history-of-discrimination

Overview: Chapter 1 Assessment

1. Yemen is a Christian country that has existed for nearly 1,000 years.

   FALSE

   Yemen is a Muslim Arab country that has only existed as a state since 1990, when the independent states of North and South Yemen merged.

2. Yemen is a landlocked, desert region.

   FALSE

   Yemen's extensive coastline is lined with plains, and its western coastal plain on the Red Sea is known as the Tihamah.

3. Yemen possesses numerous islands.

   TRUE

   Yemen possesses more than 100 islands in the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden, and the Arabian Sea.

4. Numerous rivers drain Yemen.

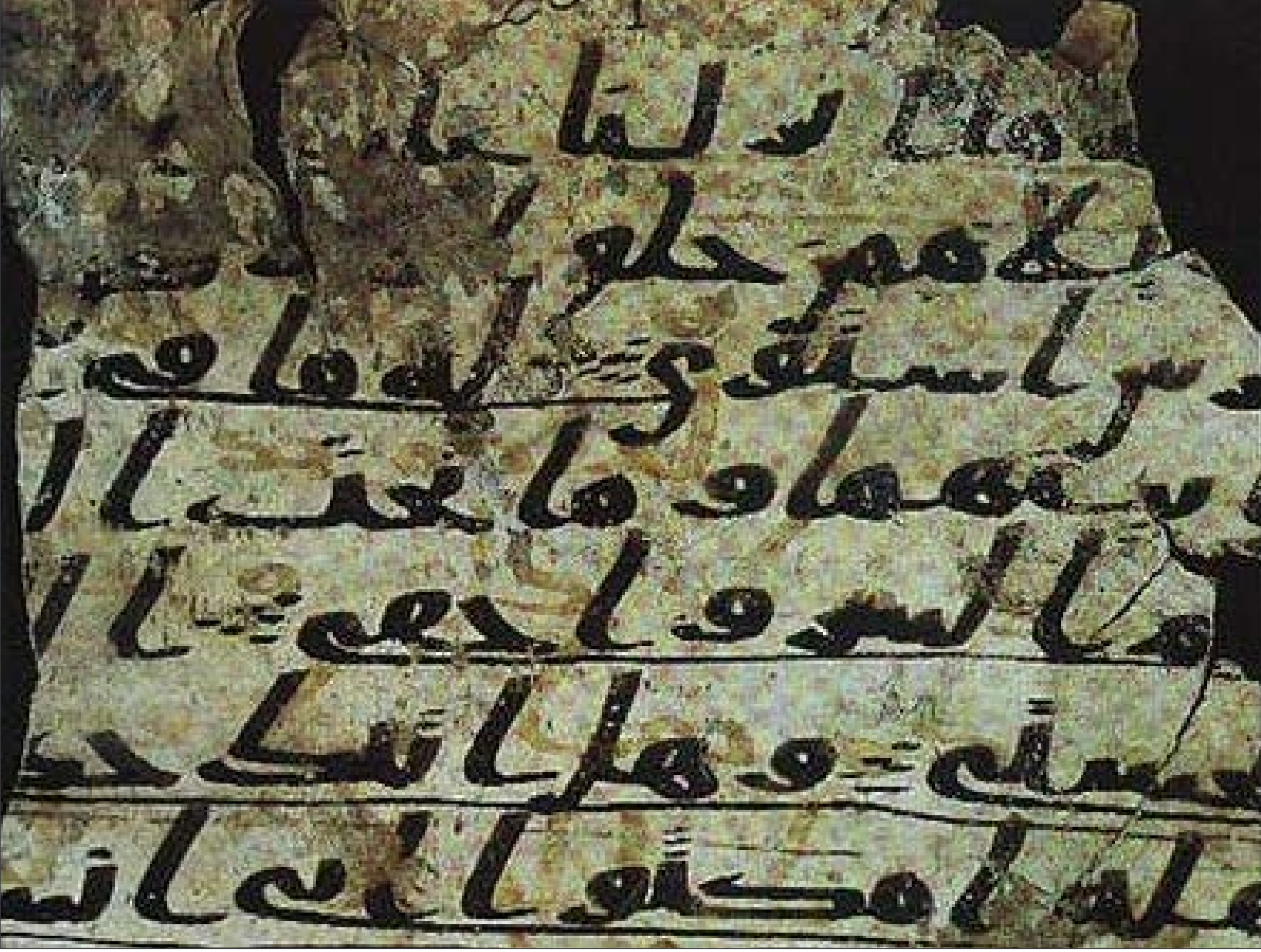
   FALSE

   Yemen has no permanent rivers; seasonal drainage occurs through wadis, which are valleys and dry riverbeds that periodically flow with runoff.

5. Yemen ships goods and oil around the world.

   TRUE

   Yemen's shipping network is along a major route for shipping goods and oil between Europe, Asia, and to the United States.



Oldest known Quran in Sanaa
Courtesy of Wikipedia

Chapter 2: Religion

Introduction

Islam is the predominant religion in Yemen, where the population is almost entirely Muslim. The religion first made inroads in the 7th century C.E., during the diffusion of Islam throughout the Arabian Peninsula and beyond. In Yemen, its spread was complicated by competing Islamic sects, which, over several centuries, strove for political and spiritual dominance in the region.[1] Today, Yemen is home to two major Muslim groups, the Shafi'is and the Zaydis, which follow different schools or sects of Islam. The Shafi'is take their name from the Shafi'i school of Sunni Islam, while the Zaydis are a Shi'a Muslim sect. A third group, known broadly as Isma'ilis, also lives in

Yemen, although its numbers are relatively few. Yemen's small non-Muslim population consists mainly of Jews and Christians, the latter of whom are typically foreigners. Jews are the only native non-Muslim people in Yemen. Their once-large population has fallen because of emigration, mostly to Israel.[2]

Islam shapes not only the daily lives of Yemenis but also the country's social organization, politics, and government. It is the state religion and its legal code (shari'a) is enforced by Yemeni law. The spread of religious extremism is a pressing concern. An insurgency in the north (led by the al-Houthi family) and a growing terrorism threat (led by al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula) are partially fueled by religious motivations.[3] Yet for many observers, the spread of religious extremism and insurgency stems from the country's serious economic troubles.[4] In any case, Islam is the foundation of Yemeni society.

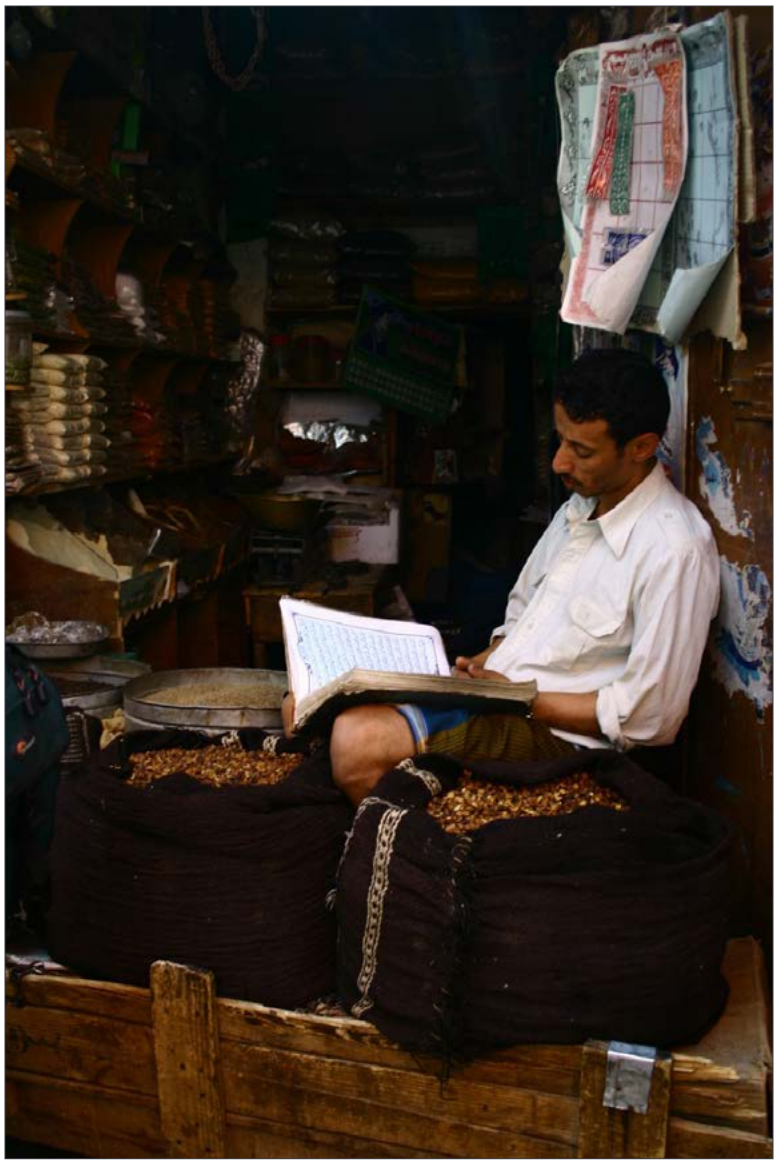
Al'Ashrafyia Mosque
© Pim Pim

Islam

Basic Tenets

Islam is a monotheistic religion, meaning its followers believe in a single God. In the Muslim community, or *ummah*, God is known as Allah. The Arabic term *islam* means "to submit" or "to surrender." A Muslim, therefore, is one who submits to the will of Allah. Muslims believe that Allah revealed his message to the Prophet Muhammad, a merchant who lived in Arabia from 570 to 632 C.E. They consider Muhammad the last of a long line of prophets that included Abraham (Ibrahim), Moses (Musa), and Jesus (Esa). In this way, Muslims share the lineage of the Judaic and Christian traditions. But they believe the message relayed by Muhammad is the final revelation of the faith. This message is recited in the Quran, the sacred scriptures of Islam. Additional sacred texts include the hadith, a collection of the sayings of Muhammad, and the sunnah, which describes the practices of Islam as shown through Muhammad's behavior.[5]

The essential beliefs and rites of the Islamic faith are encapsulated in the five pillars of Islam. The first, foundational pillar is the sincere recitation of the Muslim declaration of faith, or *shahada*: "There is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is the prophet of Allah." The remaining pillars include: the performance of ritual prayers five times a day (*salat*); the giving of alms to the poor and needy, typically through a tax on income (*zakat*); fasting during the holy month of Ramadan (*sawm*); and the undertaking of a pilgrimage to the Islamic holy city of Mecca (*hajj*).[6] Muslims believe that Allah will judge them for



Shop-keeper reading Quran
© Jon Bowen

their actions on earth, assigning them to spend their afterlife in heaven or hell.[7]

Sunni and Shi'a

Islam has two major branches: Sunni and Shi'a. The two sects formed in the 7th century C.E., shortly after the introduction of Islam. Believers divided over a disagreement about selecting the successor, or caliph (*khalifa*), to the Prophet Muhammad, who died in 632 C.E. The Sunni, as they came to be known, believed Muhammad had not definitively selected a successor; they decided the first caliph should be elected from among the leaders of the Muslim community. They chose Abu Bakr, Muhammad's father-in-law, as the first caliph. The opposing group, later called the Shi'a, believed that Muhammad had designated his son-in-law, Ali ibn Abi Talib, as his successor. They believed that only Muhammad's descendants held a rightful claim to the caliphate. For Shi'ites, the role of caliph was eventually conceived as an imam, or spiritual leader; many Shi'a sects believe these leaders possess special insight.

Ali was eventually selected as the fourth caliph (656–661 C.E.), but his appointment was not universally accepted in the Muslim community. The unresolved issue of succession created a deep divide between the two groups, leading to infighting and the assassination of Ali.[8] The Sunni–Shi'a divide was cemented by the death of Hussein ibn Ali, the son of Ali and grandson of Muhammad. He was killed in the Battle of Karbala in 680 C.E. amid continued power struggles for the caliphate. While the two sects share the fundamental tenets of Islam, their separation resulted in a divergence of practices and beliefs. Over time, several splinter groups arose within the two major branches. Today, Sunnis make up approximately 85% of the global Muslim community.[9]

Sufism: Mystical Faith and Devotions

Sufism, known in the Islamic world as *tasawwuf*, is a mystical form of Islam. Its purpose is to obtain a direct, personal connection with Allah. Followers seek to achieve this by adhering to the Sufi path, or *tariqah*, a long-term course of study that involves

Zabid
© Julien Harneis

devotion and practice. Sufi practices include ritual prayer, meditation, and various ascetic or ecstatic activities. Sufi spiritual leaders are known as *shaykhs*. Viewed as living saints, these holy men are believed to possess special spiritual power known as *baraka*. They act as mentors and spiritual guides to students who form brotherhoods (also know as *tariqahs)* around their teachings. Globally, Sufi practitioners are found among both Sunnis and Shi'ites.[10] In Yemen, Sufi mystics played an important role in spreading Sunni Islam in the Tihama and southern highlands. But they were not accepted in the northern and central highlands, where the dominant Zaydi Shi'ites rejected their practices.[11] Sufi mystics are said to have initiated the consumption in Yemen of both coffee and qat, a leaf that is chewed as a stimulant.[12]

Religious Divisions in Yemen

Shafi'i

The Shafi'is take their name from the Shafi'i school of Sunni Islam. The Shafi'i school is named for an Islamic legal scholar, Muhammad al-Shafi'i, who lived from 768–820 C.E. Shafi'is follow the basic guidelines of Sunni Islam, which is typically described as the orthodox (traditional) form of the religion. Although exact figures are unavailable, Shafi'is are thought to make up approximately 55% of the Yemeni population.[13] With the exception of the northern and central highlands, they are predominant in most areas, including the Tihama, the southern highlands (from Ta'izz to the southern coast), and central and eastern Yemen.[14] A distinguishing feature of the Shafi'i school in Yemen is its close connection with Sufism. (Orthodox Muslims traditionally reject Sufism as impure or un-Islamic.) Many Shafi'is in Yemen continue to incorporate Sufi elements into their religious practice. One such element is the tradition of visiting the tombs of Muslim saints or *shaykhs*.[15] Yemeni Shafi'is maintain a center for religious study at Zabid, on the Tihama.[16]

Zaydi History and Background

Zaydis are followers of the Zaydiyyah sect of Shi'a Islam, which emerged in the 9th century.[17] They take their name from Zayd ibn Ali, the grandson of Hussein ibn Ali, who was the grandson of the Prophet Muhammad. Followers of the movement recognize Zayd as the fifth imam, rather than his brother, Muhammad al-Baqir, who is recognized by most Shi'ites. The Zaydis are thus sometimes known as "Fivers."[18] The Zaydis became dominant in the highlands of Yemen in the late 9th century, giving rise to a Zaydi state

Zaydi leader Imam Yahya
Courtesy of Wikipedia

and a long succession of Zaydi imams.[19] In the modern era, from 1918 to 1962, Zaydi imams ruled North Yemen.[20] Today, Zaydis dominate the northern and central highlands. They constitute an estimated 45% of the Yemeni population.[21]

Imams for the Zaydis

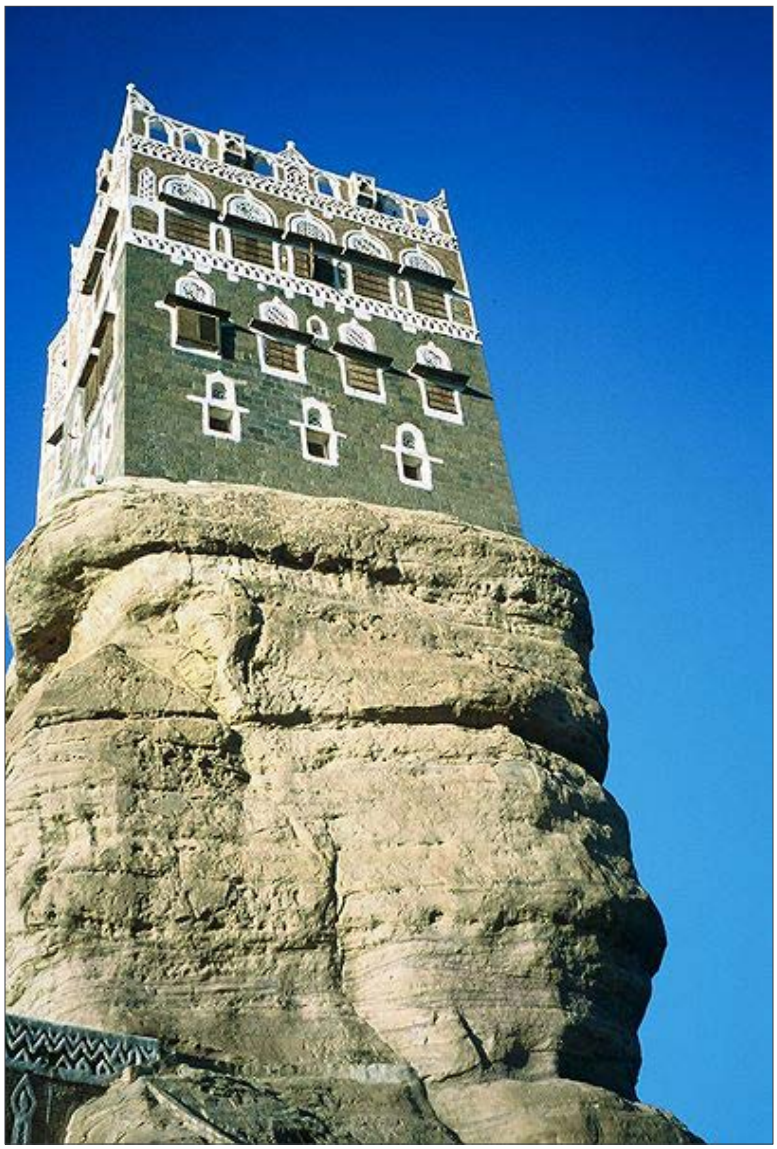
Although differences between Sunni and Shi'a Muslims have been widely reported, "different Shiite groups have historically disagreed among themselves on the identity, nature, and sequencing of the Shiite Imams."[22] The legitimacy of imams derives in part from being descendants of the Prophet Muhammad, or *sayyid*, a privileged group. Yet a distinguishing feature of Zaydi doctrine is that the position of imam could be filled by descendants of either of Ali's sons, Hussein or Hassan. More importantly, Zaydis believed candidates for the role of imam needed to distinguish themselves by demonstrating proper character, leadership, and Islamic scholarship. In contrast, other Shi'a sects believe imams of certain lineage inherently possess special spiritual insight and other qualities. In other sects, the imamate was traditionally passed down from father to son. Although heredity was a factor for Zaydis, they did not believe imams possessed or inherited supernatural qualities or were infallible.[23] For this and other reasons, Zaydis have been described as pragmatic and rational, rather than extremist or ideological.[24] The Zaydis' appreciation of individual merit (rather than just heritage) allowed competition and politics to play a role in the selection process. Zaydi imams were thus elected from an elite class by community leaders.[25] The Zaydi imamate formally ended in 1962, when it was overthrown in a revolution that led to the founding of the Yemen Arab Republic (North Yemen).[26]

Zaydis vs. Shafi'is; al-Houthi

Because of its practical and relatively orthodox nature, the Shi'a Zaydiyyah has been called the "fifth school" of Sunni Islam. The differences between the Zaydis and the Shafi'is of Yemen are relatively minor in comparison to the broader Shi'a–Sunni divide. Both groups place great importance on religious scholarship, and both typically avoid extremist religious views.[27] Ironically, the Zaydis reject any mystical or folk application of Islam, while the Shafi'is embrace Sufi traditions.[28] These circumstances reverse the

common pattern of the Shi'a-Sunni relationship, in which Shi'ites are seen as more mystical and Sunnis are more orthodox.[29]

Because they view imams as human rather than divine, Zaydis believe that unjust or illegitimate rulers can and should be overthrown. Such practice is seen as both a right and a duty.[30] In recent years, an insurgency in northern Yemen has been spearheaded by a powerful Zaydi family, the al-Houthi. The al-Houthi family has questioned the legitimacy of the Yemeni government, a concern that is one of the factors behind the rebellion. Ali Abdallah Saleh, who headed the government until 2011, was also a Zaydi, although not a *sayyid*.[31] Although the rebels have consistently denied it, the Saleh government has accused them of trying to restore the Zaydi imamate, which was abolished after Republican troops seized control of Sanaa in 1962.[32] This forced the imam to flee to the northern mountains, where he mounted a counteroffensive in the same locale as the Houthi rebellion.[33]



Former Imam residence
© Jörn Heise

Ismaili

Yemen is also home to a small group of Ismailis, a sect of Shi'a Islam. The sect emerged in the 8th century over disagreements concerning the selection of the seventh Shi'a imam. The Ismailis, as they came to be known, recognized Isma'il, the eldest son of the previous imam, Ja'far ibn Muhammad. But they were in the minority because most Shi'ites recognized Ja'far's younger son, Musa al Qasim, as the seventh imam. (The larger group of Shi'ites ultimately became known as the Imamis, or Twelvers, who are today the predominant Shi'a group in the Muslim world.)[34] Over the following centuries, many schisms occurred within the Ismaili sect, resulting in varied beliefs and practices.

The Ismailis who live in Yemen are divided into two subgroups: the Dawoodi (Daudis) Bohras and the Sulaymani Bohras. They are offshoots of the Musta'lian (Tayyibi) branch of the Ismailis. (These distinctions are important because of the wide range of beliefs among Ismailis.) In Yemen, the Sulaymanis are the larger of the two groups. They are also known as the Makarima after the name of their ruling family.[35] The Sulaymanis live

in the Haraz region and parts of the northern highlands, including along the border with Saudi Arabia (around the Najran region). Sulaymanis have historically isolated themselves from the Zaydis. They are known as a progressive Muslim group.[36] The Dawoodi Bohras of Yemen represent a small portion of the larger Dawoodi community based in India. In Yemen, they are concentrated in the Haraz Mountains, which remain a major site of pilgrimage for the international Dawoodi community.[37]

Although they split over issues of succession, the Sulaymanis and Dawoodis share a complex and often esoteric (hidden or mysterious) belief system. They follow the Ismaili tradition of *taqiyya*, the practice of hiding certain elements of one's religious belief system and practices. Their spiritual leaders are known as *da'i* rather than imams because they believe, like some other Shi'a groups, that imams live in hiding. *Da'i* are viewed as messengers for the hidden imams.[38] Both groups follow the Fatimad Ismaili tradition of observing seven (rather than five) pillars of Islam. These include: offering love and devotion to Allah and the prophets, imams, and *di'a* (*walaya*); ritual purity (*tahara*); daily prayers (*salat*); the giving of alms to the poor and needy (*zakat*); fasting (*sawm*); undertaking a pilgrimage to Mecca (*hajj*); and holy struggle or war (*jihad*).[39, 40]

Religion and the State

Islam is the state religion of Yemen, and shari'a, or Islamic law, is the basis of the country's legal system. Both are decreed by Yemen's constitution, which neither restricts nor protects religious freedom. Citizens and foreign nationals are free to practice a religion other than Islam, but non-Muslims comprise only a tiny percentage of the population. According to shari'a, it is illegal for Muslims to convert to another religion, and it is illegal for others to proselytize, or attempt to convert, Muslims to other faiths. These restrictions are enforced by the Yemeni government. Yemeni law also requires all elected government officials to be Muslim. The constitution states that the Yemeni president, in particular, "must practice his Islamic duties." Religious groups do not have to register with the state, but government permission is required to construct new places of worship. Islam is taught in public schools. Muslims and non-Muslims have the right to attend private schools that may or may not teach the religion.

To limit the spread of religious extremism, the government monitors mosques for sermons that urge violence or political rhetoric construed as a threat to public security. The government has closed more than 4,500 unlicensed religious schools and institutions because of concerns that they encouraged militant ideology or deviated from the government-approved curriculum.[41] Despite the government's efforts, Yemen remains susceptible to the spread of Islamic extremism and militancy. The government's power is weak beyond the Sanaa region. This has allowed an unknown number of unlicensed schools and mosques that promote Islamic fundamentalism to operate unchecked. The country has been described as an "easy haven" for those wishing to study and train in militant Islam.[42] Rampant poverty, unemployment, and illiteracy have

Inside Great Mosque in Sanaa
© Rick McCharles

been identified as major factors contributing to the spread of religious extremism and militancy in the country.[43]

Islam and Gender

Islamic law and custom call for strict boundaries between men and women. This notion, along with tribal customs, has contributed to the development of a patriarchal culture in which the respective roles of men and women are distinct. One of the most pervasive practices in Yemen is the segregation of the sexes. Yemeni men and women typically do not mix socially in public, especially if they are unrelated. Gender boundaries are also observed in the home, among the extended family. Many Yemeni women are restricted to the home through purdah, or the seclusion and veiling of women. This practice is partly tied to the traditional association of men with public spaces and women with domestic spaces. Circumstances vary by location and family, but many Yemeni women rarely leave the family compound or its immediate vicinity.[44] In public, most women wear a *balto* (a long cloak) and a *hijab* (a headscarf) and/or *niqab* (veil) to conceal themselves. Or they may wear a traditional outfit known as the *sharshaf*, which has even greater coverage.[45] Purdah is tied to Islam's general code of modesty for women, who are traditionally seen as more susceptible to sexual urges and advances than men.

Although excluded from group prayer at the mosque, Yemeni women gather instead at Quranic study groups known as *nadawat*. These informal gatherings may be held at a women's home or, occasionally, at a mosque. The meetings typically include a lecture on religious themes—presented by a woman—followed by socializing. This trend has been observed, in particular, among middle class women in Sanaa. Such meetings were tied to an Islamic charity organization.[46]

Islam in Daily Life

Prayer

The daily lives of Yemenis revolve around the basic duties of Islam. Foremost among daily rituals, Muslims must perform a series of prayers, known as *salat* (the second pillar of Islam). These prayers are performed five times a day: at dawn, noon, mid-afternoon, sunset, and evening. As prayer times correspond with the position of the sun (and thus vary throughout the year), Muslims are called to prayer by the muezzin (or *muadhdhin*). The muezzin typically announces the call for prayer from the minaret

Man waiting for prayer
© Alexandre Baron

of the local mosque. Prayers can be performed individually or with fellow Muslims at the mosque. Prayer at mosques is traditionally reserved for male Muslims. Women typically pray at home; if they do pray at mosques, they are segregated from men. The noon prayer on Friday, the Islamic holy day, is the most important prayer. It is performed communally by male Muslims at the mosque. All prayers must be offered facing Mecca, the holy city of Islam, which is located in Saudi Arabia, to the northwest of Yemen.[47]

Washing Ritual: Wudu or Ablution

Before prayer, Muslims are required to perform ablution, or *wudu*, as a form of ritual purification. This process involves washing one's hands, face, arms, neck, and feet, as well as rinsing out the mouth and nose. Muslims may also recite the *shahada* at this time.[48] *Wudu* is not performed only for physical cleanliness, although this is important. Rather, the rite is meant to spiritually and mentally cleanse the participant to perform a holy action in a pure and concentrated state. This state of ritual purity may be broken by any one of several acts, such as defecating or urinating, breaking wind, or, for many Muslims, simply touching a person of the opposite sex. The necessity of performing multiple daily prayers encourages Muslims to maintain ritual purity throughout the day. In Yemen, where water is extremely scarce, a family's water supply may be wholly reserved for drinking and performing *wudu*.[49] In the absence of water, symbolic elements, such as sand or a stone, may be used, or a person may simply perform the motions.[50]

Ritual Purity/Tahara

Ritual purity is known as *tahara*, and it extends to avoiding impure substances (such as bodily fluids) and foods considered unclean (such as pork). Muslims are considered impure following sexual intercourse or childbirth, or during menstruation. In these instances, full ablution, known as *ghusl*, is required to reach a state of ritual purity. *Ghusl* typically consists of washing the entire body in a ritual manner. This may be performed at a *hammam*, or bathhouse. Only after *wudu* or *ghusl* are performed can prayers or religious rites be conducted in good faith and righteous action.[51]

Social Welfare: Zakat

While *zakat* funds generally play a prominent role in improving social welfare in Muslim societies, their impact in Yemen is more limited. Like other Islamic countries, the government in Yemen handles collecting *zakat* through local councils. There have been complaints that most of it is spent on administrative costs, including council

member travel, and little actually reaches the poor (*al-mustahiqqin*), the intended beneficiaries. Those who refuse to pay or underpay according to council calculations, the minimum being the equivalent of 2.5% of a family's annual income, can be prosecuted. Charities also collect *zakat* since merchants may retain 25% of their obligatory contribution and disperse it to organizations of their choice.[52]

Religious Events and Festivals

Islamic events and festivals are observed according to the Islamic lunar calendar, which is shorter than the standard Gregorian calendar used in the United States and other countries. The dates of these events on the standard calendar thus change from year to year.

Fast ending date snack
© Carpetblogger / flickr.com

Ramadan

Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic calendar and the major religious event for Muslims. It is during this period that observant Muslims fulfill the third pillar of Islam, undertaking a fast (*sawm*). This event commemorates the initial revelation of the Quran to Muhammad, which according to Muslim tradition was performed by the Angel Gabriel (Jibril) during the month of Ramadan. Ramadan provides an opportunity for Muslims to show their devotion to the Islamic faith. Throughout the month, observant Muslims must abstain from eating, drinking, and engaging in sexual intercourse during daylight hours. Restrictions also apply to smoking and chewing gum. These prohibitions are observed to demonstrate piety and self-restraint. Muslims are also expected to enhance their study of the Quran during this time. Ramadan is a time of spiritual and physical purification. *Zakat* is paid at this time.

Exchange 1: When will Ramadan start?

Soldier:	When will Ramadan start?	ayHeen ʿayibtadee ramaDhaan?
Local:	Tomorrow/	ghudwa

Large meals, known as *iftar*, are typically served after sunset to offset the rigorous demands of daytime fasting, which can cause fatigue and irritability. The pace of everyday life slows considerably during holy month. Muslims work fewer hours, and

Children in Eid attire
© Kate Dixon

businesses and shops follow irregular schedules. In the Muslim community, young children and the sick and infirm may be exempted from the fast. Non-Muslims, including foreigners, are not required to fast, but they are expected to refrain from eating, drinking, smoking, or chewing gum in public. Skyrocketing food costs and protests over rising petrol costs have put a crimp in Ramadan celebrations in recent years.[53, 54]

Eid al-Fitr

The end of Ramadan is celebrated with a multiday festival known as Eid al-Fitr, or the Festival of the Breaking of the Fast. During this time, Muslims share traditional meals and exchange gifts with family and friends. This holiday is sometimes known as Eid as Sagheer, or the Lesser Festival.

Exchange 2: Will you be celebrating Eid?

Soldier:	Will you be celebrating Eid?	ʿatiHtafalo bil-ʾeed?
Local:	Yes!	aywa

Eid al-Adha

The Islamic festival Eid al-Adha occurs in the 12th month of the Islamic lunar year, known as Dhu al Hijjah. This month is the time for Muslims to observe the fifth pillar of Islam, the undertaking of a holy pilgrimage to Mecca (*hajj*). Marking the end of the pilgrimage, Eid al-Adha, or the Festival of the Sacrifice, commemorates Ibrahim's offer to sacrifice his son in obedience to Allah. As told in the Quran, Ibrahim prepared to sacrifice his son to Allah, but Allah intervened at the last moment and revealed that it was a test of faith. In an act of mercy, Allah allowed Ibrahim to sacrifice a ram instead. During the multiday festival, Yemenis sacrifice animals, primarily goats and sheep, to provide feasts for family and friends. Celebrations begin with city children burning tires and country children lighting fires.[55] Adults distribute a portion of the food to the poor and needy. Eid al-Adha is also called Eid al-Kabeer, or the Greater Festival.

Other Events and Holidays

While Ramadan and the two Eids are the most important religious events, Yemeni Muslims observe additional holidays of religious significance. Muharram is the Islamic New Year. It is celebrated on the first day of Muharram, the first month of the Islamic lunar calendar. Mouloud celebrates the birth of the Prophet Muhammad. Muslims

observe this holiday during the third month of the Islamic calendar, Rabi' al-Awwal. Both of these events, as well as the two Eids, are national public holidays. Ashura, the anniversary of the martyrdom of Hussein ibn Ali, is a major religious event for most Shi'ites. It occurs on the 10th day of the month of Muharram, a period of mourning for the Shi'a community. The Zaydis reportedly do not commemorate this event to the extent that other Shi'a sects do.[56]

Mosque minaret
© Jon Bowen

Places of Worship

Mosques

A mosque, or *masjid*, is the traditional site of Muslim worship. The largest and most important mosques are known as *jama* (or *jami*) *masjid*. These mosques, also called Friday mosques, host large communal prayers on Fridays (the Islamic holy day) and holidays. They are found in city or town centers. Smaller mosques are scattered throughout villages and rural areas, so each community has one if not several mosques. Mosques have several basic features. The main prayer hall is where Muslims meet to worship. They sit on the floor, which is covered in mats or carpets. The *mihrab* is a niche in the wall of the prayer hall that faces Mecca, and is known as *gibla*. Muslims always pray facing the holy city. To the right of the *mihrab* is the *minbar*, or pulpit, where the prayer leader stands during services. Minarets are towers attached to the mosque from which the muezzin calls Muslims to prayer. Mosques contain designated areas for Muslims to remove their shoes and washrooms where they perform their ritual ablution (*wudu*) before prayer.[57, 58] Besides holding prayer services, mosques often serve as schools and communal meeting centers.

Great Mosque

The Great Mosque, or Jama al Kabir, in the capital, Sanaa, is one of Yemen's most well known and culturally significant mosques. It dates to the 7th century and is thought to be among the world's oldest *masjid*.[59] It has long functioned as a center for Islamic studies. The compound houses a library containing a large collection of ancient

Married couple & friend
© Francsco Veronesi

manuscripts.[60] Another, newer mosque in Sanna is known as the Saleh Mosque, after the country's president, Ali Abdallah Saleh. Capable of holding roughly 40,000 people, this massive mosque opened in 2008 to some controversy.[61] Its cost of USD 60 million was seen by many Yemenis as an extravagant use of government resources considering much of the population remains poor and lacks basic social services.[62]

Women, Mosques, and Dress

Women are typically not allowed to attend prayer services at mosques. An exception to this norm is seen among the Bohras (the Yemeni Ismailis), who reportedly permit their women to pray at mosques.[63] Female worshippers are nonetheless relegated to a separate section. Most mosques in Yemen do not allow entry to non-Muslims.[64] (Cemeteries may also prohibit non-Muslim visitors.)[65] Non-Muslims should receive express permission from mosque officials before entering a mosque.

Exchange 3: May I enter the mosque?

Soldier:	May I enter the mosque?	mumkin adKhul al-masjid?
Local:	Yes.	aywa

Yemenis wear conservative clothing, especially when visiting a mosque. Men generally wear skullcaps and women wear headscarves.

Exchange 4: Do I need to cover my head?

Soldier:	Do I need to cover my head?	laazim aghaTee raasee?
Local:	Yes.	aywa

Visitors need to dress conservatively to avoid causing offense. Men should wear loose-fitting pants and long-sleeved shirts. Women should wear loose-fitting clothing that covers everything above the ankles, including the arms and shoulders. They should also wear headscarves. Finally, and of great importance, shoes must be removed before entering a mosque.

Exchange 5: Must I take off my shoes inside the mosque?

Soldier:	Must I take off my shoes inside the mosque?	laazim aKhla' jazmatee daaKhil al-masjid?
Local:	Yes.	aywa

For the Shafi'is, the tombs of Sufi saints also serve as sites of pilgrimage and religious veneration. The practice of visiting these tombs is known as *ziyara*.[66] Such tombs can be found in regions where the Shafi'is are predominant: the Tihama, the southern highlands, and central and eastern Yemen.[67]

Endnotes

1 Thomas D. Gochenour, "Towards a Sociology of the Islamisation of Yemen," in *Contemporary Yemen: Politics and Historical Background*, ed. B.R. Pridham (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1984), 8–17.

2 Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. Department of State, "International Religious Freedom Report 2009: Yemen," 26 October 2009, http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127361.htm

3 Jeremy M. Sharp, "Yemen: Background and U.S. Relations" (report, Congressional Research Service, 13 January 2010), 8, http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/RL34170.pdf

4 IRIN, "Analysis: Yemen's Rebellions Fuelled by Economic Meltdown," 4 February 2010, http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=87996

5 BBC, "Religions: Islam: Texts: The Qur'an," 8 September 2009, http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/islam/texts/quran_1.shtml

6 *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Islam: Fundamental Practices and Institutions of Islam: The Five Pillars," 2009, http://search.eb.com/eb/article-69149

7 BBC, "Religions: Islam: Beliefs: Basic Articles of Faith," 3 September 2009, http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/islam/beliefs/beliefs.shtml

8 *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Islam: Islamic Thought: Theology and Sectarianism," 2009, http://search.eb.com/eb/article-69163

9 BBC, "Religions: Islam: Beliefs: Sunni and Shi'a," 19 August 2009, http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/islam/subdivisions/sunnishia_1.shtml

10 *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Sufism," 2010, http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9105856

11 Thomas D. Gochenour, "Towards a Sociology of the Islamisation of Yemen," in *Contemporary Yemen: Politics and Historical Background*, ed. B.R. Pridham (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1984), 19.

12 Marta Colburn, "Glossary: Sufi," in *The Republic of Yemen: Developmental Challenges in the 21st Century* (London: Catholic Institute for International Relations, 2002), 78.

13 Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. Department of State, "International Religious Freedom Report 2009: Yemen," 26 October 2009, http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127361.htm

14 Manfred W. Wenner, "Chapter 2: People and Culture," in *The Yemen Arab Republic: Development and Change in an Ancient Land* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1991), 29.

15 Daniel McLaughlin, "Chapter 1: Background Information: Religion" in *Yemen* (Guilford, CT: Globe Pequot Press, 2007).

16 Werner Daum, "Islam," in *Insight Guide: Yemen*, 2nd ed., ed. Hans Höfer (Singapore: APA Publications, 1992), 75.

17 *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Shi'ite: Early Development," 2010, http://search.eb.com/eb/article-272010#951982.hook

18 Daniel McLaughlin, "Chapter 1: Background Information: Religion" in *Yemen* (Guilford, CT: Globe Pequot Press, 2007).

19 Sally Ann Baynard, "Chapter 1: Historical Setting," in *The Yemens: Country Studies*, 2nd ed., ed. Richard F. Nyrop (Washington, DC: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1986), 27.

20 *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Zaydiyah," 2010, http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9078280

21 Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. Department of State, "International Religious Freedom Report 2011: Yemen," 26 October 2011, http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/irf/religiousfreedom/index.htm#wrapper

22 Kamran Scot Aghaie, "The Passion of 'Ashura' in Shiite Islam," in *Voices of Islam*: *Voices of the Spirit*, ed. Vincent Cornell (New York: Praeger Publishers,

2006), 119.

23 Christopher Blanchard, "Islam: Sunnis and Shiites" (report, Congressional Research Service, 11 December 2006,) 5, http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/78715.pdf

24 Werner Daum, "Islam," in *Insight Guide: Yemen*, 2nd ed., ed. Hans Höfer (Singapore: APA Publications, 1992), 72–73.

25 Sally Ann Baynard, "Chapter 1: Historical Setting," in *The Yemens: Country Studies*, 2nd ed., ed. Richard F. Nyrop (Washington, DC: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1986), 24.

26 Manfred W. Wenner, "Chapter 2: People and Culture," in *The Yemen Arab Republic: Development and Change in an Ancient Land* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1991), 27.

27 Werner Daum, "Islam," in *Insight Guide: Yemen*, 2nd ed., ed. Hans Höfer (Singapore: APA Publications, 1992), 75.

28 Paul Dresch, "Chapter 1: Introductory: A Sketch of Physical and Conceptual Geography," in *Tribes, Government, and History in Yemen* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 11.

29 Daniel McLaughlin, "Chapter 1: Background Information: Religion" in *Yemen* (Guilford, CT: Globe Pequot Press, 2007), 23.

30 Sally Ann Baynard, "Chapter 1: Historical Setting," in *The Yemens: Country Studies*, 2nd ed., ed. Richard F. Nyrop (Washington, DC: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1986), 24–27.

31 Jeremy M. Sharp, "Yemen: Background and U.S. Relations" (report, Congressional Research Service, 13 January 2010), 8, http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/RL34170.pdf

32 Paul Handley, "Saudi and Yemen Battle Zaidi Rebels," Agence France-Presse, 7 November 2009, http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5imeeJ9igAWZzVyXkyN75kZRjhV7A

33 Ginny Hill, "Cold War Roots of Yemen Conflict," BBC News, 17 September 2009, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8261867.stm

34 *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Isma'ilite," 2010, http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9042936

35 Manfred W. Wenner, "Chapter 2: People and Culture," in *The Yemen Arab Republic: Development and Change in an Ancient Land* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1991), 28.

36 Farhad Daftary, "Chapter 5: Mustalian Ismailism," in *The Ismailis: Their History and Doctrines* (UK: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 321–23.

37 Max Kasparek, "The Populations," in *Yemen: Haraz Mountains: Nature, Culture, Trekking* (Heidelberg, Germany: Kasparek Verlag, 2007), 17–20.

38 Sally Ann Baynard, "Chapter 1: Historical Setting," in *The Yemens: Country Studies*, 2nd ed., ed. Richard F. Nyrop (Washington, DC: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1986), 29–30.

39 Farhad Daftary, "Chapter 4: Fatimad Ismailism," in *The Ismailis: Their History and Doctrines* (UK: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 250.

40 Daniel McLaughlin, "Chapter 1: Background Information: Religion" in *Yemen* (Guilford, CT: Globe Pequot Press, 2007), 25.

41 Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. Department of State, "International Religious Freedom Report 2011: Yemen," 31 July 2011, http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/irf/religiousfreedom/index.htm#wrapper

42 Michel Moutot, "Yemen an Easy Haven for Foreigners Drawn to Militant Islam," Agence France-Presse, 21 January 2010, http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5jziujTwf4jWeaTbCaGclpiNAru_g

43 IRIN, "Analysis: Yemen's Rebellions Fuelled by Economic Meltdown," 4 February 2010, http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=87996

44 Laurie Krieger, "Chapter 2: North Yemen,"

in *The Yemens: Country Studies*, 2nd ed., ed. Richard F. Nyrop (Washington, D.C: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1986), 125–27.

45 Joke Buringa, "Traditional Dress and Fashion," in *Insight Guide: Yemen*, 2nd ed., ed. Hans Höfer (Singapore: APA Publications, 1992), 98.

46 Janine A. Clark, "Chapter 4: The Islah Charitable Society in Yemen: Women's Social Networks, Charity, and Da'wa," in *Islam, Charity, and Activism: Middle-Class Networks and Social Welfare in Egypt, Jordan, and Yemen* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), 115–16.

47 John L. Esposito, ed., "Salat," in *The Oxford Dictionary of Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 275.

48 Cyril Glassé, ed., "Wudu," in *The New Encyclopedia of Islam*, 3rd ed. (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2008), 553–55.

49 IRIN, "Yemen: Drought Displaces Thousands in Mountainous Northwest," 5 May 2008, http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=78048

50 *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Tahara," 2010, http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9474562

51 *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Tahara," 2010, http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9474562

52 Ali Saeed, "The Absence of Zakat's Impact on Yemen's Economy," *Yemen Times*, 14 October 2009.

53 Mohammed Ghobari, "As Bleak Ramadan Begins, Yemeni Protesters Cling to Hope," Reuters, 3 August 2011, http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/08/03/oukwd-uk-yemen-ramadan-idAFTRE7721P520110803

54 Caroline Gluck, "Ramadan in Yemen—the Hardest Year Ever," Huffington Post, 9 August 2012, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/caroline-gluck/ramadan-in-yemen---the-ha_b_1758876.html

55 Faisal Darem, "Eid al-Adha in Yemen Remains Vibrant Despite Tough Economic Conditions," Al-Shorfa, 25 October 2012, http://al-shorfa.com/en_GB/articles/meii/features/2012/10/25/feature-03

56 Manfred W. Wenner, "Chapter 2: People and Culture," in *The Yemen Arab Republic: Development and Change in an Ancient Land* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1991), 29.

57 *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Mosque," 2008, http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/393679/mosque#

58 BBC News, "Religions: Islam: Prayer and Worship: Mosque," 18 August 2009, http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/islam/prayer/mosque.shtml

59 Manfred W. Wenner, "Chapter 2: People and Culture," in *The Yemen Arab Republic: Development and Change in an Ancient Land* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1991), 23.

60 Frances Linzeel Gordon, "Sana'a: Mosques," in *Lonely Planet: Arabian Peninsula* (Footscray, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet Publications, 2004), 376.

61 BBC News, "Yemen's New $60m Mosque," 24 November 2008, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/7745708.stm

62 Associated Press, "Yemen's Poor Outraged by Massive Mosque for President," Fox News, 23 November 2008, http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,456506,00.html

63 Mohammed al-Kibsi, "Bohra Celebrate 96th Birthday of Da'i al-Mutlaq Syedna Burhanuddin," Yemen Observer, 8 May 2007, http://www.yobserver.com/front-page/10012153.html

64 Daniel McLaughlin, "Chapter 2: Practical Information: Mosques," in *Yemen* (Guilford, CT: Globe Pequot Press, 2007), 62.

65 VisitYemen, "ABC for Visitors," n.d., http://www.visityemen.com/index.html

66 David Buchman, "The Underground Friends of God and Their Adversaries: A Case Study and Survey of Sufism in Contemporary Yemen," American Institute for Yemeni Studies, 1997, http://www.aiys.org/no-39-1997/189-the-underground-friends-of-god-and-their-

adversaries-a-case-study-and-survey-of-sufism-in-contemporary-yemen.html

67 Werner Daum, "Islam," in *Insight Guide: Yemen*, 2nd ed., ed. Hans Höfer (Singapore: APA Publications, 1992), 73.

Overview: Chapter 2 Assessment

1. Although officially an Islamic state, Yemen respects religious freedom for non-Muslims.

   FALSE

   Islam is the state religion in Yemen, religious freedom is not constitutionally provided, apostasy laws exist, and laws forbid non-Muslims from proselytizing.

2. Islam heavily influences Yemeni life.

   TRUE

   Islam shapes not only the daily lives of Yemenis but also the country's social organization, politics, and government.

3. Ashura is a religious holiday celebrated only among Shiites.

   FALSE

   Ashura is an important day for Sunni and Shi'a sects but for different reasons. For Shiites, the day is a solemn commemoration of the martyrdom of Hussein ibn Ali. For Sunnis, it commemorates the day that Moses fasted and Allah saved the Israelites from their Egyptian foes.

4. Apostasy is criminalized in Yemen.

   TRUE

   The Yemeni government enforces shari'a proscriptions on apostasy, and it is illegal for others to proselytize to or attempt to convert Muslims to other faiths.

5. The Yemeni government takes no steps to mitigate religious extremism.

   FALSE

   The government closed more than 4,500 unlicensed religious schools and institutions because of concerns that they encouraged militant ideology or deviated from the government-approved curriculum.

Shopping in Sanaa
© Davide / flickr.com

Chapter 3: Traditions

Introduction

Yemeni society is deeply rooted in *adat wa taqalid*, or "customs and traditions."[1] These range from basic codes of interaction to forms of social organization, such as tribe, class, and gender. Combined with the beliefs and practices of Islam, these customs make Yemen a conservative, traditional society. Circumstances vary greatly from a southern urban center like Aden, for example, to a remote *wadi* (valley) in the eastern plateau. Yet in all regions, Yemenis place great value on customs and manners. As in many Muslim cultures, such practice relates to preserving individual and familial honor, which are highly valued and closely linked in Yemeni society. This is especially true among Yemeni tribes, for whom heritage and perceptions of character determine social status. These

factors not only affect everyday social relations but also economic and political matters in the community.

In many areas of Yemen, the tribal order operates independently of the central government, which has limited authority beyond the Sanaa region.[2] The absence of the state in these mostly rural areas contributes to the need for strong, traditional forms of local organization. As one writer described it, "This narrow and almost inflexible social order both demands and supports the solidarity of the community."[3] At the same time, tribal traditions and politics play a major role in the central government.[4] Yemen is thus characterized by the coexistence and interaction of a strong tribal society and weak state administration.[5]

Yemeni men in market
© Francesco Veronesi

Traditional Social Groups

Social organization varies widely in modern Yemen, where different regions have unique histories and cultural influences. Social structures may even vary from village to village within a region. Traditionally, there are several types of social groupings recognized throughout much of Yemen. Although these structures have broken down to some extent, they remain influential.[6]

At the top of the traditional hierarchy are the *sayyids*, or *saada*, an elite group of well-educated and often wealthy families. They trace their lineage to the Prophet Muhammad, a heritage that carries immense prestige. Men from their ranks served as religious leaders and conflict mediators. The Zaydi Shi'a imam was chosen by the *sayyids* from among their own class. Just below the *sayyids* in the hierarchy were the *qadis* (*quda*), a class of Muslim scholars who distinguished themselves through education rather than heritage. *Qadis* could transmit membership in the class to their offspring. The term *qadi* is broadly used in the Arab world as the name for a traditional Islamic judge; Yemeni *qadis* have held other esteemed scholarly and professional positions as well.[7] In the modern era, *qadis* have, to some extent, surpassed *sayyids* in stature. *Qadis* now play a greater role in the central government than *sayyids*. Some *sayyids* have aligned themselves more closely with tribes following the diminished importance and, in some cases, rejection of their class in post-revolution Yemen.[8]

The largest social group is that of the *qabili* (*qabail*), or tribesmen. Most tribesmen are sedentary agriculturist landowners. (Landless farmers, or peasants, who traditionally have a lower social status than tribesmen are known as *fellahin*.)[9] Tribesmen provided protection or sanctuary (*hijra*) for the elite *sayyids* and *qadis* and for lower-class non-

tribesmen whom they took on as clients. As landowners and warriors, tribesmen were seen as independent and self-sufficient. They have a similar reputation today. Tribesmen continue to carry weapons to mark their tribal identity. Members of a tribe often claim a common heritage—either through blood or political alliances—that can be traced back to pre-Islamic times. This gives them significant social esteem.[10] Yet for many tribes, especially those in the highlands, territory plays a greater role in shaping tribal identity.[11]

Tribal Affairs Office
© Osama Al-Eryani

Hashid and Bakil

The Hashid and Bakil—two tribal confederations—are the most powerful and influential tribes in Yemen. Based north of Sanaa, the Hashid confederation is the more politically dominant of the two; it plays a strong role in the central government.[12] Yemen's president, Ali Abdallah Saleh, is a member of the Hashid.[13] Among the *qabili* is an elite group of families known as the *mashaykh*, from which tribal leaders, or *shaykhs*, are traditionally chosen.[14] Locally elected s*haykhs* have been increasingly incorporated into the central government in recent years.[15] Tribalism remains strongest in the northern highlands and areas of the eastern plateau. In the coastal plains, it is "weak or virtually nonexistent." In the south, the promotion of socialism under the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (1970–1990) played a significant role in weakening tribalism.[16]

Bottom of the Pyramid

The lowest social group in Yemen has consisted of persons without a traceable ancestry—an essential source of identity and esteem in Yemen. Its members are sometimes known generally as Bani Khums.[17] People who work in various service or commercial positions, which were typically passed from generation to generation, make up this group. It includes shopkeepers, artisans, butchers, barbers, bathhouse workers, and street sweepers, among others. Such positions were deemed lowly by tribesmen and the elites.[18] Members of this group were landless and dependent upon tribesmen for protection. They were thus considered "weak" and without *'ard* (honor).[19] In urban areas, state services (e.g., education) and a cash economy have increased economic mobility and broken down many of the traditional prejudices against people working in these service positions.[20]

Although social change has dissolved and modified the traditional hierarchy to some degree, an extremely marginalized group is known as the Akhdam, or "servants." Typically dark skinned (with African features) and poor, they work as street sweepers or cleaners and live in slums. They prefer to be called "al Muhamasheen," or "the marginalized ones."[21] Another low-status group is known as the *abid*, the descendents of slaves.[22]

Boy with gun
© Nick Leonard

Honor and Values Among Yemeni Tribes

In Yemen, as in most Islamic societies, the notion of honor plays a major role in shaping traditional codes of conduct. This is especially true among Yemeni tribes, who follow a code of customary or tribal law known as *urf*, or *urf qabili*. This social code has also historically been called *taghut*, a derogatory reference to the code's pre-Islamic foundations and its deviations from shari'a, or Islamic law.[23] Yet *urf* operates alongside shari'a to regulate Yemeni tribal society. Shari'a addresses religious custom and family law, but *ulf* pertains to conduct, responsibility, and relations among and between tribes.[24] The specifics of customary law are not universal among Yemeni tribes, who agree on general notions of right and wrong but may differ in terms of process or interpretation.[25]

Honor and Shame

The central theme of tribal custom is the maintenance of honor (*sharaf*). For tribesmen, honor is the defining characteristic of a person's self-worth and reputation in society. Honor must be protected at all times to prevent it from being tarnished. A tribesman's honor is bound to that of his family, ancestry, and tribe. Those with a more noble ancestry are seen as possessing greater honor. Individually, gaining and maintaining honor depends upon a tribesman's character and behavior. Courage, religious virtue, hospitality (generosity), strength, integrity, and self-possession (composure) are some of the most highly valued attributes.[26] A tribesman's honor is dependent upon his ability to protect the honor and sanctity of his land, home, and family. This aspect of honor is known as *'ard*, which is associated with the defense of what is seen as vulnerable

or weak, particularly land and women. (Yemeni tribes have a saying: "*al-ard 'ard*" or "land is honor.") Bound by tribal code and his honor, a tribesman is responsible for the protection of guests and refugees.[27]

Displaced Yemeni
© IRIN Photos / flickr.com

Loss of Honor

While these two conceptions of honor, *sharaf* and *'ard*, are inextricably connected, subtle differences can be seen in perceptions of how they may be lost. A Yemeni tribesman's honor is tarnished by committing or suffering a disgraceful or demeaning act. The concept of disgrace or shame is known as *'ayb*. As it refers to *sharaf*, acts of *'ayb* include cowardice or stinginess, or any failure to adhere to basic social codes of propriety. It also refers to insults and gossip that question or slight a tribesman's character. In this sense, a man's face is said to be a reflection of his *sharaf*: "What 'breaks' a man's *sharaf* is said to 'blacken' his face. . . . By contrast, the face is 'whitened' by courage, generosity, and honourable [*sic*] conduct."[28] Tribesmen thus make promises on their honor, or "face," by drawing their finger down their face or grasping their beard. This indicates that they are giving their word.[29]

A tribesman's *'ard* is damaged by acts that violate the sanctity and privacy of his land, home, or family. This includes any actions that limit his ability to protect such assets. This happens if he is relieved of his weapons. Acts of trespass, physical assault, or murder are attacks on a tribesman's *'ard*. In such instances, a tribesman's damaged *'ard* is seen as "ravaged," "violated," or "exposed."[30] Tribesmen are therefore territorial and extremely protective of anything that falls under their domain.

Mediating Conflict and Making Amends

Yemeni tribes possess a strong sense of shared responsibility, which is the product of a strict honor code that discourages dishonorable action by tying a tribesman's honor to that of his family and community. Yet infractions and conflicts often occur, and tribal law has mechanisms for mediating and resolving them.[31] Tribal leaders, or *shaykhs*, traditionally serve as conflict mediators. When an act of insult or injury has damaged a tribesman's honor, amends are sought to restore "balance" (*mizan*) to the situation. Settlements are negotiated through an often lengthy and complex arbitration process overseen by one or several *shaykhs*. Amends most often take the form of a payment in cash or goods. The size of the payment depends upon the seriousness of the insult or injury (*'ayb*). Minor offenses may result in small cash payments, while a serious offense, such as the killing of a fellow tribesman, requires a large payment. For the latter, a

payment known as "blood money" (*diyah*) is required to make amends for the "blood-debt" (*dayn al-dam*).[32]

Guarantors who represent the parties involved ensure the amends are made. Some payments, such as *diyah*, may be supplied by the whole tribe or part of the tribe.[33] Tribesmen who commit a serious breach of tribal law may be expelled from their tribe and left to fend for themselves.[34] Although the central government operates official courts, this traditional form of conflict resolution remains in practice in tribal areas.[35] Here official channels of state government may be out of reach, and attempting to resolve disputes through them may be a source of shame.[36]

Blood Feuds

Not all conflicts are resolved quickly or peacefully. Although most settlements are made through material compensation, revenge is perceived as an honorable option and necessary for restoring one's good name (*naqa*).[37] Revenge can develop into a bloody cycle in which each act of violence is met with a reciprocal response. Tribal mediation is designed to prevent these conflicts from spiraling out of control and from wreaking long-term social and economic instability on a community. Yet disputes over land, water, and selection of marital partners frequently result in murder, often compelling the relatives of the deceased to seek revenge. Revenge killings have even spread to urban areas, where tribal members who migrated to the city may live without the protection of their rural counterparts. Some observers have tied the spread of revenge killings to a decline in tribal values that once limited the practice. One such factor is the perceived corruption of the *shaykh*'s role. According to some sources, the *shaykh* has been incorporated into the central government, thus reducing his accountability to his people.[38, 39] Although he may have previously had a vested interest in restoring harmony to demonstrate his leadership skills, now he does not. The widespread availability of guns also makes it difficult to prevent disputes from degenerating into blood feuds (*tha'r*).[40]

Tribesmen and Jambiya

Reflecting their history as a warrior class, tribesmen (*qabili*) carry weapons as a sign of status. Traditionally the right was reserved for tribesmen and some elites, but not the lower classes. Weapons are not only a means of defense, but an emblem of a tribesman's honor, masculinity, and strength. This is especially true of the *jambiya*, a curved dagger that is widely carried throughout Yemen. The dagger is sheathed and typically worn upright, front and center, on a tribesman's belt. (This placement marks a tribesman.) The sheath and the handle of the *jambiya* are usually decorated. *Jambiya* are highly prized by their owners, with some worth a fortune depending upon the materials they are made of and their age. A tribesman's social status is evident from the value and design of his *jambiya*. These daggers play an important role in the coming-of-age cycle for males,

who carry them regularly as adults. According to one *shaykh*, "To this day, a number of people would rather die than be seen in public without their *Jambiyas*."[41] A tribesman may touch or draw attention to his *jambiya*, a symbol of his honor (*sharaf*), when he represents himself or feels his honor is in question or under assault.[42] To unsheathe the dagger in a hostile manner dramatically signals potential conflict.[43]

Firearms

Firearms are also commonly carried by tribesmen. These are highly prized possessions and symbols of a tribesman's strength and masculinity. As one Yemeni community leader said, " . . . a tribesman can give up everything except his gun."[44]

Exchange 6: Are you carrying any guns?

Soldier:	Are you carrying any guns?	bitiHmil ayi seelaaH?
Local:	Yes.	aywa

Man with AK47
© Jon Bowen

According to tribal custom, guns are necessary for defense but should be carried and used with restraint. Although they are fired at celebrations, they are not to be discharged with "hostile intent" during times of peace.[45] Gun ownership is widespread, especially in the northern highlands and eastern plateau. Small arms proliferation is a serious issue in Yemen. In 2009, a low estimate placed the number of small arms in the country at nearly 10 million, with most of them in private hands. Some estimates made in the last decade place this number as high as 60 million, or almost three guns for every Yemeni.[46] Only in 2007 was the open carrying of guns banned in the urban capitals of each governorate, or administrative region, of the country.[47] Yet this law has been difficult to enforce and, according to reports, has merely moved the country's thriving gun trade from open markets to private homes and shops.[48]

Gender Roles and Relations

Traditional Roles

In Yemen, the respective roles of men and women are defined by custom and local interpretation of shari'a, or Islamic law. Likewise, interactions between the sexes are strictly regulated. Like most Muslim Arab cultures, Yemeni society is strongly patriarchal, so authority lies with the male head of household. Yemeni society is also patrilineal, meaning lineage is traced on the father's side of the family. Men enjoy more rights and greater social status than women, who are subordinate to their husbands

and male relatives. As the head of the household, men are expected to be strong-willed providers and protectors of their family. They make the important decisions for the family and represent its interests in the public sphere.[49] Women, on the other hand, are expected to be good Muslims and mothers, and preferably to bear sons. Their role is often limited to the domestic sphere, where they care for children and perform essential duties for the household. They are expected to be chaste and modest.[50]

Women with children
© Al Jazeera English / flickr.com

Gender and Honor

The secondary status of women in Yemeni society is a product of traditional views and kinship systems. In a patrilineal system, women earn their status by producing male offspring who carry on the family's name and wealth. But even though Yemeni men trace their heritage through their father, honor is inseparable from that of female relatives. Women also represent the family's honor, and their character and actions reflect not only upon themselves but also upon their family. This custom follows the tradition of shared honor and responsibility among Yemeni families and tribes. By custom, women are under the domain of their male relatives, whose honor (*'ard*) depends on their ability to protect them. Women are seen as weak and vulnerable, not only to external threats, but to their own desires. This is especially considered true pertaining to female chastity and preserving virginity before marriage.[51]

A woman's "sexual honor" is known as *namus*, which is closely related to the notion of *'ard*. Both are vulnerable qualities (and assets of the family) that require fierce protection by male relatives.[52] In this way, a woman's *namus* is bound to the honor of her male relatives, who are bound to protect her. In addition, male relatives monitor or control a woman's behavior because, according to tradition, women are less responsible and more susceptible to impulse than men.[53] Yet even incidents that are beyond a woman's control, such as cases of assault, bring disgrace to both her and her family. Any damage to a girl's *namus* may hinder her family's ability to secure a marriage partner for her—a process that has both social and economic implications.

Segregation and Seclusion

These traditional views shape the daily lives and interactions of men and women in Yemeni society. The segregation of men and women is common practice. Members of the opposite sex do not mix socially in public, especially if they are unrelated. Gender boundaries are also observed in the home, among the extended family. Physical contact

between unrelated men and women is taboo; even friendships between members of the opposite sex are seen as inappropriate. The public realm is a male-dominated space. Many Yemeni women are restricted to the home through the practice of purdah, or the seclusion and veiling of women. Circumstances vary according to location and family. Urban women and those from wealthy rural families were the most secluded because their participation in the public workforce was not necessary. Today, many Yemeni women remain restricted to the family compound or its immediate vicinity.[54]

Women may be escorted by male relatives in public. A woman's interaction with members of the opposite sex is often limited to her male relatives within the domestic realm. All of these practices protect a woman's *namus* and the honor of her family. They also reflect the Islamic custom of maintaining boundaries between the genders. In the region comprising the former South Yemen, such practices were loosened under the socialist government of the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (1970–1990). But since unification in 1990, conservative customs such as purdah have reemerged across the south.[55, 56] The seclusion of girls and women to the home contributes to a wide gender gap in Yemen. Yemeni women, for example, have substantially lower rates of literacy and workforce participation than Yemeni men.[57] Because the legal system is weak, female propriety is enforced by the community.[58]

Child bride
© BBC World, Service

Abuse and Honor Killings

Women who fail to comply with the social code—such as wearing an inappropriate outfit—may face verbal harassment from men in public. Domestic abuse is considered a private family affair and thus goes undocumented. The stigma of shame encourages this practice. Abused women are expected to seek help from a male relative, so as to keep the matter in the family. Rape is illegal but rarely prosecuted because such charges are difficult to prove. Without a confession, Yemeni law requires testimony from four female witnesses or two male witnesses to verify its occurrence. (The higher value of a male witness reflects traditional perceptions of gender.) More often, rape victims are themselves charged with "fornication" while the suspect is released. As a result, rape often goes unreported.

Honor killings are also thought to occur in Yemen, although they are rarely reported or documented. These killings are carried out in extreme cases in which a woman or girl is thought to have shamed her family. Serious offenses include committing adultery, engaging in premarital sexual relations, or suffering rape. The death of the shamed

woman in an honor killing is thought to restore the family's honor and good name (*naqa*).[59] Male relatives usually carry out the killings themselves, and they are often supported by the male community in doing so. Indeed, Yemeni law grants leniency to persons convicted of committing violent crimes against women in the name of restoring honor.[60]

Female Genital Mutilation

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is the practice of partial or complete removal of some or all parts of the female genitalia. Known as *khitan al-inath*, this practice is performed in the belief that it accords with religious and cultural custom. Although justifications for the practice vary, its practitioners say it curbs a woman's sexual impulses, marks her entry into womanhood, and/or ensures cleanliness. But FGM has no doctrinal foundation in Islam and no medical benefits. Rather, the procedure can be extremely painful and lead to a variety of serious and long-term health complications, particularly in relation to childbirth. It can also cause psychological trauma.[61] The practice is most often identified with communities in Yemen's coastal regions, but some reports indicate it is widespread.[62]

In 2001, the Yemeni government barred healthcare personnel from performing the procedure. Yet it still occurs frequently in the home, where it is often performed in an unprofessional manner in unsanitary conditions. As UN officials described it, "the practice persists because it is sustained by social perceptions, including that girls and their families will face shame, social exclusion and diminished marriage prospects if they forego cutting." In 2010, Yemeni officials announced tentative plans to pass a more comprehensive ban within 4 years, following further study.[63] In Yemen, FGM has been described in the local press as "a very sensitive issue." FGM is often ignored or denied despite its continued practice.

Qat Chewing

Qat is a shrub whose leaves are chewed as a mild stimulant. It is not a narcotic, as is often claimed.[64] Its chemical compounds are more closely related to amphetamines.[65] Qat is widely consumed in Yemen as part of daily afternoon social gatherings. For men, these gatherings are known as *maqil*. *Maqil* provide an opportunity for male community members to share conversation, conduct business, settle disputes, discuss local economic and political issues, and exchange lore and poetry.[66] For women, who consume the drug less often or not at all, qat may be chewed during female social gatherings known as *tafrita*. These gatherings also take place in the afternoon.[67]

Maqil are held in the entertaining room (*mafraj*) of the host's home, where guests arrange themselves according to social status. Guests bring their own qat, which is purchased freshly cut, on a daily basis, in the markets. (Qat must be consumed no later than 24–36 hours after its harvest, a condition that has limited its export.) Chewers

Carrying qat to market
© Carpetblogger / flickr.com

carefully pick their qat leaves, which are amassed in a large lump on the inside of the cheek. The juices take effect within an hour. While it may vary from person to person, the initial effect is said to be a "feeling of excitement and elation" that lasts for a couple hours. This is followed by a "dreamy, contemplative mood" that "lasts an hour or more." During the initial stage of the qat chew, conversation is lively and animated. As the feeling of euphoria fades, so does the conversation, leading to periods of silence and quiet contemplation. The drug suppresses the appetite but provokes thirst. Drinking water or soda during the process is therefore common, as is smoking. Beginning after lunch in the early afternoon, these gatherings typically last until early evening.[68]

Qat: A Social Problem

Although qat chews have a long history in Yemen, widespread daily consumption of the plant has been increasingly identified as a serious social problem. Heavy use has been tied to illnesses such as kidney and liver disease. In some Muslim Arab countries, such as Saudi Arabia, qat chewing is outlawed for being un-Islamic.[69] In Yemen, the plant is generally not considered a drug, even by officials. Yet qat chewing can be an everyday habit that absorbs much of a Yemeni's disposable income and free afternoons. In a country with high poverty and unemployment, some observers view qat chewing as a waste of productive labor hours and precious funds.[70] Some farmers may spend more than half their income on the plant, which is widely consumed by all levels of society. High demand for the plant makes it Yemen's primary cash crop, creating an incentive for cultivators to replace food crops with qat, a water-intensive crop. This contributes to domestic food shortages as well as an increased strain on the country's dwindling water supply.[71]

Greetings and Interactions

Yemenis greet others in a formal manner that respects status and gender. A common formal greeting is the standard Arabic blessing used throughout the Muslim world:

Exchange 7: May peace be upon you.

Soldier:	May peace be upon you.	as-salaamu ʿaleykum
Local:	And upon you be peace.	wa-ʾaleykum as-salaam

When exchanging this blessing, Yemenis may place their right hand on their chests as a show of sincerity. They may also bow slightly.

Exchange 8: Good morning.

Soldier:	Good morning.	SabaaH al-Khayr
Local:	Good morning.	SabaaH an-noor

Men greet each other with a light handshake using the right hand. Handshakes are typically extended to foreigners.

Exchange 9: Good evening.

Soldier:	Good evening.	masaa al-Khayr
Local:	Good evening.	masaa an-noor

Close male friends may hug and kiss each other on the cheek. They may also hold hands, which in Arab culture is a sign of friendship, not homosexuality. Same-sex romantic relationships are illegal in Yemen and the death penalty can be imposed on offenders.[72]

Exchange 10: How are you?

Soldier:	How are you?	keyf Haalak
Local:	Fine, very well.	bi-Khayr al-Hamdu lilaah

When greeting a group, Yemenis first greet elders and men of high status. For small groups, a handshake is offered to each man, while a nod and a general greeting may be used to meet large groups.

Exchange 11: Hi, Mr. al-Akhmar.

Soldier:	Hi, Mr. al-Akhmar.	ah-lan ya aKh al-aHmar
Local:	Hello!	ah-lan
Soldier:	Are you doing well?	anta bi-Khayr?
Local:	Yes.	na'am

Eye contact is appropriate and important during communications between men. Yemenis may communicate indirectly about delicate matters to avoid causing offense or shame. It is inappropriate for men to ask each other specifically about their female relatives.

Exchange 12: How is your family?

Soldier:	How is your family?	keyf al-usra?
Local:	They are doing fine, thank you.	hum bi-Khayr, shookran

Yemeni women greet each other with a handshake. If they are close, they may hug and kiss each other on the cheek or hold hands.

Although interactions between members of the same gender can be friendly and physical, interactions between men and women are formal and reserved. Physical contact is limited or completely restricted, especially between unacquainted men and women. In conservative communities, Yemeni women might not be introduced to unfamiliar men. In these settings, it is inappropriate for men to make direct eye contact or stand close to such women. When women are introduced to men, men should wait for the woman to initiate a handshake or any conversation beyond a formal verbal greeting. Eye contact should be minimal; staring is inappropriate. Formality and propriety should be maintained at all times so as not to cause shame or offense, which can bring serious repercussions. Foreign women should not take offense if a Yemeni man will not shake her hand.[73]

Right Hand vs. Left Hand

As in most Muslim cultures, Yemenis maintain an important distinction between the right and left hands. The right hand is used for all public interactions, including shaking hands, eating, drinking, making a payment, presenting or receiving a gift, and other actions. The left hand is associated with matters of personal hygiene conducted in the

bathroom and is thus considered unclean. It is therefore highly inappropriate to use the left hand for eating, passing things to others, or performing other public acts. Even left-handed visitors should observe this custom to avoid causing offense.[74]

Frankincense burners
© Charles Roffey

Hospitality and Gift-Giving

Generous hospitality (*karamah*) is a tribal tradition and matter of great pride among Yemenis. Acts of hospitality bring honor to both the guest, who is treated with respect and generosity, and the host, whose generosity earns him esteem from his peers.[75] Common demonstrations of hospitality include invitations for tea, a qat chew, a meal, or a social event. Social engagements are segregated by gender. Men who visit a Yemeni's home, for example, might not meet or even see the host's female relatives. Guests should wear clean, conservative attire when visiting a Yemeni's home for such an event. Yemeni homes have a special room, known as a *diwan*, for entertaining guests. They may also have a *mafraj* (*mafradsh*), a lounge used to host qat chews. The *mafraj*, which is often on the highest floor of the traditional tower house, is typically the best decorated. Here, the hosting family and guests sit on cushions on the floor. Guests are expected to remove their shoes when entering the home.

In Yemen, gifts are only exchanged between close friends and family members.[76] It is respectful for guests to bring a small gift for the host or his children when visiting the home. Small food items such as sweets or pastries are appropriate. When giving gifts, foreigners should respect Islamic dietary customs that prohibit Muslims from consuming pork or alcohol. Do not give money or cheap souvenirs.[77] Gifts should be wrapped and presented with the right hand or both hands. By custom, Yemenis may once or twice refuse to accept a gift before doing so with gratitude.

Exchange 13: This gift is for you.

Soldier:	This gift is for you.	teeyeh hadeeya lak
Local:	I cannot accept this.	maa-agbalhaash

Following the Yemeni way, foreigners should also initially refuse a gift before accepting it, and it should be received with the right hand or both hands.[78] Gifts are not opened in front of the giver.[79]

Lunch
© ~W~ / flickr.com

Eating Habits

Although eating habits vary by family and region, the midday meal is the largest and most important meal for Yemenis. It is held in the early afternoon, after the midday prayer and before the daily qat chew. Evening dinners are small, in part because of the appetite-suppressing qualities of qat. Meals are served on a large cloth on the floor of the dining or entertaining room. Any invitation to join Yemenis for a meal at home ensures it will be a lavish spread. It's advisable not to eat much beforehand because declining successive servings could be interpreted as disliking the food. Or it might be seen as a sign of politeness, and a guest might be pressed to eat more.[80]

Exchange 14: I really appreciate your hospitality.

Soldier:	I really appreciate your hospitality.	shookran ʿala Dheeyaafatkum
Local:	It is nothing.	maaheesh shey

After removing their shoes, guests should wait to be seated by the host; they will likely be seated in a particular place. Guests should be careful not to step on the dining cloth or in front of anyone already seated. People sit cross-legged, sometimes atop cushions. Guests should avoid pointing the soles of their feet at others, which is considered rude. Before and after eating, guests are given the opportunity to wash their hands. This is an important custom that meets Islamic guidelines for ritual purity and cleanliness. It is also a matter of basic hygiene because Yemenis typically eat with their fingers instead of using utensils.[81]

Tea (*shay*) is served before the meal, which is the time for conversation. After a prayer, little is said during the meal since that would dishonor the food. Individuals might have their own plates for some dishes. Food should be taken from the dish and eaten with the right hand only because the left hand is considered unclean. Likewise, dishes should be passed to and received from others using the right hand. Guests should avoid licking their fingers. Since there are no utensils, bread is used to scoop food. Guests will be encouraged to eat heartily from a variety of dishes. It is polite for guests to express their satisfaction with the meal as well as appreciation for the amount of food served.

Exchange 15: The food tastes so good.

Soldier:	The food tastes so good.	al-akl Haalee gawee gawee
Local:	Thank you.	shookran

Guests should leave a small portion of food on their plate as a sign that they are full and satisfied. Such practice reflects well upon the host's ability to provide a bountiful meal. The last course is a beverage, most likely coffee or tea but perhaps water. Guests are expected to depart shortly thereafter.[82]

Spices and sweets
© yeowatzup / flickr.com

Food and Drink

Yemeni dietary habits are shaped by Islamic custom. Like most devout Muslims, Yemenis generally limit their intake to foods deemed *halal*, or acceptable according to Islam. Prohibited foods are deemed *haram*.[83] Most notably, Islam prohibits the consumption of pork and alcohol. These prohibitions are widely observed in Yemen, where pork is practically nonexistent and alcohol is severely restricted. Islamic custom requires animals to be slaughtered in an appropriate manner by Muslim butchers. Although much of the Yemeni population works in agriculture, the majority of Yemen's food supply is imported because of a lack of domestic food crops.[84]

Meat, vegetables, rice, and bread are the core components of the Yemeni diet. Yemenis use many distinctive spices that reflect both Middle Eastern and South Asian (Indian) cuisine. These include cumin, turmeric, coriander, cardamom, caraway, and fenugreek. Common types of meat are chicken, goat, and lamb, the latter being the most prized. Kebabs, or grilled meat chunks, are typical of Middle Eastern cuisine. Meats, especially beef, are a luxury for poor Yemenis, and they are used to the fullest extent. Flavorful broths and soups are made from boiling meat or bones with spices.[85] One type of spicy meat and vegetable soup is known as *shoubra*.[86]

Exchange 16: This food is very good.

Soldier:	This food is very good.	Theeyeh al-akl 'ees gawee
Local:	It's Marag.	Theeyeh marag

Coastal areas enjoy fresh fish, commonly baked in a clay oven and served with rice.[87] Bread, available in numerous varieties, accompanies practically every meal or is a meal in itself. Breakfast is typically small, often consisting of tea (*shay*) and bread, with eggs and/or beans. Lunch is the primary meal of the day. The characteristic lunchtime meal is known as *saltah*, which is often described as Yemen's national dish.

Exchange 17: What is the name of this dish?

Soldier:	What is the name of this dish?	eysh ism al-akla teeyeh?
Local:	This is *saltah.*	teeyeh saltah

Saltah is a spicy meat stew containing eggs and various vegetables, such as tomatoes, onions, potatoes, beans, and/or lentils. Served very hot, this stew is seen as the best meal to eat before the afternoon qat chew.[88] *Saltah* is flavored with fenugreek, a bitter seed used to make a common cooking paste known as *hilbah* (*hulba*). This whipped paste is incorporated into *saltah* and other dishes, and may also be used as a dip.[89] Another common sauce is *zhug*, a spicy relish also known as *zahawag*.[90]

Exchange 18: What ingredients are used to make *zhug?*

Soldier:	What ingredients are used to make *zhug*?	keyf bita'maloo as-saHaawig?
Local:	Tomatos, garlic, salt, pepper, cardamom and coriander.	aT-Tamatees ma' thom wa-miliH wa-basbaas aKhDhar wa-heyl wa-kazbara

Dinner dishes, which are typically small, include *fasouliya* (beans) and *ful*, a bean paste made with spices and vegetables.[91] *Asid* (*asit*) is a sorghum porridge commonly eaten by peasants in the countryside. Yogurt and honey are popular condiments. The latter is used on desserts such as *bint al-sahn*, a layered pastry. Tea (*shay*) is usually served sweetened. Mocha, a famous local variety of coffee, is available but expensive. Many Yemenis thus drink *qishr*, which is made using ground coffee husks rather than beans; it often comes spiced with ground ginger.[92] Fruit juices (*aseer*) are also available.[93]

Traditional female garb
© Charles Roffey

Dress Codes

Styles of dress vary by region and social group. Yemenis dress modestly, but follow styles and trends. This is especially true for women, most of whom practice types of purdah. A common garment for women is a long coat called a *balto*, known as an *abaya* elsewhere in the region. This is usually paired with a *hijab*, or headscarf, and/or a veil (*niqab*). Providing even greater coverage than the *balto*, the *sharshaf* consists of "a pleated wrap skirt, a triangular hood draped over the head and shoulders . . . and a translucent black face covering." This outfit has been seen as a mark of "urban sophistication" in Yemen. In the highlands, rural women may wear a shawl (*maswan*) over their heads while walking outside their village. Although considered less fashionable today, some elderly Yemeni women wear a *sitara* (*setarrah*), which is a colorful, patterned cloth draped over the body.[94] Underneath their outer garments, women typically wear dresses, with either pants or leggings worn underneath. Western clothing is relatively common in urban areas. In rural areas, women's dress has traditionally been more colorful than that of urbanites. Jewelry (usually gold or silver) and traditional or modern forms of makeup are also common.[95]

For men, traditional dress consists of a *futah*, or a pleated kilt that reaches below the knees, and a shirt. In the highlands, where temperatures are cooler, jackets and vests are also worn. Another traditional garment for men is the *thawb*, a long, loose-fitting robe, often worn over pants. Turbans are the most common form of headgear, although some men may wear a traditional *kofia*, a conical bamboo hat that carries formal significance.[96] Yemenis typically wear sandals. Belts are a standard accessory; they are needed to carry the *jambiya*, the most important accessory for Yemeni men. A *jambiya* carried toward the front, in the center of the belt, is the mark of a tribesman. *Sayyids* and *qadis* carry their *jambiya* to the right, toward the hip. They also wear all-white clothing.[97] Men may also wear some Western clothing, especially in urban areas.

Following Yemeni fashion, foreigners should dress conservatively. Both genders should wear loose-fitting clothing that covers the arms, shoulders, and legs.

Exchange 19: How should I dress?

Soldier:	How should I dress?	eysh ilbas?
Local:	Wear loose fitting clothes which cover your body.	ilbis libs muHtaram yighaTee jismak

Foreign women are not required to wear a *balto* and *hijab*, although headscarves are recommended.[98]

Exchange 20: Is this acceptable to wear?

Soldier:	Is this acceptable to wear?	Theeyeh libaas muHtaram?
Local:	Yes.	na'am

Men dancing
© Stepout / flickr.com

Nonreligious Holidays

Although not as important as religious holidays, Yemenis recognize several secular holidays of political and historical significance. Unlike Islamic holidays, these secular events are marked on the standard (Gregorian) calendar rather than the Islamic lunar calendar. Held on 22 May, National Unity Day commemorates the merger of North and South Yemen, in 1990, to form the current Republic of Yemen. Two holidays recognize respective revolutions in the north and south. Revolution Day (26 September) marks the overthrow of the last Zaydi imam in 1962, which led to the foundation of the Yemen Arab Republic (North Yemen). National Day (14 October) commemorates the Yemenis' initial rebellion against the British in the south, in 1963, which eventually led to the formation of the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (South Yemen). Held on 30 November, Independence Day commemorates South Yemen's official independence from the British in 1967. The Yemeni government also recognizes Labor Day (1 May), an international holiday.[99]

Dos and Don'ts

Do greet Yemenis in a formal manner.

Do dress conservatively and avoid tight or revealing clothes.

Do treat elders with utmost respect.

Do take your shoes off when entering a home or mosque.

Do leave a small portion of food on your plate after a meal.

Don't eat or pass items with your left hand.

Don't initiate handshakes with women.

Don't stare at or approach unfamiliar women.

Don't enter a mosque without permission.

Don't show the soles of your feet when sitting.

Don't take photographs of people, especially women, without their permission.

Endnotes

1 Susanne Dahlgren, "Islam, Custom and Revolution in Aden: Reconsidering the Background to the Changes of the Early 1990s," in *Yemen into the Twenty-First Century: Continuity and Change*, eds. Kamil A. Mahdi, Anna Würth, and Helen Lackner (Reading, UK: Ithaca Press, 2007), 329–30, 341.

2 Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, "Country Profile: Yemen," August 2008, 19, http://memory.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Yemen.pdf

3 Jeff Meissner, "The Tribes—The Backbone of the Nation," in *Insight Guide: Yemen*, 2nd ed., ed. Hans Höfer (Singapore: APA Publications, 1992), 115.

4 World Bank, "Republic of Yemen: Country Social Analysis" (report, Water, Environment, Social and Rural Development Department, Middle East and North Africa, 11 January 2006), 35–38, http://siteresources.worldbank.org/BOLIVIA/Resources/Yemen_CSA.pdf

5 Zaid al-Alaya'a, "Tribes Should Be Social Entities not Political Participants, Says al-Dhaheri," Yemen Observer, 22 September 2007, http://www.yobserver.com/reports/10012989.html

6 World Bank, "Republic of Yemen: Country Social Analysis" (report, Water, Environment, Social and Rural Development Department, Middle East and North Africa, 11 January 2006), 12, http://siteresources.worldbank.org/BOLIVIA/Resources/Yemen_CSA.pdf

7 Laurie Krieger et al., "North Yemen: Social Class and Tribe," in *The Yemens: Country Studies*, 2nd ed., ed. Richard F. Nyrop (Washington, DC: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1986), 113–15.

8 Paul Dresch, "Chapter 4: Estates of Society Within the Tribal Peace," in *Tribes, Government, and History in Yemen* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1993), 140–41.

9 John G. Kennedy, "Chapter 2: History and Social Structure of North Yemen," in *The Flower of Paradise: The Institutionalized Use of the Drug Qat in North Yemen*, ed. Margaret Lock (Dordrecht, Netherlands: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1987), 46–47.

10 Manfred W. Wenner, "Chapter 2: People and Culture," in *The Yemen Arab Republic: Development and Change in an Ancient Land* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1991), 33.

11 Laurie Krieger et al., "North Yemen: Social Class and Tribe," in *The Yemens: Country Studies*, 2nd ed., ed. Richard F. Nyrop (Washington, DC: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1986), 116.

12 World Bank, "Republic of Yemen: Country Social Analysis" (report, Water, Environment, Social and Rural Development Department, Middle East and North Africa, 11 January 2006), 12, http://siteresources.worldbank.org/BOLIVIA/Resources/Yemen_CSA.pdf

13 Robert D. Kaplan, "A Tale of Two Colonies," *Atlantic*, April 2003, http://www.theatlantic.com/doc/200304/kaplan

14 Laurie Krieger et al., "North Yemen: Social Class and Tribe" in *The Yemens: Country Studies*, 2nd ed., ed. Richard F. Nyrop (Washington, DC: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1986), 115–21.

15 World Bank, "Republic of Yemen: Country Social Analysis" (report, Water, Environment, Social and Rural Development Department, Middle East and North Africa, 11 January 2006), 36, http://siteresources.worldbank.org/BOLIVIA/Resources/Yemen_CSA.pdf

16 World Bank, "Republic of Yemen: Country Social Analysis" (report, Water, Environment, Social and Rural Development Department, Middle East and North Africa, 11 January 2006), 13, http://siteresources.worldbank.org/BOLIVIA/Resources/Yemen_CSA.pdf

17 Laurie Krieger et al., "North Yemen: Social Class and Tribe" in *The Yemens: Country Studies*, 2nd ed., ed. Richard F. Nyrop (Washington, DC: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1986), 123–24.

18 Manfred W. Wenner, "Chapter 2: People and Culture," in *The Yemen Arab Republic: Development and Change in an Ancient Land* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1991), 34–35.

19 Paul Dresch, "Chapter 4: Estates of Society Within the Tribal Peace," in *Tribes, Government, and History in Yemen* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1993),118–23.

20 World Bank, "Republic of Yemen: Country Social Analysis" (report, Water, Environment, Social and Rural Development Department, Middle East and North Africa, 11 January 2006), 13, 28, http://siteresources.worldbank.org/BOLIVIA/Resources/Yemen_CSA.pdf

21 Robert F. Worth, "Languishing at the Bottom of Yemen's Ladder," *New York Times*, 27 February 2008, http://www.nytimes.com/2008/02/27/world/middleeast/27yemen.html

22 Laurie Krieger et al., "North Yemen: Social Class and Tribe," in *The Yemens: Country Studies*, 2nd ed., ed. Richard F. Nyrop (Washington, DC: GPO for the Library of Congress,1986),123–24.

23 Laila al-Zwaini, "State and Non-State Justice in Yemen" (conference paper, U.S. Institute of Peace, Kabul, 10–14 December 2006), 3, http://www.usip.org/files/ROL/al_zwaini_paper.pdf

24 Laurie Krieger et al., "North Yemen: Social Class and Tribe," in *The Yemens: Country Studies*, 2nd ed., ed. Richard F. Nyrop (Washington, DC: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1986), 121–22.

25 Paul Dresch, "Chapter 3: Tribes and Collective Action," in *Tribes, Government, and History in Yemen* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1993), 107–8.

26 Steven Charles Caton, "Chapter 2: *Gabyilah*: Ideologies of Tribalism, Language, and Poetry," in *"Peaks of Yemen I Summon": Poetry as Cultural Practice in a North Yemeni Tribe* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 26–30.

27 Paul Dresch, "Chapter 2: The Language of Honor," in *Tribes, Government, and History in Yemen* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press,1993), 54–55, 59–61.

28 Paul Dresch, "Chapter 2: The Language of Honor," in *Tribes, Government, and History in Yemen* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1993), 54–55, 59.

29 Shelagh Weir, "Chapter 2: Social and Political Inequality," in *A Tribal Order: Politics and Law in the Mountains of Yemen* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2007), 42.

30 Paul Dresch, "Chapter 2: The Language of Honor," in *Tribes, Government, and History in Yemen,* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1993), 54–55.

31 Laila al-Zwairi, "State and Non-State Justice in Yemen" (conference paper, U.S. Institute of Peace, Kabul, 10–14 December 2006), http://www.usip.org/files/ROL/al_zwaini_paper.pdf

32 Paul Dresch, "Chapter 2: The Language of Honor," and "Chapter 3: Tribes and Collective Action," *in Tribes, Government, and History in Yemen* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1993), 47–53, 55–56, 92–94.

33 Paul Dresch, "Chapter 3: Tribes and Collective Action," in *Tribes, Government, and History in Yemen* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1993), 84–85.

34 Jeff Meissner, "The Tribes—The Backbone of the Nation," in *Insight Guide: Yemen*, 2nd ed., ed. Hans Höfer (Singapore: APA Publications, 1992), 118.

35 World Bank, "Republic of Yemen: Country Social Analysis" (report, Water, Environment, Social and Rural Development Department, Middle East and North Africa Region, 11 January 2006), 13, 28, 32, http://siteresources.worldbank.org/BOLIVIA/Resources/Yemen_CSA.pdf

36 Laila al-Zwaini, "State and Non-State Justice in Yemen" (conference paper, U.S. Institute of Peace, Kabul, 10–14 December 2006), 3–4, http://www.usip.org/files/ROL/al_zwaini_paper.pdf

37 Sarah Phillips, "What Comes Next in Yemen?

Al-Qaeda, the Tribes, and State Building" (paper, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Middle East Program, March 2010), 9, http://www.carnegieendowment.org/files/yemen_tribes.pdf

38 Zaid al-Alaya'a, "Tribes Should Be Social Entities not Political Participants, Says al-Dhaheri," Yemen Observer, 22 September 2007, http://www.yobserver.com/reports/10012989.html

39 World Bank, "Republic of Yemen: Country Social Analysis" (report, Water, Environment, Social and Rural Development Department, Middle East and North Africa Region, 11 January 2006), 38, http://siteresources.worldbank.org/BOLIVIA/Resources/Yemen_CSA.pdf

40 Laila al-Zwaini, "State and Non-State Justice in Yemen" (conference paper, U.S. Institute of Peace, Kabul, 10–14 December 2006), 8, 10, 13–14, http://www.usip.org/files/ROL/al_zwaini_paper.pdf

41 Abdul Rahim al-Shawthabi, "Jambiya: Deep-Rooted Tradition," Yemen Post, 12 March 2009, http://www.yemenpost.net/Detail123456789.aspx?ID=100&SubID=170&MainCat=5

42 Paul Dresch, "Chapter 2: The Language of Honor," in *Tribes, Government, and History in Yemen* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1993), 32–33, 35–36.

43 Shelagh Weir, "Chapter 2: Social and Political Inequality," in *A Tribal Order: Politics and Law in the Mountains of Yemen* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2007), 37–42.

44 IRIN, "Yemen: When Cultural Norms Underpin Gun Ownership," 21 May 2006, http://www.irinnews.org/InDepthMain.aspx?InDepthId=8&ReportId=41050&Country=Yes

45 Shelagh Weir, "Chapter 2: Social and Political Inequality," in *A Tribal Order: Politics and Law in the Mountains of Yemen* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2007), 42–43.

46 Richard Engel, "Yemen's Weapon Culture," BBC News, 22 January 2002, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/1775938.stm

47 Yemen Observer, "Weapons Ban Makes Historic Progress; Unity Is Crucial to Enforcement," 1 September 2007, http://www.yobserver.com/editorials/10012860.html

48 IRIN, "Yemen: Small Sales Heading Underground," 14 February 2010, http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=88094

49 Laurie Krieger et al., "North Yemen: Gender Roles," in *The Yemens: Country Studies*, 2nd ed., ed. Richard F. Nyrop (Washington, DC: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1986), 125.

50 Susanne Dahlgren, "Islam, Custom and Revolution in Aden: Reconsidering the Background to the Changes of the Early 1990s," in *Yemen into the Twenty-First Century: Continuity and Change*, eds. Kamil A. Mahdi, Anna Würth, and Helen Lackner (Reading, UK: Ithaca Press, 2007), 340–42.

51 Khaled al-Quzahy, "Modernity and Conservatism: A Study of the Status of Yemeni Women" (master's program paper, Cultural Studies, University of Sidi Mohammed Ben Abdellah, 2009–2010), http://www.academia.edu/860859/Modernity_and_Conservatism_A_Study_of_the_Status_of_Yemeni_Women

52 Paul Dresch, "Chapter 2: The Language of Honor," in *Tribes, Government, and History in Yemen* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1993), 44–45, 54–55.

53 Susanne Dahlgren, "Islam, Custom and Revolution in Aden: Reconsidering the Background to the Changes of the Early 1990s," in *Yemen into the Twenty-First Century: Continuity and Change*, eds. Kamil A. Mahdi, Anna Würth, and Helen Lackner (Reading, UK: Ithaca Press, 2007), 340–42.

54 Laurie Krieger et al., "North Yemen: Gender Roles," in *The Yemens: Country Studies*, 2nd ed., ed. Richard F. Nyrop (Washington, DC: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1986), 125–27.

55 Ulf Laessing, "Women of Southern Yemen Port Remember Better Times," Reuters, 22 January 2010,

http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSTRE60L2ZD20100122

56 Susanne Dahlgren, "Islam, Custom and Revolution in Aden: Reconsidering the Background to the Changes of the Early 1990s," in *Yemen into the Twenty-First Century: Continuity and Change*, eds. Kamil A. Mahdi, Anna Würth, and Helen Lackner (Reading, UK: Ithaca Press, 2007), 340–43.

57 World Economic Forum, "Global Gender Gap Report 2009: Yemen" (Geneva, 2009), http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GenderGap_Report_2009.pdf

58 Ginny Hill, "Yemen Divided on Vice and Virtue," BBC News, 11 August 2008, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/7546907.stm

59 Paul Dresch, "Chapter 2: The Language of Honor," in *Tribes, Government, and History in Yemen* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1993), 49.

60 Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. Department of State, "Yemen," in *2008 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices*, 25 February 2009, http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2008/nea/119130.htm

61 IRIN, "Yemen: Eradicating FGM Will Be a Slow Process, Experts Say," 14 November 2005, http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?reportid=25685

62 Care2Make a Difference, "Female Genital Mutilation, Taboo Subject in Yemen," 2013, http://www.care2.com/news/member/970599646/472281

63 IRIN, "Yemen: New FGM/C Law Possible "Within Four Years"—Minister," 10 February 2010, http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=88058

64 Manfred Wenner, "Chapter 1: The Land," in *The Yemen Arab Republic: Development and Change in an Ancient Land* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1991), 12–13.

65 Fritz Piepenburg, "Passing the Time with Qat," in *Insight Guide: Yemen*, 2nd ed., ed. Hans Höfer (Singapore: APA Publications, 1992).

66 Paul Dresch, "Chapter 1: Introductory," in *Tribes, Government, and History in Yemen* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1993), 20.

67 Laurie Krieger et al., "North Yemen: Geographic and Demographic Setting: Qat," in *The Yemens: Country Studies*, 2nd ed., ed. Richard F. Nyrop (Washington, DC: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1986), 106–8.

68 Laurie Krieger et al., "North Yemen: Geographic and Demographic Setting: Qat," in *The Yemens: Country Studies*, 2nd ed., ed. Richard F. Nyrop (Washington, DC: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1986), 106–8.

69 Saeed al-Batati, "Yemeni Social Worker Calls for Clampdown on Qat Dens," Arab News, 25 January 2009, http://test.arabnews.com/node/320277

70 Suzan Ghanem, Jowhara Zindani, and Zinadine Zindani, "Qat: The Plague of Yemen," Yemen Observer, 26 February 2008, http://www.yobserver.com/sports-health-and-lifestyle/10013815.html

71 Lin Noueihed, "Qat Draws Water and Life from Impoverished Yemen, " Reuters, 29 May 2007, http://uk.reuters.com/article/idUKNOA93814520070529?sp=true

72 Refworld, "Situation for Homosexuals in Yemen, Including Societal Attitudes," Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, 16 July 2004, http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/country,,,QUERYRESPONSE,YEM,4562d8cf2,41501c7615,0.html

73 Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Intelligence, U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, "Arab Cultural Awareness: 58 Factsheets" (TRADOC DCSINT Handbook No. 2, Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas, January 2006), http://www.fas.org/irp/agency/army/arabculture.pdf

74 Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Intelligence, U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, "Arab Cultural Awareness: 58 Factsheets" (TRADOC DCSINT Handbook No. 2, Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas, January 2006), http://www.fas.org/irp/agency/army/arabculture.pdf

75 Steven Charles Caton, "Chapter 2: *Gabyilah*: Ideologies of Tribalism, Language, and Poetry," *in "Peaks of Yemen I Summon": Poetry as Cultural Practice in a North Yemeni Tribe* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 28.

76 Executive Planet, "Yemen: Gift Giving," n.d., http://www.executiveplanet.com/index.php?title=Yemen:_Gift_Giving

77 Lizbeth Pereira, "Yemen: Etiquette, Customs, Facts and Vital Information," MissionsLaunch, 2008, http://www.missionslaunch.com/category/regions/middle-east/yemen/

78 Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Intelligence, U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, "Arab Cultural Awareness: 58 Factsheets" (TRADOC DCSINT Handbook No. 2, Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas, January 2006), http://www.fas.org/irp/agency/army/arabculture.pdf

79 Yemen College of Middle Eastern Studies, "Yemeni Culture: Social Events," 2009, http://www.ycmes.org/culture.html

80 Lizbeth Pereira, "Yemen: Etiquette, Customs, Facts and Vital Information," MissionsLaunch, 2008, http://www.missionslaunch.com/category/regions/middle-east/yemen/

81 Yemen College of Middle Eastern Studies, "Yemeni Culture: Food Etiquette," 2009, http://www.ycmes.org/culture.html

82 Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Intelligence, U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, "Arab Cultural Awareness: 58 Factsheets" (TRADOC DCSINT Handbook No. 2, Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas, January 2006), http://www.fas.org/irp/agency/army/arabculture.pdf

83 Islamic Food and Nutrition Council of America, "What Is Halal?" 1999–2009, http://www.ifanca.org/cms/wpages/detail/4ca47c89-ec4c-41ba-ac38-1c111b830f0c

84 IRIN, "Yemen: Food Insecure Face Double Whammy," 2 February 2009, http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=82687

85 Things Asian, "The Exotic Cuisine of Yemen—The Ancient Happy Arabia," 29 March 2006, http://www.thingsasian.com/stories-photos/3576

86 Things Asian, "Recipe: Shoubra—Meat Soup," 29 March 2006, http://www.thingsasian.com/stories-photos/3580

87 Frances Linzee Gordon et al., *Lonely Planet: Arabian Peninsula* (Footscray, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet Publications, 2004), 371.

88 Diana Viola and Elinor Moore, "Dining with the Queen of Sheba: Ethiopian Cooking and Yemeni Cooking," InMamasKitchen, n.d., http://www.inmamaskitchen.com/FOOD_IS_ART/mideast/ethiopia_yemen.html

89 Things Asian, "Recipe: Hulbah—Fenugreek Paste," 9 March 2006, http://www.thingsasian.com/stories-photos/3577

90 Tom Jaine, ed., "Yemen," in *The Oxford Companion to Food*, 2nd ed. (UK: Oxford University Press, 2006), 860–61.

91 Frances Linzee Gordon et al., *Lonely Planet: Arabian Peninsula* (Footscray, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet Publications, 2004), 371.

92 Tom Jaine, ed., "Yemen," in *The Oxford Companion to Food*, 2nd ed. (UK: Oxford University Press, 2006), 860–61.

93 Daniel McLaughlin, "Chapter 2: Eating and Drinking," in *Yemen* (Guilford, CT: Globe Pequot Press, 2007), 55.

94 Eman al-Jarady, "The Setarrah: An Endangered Species?" Yemen Observer, 28 August 2007, http://www.yobserver.com/news-varieties/10012842.html

95 Najwa Adra, "Yemen," in *Encyclopedia of Women and Islamic Cultures: Family, Body, Sexuality and Health*, vol. 3, ed. Joseph Suad (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2006), 47–48.

96 *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Yemen:

Cultural Life: Daily Life and Social Customs," 2010, http://search.eb.com/eb/article-273063

97 Manfred W. Wenner, "Chapter 2: People and Culture," in *The Yemen Arab Republic: Development and Change in an Ancient Land* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1991), 46.

98 Daniel McLaughlin, "Chapter 2: Practical Information," in *Yemen* (Guilford, CT: Globe Pequot Press, 2007), 50.

99 Daniel McLaughlin, "Chapter 2: Practical Information," in *Yemen* (Guilford, CT: Globe Pequot Press, 2007), 56–57.

Overview: Chapter 3 Assessment

1. Customs and manners play an important role in Yemen society.

   TRUE

   Customs and manners preserve highly valued individual and familial honor, especially among Yemeni tribes, for whom heritage and perceptions of character determine social status.

2. Governmental authority has limited reach in Yemen.

   TRUE

   In many areas of Yemen, the tribal order operates independently of the central government, which has limited authority beyond the Sanaa region.

3. Yemen maintains homogenous social groups.

   FALSE

   Social organization varies widely in Yemen; different regions have unique histories and cultural influences, and social structures may even vary from village to village within a region.

4. The sayyids dominate Yemen's traditional hierarchy.

   TRUE

   The sayyids are an elite group of well-educated and often wealthy families who trace their lineage to the Prophet Muhammad, a heritage that carries immense prestige.

5. Ancestry carries little importance in Yemeni society.

   FALSE

   Those who cannot trace their ancestry occupy social positions devoid of esteem and are known throughout the country as the poor and the weak.

Water truck in Sanaa
© Manogamo / flickr.com

Chapter 4: Urban Life

Introduction

As of 2010, approximately 32% of the Yemeni population lived in urban areas.[1] Although the population remains predominantly rural, rapid urbanization over the last several decades has produced a large-scale demographic shift. In 1975, approximately 90% of Yemenis lived in rural areas. Urbanization has been fueled by several trends since then, including rural-to-urban migration and rapid population growth.[2] The population of Sanaa, for example, has expanded from about 135,000 people in 1975 to more than 2.3 million today.[3] With a high urban growth rate (averaging 4.6% estimated from 2010–2015), this trend is expected to continue. Moreover, the country's high population growth rate of 2.9% (average from 2005–2010) will increase Yemen's population of 23.6 million (2009) in coming years.[4]

Rapid population growth is a serious concern in Yemen, where farmers face increasing difficulties in supporting their families. Lack of access to water—for either consumption or crop cultivation—has become a common cause for migration from the countryside to the city.[5] Yet the influx of rural migrants to cities has exacerbated pressure on urban infrastructure and resources, in particular water. Sanaa could run out of water by 2025, or even earlier, if the depletion of local aquifers continues at the current rate.[6] The government has a limited role in allocating water since many pumps are in private hands.[7] Government officials have speculated that Yemen's capital city could become "a ghost town" when residents are forced to find water elsewhere.[8] In response, urban planners have suggested raising the cost of living to deter new arrivals.[9] Since many migrants seek work in the unregulated informal economy, it is unclear whether such a move would deter migration. At the same time, many urban residents remain closely linked to the rural economy. Migrants may return to rural areas for seasonal agricultural work or send their earnings to their families in their village. Some landowning urban residents derive a significant portion of their income from their holdings or interests in the countryside.[10]

Sidewalk seller couple
© Francesco Veronesi

Urban Conditions

Urban Livelihoods

Unlike most rural areas, many Yemeni cities offer a range of occupations and services. The development of a diversified cash economy in urban areas allows greater economic mobility among the population. This trend erodes Yemen's traditional social hierarchy by raising the status of market and service positions, which were formerly low status positions. A low-status individual from a rural village, for example, might be able to make a new life for himself and his family by moving to a city. Although mobility has increased, economic and occupational status differences remain pronounced in urban areas.[11]

Exchange 21: Did you grow up here?

Soldier:	Did you grow up here?	anta trabeyt haanaa?
Local:	No.	ma'

Public sector jobs are among the most sought after in urban areas, where the central government typically maintains a presence and some level of authority (in contrast to rural regions). These positions are desirable because they provide a stable income. Yet knowing someone in power with whom a job seeker can claim shared affiliation, whether it be familial, tribal, or political, is often crucial to being hired. Even those who land such jobs often must seek additional work to supplement their low salaries. Civil servants, for example, moonlight as taxi drivers.[12] Most families remain reliant on male breadwinners. The majority of females in urban areas perform unpaid labor on behalf of their households, such as waiting in line to purchase cooking oil, a task that can take hours when there is a shortage.[13] Social prohibitions restrict women from joining the formal workforce.[14]

Public spigot
© Charles Roffey

Housing and Living Conditions

Although the traditional social hierarchy has eroded to some extent, a widening gap has emerged between a small class of wealthy urban elites and a large class of working or underemployed poor. This divide is evident in urban settlement patterns. Most Yemeni cities have a busy and densely inhabited old city center surrounded by modern suburbs and sprawl, including industrial areas and shantytowns.[15] In 2007, the United Nations estimated that approximately 77% of Yemen's urban residents live in *mahwa*, commonly translated as either slums or shantytowns.[16] Such a household is defined as "a group of individuals living under the same roof lacking one or more of the following conditions: access to improved water; access to improved sanitation; sufficient living area; durability of housing."[17]

Less than half of all urban households are linked to public water distribution systems.[18] Lacking direct access to the municipal water supply, a large percentage of urban residents buy their water from privately owned tanker trunks that tap wells in the surrounding region. This is especially true in Sanaa. Those who cannot afford to buy water fill buckets at public spigots, usually at mosques, and carry them home, sometimes over long distances.[19] Most homes that are not linked to the water system also lack sewer service. For those who can afford them, homes in newer housing developments in the suburbs have both water and sewer systems. But slum residents often live in makeshift structures built from low-cost or found materials.[20] Without functional toilets and water for basic hygiene, residents of slums face serious health complications because of a lack of sanitation.[21]

Members of the hereditary underclass known as the Akhdam (servants) are disproportionately represented among *mahwa* dwellers. (The term *Akhdam* has been increasingly used by some Yemenis to label all residents of shantytowns.)[22] Subject to unfounded rumors about their heritage and practices, Akhdam continue to face discrimination and persecution. Since few hold title to the land on which they built their homes, often little more than huts, they cannot claim municipal services afforded, in theory, to other city residents. These include essential public goods such as water, sanitation, and police protection. Although both Islamic and Yemeni civil law accord ownership of unoccupied land to settlers, the low social status of the Akhdam—who sometimes refer to themselves as *muhamasheen*, or marginalized ones, and focus on daily survival—makes it hard for them to collectively press their case.[23] In 2008,

an American journalist described the conditions of an Akhdam shantytown on the outskirts of Sanaa: " . . . more than 7,000 people live crammed into a stinking warren of low concrete blocks next to a mountain of trash. Young children, many of them barefoot, run through narrow, muddy lanes full of human waste and garbage."[24]

Pre-owned TVs and radios
© Dietmar / flickr.com

Telecommunications

Yemen's telecommunications infrastructure and capabilities are relatively limited. The country has a small number of landline telephone connections: 1.1 million in 2011. Landline service has been outpaced by the rapid growth of the mobile phone industry. As of 2011, the country had an estimated 11.7 million mobile or cellular phone users.[25] This is up from around 2 million in 2006.[26]

Exchange 22: What is your telephone number?

Soldier:	What is your telephone number?	kam ragm talafonak?
Local:	My phone number is 765-432	talafonee sab'a sita Khamsa arba'a thalaatha ithneyn

Many Yemenis remain too poor to purchase either a landline or mobile phone, and many live in areas where such service is unavailable.[27] Urban areas have greater wireless coverage than rural regions. During times of unrest, the government may cut cell phone service to prevent the spread of information by those challenging state authority. This happened in the south, where there is a secessionist movement, in March 2010.[28]

Exchange 23: May I use your phone?

Soldier:	May I use your phone?	mumkin astaKhdim talafonak?
Local:	Sure.	tafadHal

Internet connectivity remains limited, because of a lack of infrastructure and clientele. Most Yemenis are also too poor to afford computers and related equipment. As of 2009, the country had 2.4 million internet users.[29] Urban areas house local television and radio stations, which are controlled by the state.[30] Less than half (43%) of Yemeni households have a television.[31] Wealthy Yemenis might have satellite service.[32]

Healthcare

Yemen's healthcare system is underdeveloped and poor in both coverage and quality. The country lacks sufficient healthcare personnel and facilities. Nationwide, there are only 3 doctors and 7 hospital beds for every 10,000 Yemenis. While professional medical attention is often unavailable in rural areas, approximately 80% of urban areas are, in theory, covered by health services.[33] Yet the quality of such care is often poor and access is uneven. Ambulance service and blood banks, which require refrigeration, are extremely limited.[34]

Exchange 24: Is there a hospital nearby?

Soldier:	Is there a hospital nearby?	beh mustashfa gareeb min haanaa?
Local:	Yes, in the center of town.	na'am bi-wasaT al-madeena

Doctor with patient
© USAID

Yemen has private, semiprivate, and public (government run) healthcare facilities. Although public facilities are designed to provide less expensive treatment than private hospitals, corruption is said to be rampant at such facilities. Mismanagement and low salaries compel medical staff to charge unofficial fees for services. Moreover, "patients must wait a long time to be seen in emergency rooms. Once diagnosed, they are immediately sent out to buy their own drugs from pharmacies."[35] Those who lack the means to pay simply forgo treatment. Preference is given to wealthier patients and those who have social ties with staff or important public figures.[36] Some public facilities operate as low-cost public providers in the morning but function as "for-profit, fee-for-service" facilities in the afternoon. The conditions and quality of medical personnel at these hospitals are notoriously poor, frequently resulting in misdiagnoses and unnecessary deaths.[37]

Exchange 25: Is Dr. al-Sanhani in?

Soldier:	Is Dr. al-Sanhani in?	ad-daktor as-sanHaanee mawjood?
Local:	Yes.	na'am

The best care is found at modern facilities in Yemen's two major cities, Sanaa and Aden.[38] But private facilities are relatively high-cost and remain too expensive for most Yemenis. Moreover, the quality of service remains mediocre or even poor by international standards. As a result, Yemenis who can afford to travel abroad for healthcare, especially for serious issues, typically do so.[39]

Exchange 26: Do you know what is wrong?

Soldier:	Do you know what is wrong?	anta daaree eysh haSal?
Local:	Yes.	na'am

Midwifery service
© The White Ribbon Alliance

Inequities in Healthcare

Unequal access to basic medical care is a serious problem in urban areas, where poverty and lack of sanitation and clean drinking water contribute to the spread of sickness and disease. Diarrhea, flu, measles, malaria, and meningitis are widespread in slums.[40] In addition to malnutrition and acute respiratory infections, these illnesses contribute to the country's high rates of infant and child mortality.[41] Diarrhea alone is responsible for "20–25% of the 84,000 annual deaths among children under five" in Yemen.[42] According to Yemeni law, all children are entitled to free medical care. Yet this law is not matched by the necessary financial resources. Many children do not receive standard childhood immunizations. Male children are said to receive better care because of traditional gender preferences in Yemeni society.[43] Neonatal mortality rates and maternal mortality rates are also high because of poor prenatal care. The young age at which many Yemeni women, particularly adolescents, deliver their first child contributes to these high rates.[44] Skilled medical professionals attend only 36% of births (2006) in Yemen.[45] Women suffer from the lack of trained female health professionals, who—unlike male physicians—can treat women while respecting Islamic gender boundaries.[46]

Co-ed high school
© World Bank Photo Collection

Education

According to the law, education is free, compulsory, and universal for all Yemeni children ages 6–15. This includes both primary and secondary schooling, for a total of 9 years. Logistically, it is easier for urban residents to enroll.[47] Here too, the government does not enforce its own laws. Associated fees for books and uniforms, along with incidental expenses, often prevent poor children from attending even if there is a school close by.[48] Access to education is uneven and heavily dependent on family income. Although children of wealthy families can attend private schools that provide higher-quality education, poorer children often cannot attend even low-quality public school. They frequently must cut short attendance to work, either around the house if they are girls or in the informal sector if they are boys.[49] A 2006 survey revealed that 46% of primary-school age children in Yemen were not enrolled in school.[50] Potential pupils can also be turned away for poor hygiene, an endemic problem for those whose families lack access to water.[51]

School girls
© Richard Messenger

Gender Gap

The starkest gap in access to education is by gender. Girls have substantially lower rates of enrollment and attendance than boys, with the gender gap increasing from one educational level to the next. For example, while approximately 75% of boys regularly attend primary school, only 64% of girls do so.[52] This trend is fueled by traditional views and practices that mandate the segregation of the sexes and the seclusion of women to the home. A lack of female teachers and girls-only schools prevents many young female students from attending. Child brides may be ineligible to attend school since they presumably possess sexual knowledge that could be corrupting to their female classmates. Nor would the families they married into likely see much benefit to the household in their continued schooling. Education is more highly valued for males because girls are expected to limit their activities to the home. Such

practices contribute to a wide gap in literacy rates between adult men (76%) and women (39%).[53] Literacy rates among urban women (59.5%) are significantly higher than those of rural women (24%).[54]

Urban areas are home to Yemen's higher educational facilities, such as the University of Sanaa, University of Aden, and their satellite schools. Yemeni students from wealthy families often study abroad.[55] Access to higher education is limited because of poverty and the poor quality and availability of lower-level education. As a result, less than 6% of Yemeni students enroll at the college or university level. Moreover, the quality of higher education is often poor.[56] Because of the country's weak economy, employment opportunities are scarce even for college graduates, many of whom become job seekers.[57]

Daily Life

Bath Houses

A feature of urban areas is the public bath house, or *hamam*. Although found throughout the Arab world, these facilities are a necessity in a country in which running water is not widely available in homes. *Hamam* allow Yemenis to bathe for purposes of hygiene and Islamic custom (ritual purity). Bath houses are also important social centers for Yemenis, especially women. There are *hamams* for men and those for women. Large ones have two separate sections with a hidden entrance for the women's section. Women gather at the *hamam* to wash and purify themselves through scrubbing, hair removal, and steaming. Bath house attendants assist in the process, which involves vigorous scrubbing of the skin with rough pads. Patrons use the time for conversation and socializing. For some women, this may be one of the few opportunities during the week to socialize with female friends outside the home.[58]

Lunch
© fiat luxury / flickr.com

Restaurants

Yemen's major cities have a variety of restaurants and food vendors, including some international chains. Dining establishments are busiest during lunch, the most important meal of the day. They typically close for the afternoon—during the daily qat chew—but reopen for dinner. During Ramadan, the holy month during which Muslims fast, restaurants are closed throughout the day but open after dusk for large, fast-breaking meals known as *iftar*. In Yemen, restaurants often have two sections: a private family section, where women and children eat with their male relatives, and a public section that is limited to

male patrons. The male section is commonly on the first floor of the restaurant, with the family section located upstairs.[59] Foreign women might sit in the family section, if they feel uncomfortable in the male section.[60] Restaurants usually have sinks for customers to wash their hands, as food is typically eaten without utensils. Diners may sit around tables or on carpeted floors.

Exchange 27: May I have a glass of water?

Soldier:	May I have a glass of water?	mumkin tideenee galaS maa?
Local:	Yes, right away.	na'am fi al-Haal

Visitors should take care to drink only bottled water and avoid tap water and iced drinks. Fruit juices sold by street vendors might contain tap water.

Exchange 28: I would like tea.

Soldier:	I would like tea.	ishtee shaahee
Local:	Yes.	na'am

Tea, a common beverage, is usually served sweet. Yemenis typically eat light breakfasts consisting of tea (*shay*) and bread with eggs and/or beans.

Exchange 29: Are you still serving breakfast?

Soldier:	Are you still serving breakfast?	'aad beh faToor?
Local:	Yes.	na'am

Lunch often begins with a bowl of meat broth known as *marag* (*maraq*).[61]

Exchange 30: I'd like some hot soup.

Soldier:	I'd like some hot soup.	ishtee marag Haamee
Local:	Sure.	HaaDhir

Common types of meat are chicken, goat, and lamb. Kebabs, or grilled meat chunks, are typical of Yemeni street fare. The most common lunchtime meal is known as *saltah*, a spicy meat stew often described as Yemen's national dish.

Exchange 31: What type of meat is this?

Soldier:	What type of meat is this?	eysh min shirka teeyeh?
Local:	Lamb.	ghanamee

Yemeni desserts are typically flavored with honey. A favorite is known as *bint al-sahn*, which is a layered pastry.

Exchange 32: Do you have a dessert?

Soldier:	Do you have a dessert?	beh ʻindakum shee niHalee beh?
Local:	Yes, we have *bint al- sahen*.	na'am beh ʻindana bint aS-SaHan

Coffee is commonly served after the meal. Regular coffee (*bunn* or *qahwa*) can be expensive for the average Yemeni. A cheaper and more common variety, known as *qishr*, is brewed from coffee husks rather than beans.

Exchange 33: I would like coffee.

Soldier:	I would like coffee.	ishtee gah-wa
Local:	Sure.	HaaDhir

In Yemen, one person pays the bill for the entire party, although diners typically fight to have their money accepted first. As credit card service is limited, cash is the required form of payment.

Exchange 34: Put this all in one bill.

Soldier:	Put this all in one bill.	iTraH kuleh bi-faatoora waaHda
Local:	Okay.	tamaam

Tipping is not common practice in Yemen, although it may be expected at hotels and restaurants catering to tourists and wealthy patrons. Restaurant bills may instead include a service charge.

Exchange 35: Can I have my total bill, please?

Soldier:	Can I have my total bill, please?	kam al-Hisaab law samaHt?
Local:	Yes, of course.	na'am Tab'an

In accordance with Islamic law, the consumption of alcohol is highly restricted in Yemen. Sales are typically limited to upscale hotels. Public consumption and intoxication are strictly prohibited.

Exchange 36: Where is your restroom?

Soldier:	Where is your restroom?	feyn al-Hamaam?
Local:	That room to your left, over there.	haanaaka ʻala yasaarak

Boy minding family shop
© Stefan Geens

Marketplace

The traditional marketplace in Yemen is known as the souk, or bazaar, and is open Sunday through Thursday from 8 a.m.–9 p.m. with an extended afternoon break.[62] Typically located in the historic city center district, these open-air markets contain numerous individual shops, stalls, and vendors. A wide variety of goods are available, including food, crafts, souvenirs, and consumer products.

Exchange 37: Is the bazaar nearby?

Soldier:	Is the bazaar nearby?	hal as-soog gareeb min haanaa?
Local:	Yes, over there on the right.	na'am, haanaa ʻala al-yameen

The central market in Sanaa is known as the Souk al-Milh, or Salt Market.[63] Located in old Sanaa, it is made up of roughly 40 smaller markets that each specialize in a certain product, such as spices, produce, qat, jewelry, or carpets.[64] One of the most common products at any souk is the *jambiya*, a curved dagger widely worn by Yemeni men.

Exchange 38: Do you sell *jambiya*?

Soldier:	Do you sell *jambiya*?	bitbee' janaabey?
Local:	Yes.	na'am

No Excessive Haggling

Although bargaining is common practice throughout the greater Arabian Peninsula, it is less so in Yemen. Prices are often open to some negotiation, but shoppers should not expect huge markdowns from the initial price. Excessive haggling may cause offense.[65]

Exchange 39: Can I buy a jambiya with this much money?

Soldier:	Can I buy a *jambiya* with this much money?	mumkin ashtaree jambeeya bi-teeyeh az-zalaT?
Local:	No.	ma'

It is important for customers to familiarize themselves with the market and its practices by visiting a number of different stalls and comparing prices and qualities of goods. With an understanding of local pricing norms, foreigners will be able to better conduct negotiations with vendors. After agreeing to a price, customers should follow through with the transaction; it is inappropriate to withdraw an offer that has been accepted or to bargain if there is no intention to buy.

The basic unit of Yemeni currency is the Yemeni Rial (YER). Banknotes are available in denominations of YER 10, YER 20, YER 50, YER 100, YER 200, YER 500, and YER 1000. Coins come in denominations of YER 5, YER 10, and YER 20. In early 2010, the exchange rate was USD 1 to YER 204.

Exchange 40: Can you give me change for this?

Soldier:	Can you give me change for this?	mumkin tiSrif lee teeyeh?
Local:	No.	ma'

Although U.S. dollars and euros are accepted in Yemen, some merchants may require payment in YER. Those vendors who accept foreign currencies will likely want payment in small bills because of the fear that larger denomination banknotes may be counterfeit.

Exchange 41: Do you accept U.S. currency?

Soldier:	Do you accept U.S. currency?	batigbal 'umla amreekeeya?
Local:	No we only accept Riyals.	ma' maa nigbal ilaa ar-reeyaal

Markets and other businesses typically close from approximately 1–4 p.m. During this time locals partake in the daily qat chew after bargaining for the best leaves from sellers

in souks that specialize in qat.[66]

Exchange 42: How much longer will you be here?

Soldier:	How much longer will you be here?	kam baagee lak tiglis haanaa?
Local:	Three more hours.	thalaath saa'aat

Because of rampant poverty, beggars are widespread in busy urban areas such as marketplaces. They are often children or refugees.[67]

Exchange 43: Give me money.

Local:	Give me money	ideenee zalaT
Soldier:	I don't have any.	maabesh ma'ee shee

Many Yemeni children have been trafficked into the major urban areas of Sanaa and Aden, or nearby Saudi Arabia, to work as street beggars or in the commercial sex trade.[68]

Road in Aden
© fiat.luxury / flickr.com

Transportation

Yemen's roads are limited and often in poor condition. Roads within and between major urban centers are paved, but maintenance is haphazard and conditions vary from good to poor. The best intra-urban highways are in the west, running between Sanaa and Ta'izz in the highlands, and from those cities to Al Hudaydah on the Tihama.[69] Driving conditions in urban areas are often unsafe. Traffic lights and police are present, but basic traffic laws are not obeyed or enforced except to solicit bribes from offenders. Vehicles are often in poor condition; many lack basic features such as working headlights, taillights, and turn signals. Hazards include both pedestrians and animals.[70]

Foreigners can drive in Yemen with an International Driving Permit.[71] Rental vehicles can be hired with or without a driver. Hired drivers may also serve as navigators, interpreters, and basic mechanics.[72]

Exchange 44: Where can I rent a car?

Soldier:	Where can I rent a car?	men feyn asta-gir sayaara?
Local:	Downtown.	bi-wasaT al-madeena

Diesel fuel is subsidized by the government in Yemen. Subsidies can promote overuse by those with preferential access and can lead to shortages for those lacking connections. Shortages are periodically reported in the Yemeni press.[73]

Exchange 45: Is there a gas station nearby?

Soldier:	Is there a gas station nearby?	beh maHaTat batrol gareeba min haanaa?
Local:	Yes.	na'am

Mechanics and parts stores are less widespread and may be difficult to find.[74]

Exchange 46: Is there a good auto mechanic nearby?

Soldier:	Is there a good auto mechanic nearby?	beh mikaaneekee gareeb min haanaa?
Local:	Yes.	na'am

Yemen has 57 airports, 17 of which have paved runways.[75] Four of Yemen's major cities host international airports: Sanaa, Aden, Ta'izz, and Al Hudaydah.

Exchange 47: Which road leads to the airport?

Soldier:	Which road leads to the airport?	eysh min shaari' yiwadeenee laa al-maTaar?
Local:	The road heading east.	ash-shaari' ash-shargee

Shared taxi vans
© Judith Argila

Rails, Buses, and Taxis

Yemen has no rail network. Plans have been made to construct a railway running southward from Saudi Arabia through the Tihama, and then eastward through Aden and along the southern coast to Oman. Although proposed for July 2010, instability in both the north and south has hindered and may halt construction.[76, 77]

Exchange 48: Is there a train station nearby?

Soldier:	Is there a train station nearby?	beh maHaTat geeTaar gareeba min haanaa?
Local:	No.	ma'

Bus service provides relatively inexpensive transport between urban areas. Cheaper bus lines often have poorly maintained vehicles.[78] Minibuses typically provide local bus service within cities.[79]

Exchange 49: Will the bus be here soon?

Soldier:	Will the bus be here soon?	eysh 'ayigee al-baaS ba'd galeel?
Local:	Yes.	na'am

Taxi service is available between and within urban areas. Shared taxis (*bijous*) are typical, usually consisting of station wagons holding 8–10 people. Pickup stations are known as *furzat*. Taxi drivers usually only leave with a full load, unless payment is made for empty seats.[80]

Exchange 50: Where can I get a cab?

Soldier:	Where can I get a cab?	feyn 'alaagee taaksee ?
Local:	Over there.	haanaak

Taxis can also be contracted for travel between cities, but customers pay the price of any empty seats. There are also motorbike taxis, which are cheaper and can move through traffic more easily.[81]

Exchange 51: Can you take me there?

Soldier:	Can you take me there?	mumkin tashulnee laa haanaak?
Local:	Yes, I can.	na'am agdar

Fares between cities are usually fixed. Fares around town in contracted taxis (rather than shared taxis) should be negotiated beforehand, because meters are not used.

Endnotes

1 Central Intelligence Agency, "Yemen," in *The World Factbook*, 29 November 2012, https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ym.html

2 World Bank, "Republic of Yemen: Country Social Analysis" (report, Water, Environment, Social and Rural Development Department, Middle East and North Africa, 11 January 2006), 28, http://siteresources.worldbank.org/BOLIVIA/Resources/Yemen_CSA.pdf

3 IRIN, "Yemen: Rapid Urbanisation Threatening Capital's Water Supplies," 14 August 2007, http://ww.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=73716

4 UNFPA, "Demographic, Social and Economic Indicators," in *State of World Population 2009: Facing a Changing World: Women, Population and Climate* (report, UN Population Fund, 2009), 90, http://www.unfpa.org/swp/2009/en/pdf/EN_SOWP09.pdf

5 Jen Alic, "As Yemen's Water Runs Dry, al-Qaida Runs Rampant," OilPrice, 3 May 2012, http://oilprice.com/Geopolitics/Middle-East/As-Yemens-Water-Runs-Dry-al-Qaida-Runs-Rampant.html

6 Zaid al-Alaya'a, "Water Expert: Sana'a Basin to Drain Away by 2025," Yemen Observer, 8 August 2009, http://www.yobserver.com/environment/10017024.html

7 Peter Salisbury, "Yemen's Water Woes," Foreign Policy, 30 August 2012, http://mideast.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2012/08/30/yemens_water_woes

8 IRIN, "Yemen: Rapid Urbanisation Threatening Capital's Water Supplies," 14 August 2007, http://ww.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=73716

9 IRIN, "Yemen: Alarm Bells over Water," 14 August 2008, http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=79819

10 World Bank, "Republic of Yemen: Country Social Analysis" (report, Water, Environment, Social and Rural Development Department, Middle East and North Africa, 11 January 2006), 22–33, http://siteresources.worldbank.org/BOLIVIA/Resources/Yemen_CSA.pdf

11 World Bank, "Republic of Yemen: Country Social Analysis" (report, Water, Environment, Social and Rural Development Department, Middle East and North Africa, 11 January 2006), 12–13, 28–33, http://siteresources.worldbank.org/BOLIVIA/Resources/Yemen_CSA.pdf

12 Abdul Rahim al-Showthabi and Moneer al-Omari, "Old Taxi Drivers Complain of Competition from Big Officials," Yemen Post, 2 June 2008, http://www.yemenpost.net/32/Reports/20083.htm

13 Paul Stephens, "Yemen Economy Bullish, But Where's the Money?" GlobalPost, 16 March 2010, http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/middle-east/100302/yemen-economy-bullish

14 Moneer al-Omari, "Most Yemeni Women Work in Unpaid Jobs; Women's Unemployment on Rise," Yemen Post, 5 July 2009, http://www.yemenpost.net/Detail123456789.aspx?ID=100&SubID=1006&MainCat=5

15 World Bank, "Republic of Yemen: Country Social Analysis" (report, Water, Environment, Social and Rural Development Department, Middle East and North Africa, 11 January 2006), 2,31, http://siteresources.worldbank.org/BOLIVIA/Resources/Yemen_CSA.pdf

16 Millennium Development Goals Indicators, "Series Data: Slum Population as Percentage of Urban, Percentage," 2012, http://mdgs.un.org/unsd/mdg/SeriesDetail.aspx?srid=710

17 Millennium Development Goals Indicators, "Series Data: Slum Population as Percentage of Urban, Percentage," 2012, http://mdgs.un.org/unsd/mdg/Metadata.aspx?IndicatorId=0&SeriesId=710

18 IRIN, "Yemen: Rapid Urbanisation Threatening Capital's Water Supplies," 14 August 2007, http://ww.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=73716

19 Haley Sweetland Edwards, "Yemen Water Crisis Builds," *Los Angeles Times*, 11 October 2009, http://articles.latimes.com/2009/oct/11/world/fg-yemen-water11

20 IRIN, "Yemen: Residents of Sanaa Slum Battle Disease, Lack of Water," 3 January 2008, http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=76075

21 IRIN, "Yemen: Residents of Sanaa Slum Battle Disease, Lack of Water," 3 January 2008, http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=76075

22 World Bank, "Republic of Yemen: Country Social Analysis" (report, Water, Environment, Social and Rural Development Department, Middle East and North Africa, 11 January 2006), 31, http://siteresources.worldbank.org/BOLIVIA/Resources/Yemen_CSA.pdf

23 Urban Health Updates, "Ancient Class System Haunts Yemeni Shantytowns," 24 August 2009, http://urbanhealthupdates.wordpress.com/2009/08/24/ancient-class-system-haunts-yemeni-shantytowns/

24 Robert F. Worth, "Languishing at the Bottom of Yemen's Ladder," *New York Times*, 27 February 2008, http://www.nytimes.com/2008/02/27/world/middleeast/27yemen.html

25 Central Intelligence Agency, "Yemen," in *The World Factbook*, 14 November 2012, https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ym.html

26 Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, "Country Profile: Yemen," August 2008, 17, http://memory.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Yemen.pdf

27 Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, "Country Profile: Yemen," August 2008, 17, http://memory.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Yemen.pdf

28 Yemen Post, "As Crackdown on Rioters Continues, Yemen Cuts Cell Phone Service in South," 9 March 2010, http://www.yemenpost.net/Detail123456789.aspx?ID=3&SubID=1955

29 Central Intelligence Agency, "Yemen," in *The World Factbook*, 4 February 2010, https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ym.html

30 Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, "Country Profile: Yemen," August 2008, 20, http://memory.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Yemen.pdf

31 eStandardsForum, Financial Standards Foundation, "Country Brief: Yemen," 13 October 2009, 13, http://www.estandardsforum.org/system/briefs/330/original/brief-Yemen.pdf?1257782049

32 *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Yemen: Economy: Transportation and Telecommunications," 2012, http://search.eb.com/eb/article-45262

33 World Health Organization, "Countries: Yemen," September 2012, http://www.who.int/countries/yem/en/

34 Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, "Country Profile: Yemen," August 2008, 7–8, http://memory.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Yemen.pdf

35 Abdul Rahim al-Showthabi, "The Poor Ponder at Saleh's Mosque," Yemen Post, 26 January 2009, http://www.yemenpost.net/65/Reports/20081.htm

36 Hakim Almasmari, "Government Hospitals Suffer Under Widespread Corruption and Mismanagement, Study Says," Yemen Post, 7 July 2008, http://www.yemenpost.net/37/Health/20081.htm

37 World Bank, "Republic of Yemen: Country Social Analysis" (report, Water, Environment, Social and Rural Development Department, Middle East and North Africa, 11 January 2006), 45–46, http://siteresources.worldbank.org/BOLIVIA/Resources/Yemen_CSA.pdf

38 Bureau of Consular Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Yemen: Country Specific Information," 19 February 2010, http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1061.html

39 World Bank, "Republic of Yemen: Country Social Analysis" (report, Water, Environment, Social and Rural Development Department, Middle East and North Africa, 11 January 2006), 45–46, http://siteresources.worldbank.org/BOLIVIA/Resources/Yemen_CSA.pdf

40 IRIN, "Yemen: Residents of Sanaa Slum Battle

Disease, Lack of Water," 3 January 2008, http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=76075

41 IRIN, "Yemen: New Drive to Reduce Child Mortality," 5 October 2009, http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=86442

42 IRIN, "Yemen: Drive to Promote Handwashing, Reduce Child Mortality Rates," 20 October 2008, http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=81001

43 Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. Department of State, "Yemen," in *2008 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices*, 25 February 2012, http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/2011/nea/186455.htm

44 Jim Lobe, "Most At-Risk Mothers? Girls Having Children," Choike, 4 May 2009, http://www.choike.org/2009/eng/informes/1879.html

45 World Health Organization, "Countries: Yemen," September 2012, http://www.who.int/countries/yem/en/

46 World Bank, "Republic of Yemen: Country Social Analysis" (report, Water, Environment, Social and Rural Development Department, Middle East and North Africa, 11 January 2006), http://siteresources.worldbank.org/BOLIVIA/Resources/Yemen_CSA.pdf

47 Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, "Country Profile: Yemen," August 2008, http://memory.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Yemen.pdf

48 Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. Department of State, "Yemen," in *2011 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices*, 24 May 2012, http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/2011/nea/186455.htm

49 Jeffrey Fleishman, "In Yemen, Tribal Tradition Trumps Education," *Los Angeles Times*, 24 December 2009, http://articles.latimes.com/2009/dec/24/world/la-fg-yemen-school24-2009dec24

50 IRIN, "Yemen: Concern over Increasing Number of School Dropouts," 27 November 2007, http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?ReportID=75528

51 Urban Health Updates, "Ancient Class System Haunts Yemeni Shantytowns," 24 August 2009, http://urbanhealthupdates.wordpress.com/2009/08/24/ancient-class-system-haunts-yemeni-shantytowns/

52 UNICEF, "At a Glance: Yemen: Statistics," 2012, http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/yemen_statistics.html

53 World Economic Forum, "Global Gender Gap Report 2009: Yemen" (Geneva, 2009), http://www.weforum.org/pdf/gendergap2009/Yemen.pdf

54 IRIN, "Yemen: Female Education Remains Key Challenge," 6 September 2007, http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=74159

55 *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Yemen: Government and Society: Education," 2012, http://search.eb.com/eb/article-45267

56 Bo-Madyan Kahtan, "Less Than 6% Make It to College," Yemen Post, 18 February 2008, http://www.yemenpost.net/17/Reports/1.htm

57 World Bank, "Republic of Yemen: Country Social Analysis" (report, Water, Environment, Social and Rural Development Department, Middle East and North Africa, 11 January 2006), 42–44, http://siteresources.worldbank.org/BOLIVIA/Resources/Yemen_CSA.pdf

58 Nadia al-Sakkaf, Yemen Times, "Hamam Al-Hana: Entertainment and a Good Scrub," ProQuest, 1 December 2008, http://search.proquest.com/docview/429802527?accountid=145230

59 Anthony Ham and Frances Linzee Gordon, "Food and Drink," in *Lonely Planet: Arabian Peninsula*. (Footscray, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet Publications, 2004), 60.

60 Yemen College of Middle Eastern Studies, "Yemeni Culture: Food Etiquette," 2009, http://www.ycmes.org/culture.html

61 Daniel McLaughlin, "Chapter 2: Eating and Drinking," in *Yemen* (Guilford, CT: Globe Pequot Press, 2007), 55.

62 Independent News Daily, Yemen Blog, "Souks in Yemen," 3 October 2009, http://yementribune.com/blog/?p=456

63 Anthony Ham and Frances Linzee Gordon. "San'a," in *Lonely Planet: Arabian Peninsula* (Footscray, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet Publications, 2004), 375–76.

64 Khaled ad-Dhababi, "Traditional Souks in Yemen," *Islamic Tourism* 13 (September–October 2004), http://islamictourism.com/PDFs/Issue%2013/English/64%20yemen%202p.pdf

65 Anthony Ham and Frances Linzee Gordon, "Bargaining," in *Lonely Planet: Arabian Peninsula* (Footscray, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet Publications, 2004), 443.

66 Robert Fox, "A National Obsession," Travel Blog, 16 March 2010, http://www.travelblog.org/Middle-East/Yemen/Sanaa/blog-482776.html

67 Saeed al-Batati, "In Yemen, Somali Refugees Beg to Survive," Arab News, 13 January 2010, http://www.arabnews.com/node/332630

68 Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, U.S. Department of State, "Country Narratives: Countries Q Through Z: Yemen," in *Trafficking in Persons Report 2012*, 374, http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/192598.pdf

69 Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, "Country Profile: Yemen," August 2008, http://memory.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Yemen.pdf

70 Bureau of Consular Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Yemen: Country Specific Information," 16 February 2012, http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1061.html

71 British Foreign and Commonwealth Office, "Travel Advice: Yemen," 21 January 2010, http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travel-and-living-abroad/travel-advice-by-country/middle-east-north-africa/yemen/

72 Anthony Ham and Frances Linzee Gordon, "Transport in Yemen: Getting Around," in *Lonely Planet: Arabian Peninsula*" (Footscray, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet Publications, 2004), 430.

73 Ashwaq Arrabyee, "Gas, Diesel and Electricity Crisis Continues in Yemen," e.blogspot.com, 22 March 2011, http://narrabyee-e.blogspot.com/2011/03/gas-diesel-and-electricity-crisis.html

74 Anthony Ham and Frances Linzee Gordon, "Transport in Yemen: Getting Around," in *Lonely Planet: Arabian Peninsula* (Footscray, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet Publications, 2004), 429.

75 Central Intelligence Agency, "Yemen," in *The World Factbook*, 16 February 2012, https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ym.html

76 Reuters, "Yemen to Launch $3.5bn Railway," National, 17 January 2010, http://www.thenational.ae/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20100117/FOREIGN/701179964/1107/FORIEGN

77 Abdul Aziz al-Hiajem, "Yemen to Construct First Railway Line to Link It to Saudi Arabia, Oman," *Al Arabiya News*, 4 October 2012, http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/10/04/241857.html

78 Daniel McLaughlin, "Chapter 2: Practical Information: Getting Around," in *Yemen* (Guilford, CT: Globe Pequot Press, 2007), 53–54.

79 Anthony Ham and Francis Linzee Gordon, "Transport in Yemen: Getting Around," in *Lonely Planet: Arabian Peninsula* (Footscray, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet Publications, 2004), 430.

80 Daniel McLaughlin, "Chapter 2: Practical Information: Getting Around," in *Yemen* (Guilford, CT: Globe Pequot Press, 2007), 53–54.

81 Ashraf al-Muraqab, "Motorbikes: Robbery, Harassment and Tragic Accidents," *Yemen Times*, 23 April 2012, http://www.yementimes.com/en/1566/health/756/Motorbikes-robbery-harassment-and-tragic-accidents.htm

Overview: Chapter 4 Assessment

1. The majority of Yemenis live in urban areas.

   FALSE

   As of 2010, approximately 32% of the Yemeni population lived in urban areas, although urbanization has increased in recent decades.

2. Rural-to-urban migration is fueled by water shortages.

   TRUE

   Lack of access to water—either for consumption or crop cultivation—has become a common cause for migration from the countryside to the city.

3. Sanitation problems are rampant in urban Yemen.

   TRUE

   Despite the involvement of international NGOs as well as humanitarian aid and subsidies from foreign governments, sanitation problems exist for many Yemenis.

4. Economic mobility has increased for urban Yemenis.

   TRUE

   The development of a diversified cash economy in urban areas allows greater economic mobility among the population, but undermines Yemen's traditional social hierarchy.

5. Large numbers of urban Yemenis live in impoverished conditions.

   TRUE

   The United Nations has estimated that approximately 77% of Yemen's urban residents live in mahwa, commonly translated as either slums or shantytowns.

Drawing water from village well
© European Commission / flickr.com

Chapter 5: Rural Life

Introduction

The majority (69%) of the Yemeni population lives in rural areas.[1] Rural Yemen is characterized by tribalism, limited central government, and low levels of development. But even though the central government lacks authority outside Sanaa, rural Yemen is not an ungoverned or lawless place. Rather, society is organized, often rigidly, by tribal institutions and customary law.[2] Moreover, tribal leadership in rural areas has developed closer ties with the central government. This has weakened traditional tribal structures and customs designed to maintain order and equity. For example, the incorporation of tribal leaders, or *shaykhs*, into the central government has reduced their accountability to local communities and exposed them to corruption.[3] Tribes have mechanisms for managing resources and preventing, mediating, and resolving conflict. Most land, for example, was communally owned. All households in the community shared the right to graze livestock, collect firewood, and pick fruit from

trees in places where orchards existed. This did not necessarily extend to the right to plant crops, which requires irrigation. The rights to runoff (rainfall) water could be held by downstream communities. Customary law upheld the right to use runoff over the right to cultivate crops.[4] But rapid population growth, a weak economy, widespread poverty, and the privatization of scarce resources have all intensified the competition for access to water and land. The situation has contributed to conflict and the spread of extremism by groups such as al-Qaeda who can appeal to a disenfranchised population by emphasizing injustice, which offends tribal honor. The appeal is that a collective defense must be mounted against a central government that has appropriated Yemen's national wealth, in the form of oil revenues, and used it to oppress the people and keep them poor.[5]

Tribes: Organization and Distribution

The presence and strength of tribal organization varies by region. It is weak or practically nonexistent in much of the Tihama and southern coastal plains. Along the southern coast, tribalism weakened during the British colonial era and, later, under the socialist government of the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (1970–1990). Here people are organized according to locality rather than tribe.[6] Tribal organization is strongest in the highlands (especially in the north) and the adjacent eastern slope. Tribes define themselves by locality, genealogy (ancestry), and customs. Many scholars of Yemen assert that locality plays the dominant role in defining tribal identity. Indeed, current tribal boundaries are thought to date back several centuries or even a millennium or more.[7]

Exchange 52: Do you know this area very well?

Soldier:	Do you know this area very well?	biti'rif teeyeh al-manTiga gawee?
Local:	Yes.	na'am

Genealogical ties are meaningful, whether they are based on blood or political alliances.[8] It is common for tribes to be named for an ancestor or their geographic region.[9]

Nation-States and Confederations

Although levels of organization and strength vary, many tribes maintain their own political, economic, and judicial structures, as well as militias. Tribes define themselves in opposition to surrounding tribes, with whom they may occasionally come into

conflict. But tribes that oppose each other locally often unite in defense against more distant tribes if they present a threat to local interests. Strong and well-organized tribes form small, autonomous "nation-states" within greater Yemen. Tribal confederations, or alliances between multiple tribes, represent a higher level of organization.[10] These alliances formed to allow tribes to share resources and protect mutual economic interests, such as regional trade routes and markets. Today, tribal confederations represent the interests of their constituent tribes in interactions with the central government.[11]

The country's two most important and influential tribal confederations are known as the Hashid and Bakil. Their constituent tribes are based around Sanaa and throughout the northern highlands.[12] Both of their names date to pre-Islamic times, and each confederation has constituent tribes with long histories.[13] The Hashid confederation is the more politically powerful of the two, and it plays a strong role in the central government.[14] Yemen's president, Ali Abdullah Saleh, is a member of the Hashid.[15] There is great diversity among Yemeni tribes. As one Yemeni scholar observed, "There are fighting tribes and there are peaceful tribes, there are tribes in fertile land and tribes in barren land, there are tribes with strong fanaticism, and there are tribes who are less (fanatical). There are tribes that are loyal to the ruling system and those in opposition to it. . . . There are places where tribes still cling to their tribal norms and . . . places where tribes have lost these norms."[16]

Village soldiers
© Franco Pecchio

Tribal Leadership and the State

Rural administration varies from region to region, depending upon the strength of tribal organization and/or state influence in that region. Many tribes operate independently from the central government, whose authority is weak outside Sanaa. The central government is thus dependent upon the support of tribes to maintain stability. Tribes are political entities that contribute to the state's existence and influence its operation.[17] Yemen has been described as a "tribal republic" in which "a weak central government is supported by a network of alliances between key tribes, tribal leaders, and the president."[18] The cooperation of tribes is largely secured through the government's

patronage network—resources (e.g., oil revenues, jobs, political appointments) are distributed to clients and supporters. Conflicts and rebellion often occur when tribes feel they have been unfairly denied access to such resources.

The patronage system has allowed the central government to incorporate, to a certain degree, tribal leadership into its fold. This has occurred via the Department of Tribal Affairs, which has formally recognized nearly 6,000 tribal *shaykhs* (tribal leaders) around the country. These *shaykhs* receive a cash stipend and other forms of patronage from the government.[19] Some are elected to higher government offices, such as the national parliament. In the past, their leadership was evaluated on the basis of their ability to resolve conflicts and maintain harmony with surrounding tribes. Now it is judged by their ability to bring resources into the community, which are distributed according to the *shaykh's* discretion. Needy community members thus have an incentive to seek material benefits from tribal leaders rather than advocating for changes to the existing system.

Exchange 53: Does your shaykh live here?

Soldier:	Does your shaykh live here?	eysh sheyKhukum ya'eesh haanaa?
Local:	Yes.	na'am

Yemeni man
© Francesco Veronesi

Shakyhs: A Shift to Self-Interest?

The extent to which this shift has occurred is a matter of scholarly debate and specific circumstances vary by tribe. Yet there is broad agreement that the patronage system has discernibly weakened traditional tribal mechanisms for electing and regulating tribal leadership. The tribes of the northern highlands have traditionally held the right to both elect and remove their *shaykhs* by way of a communal vote. This mechanism is meant to ensure that leaders remain accountable to their people while they conduct their traditional duties, which include resource management and distribution. But the patronage network has provided tribal leaders with means of support outside the community, thereby reducing their accountability to the people. Moreover, their wealth and connections to the central government and the patronage network allow them to wield great influence over the community. One Yemeni leader remarked upon the situation, "Once a Shaykhh *[sic]* enters the government, he erodes tribal authority and

can turn into a despot unless he respects the tribal law that his grandfathers swore by." Tribes that are well organized and mindful of tradition retain the ability to remove their leaders. Many *shaykhs* remain unregistered with and/or opposed to the government.[20]

Exchange 54: Can you take me to your shaykh?

Soldier:	Can you take me to your shaykh?	mumkin tashulnee laa sheyKhukum?
Local:	Yes.	mumkin

Shaykhs retain their customary duties to mediate conflicts and manage and distribute resources within the community. They mobilize the community in times of need, and act as intermediaries between the government and the tribe.

Exchange 55: Respected shaykh, we need your help/ advice/ opinion.

Soldier:	Respected shaykh, we need your help / advice / opinion.	ash-sheyKh al-muHtaram nishtee musaa'adatkum / naSeeHatkum / raayakum
Local:	Yes.	HaaDhir

Villages
© fiat/luxury / flickr.com

Land Tenure

Land is treasured by Yemenis. This is partly because of the limited supply of agricultural land in Yemen, where less than 3% of land is arable (suitable for farming). An additional 3.7% is classified as "marginal farmland."[21] Most Yemeni tribesmen are sedentary agriculturists; their livelihoods depend on a recognized claim to land (and related water resources). Moreover, Yemeni tribal culture associates territory with tribal identity and the protection of that territory with tribal honor. Yemeni tribes have two sayings to this effect: "al-ard 'ard" or "land is honor," and "man aqdam li-ard-uk aqdam li-'ard-uk," or "whoever transgresses against your land transgresses against your honor."[22] For these reasons, Yemeni tribesmen are fiercely territorial. Conflicts over land are a common source of blood feuds.[23]

Exchange 56: Did these people threaten you?

Soldier:	Did these people threaten you?	eysh Khawafook haaTholaa an-naas?
Local:	No.	maashey

In Yemen, land is classified into four major categories: privately owned land (*mulk* or *mulk khas*), state-owned land (*aradi al-dawla*), communal land, and land endowed to a religious trust (*aradi waqf*). The majority of the country's landholdings are privately owned.[24] Such land is managed according to customary law (*ulf*), and tenure is typically documented through deeds and contracts authorized by a local tribal leader.[25]

Exchange 57: Do you own this land?

Soldier:	Do you own this land?	teeyeh al-bug'a mulkak?
Local:	Yes.	na'am

Terraced hills
© Franco Pecchio

Land Conflicts and Property Rights

But conflicts over boundaries and ownership occur because of the lack of a national surveying system and registry, as well as a process for authenticating customary deeds and contracts. (The state's Survey and Land Registration Authority only administers urban land.) State-owned land often lacks detailed records and is thus subject to illegal seizure, or land grabbing.[26] This is the case in the former South Yemen, where land was nationalized during the socialist era but reopened to individual claims after unification. Although this policy allowed former landowners to regain their property, many small farmers who received land during the socialist era lost their property rights. Moreover, many claims made on public land were unsubstantiated but secured through patronage. This ongoing practice hurts small farmers; land has been increasingly accumulated by wealthier and better connected landowners. Land is more likely to be fairly distributed in regions where tribal organization remains strong (such as certain areas of the highlands).[27]

Traditionally, tribal leaders are responsible for managing communal land. According to the World Bank, "as land speculation has increased . . . there is growing confusion over communal land entrusted to *shaykhs* and the land that they hold privately. Some

shaykhs have sold land alleged to be communal to private owners outside the tribe, a contravention of customary norms."[28] *Shaykhs* traditionally serve as mediators in conflicts over private land. But their increased involvement and profiteering in land speculation, through which they may have personally acquired choice parcels, has tarnished their reputation as neutral judges. The opportunity to profit is the result of privatization. This has given rise to new categories of ownership, which supersede customary user rights, that has disproportionately benefited those in power. It has also contributed to the unsustainable exploitation of aquifer water resources since restrictions on well drilling on formerly communal land are no longer enforced by tribal authorities.[29]

Insufficient records also affect the administration of *waqf* land, or land that is donated to the Muslim establishment. Constituting roughly 10–15% of Yemen's agricultural land, *waqf* land is typically cultivated by tenant farmers who pay their rent with a share of their crops. Such land is also subject to illegal procurement or seizure by powerful landowners.[30] The arbitrary combination of customary and state law in land management practices has also fueled land grabbing.[31]

Future landowner
© Charles Roffey

Inheritance

Private land usually passes from a father to his sons. Young men thus have to wait for their fathers to die before becoming landowners, unless they can secure it through patronage or cash payment. Inheritance customs contribute to smaller plots because land is successively divided from generation to generation.[32] Although women play an important role in the agricultural economy, they have limited opportunity for land ownership. Islamic law entitles women to half a share of land from their father's estate and smaller increments from the estates of their sons and husband. But Yemenis follow customary practices in which women relinquish their land rights in exchange for guaranteed lifetime support from their male relatives. Under this arrangement, for example, a woman may move back in with her male relatives in the event of widowhood or divorce.[33]

Young vegetable seller
© Francesco Veronesi

Rural Economy and Resources

Most rural residents earn their living through sedentary agriculture and livestock herding. In rugged areas of the highlands, people cultivate terraces cut into steep hillsides. This ancient system allows farmers to harness fertile soils on the mountainside and to maximize limited rainfall. But modern irrigation techniques commonly used in flatter areas leads to the abandonment of hillside terraces, which contributes to soil erosion. Land holdings in the highlands are typically small and fragmented, but small-scale farmers often own their own land. Although the sale of produce was formerly limited to weekly markets, small permanent market towns have emerged in the rural highlands, replacing the traditional barter system with one based on cash and commercial services.[34]

In the Tihama, one of Yemen's poorest regions, the majority of agricultural land is held by a small number of landowners. Such land is cultivated by wage laborers. Small-scale fishing has grown increasingly viable with the expansion of regional highway networks and the use of refrigerated trucks. Agricultural land along the southern coast is also mostly concentrated with wealthy landowners. Many small farmers in this region lost their property rights following unification in 1990 and now work as wage laborers, transient farmers, and unskilled construction workers. In the sparsely populated eastern plateau, farmers use oases and *wadis* such as Wadi Hadramawt for cultivating crops. Although the Yemeni oil industry is based in this region, it provides few jobs. Informal cross-border trade, or smuggling, is a major economic activity in this region. Nomadic pastoralism, or seasonal migration with livestock, was once relatively common but is now limited to small populations.[35]

The instability and low profits and wages associated with agriculture contribute to rampant poverty and unemployment. Nationwide, more than 45% of the population lives on less than USD 2 per day.[36] Seasonal or permanent migration to urban areas or abroad is a common response to rural poverty. Male children are commonly sent out to work in the informal economy rather than attend school. In Wadi Hadramawt, for example, teenage boys customarily migrate to Oman to work with male relatives already established there. They then send a portion of their wages home to their families. Many Yemeni children are trafficked (often arranged by their parents) into Saudi Arabia.[37]

Qat cultivation
© Antti Salonen

Qat Cultivation

The Yemeni agricultural sector has increasingly centered on the cultivation of qat, a shrub whose leaves are widely chewed by Yemenis as a mild stimulant. This is especially true in the highlands, where in the 1970s most farmers worked in subsistence agriculture, namely the cultivation of grains and other food crops. But the market for qat has greatly expanded because consumption has increased, becoming more widespread. More and more farmers have replaced their food crops with qat, a cash crop. Between 1970 and 2000, the area of qat cultivation in Yemen grew from 8,000 hectares (19,770 acres) to 103,000 hectares (254,000 acres).[38] By 2008, this area had surpassed 146,000 hectares. (360,800 acres)[39]

Farmers have embraced qat cultivation for several reasons. Although qat is a water-intensive crop, it is highly resistant to pests and disease and requires little labor. Because of high demand, the qat market is lucrative. Although low quality qat may cost around USD 1 per bushel, the best qat can reportedly draw more than USD 100 per bushel at market.[40] Moreover, local distribution networks are highly developed and the domestic market is protected by a restriction on imports of the plant. Overall, yearly returns from qat are three times higher than those from coffee, another important cash crop.[41] Diesel fuel, used to illegally pump underground water for qat irrigation, is also subsidized.[42] This reduces the production cost of a crop that is marketed daily year round. If the government phased out this subsidy, the profit margins for qat cultivation would shrink, possibly creating market incentives for farmers to shift production to other crops.[43]

Women take qat to market
© Will De Freitas

Qat Reduces Food and Water

The expanded cultivation of qat at the expense of food crops has contributed to severe food insecurity in Yemen. Drought and conflict are also responsible for shortages. Although a large share of the Yemeni population works in agriculture, the majority of Yemen's food supply is imported because of insufficient domestic food production. Even most rural households are net food buyers rather than sellers. High prices for food imports

often prevent poor families from purchasing necessary supplies.[44] The lack of food, as well as the lower nutritional value of food imports, has contributed to malnutrition and other health issues among the Yemeni population. Because they receive higher cash returns, qat farmers are "more than twice as likely to be food secure than those not doing so."[45] In 2010, an estimated 32% of the country was food insecure, meaning they were "suffering from acute hunger."[46]

Water shortages are also serious. Agriculture uses up Yemen's water supply. It accounts for roughly 90% of the country's annual water withdrawal, leaving only 10% for domestic and industrial use. Approximately 40% of annual water use goes to qat cultivation.[47] Cultivation of this water-intensive crop has been discouraged by the Yemeni government. Yet the crop's high profit margin has ensured its continued (and expanded) cultivation. The proliferation of illegally drilled wells to water crops has contributed to the rapid decline of groundwater levels. In 2008, a report indicated that these levels are dropping by 6–20 m (20–65 ft) per year—an extraordinary rate. Erratic rainfall, drought, and higher temperatures have hindered the replenishment of aquifers and surface storage systems.[48] Moreover, an estimated 20–30% of the country's rainfall is thought to be wasted through faulty collection and poorly maintained dams.[49]

Women carrying water
© Kevin Burden

Water Shortages

Water supplies are therefore extremely limited. In rural areas, people often hike long distances to tap local wells or springs. In 2009, lingering drought in the northwestern highlands forced residents to hike some 10–15 km (6–9 mi) over rugged terrain to reach high mountain springs. About 40,000 women and children, who traditionally collect water, were thought to be affected. Although some residents in the region had rainwater catchment systems, most could not afford them.[50] Water scarcity is a common cause for rural-to-urban migration: urban areas maintain a public water supply—albeit limited and rapidly decreasing—as well as a network of private sellers.[51] Water shortages have increasingly been tied to social unrest and conflict.[52] The resource is traditionally managed according to Islamic and customary law, but the growing inequities that have affected land distribution have affected access to water. Large farmers have the resources to dig more and deeper wells. But the wells of nearby small farmers have dried out because of breaches of customary law, which requires wells to be spaced at certain distances.[53] Rural areas have increasingly been forced to truck in water for both agricultural and domestic use.[54]

Midwifery student
© World Bank Photo Collection

Healthcare

Yemen's healthcare system is severely inadequate in both coverage and quality of service. Rural areas suffer from a lack of access to basic medical services. Tribal conflicts have deterred outside medical personnel from traveling into areas not under government authority.[55] As of 2003, only 25% of rural residents had access to local medical care.[56] This reflects a severe shortage of qualified medical personnel and healthcare facilities across Yemen. The majority of rural residents are forced to travel for professional treatment, either to a regional clinic or urban center. High costs, poor transportation networks, and a lack of modern transport can slow or impede this process. Pregnant women, for example, may be forced to ride long distances on camels to give birth at the nearest clinic.[57]

Exchange 58: Is there a medical clinic nearby?

Soldier:	Is there a medical clinic nearby?	beh mustawSaf gareeb min haanaa?
Local:	Yes, over there.	na'am haanaak

Conditions at rural clinics are typically poor and unsanitary. Staff members are often poorly trained, in short supply, or entirely absent. Many rural facilities do not have electricity and thus lack basic equipment and supplies, including medicine.[58] Although public healthcare facilities are supposed to provide free or low-cost care to the poor, corruption is said to be rampant at such facilities. Mismanagement and low salaries compel medical staff to charge unofficial fees for services. Many rural residents cannot afford such fees, which are expected upfront. Poverty, lack of trust, and long travel distances compel many rural inhabitants to seek alternative treatment, such as traditional healing practices.[59]

Exchange 59: My arm is broken, can you help me?

Soldier:	My arm is broken, can you help me?	Theraa'ee iktasar mumkin tisaa'idnee
Local:	Yes, I can help you.	na'am agdar asaa'idak

Women and children are disproportionately affected by the poor quality and unavailability of healthcare services. Malnutrition, acute respiratory infections, and various food, water, and insect-borne illnesses contribute to high infant and child

mortality rates.[60] Diarrhea alone is responsible for "20–25% of the 84,000 annual deaths among children under five" in Yemen.[61] Yemeni women suffer from high maternal mortality rates. Less than half (43%) of expectant mothers receive prenatal care, and even fewer (36%) receive the attention of a skilled medical professional during the birth.[62] This is partially because of the lack of female healthcare professionals in Yemen, where traditional gender boundaries often prevent women from visiting male physicians.[63]

Teacher with student
© World Bank Photo Collection

Education

Officially, public education in Yemen is free, compulsory, and universal for children ages 6–15. This includes a total of 9 years of primary and secondary education.[64] Yet poverty, gender discrimination, and lack of availability prevent many Yemeni children from enrolling or attending. Schools are relatively widespread but are still only present in about one out of every three villages nationwide.[65]

Exchange 60: Is there a school nearby?

Soldier:	Is there a school nearby?	beh madrasa gareeba min haanaa?
Local:	Yes.	aywa

Quality of education is affected by corruption. Public schooling is underwritten by the government which, in theory, recruits teachers based on their qualifications. In reality, it is one of the main distribution networks in the government's patronage system. A significant portion of funding allocated for education is simply channeled into the pockets of personnel rather than to the institutions. Approximately 40% of employees in the Ministry of Education are thought to be "ghost workers," or persons who receive a paycheck but do not actually work.[66] As a result, educational facilities are often in poor condition and lack electricity, running water, and sanitation.[67]

Exchange 61: Do your children go to school?

Soldier:	Do your children go to school?	juhaalak beeseeroo al-madrasa?
Local:	Yes.	aywa

Boy off to school
© Osama Al-Eryani

Poverty, Gender Limit Access to Schooling

Although basic schooling is technically free, associated costs of attendance, such as uniforms, are too high for many families to afford, especially if they have several children, which is the case for most rural households. Likewise, poverty forces many children, especially those in rural areas, to drop out of school to work either in the informal sector or in the household.[68] In addition, many rural families see limited practical value in education considering the agricultural nature of the rural economy and limited opportunities for the type of work that requires academic knowledge. As one young man from rural Yemen remarked, "What good is it to continue with secondary education when all you can be is a qat farmer?"[69]

Girls have limited access to education, especially in rural areas. Customs enforce the segregation of the sexes and isolate women in the home. A lack of female teachers and girls-only schools prevents many young female students from attending. Moreover, education is more highly valued for males since girls are not expected (and often not allowed) to have a career outside the home. Girls may be sent to school just to learn basic reading and writing. Yet even this is not always the case. Low enrollment and attendance rates translate into a very low literacy rate for rural females aged 10 and above: 24%, as of 2005. This is significantly lower than the literacy rate for urban females: 59.5%. Rural boys are also less likely to be literate than their urban counterparts.[70]

Private schools exist in Yemen, but enrollment is usually limited to children from wealthy families. Private education is more common in cities than in rural areas.[71] Yemen is home to an unknown number of unlicensed religious schools, some of which teach fundamentalist and extremist doctrine. The rise of these schools has been partly attributed to the failure of the public system to provide comprehensive coverage and quality education.[72] The Yemeni government has closed more than 4,500 unlicensed religious schools and institutions because of concerns that they encouraged militant ideology or otherwise deviated from the government-approved curriculum.[73] Yet many such institutions remain in operation.

Rural road
© Jon Bowman

Transportation

Yemen's road network is poorly developed, especially in rural areas. The construction of all-weather (paved) highways only began in the 1970s.[74] Today, according to some estimates of the country's 71,300 km (44,300 mi) of roadway, only 6,200 km (3,850 mi) are paved.[75] Reports that account for recent improvements in infrastructure estimate the length of paved roads at around 14,000 km (8,700 mi).[76] Highways running between the country's major urban centers are in the best condition. These include the highway linking Sanaa and Ta'izz in the highlands, and those connecting Sanaa and Ta'izz to Al Hudaydah on the Tihama. The highway from Aden to Ta'izz is also said to be in decent condition.[77]

Outside the primary highway network, conditions are poor. Most rural roads are unpaved, consisting only of dirt or desert track. In the highlands, unimproved roads passing over rugged terrain can be treacherous. Unpaved rural roads "are in very poor condition, allowing travel only under exhausting conditions at extremely low speeds, and entailing high vehicle operating costs." Four-wheel-drive and high-clearance vehicles are typically required for travel throughout rural Yemen. Many unimproved roads are entirely impassable during the rains. Yemen's incomplete and often poor-quality road network leaves many rural residents isolated. An estimated 75% of the rural population lacks access to paved roads.[78] Services are scarce in these areas.

Exchange 62: Is there lodging nearby?

Soldier:	Is there lodging nearby?	beh fanaadig gareeba min haanaa?
Local:	No.	maashey

Border Crossings and Checkpoints

Travel in and out of Yemen is monitored and regulated at official border crossings. Yemen's borders otherwise remain porous and highly susceptible to smuggling and trafficking. Travel within Yemen is restricted. Foreigners typically need permits from the Yemen Tourist Police to travel beyond Sanaa.[79]

Exchange 63: Where is the nearest checkpoint?

Soldier:	Where is the nearest checkpoint?	ayn agrab nugTat tafteesh?
Local:	It's two kilometers.	ithneyn keelo min haanaa

Checkpoints are common, especially on the outskirts of urban areas.[80] Travel in rural Yemen is considered high risk because of the very real threat of kidnapping, carjacking, terrorism, and armed conflict.

Exchange 64: Is this all the ID you have?

Soldier:	Is this all the ID you have?	haaTholaa kul al-baTaayig alee ma'ak?
Local:	Yes.	na'am

Yemenis receive official IDs, but forgeries are common. Those seeking additional IDs may wish to create a false identity to get a second government job as a "ghost worker" to draw an additional salary. Or procuring IDs for nonexistent members can increase the number of benefits available to a household.[81]

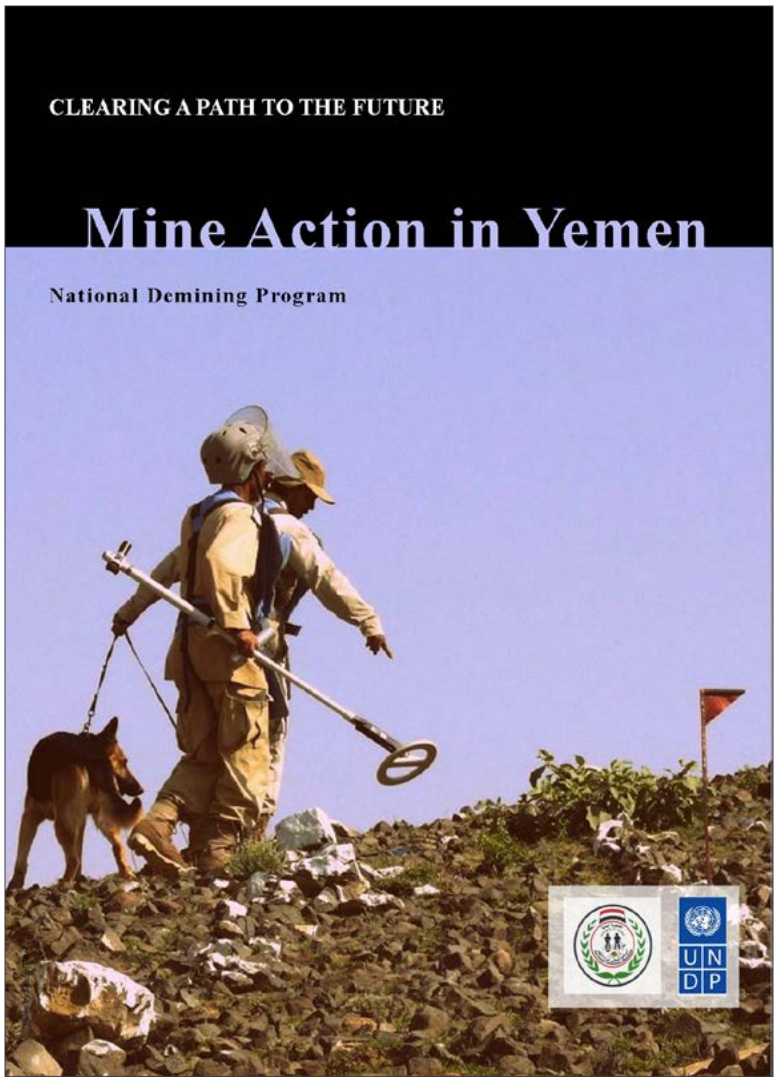
Exchange 65: Please get out of the car.

Soldier:	Please get out of the car.	Khruj min as-sayaara law samaHt
Local:	OK.	naahee

Tribes also independently monitor and regulate travel within their territories. They occasionally block travel through their territory while making demands from the government. Some engage in kidnapping for similar purposes.[82]

Exchange 66: Show us the car registration.

Soldier:	Show us the car registration.	raweena awraag tasgeel as-sayaara
Local:	OK.	naahee



Landmine searching
© Yemen Executive Mine Action

Landmines

Yemen is a signatory of the Mine Ban Treaty, also known as the Ottawa Treaty. Established in 1997, the pact requires all signatories to cease the "use, stockpiling, production, and transfer of anti-personnel mines." Signatories are also required to clear all mines from their territory within 10 years of signing the agreement.[83] (The United States is not a signatory of this agreement.) Yemen signed the agreement in 1999 but has received an extension on its deadline—now 1 March 2015—for clearing mines from its territory. Although Yemen has destroyed most of its known stockpile, there are unconfirmed reports that both the Yemeni Army and rebel forces in the north have used antipersonnel mines as part of the al-Houthi conflict. Thus, the government and independent actors such as insurgents may still be planting landmines. According to a May 2007 report, mines were among the various types of weapons purchased from the public by the Yemeni government as part of an arms reduction and collection program. Entities who relinquished weapons in the program included "regular civilians, tribal sheikhs and clans from around the country."[84]

Periodic armed conflict since 1962 has left Yemen contaminated with mines and explosive remnants of war (ERW). The majority of mines were laid along the border of North and South Yemen prior to unification. Despite years of mine clearing efforts, Yemen still had more than 520 sq km (200 sq mi) of suspected hazardous area (SHA) at the end of 2008. But only a small portion of this area (12 sq km/5 sq mi) was thought to need full clearance. Some contaminated areas remain permanently marked as such, although others are not marked at all.

Exchange 67: Is this area mined?

Soldier:	Is this area mined?	hal teeyeh al-manTiga mulaghama?
Local:	Yes.	aywa

Among remaining SHAs are small portions of Lahij, Abyan, and Hadramawt governorates, including areas where mines may be buried up to 6 m (20 ft) deep in sand dunes. Although unconfirmed, reports of recent land mine use as part of the al-Houthi conflict pertained to the Saada governorate of the north. Casualties from landmines continue to occur. At least 20 casualties, including 7 deaths and 13 injuries, were recorded in 2008 alone. Most victims of landmines are civilians, particularly farmers and herders. The rainy season is considered the most dangerous time because of the potential shifting of mines during floods.[85]

Endnotes

1 UN Population Fund, "Demographic, Social and Economic Indicators," in *State of the World Population 2009: Facing a Changing World: Women, Population and Climate* (UNFPA, 2009), 90, http://www.unfpa.org/swp/2009/en/pdf/EN_SOWP09.pdf

2 Stewart M. Patrick, "Are 'Ungoverned Spaces' a Threat?" Council on Foreign Relations, 11 January 2010, http://www.cfr.org/publication/21165/are_ungoverned_spaces_a_threat.html

3 World Bank, "Republic of Yemen: Country Social Analysis" (report, Water, Environment, Social and Rural Development Department, Middle East and North Africa, 11 January 2006), 38, http://siteresources.worldbank.org/BOLIVIA/Resources/Yemen_CSA.pdf

4 G. Lichtenthäler and A.R. Turton, "Water Demand Management, Natural Resource Reconstruction and Traditional Value Systems: A Case Study from Yemen" (Occasional Paper No. 14, Water Issues Study Group, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, n.d.),4, http://www.soas.ac.uk/water/publications/papers/file38357.pdf

5 Sarah Phillips and Rodger Shanahan, "Al-Qa'ida, Tribes and Instability in Yemen" (analysis, Lowy Institute for International Policy, November 2009), http://www.humansecuritygateway.com/documents/LOWY_AlQaida_Tribes_Instability_Yemen.pdf

6 World Bank, "Republic of Yemen: Country Social Analysis" (report, Water, Environment, Social and Rural Development Department, Middle East and North Africa, 11 January 2006), 13, http://siteresources.worldbank.org/BOLIVIA/Resources/Yemen_CSA.pdf

7 Daniel Egel, "Tribal Diversity, Political Patronage and the Yemeni Decentralization Experiment" (paper, University of California, Berkeley,12 January 2010), 6, 7,9, http://www.cgdev.org/doc/events/Post-Doc%20Seminars/Daniel_Egel.pdf

8 . Laurie Krieger et al., "North Yemen: Social Class and Tribe," in *The Yemens: Country Studies*, 2nd ed., ed. Richard F Nyrop (Washington, DC: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1986), 115–16.

9 Jeff Meissner, "The Tribes—The Backbone of the Nation," in *Insight Guide: Yemen*, 2nd ed., ed. Hans Höfer (Singapore: APA Publications, 1992), 116–17.

10 World Bank, "Republic of Yemen: Country Social Analysis" (report, Water, Environment, Social and Rural Development Department, Middle East and North Africa, 11 January 2006), 12, http://siteresources.worldbank.org/BOLIVIA/Resources/Yemen_CSA.pdf

11 Daniel Egel, "Tribal Diversity, Political Patronage and the Yemeni Decentralization Experiment" (paper, University of California, Berkeley,12 January 2010), 5–6, 10, 11, http://www.cgdev.org/doc/events/Post-Doc%20Seminars/Daniel_Egel.pdf

12 Paul Dresch, "Chapter 1: Introductory," in *Tribes, Government, and History in Yemen* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1993), 24–25.

13 Paul Dresch, "Chapter 9: The Morphology of Tribal Self-Definition," in *Tribes, Government, and History in Yemen* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1993), 320.

14 World Bank, "Republic of Yemen: Country Social Analysis" (report, Water, Environment, Social and Rural Development Department, Middle East and North Africa, 11 January 2006), 12, http://siteresources.worldbank.org/BOLIVIA/Resources/Yemen_CSA.pdf

15 Robert D. Kaplan, "A Tale of Two Colonies," *Atlantic*, April 2003, http://www.theatlantic.com/doc/200304/kaplan

16 Zaid al-Alaya'a, "Tribes Should Be Social Entities not Political Participants, Says al-Dhaheri," Yemen Observer, 22 September 2007, http://www.yobserver.com/reports/10012989.html

17 Zaid al-Alaya'a, "Tribes Should Be Social Entities not Political Participants, Says al-Dhaheri," Yemen Observer, 22 September 2007, http://www.yobserver.com/reports/10012989.html

18 Daniel Egel, "Tribal Diversity, Political Patronage and the Yemeni Decentralization Experiment" (paper, University of California, Berkeley,12 January 2010), 7–8, http://www.cgdev.org/doc/events/Post-Doc%20Seminars/Daniel_Egel.pdf

19 Daniel Egel, "Tribal Diversity, Political Patronage and the Yemeni Decentralization" (paper, University of California, Berkeley,12 January 2010), 1, 7–8, http://www.cgdev.org/doc/events/Post-Doc%20Seminars/Daniel_Egel.pdf

20 World Bank, "Republic of Yemen: Country Social Analysis" (report, Water, Environment, Social and Rural Development Department, Middle East and North Africa, 11 January 2006), 35–38, http://siteresources.worldbank.org/BOLIVIA/Resources/Yemen_CSA.pdf

21 World Bank, "Republic of Yemen: Country Social Analysis" (report, Water, Environment, Social and Rural Development Department, Middle East and North Africa, 11 January 2006), 15, http://siteresources.worldbank.org/BOLIVIA/Resources/Yemen_CSA.pdf

22 Paul Dresch, "Chapter 2: The Language of Honor, " in *Tribes, Government, and History in Yemen* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1993), 54–55.

23 Laila al-Zwaini, "State and Non-State Justice in Yemen" (conference paper, U.S. Institute of Peace, Kabul, 10–14 December 2006), 8, 13, http://www.usip.org/files/ROL/al_zwaini_paper.pdf

24 M. Mosleh al-Sanabani, "Land Tenure and Resource Management in the Yemeni Highlands," in *Yemen into the Twenty-First Century: Continuity and Change*, eds. Kamil A. Mahdi, Anna Würth, and Helen Lackner (Reading, UK: Ithaca Press, 2007), 182.

25 World Bank, "Republic of Yemen: Country Social Analysis" (report, Water, Environment, Social and Rural Development Department, Middle East and North Africa, 11 January 2006), 15, http://siteresources.worldbank.org/BOLIVIA/Resources/Yemen_CSA.pdf

26 M. Mosleh al-Sanabani, "Land Tenure and Resource Management in the Yemeni Highlands," in *Yemen into the Twenty-First Century: Continuity and Change*, eds. Kamil A. Mahdi, Anna Würth, and Helen Lackner (Reading, UK: Ithaca Press, 2007), 183.

27 World Bank, "Republic of Yemen: Country Social Analysis" (report, Water, Environment, Social and Rural Development Department, Middle East and North Africa, 11 January 2006), 15–16, 24, http://siteresources.worldbank.org/BOLIVIA/Resources/Yemen_CSA.pdf

28 World Bank, "Republic of Yemen: Country Social Analysis" (report, Water, Environment, Social and Rural Development Department, Middle East and North Africa, 11 January 2006), 15, http://siteresources.worldbank.org/BOLIVIA/Resources/Yemen_CSA.pdf

29 G. Lichtenthäler and A.R.Turton, "Water Demand Management, Natural Resource Reconstruction and Traditional Value Systems: A Case Study from Yemen" (Occasional Paper No. 14, Water Issues Study Group, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, n.d.), 5–6, http://www.soas.ac.uk/water/publications/papers/file38357.pdf

30 M. Mosleh al-Sanabani, "Land Tenure and Resource Management in the Yemeni Highlands," in *Yemen into the Twenty-First Century: Continuity and Change*, eds. Kamil A. Mahdi, Anna Würth, and Helen Lackner (Reading, UK: Ithaca Press, 2007), 183.

31 World Bank, "Republic of Yemen: Country Social Analysis" (report, Water, Environment, Social and Rural Development Department, Middle East and North Africa, 11 January 2006), 15, http://siteresources.worldbank.org/BOLIVIA/Resources/Yemen_CSA.pdf

32 M. Mosleh al-Sanabini, "Land Tenure and Resource Management in the Yemeni Highlands," in *Yemen into the Twenty-First Century: Continuity and Change*, eds. Kamil A. Mahdi, Anna Würth, and Helen Lackner (Reading, UK: Ithaca Press, 2007), 185–86.

33 World Bank, "Republic of Yemen: Country Social Analysis" (report, Water, Environment, Social

and Rural Development Department, Middle East and North Africa, 11 January 2006), 16, http://siteresources.worldbank.org/BOLIVIA/Resources/Yemen_CSA.pdf

34 World Bank, "Republic of Yemen: Country Social Analysis" (report, Water, Environment, Social and Rural Development Department, Middle East and North Africa, 11 January 2006), 20–22, http://siteresources.worldbank.org/BOLIVIA/Resources/Yemen_CSA.pdf

35 World Bank, "Republic of Yemen: Country Social Analysis" (report, Water, Environment, Social and Rural Development Department, Middle East and North Africa, 11 January 2006), 12, 20–25, http://siteresources.worldbank.org/BOLIVIA/Resources/Yemen_CSA.pdf

36 IRIN, "Poverty, Lack of Education Boosting HIV/AIDS—Experts," 5 March 2001, http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=82235

37 World Bank, "Republic of Yemen: Country Social Analysis" (report, Water, Environment, Social and Rural Development Department, Middle East and North Africa, 11 January 2006), 18–19, http://siteresources.worldbank.org/BOLIVIA/Resources/Yemen_CSA.pdf

38 Suzan Ghanem, Jowhara Zindani, and Zinadine Zindani, "Qat: The Plague of Yemen," Yemen Observer, 26 February 2008, http://www.yobserver.com/sports-health-and-lifestyle/10013815.html

39 Abdul-Aziz Oudah, "Qat Absorbs More Than Yemen's Depleting Water," Yemen Observer, 16 February 2010, http://www.yobserver.com/front-page/10018176.html

40 Lin Noueihed, "Qat Draws Water and Life from Impoverished Yemen," Reuters, 29 May 2007, http://uk.reuters.com/article/idUKNOA93814520070529?sp=true

41 World Bank, "Republic of Yemen: Country Social Analysis" (report, Water, Environment, Social and Rural Development Department, Middle East and North Africa, 11 January 2006), 20, http://siteresources.worldbank.org/BOLIVIA/Resources/Yemen_CSA.pdf

42 Christopher Boucek, "Yemen on the Brink: Implications for U.S. Policy" (Congressional testimony, U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Foreign Affairs, 3 February 2010, http://www.carnegieendowment.org/files/0203_testimony_boucek.pdf

43 IRIN, "Yemen: Alarm Bells over Water," 14 August 2008, http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=79819

44 IRIN, "Yemen: 'The Most Food-Insecure Country in the Middle East,'" 17 February 2009, http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=82966

45 World Bank, "Republic of Yemen: Country Social Analysis" (report, Water, Environment, Social and Rural Development Department, Middle East and North Africa, 11 January 2006), 20–21, http://siteresources.worldbank.org/BOLIVIA/Resources/Yemen_CSA.pdf

46 IRIN, "Yemen: Food Security Takes a Knock," 25 February 2010, http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?ReportID=88235

47 IRIN, "Yemen: Unprecedented Water Rationing in Cities," 16 August 2009, http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=85734

48 UPI, "Yemen's Water Crisis a Mideast Warning," 29 October 2009, http://www.upi.com/Science_News/Resource-Wars/2009/10/29/Yemens-water-crisis-a-Mideast-warning/UPI-52511256844951/

49 Robert F. Worth, "Thirsty Plant Dries Out Yemen," *New York Times*, 31 October 2009, http://www.nytimes.com/2009/11/01/world/middleeast/01yemen.html?pagewanted=1&_r=1

50 IRIN, "Yemen: Clambering Up Mountains to Find Water," 3 November 2009, http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?Reportid=86847

51 Haley Sweetland Edwards, "Yemen Water Crisis Builds.," *Los Angeles Times*, 11 October 2009, http://articles.latimes.com/2009/oct/11/world/fg-yemen-water11

52 Laura Kasinof, "At Heart of Yemen's Conflicts: Water Crisis," *Christian Science Monitor*, 5 November 2009, http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Middle-East/2009/1105/p06s13-wome.html

53 World Bank, "Republic of Yemen: Country Social Analysis" (report, Water, Environment, Social and Rural Development Department, Middle East and North Africa, 11 January 2006), 16–18, http://siteresources.worldbank.org/BOLIVIA/Resources/Yemen_CSA.pdf

54 IRIN, "Yemen: Southern Rural Areas Forced to Rely on Trucked-In Water," 14 January 2010, http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=87733

55 Almigdad Mojalli, "Tribal Conflicts Cause Political, Social and Economic Loss," *Yemen Times*, 4 March 2009, http://www.ndi.org/files/ye_2009Feb_TribalConflictsArticle.pdf

56 World Health Organization, "Country Profiles: Yemen," September 2009, http://www.emro.who.int/emrinfo/index.asp?Ctry=yem

57 World Bank, "Republic of Yemen: Country Social Analysis" (report, Water, Environment, Social and Rural Development Department, Middle East and North Africa, 11 January 2006), 45, http://siteresources.worldbank.org/BOLIVIA/Resources/Yemen_CSA.pdf

58 World Bank, "Republic of Yemen: Country Social Analysis" (report, Water, Environment, Social and Rural Development Department, Middle East and North Africa, 11 January 2006), 45, http://siteresources.worldbank.org/BOLIVIA/Resources/Yemen_CSA.pdf

59 Hakim Almasmari, "Government Hospitals Suffer Under Widespread Corruption and Mismanagement, Study Says," Yemen Post, 7 July 2008, http://www.yemenpost.net/37/Health/20081.htm

60 IRIN, "Yemen: New Drive to Reduce Child Mortality," 5 October 2009, http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=86442

61 IRIN, "Yemen: Drive to Promote Handwashing, Reduce Child Mortality Rates," 20 October 2008, http://www.irinnews.org/Report/81001/YEMEN-Drive-to-promote-handwashing-reduce-child-mortality-rates

62 World Health Organization, "Country Profiles: Yemen," September 2009, http://www.emro.who.int/emrinfo/index.asp?Ctry=yem

63 World Bank, "Republic of Yemen: Country Social Analysis" (report, Water, Environment, Social and Rural Development Department, Middle East and North Africa, 11 January 2006), 45–46, http://siteresources.worldbank.org/BOLIVIA/Resources/Yemen_CSA.pdf

64 Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, "Country Profile: Yemen," August 2008, http://memory.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Yemen.pdf

65 Daniel Egel, "Tribal Diversity, Political Patronage and the Yemeni Decentralization" (paper, University of California, Berkeley,12 January 2010), 29, http://www.cgdev.org/doc/events/Post-Doc%20Seminars/Daniel_Egel.pdf

66 Daniel Egel, "Tribal Diversity, Political Patronage and the Yemeni Decentralization" (paper, University of California, Berkeley,12 January 2010), 18, http://www.cgdev.org/doc/events/Post-Doc%20Seminars/Daniel_Egel.pdf

67 Mutahar A. al-Abbasi, "The Education Sector in Yemen: Challenges and Policy Options," in *Yemen into the Twenty-First Century: Continuity and Change*, eds. Kamil A. Mahdi, Anna Würth, and Helen Lackner (Reading, UK: Ithaca Press, 2007).

68 IRIN, "Yemen: Concern over Increasing Number of School Dropouts," 27 November 2007, http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?ReportID=75528

69 World Bank, "Republic of Yemen: Country Social Analysis" (report, Water, Environment, Social and Rural Development Department, Middle East and North Africa, 11 January 2006), 44, http://siteresources.worldbank.org/BOLIVIA/Resources/Yemen_CSA.pdf

70 IRIN, "Yemen: Female Education Remains Key Challenge," 6 September 2007, http://www.irinnews.org/

Report.aspx?ReportId=74159

71 World Bank, "Republic of Yemen: Country Social Analysis" (report, Water, Environment, Social and Rural Development Department, Middle East and North Africa, 11 January 2006), 44, http://siteresources.worldbank.org/BOLIVIA/Resources/Yemen_CSA.pdf

72 IRIN, "Analysis: Yemen's Rebellions Fuelled by Economic Meltdown," 4 February 2010, http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=87996

73 Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. State Department, "International Religious Freedom Report 2009: Yemen," 26 October 2009, http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127361.htm

74 World Bank, "Republic of Yemen: Country Social Analysis" (report, Water, Environment, Social and Rural Development Department, Middle East and North Africa, 11 January 2006), 10, http://siteresources.worldbank.org/BOLIVIA/Resources/Yemen_CSA.pdf

75 Central Intelligence Agency, "Yemen," in *The World Factbook*, 4 February 2010, https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ym.html

76 Relief Web, "Yemen, Republic of-Ry-Rural Access II Additional Financing—Report No. AB5433," World Bank, 19 February 2010, http://reliefweb.int/report/yemen/yemen-republic-ry-rural-access-ii-additional-financing-report-no-ab5433

77 Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, "Country Profile: Yemen," August 2008, http://memory.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Yemen.pdf

78 Relief Web, "Yemen, Republic of-Ry-Rural Access II Additional Financing—Report No. AB5433," World Bank, 19 February 2010, http://reliefweb.int/report/yemen/yemen-republic-ry-rural-access-ii-additional-financing-report-no-ab5433

79 British Foreign and Commonwealth Office, "Travel Advice: Yemen," 21 January 2010, http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travel-and-living-abroad/travel-advice-by-country/middle-east-north-africa/yemen/

80 Michel Moutot, "Yemen an Easy Haven for Foreigners Drawn to Militant Islam," Agence France-Presse, 21 January 2010, http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5jziujTwf4jWeaTbCaGclpiNAru_g

81 Yemen News Agency, "Yemenizing African Refugees Through Election Cards," 21 March 2010, http://www.sabanews.net/en/news209304.htm

82 Bureau of Consular Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Yemen: Country Specific Information," 19 February 2010, http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1061.html

83 Landmine and Cluster Munition Monitor, "The Issues: Mine Ban Treaty," 2009, http://lm.icbl.org/index.php/LM/The-Issues/Mine-Ban-Treaty

84 Landmine and Cluster Munition Monitor, "Yemen: Landmine Monitor Report 2009," 2009, http://lm.icbl.org/index.php/publications/display?act=submit&pqs_year=2009&pqs_type=lm&pqs_report=yemen&pqs_section=

85 Landmine and Cluster Munition Monitor, "Yemen: Landmine Monitor Report 2009," 2009, http://lm.icbl.org/index.php/publications/display?act=submit&pqs_year=2009&pqs_type=lm&pqs_report=yemen&pqs_section=

Overview: Chapter 5 Assessment

1. Nearly 7 in 10 Yemenis live in rural villages.

   TRUE

   The majority (68%) of the Yemeni population lives in the nation's 130,000 rural villages.

2. Tribal influence and organization is weakest in the highlands region.

   FALSE

   Tribal organization is strongest in the highlands (especially in the north) and the adjacent eastern slope.

3. Qat is the most important cash crop.

   TRUE

   The nation's main cash crop, which accounts for about 6% of GDP, is qat, a shrub with leaves that Yemenis chew as a mild stimulant.

4. All land is owned by the state but may be leased to farmers.

   FALSE

   Land is classified into four major categories: privately owned land (mulk or mulk khas), state-owned land (aradi al-dawla), communal land, and land endowed to a religious trust (aradi waqf). Most land is privately owned and managed under customary law (ulf).

5. There is no significant difference between the number of girls and boys en rolled in basic education.

   FALSE

   There is a significant gender gap, with boys outnumbering girls in school by nearly 24%. In some rural schools, no girls are enrolled.

Chapter 6: Family Life

Introduction

In Yemen, as in most Muslim communities, the family is the center of life.[1, 2] Marriage is nearly universal.[3] Families tend to be large, with the average woman giving birth to seven children.[4] Although there are nuclear families in Yemen, extended families are the norm. They serve as lifelong support systems for their members, both socially and economically.[5, 6]

Exchange 63: Does your family live here?

Soldier:	Does your family live here?	hal tiskun usratak haanaa?
Local:	Yes.	aywa.

Grandfather & grandson
© Carpetblogger / flickr.com

Families are closely bound through shared honor and responsibility. The reputation and actions of each family member reflect upon the household unit as a whole. For tribesmen, individual honor is bound to the ability to protect the sanctity of the family and its assets.[7] Individuals place the needs and rights of the family above their own. Yemenis value their family relations more than anything else in their society except Allah and their Islamic faith.[8]

The Typical Household

The traditional Yemeni household consists of a large extended family with several generations living in the same home or compound. Because Yemenis follow patrilocal norms (kin living in the house of a male relative), male offspring (and their wives and children) stay in the man's extended family. When female offspring marry, they go to live with their husband's extended family.[9]

Exchange 64: Is this your entire family?

Soldier:	Is this your entire family?	haaTholaa kul ʻayiltak?
Local:	Yes.	aywa.

Exchange : 65: How many people live in this house?

Soldier:	How many people live in this house?	kam beh naas yaskunoo bi-teeyeh al-beyt?
Local:	Ten.	ʻashra.

Families tend to be large and average seven members per household. There is no difference in the size of rural and urban families.[10]

Exchange 66: Are these people part of your family?

Soldier:	Are these people part of your family?	haaTholaa an-naas min ʻayiltak?
Local:	No.	maashey.

Yemeni families are traditionally patriarchal, meaning that household authority lies with the eldest male. Lineage is traced on the father's side of the family. Men enjoy more rights and greater social status than women, who are seen as subordinate to their husbands and male relatives. As the head of the household, men are expected to be strong-willed providers and disciplinarians for their family. They make the important decisions for the family and represent its interests, including political interests, in the community.[11, 12]

Female bread seller
© Sandra / flickr.com

Women are expected to be good Muslims and mothers, preferably to sons. Their role is often limited to the home, where they care for children and perform essential tasks around the household. They are expected to be chaste and modest.[13, 14]

Status of Women

Yemen ranked third from the bottom on the 2012 gender equity index, which represented a slight improvement over the 2011 index, on which it ranked last.[15] Although the constitution declares that there is equality between males and females, reality does not support the assertion. Yemen's restrictive Personal Code, based on shari'a law and its highly patriarchal culture, leaves women vulnerable to abuse, persecution, and discrimination.[16, 17] Yemen has been referred to as the worst place to live if you are a woman.[18]

Women are denied many basic human rights. They cannot marry without the consent of their guardians. Women are denied equal rights with respect to custody of children, divorce, inheritance, and other legal issues.[19, 20] Females cannot travel or obtain a passport without a male guardian or their husband's consent. At least half of all women marry before they are 18, and

marriages before the age of 13 are becoming increasingly common.[21, 22]

Women are allowed to vote but are otherwise excluded by custom from political participation. In 2011, only 3 out of 412 parliamentary seats and only 32 judgeships were held by women. Approximately 20% of Yemeni women work outside the home. Their educational achievement lags far behind that of their male counterparts.[23] Only 48% of women are literate compared to 82% of men.[24] That number improves slightly among women aged 15–24 (72% vs. 96%).[25]

Most women are covered in public. They wear a loose head-to-toe black cloak and a face veil (*niqab*).[26] In some parts of the country, women choose to wear the *hijab*, which covers the neck and hair but not the face. These women have been harassed by al-Qaeda militants in the region.[27]

Woman carrying infant
© Francesco Veronesi

Status of Children and the Elderly

Children

Yemen is one of the poorest and least developed nations in the world.[28, 29] Children are faced with challenges ranging from poor health and low education to basic survival. Nearly 6 out of 10 children suffer from chronic malnutrition.[30] In spite of legal prohibitions against working, approximately 17% of children aged 5–17 are involved in the labor force. Eleven percent of children aged 5–11 work.[31, 32]

Yemeni children as young as 11 are recruited into the region's civil conflict.[33] In 2013 the Yemeni government used children to patrol the streets of Sanaa and to man checkpoints; children were also utilized as soldiers in Abyan.[34] Children could be found in the ranks of the Central Security Forces, the Republican Guard, and the First Armored Division. Some groups have reportedly been using children as human shields.[35]

Some Yemeni children are trafficked into Saudi Arabia where they become forced laborers or workers in the sex industry. Children are trafficked to other Gulf countries where they work in hotels or in the sex trade.[36]

The Elderly

Average life expectancy in Yemen is relatively low at approximately 64 years.[37] People 65 and older made up only 2.7% of the population in 2010, but that number is expected to increase to 3.4% by 2025.[38]

Within the Yemeni family, authority depends on seniority. The eldest members of the

household are due the greatest respect. Their opinions and views are highly prized and regarded. Often, the elderly are asked to mediate disputes among family members.[39, 40] In Muslim families, children are taught that it is an honor and a duty to care for aging parents. Even if they are sick, elderly parents remain at home with the family until they die.[41]

Unmarried adolescents
© Kevin Burden

Marriage, Divorce, and Birth

Marriage

Marriage is an expected part of life in Yemen. In urban areas, nearly 50% of women are married by the time they are 18; in rural areas, 50% of those under 13 are married.[42, 43] There is no minimum legal age for marriage, and girls as young as seven or eight are often married.[44, 45] More than half of all women in Yemen are child brides, according to a Yemeni official.[46] New data suggests that the rates are much higher: 70% in rural areas for child brides (and 7% for husbands under age 18).[47] According to the law, marriages to child brides should not be consummated until the child reaches maturity, commonly about 15 years of age.[48, 49] The law is almost never enforced.[50, 51]

Exchange 67: Are you married?

Soldier:	Are you married?	ant mutzawij?
Local:	Yes.	aywa.

In Yemen, marriages are social and economic contracts between families, rather than romantic unions between individuals.[52, 53] Parents arrange marriages for their offspring; the bride and groom may have little or no say in the matter.[54, 55] Marriage between cousins is still common practice.[56] Statistics suggest that 40% or more marriages are to kin (consanguineous) and most are to first cousins.[57, 58, 59]

Exchange 68: Is this your wife?

Soldier:	Is this your wife?	teeyeh maratak?
Local:	Yes.	aywa.

Educated, professional women have reportedly faced difficulties in finding marriage partners, with many of them staying unmarried into their late thirties. Perceptions of older, educated women as less easy to control may explain this trend. The local press has described the situation as one in which Yemeni women marry young or not at all.[60]

Islamic custom allows men to marry up to four wives, although the practice is not widespread in Yemen.[61, 62] Men who take multiple wives must by custom and law treat them equally. They should also possess the resources to provide for additional wives and offspring. Polygyny has been seen by some Yemenis as a means of absorbing unmarried or widowed women who may otherwise be without a means of support. A common reason for a man to take a second wife is because his first wife is unable to bear children.[63]

Woman walks through Amanat Al Asimah District, Sanaa
Flickr / Kate Nevens

Divorce

Divorce carries with it a serious stigma for women. Divorced women are seen as flawed and as failures. They face denial or rejection by their birth families and receive little help from the government.[64, 65] Divorced women are more likely than any other group to become victims of violence, by both men and women. They are frequent victims of sexual harassment. In the most extreme cases, they are treated like criminals.[66] The stigma of divorce can carry over into the next generation. When families meet to arrange marriages, finding out that one member of the couple came from a divorced family can complicate negotiations and may be enough to derail the proposal.[67]

Despite these challenges, divorce is relatively common. For the 45–49 age group, about 1 in 4 have divorced.[68] Divorce is a right for both genders, but it is easier for men to initiate. Yemeni men can request a divorce without justifying the separation or even asking their wife's permission. They can go to the court and have the divorce approved by local authorities.[69, 70, 71] They may also simply make a public renunciation of the marriage by declaring "I divorce you" three times.[72, 73] Women must obtain a judicial divorce that may be granted only under specific conditions.[74, 75] Among the acceptable reasons for divorce are prolonged absence, drug or alcohol abuse, adultery, impotence, disease, and taking a second wife without permission. Under customary tribal law, however, a woman also has the right to divorce without justification.[76]

Women who request a divorce (*khula*) for reasons other than those outlined in the law, must return the bride price (*mahr*) to the groom and his family.[77, 78, 79] This requirement,

combined with the loss of social and economic support from the husband's family, prevents many women from initiating divorce.[80]

Child with recycled materials
© Matthias Kihr

Yemeni women maintain ties with their natal (birth) family after marriage. This practice allows them to turn to their male relatives for support in the event of divorce. Yemeni women traditionally relinquish their land tenure rights for such support.[81]

Birth

Children are highly valued in Yemeni culture. They are seen as gifts from Allah, and they expand the family and contribute to its wealth.[82] Boys are viewed as less of an economic burden; they are also seen as a way to carry on family lineage and to keep assets in the family through inheritance. Girls, on the other hand, are married off to other families.[83]

Exchange 69: Are these your children?

Soldier:	Are these your children?	haaTholaa juhaalak?
Local:	Yes.	aywa.

Exchange 70: Do you have any brothers?

Soldier:	Do you have any brothers?	beh ʻindak aKhwaan?
Local:	Yes.	aywa.

Childbirth remains a dangerous process in Yemen, where a high fertility rate, insufficient trained medical personnel (doctors and nurses), and widespread poverty contribute to high maternal mortality rates. Most births take place at home and without a trained birth attendant. Early marriage greatly contributes to maternal mortality.[84] Nearly 51 of every 1,000 newborns die. Every day, 1 in 39 women dies in childbirth, or approximately 8 women each day.[85, 86]

Social Events

Weddings

Yemeni weddings are elaborate affairs that serve to display familial wealth and hospitality. The wedding ceremony follows several previous meetings in which the

marriage is negotiated and approved by the families involved. This includes the betrothal ceremony, in which the bride price is established and the engagement is made.[87, 88] Weddings are large communal events that involve several stages. The traditional Yemeni wedding lasts 3 days, usually Wednesday through Friday. Some weddings—part of a growing trend of extravagant and extremely expensive celebrations—may last 10 days.[89]

Exchange 71: Congratulations on your wedding!

Soldier:	Congratulations on your wedding!	mabrook az-ziwaaja
Local:	We are honored you could attend.	ʻanitsharaf beHuDhoorukum.

Arrival of groom
© Mike Moss

On Wednesday of the traditional 3-day wedding, the bride and groom sign the marriage contract in the presence of a *qazi*, or Islamic legal scholar.[90, 91] Weddings must be registered within one week of the signing of the contract.[92] The major celebration occurs on Friday, when family, friends, and community members gather for a feast and festivities.[93, 94] Wedding events are segregated by gender.[95, 96] After the men gather for the noon Friday prayer at the mosque, guests attend a large midday meal followed by an afternoon *qat* session. Music, dancing, and poetry are performed, and the party spills into the street when the groom is carried out in an ornate chair.[97] By contrast, the women's celebration occurs in a private home. The bride wears a bridal gown, ornate jewelry, and henna (traditional makeup) on her hands and feet. The wedding formally concludes with a procession in which the groom and, later, the bride cross the threshold of his family home, signifying her entry into the family.[98]

Exchange 72: I wish you both happiness.

Soldier:	I wish you both happiness.	nitmana lakum as-saʼaada.
Local:	We are honored.	netsharaf.

The bride's family may ask for a dowry of about USD 1,400 up to USD 6,000. The dowry does not include the costs of the ceremony.[99] Many cannot afford to get married and pay the cost of the dowry. A relatively new phenomenon is the mass wedding paid for

by government organizations and private philanthropists.[100, 101] In November 2013, the largest mass wedding to date in Yemen wed 4,000 couples.[102, 103]

Weddings and other social events are celebrated with gunfire. A ban on weapons in urban and semiurban environments has limited their use at social events in cities. However, weapons remain an essential feature of celebrations in rural Yemen, where not only guns but artillery may be used in the festivities. In urban areas, fireworks have replaced the traditional weapons discharge.[104, 105]

Cemetery
© Franco Pecchio

Funerals

Yemeni burial rites are shaped by Islamic custom. Muslims prefer to bury their dead within 24 hours. The body of the deceased is washed by a member of the same gender and shrouded in white linen as part of the ritual preparation for burial. This rite may be performed by family members or appointed members of the community.[106]

Exchange 73: I would like to give my condolences to you and your family.

Soldier:	I would like to give my condolences to you and your family.	ta'aazeena lak wa lil-usra.
Local:	Thank you.	shookran.

Exchange 74: Please be strong.

Soldier:	Please be strong.	Khaaleek gawee.
Local:	We will try.	'anHaawil.

Men customarily carry the body on a covered stretcher to the burial grounds. Women may be restricted from attending the burial ceremony, which typically includes the recitation of Islamic prayers. Muslims are traditionally buried on their side, facing Mecca. Women may visit the gravesite after the men have departed.[107] Mourning usually takes place inside the deceased's home or the nearby homes of family members. Men and women gather in different rooms of the house.

Yemeni children
© yeowhatzup / flickr.com

Naming Conventions

Arabic names reflect one's lineage and generally consist of a personal name, the personal name of the father, and a grandfather's personal name. An example of a full name following this structure is Ali (personal name) bin (son of) Muhammad (father's name) bin (son of) Ahmed (grandfather's name). The term *bin* is not always used before the names of the father and grandfather. The same name could thus read Ali Muhammad Ahmed.[108] For a female, the term *bint* (daughter of) is used. Therefore, Ali's sister might be Aisha (personal name) bint (daughter of) Muhammad (father's name) bin (son of) Ahmed (grandfather's name).[109]

The use of family names is becoming increasing popular. Family names are derived from one's homeland or tribal origins and often begin with *Al*.[110, 111] If a last name is used, the common naming structure is personal name, father's personal name, grandfather's name, and family name.[112] This form would appear as Ali bin Muhammad bin Ahmed Al-Sulayman, or Ali, son of Muhammad, son of Ahmed, of the tribe of Sulayman.[113] His sister would be Aisha bint Muhammad bin Ahmed Al-Sulayman.[114] When using a family name, it is common to drop the grandfather's name so the names above would be represented as Ali bin Muhammad Al-Sulayman and Aisha bint Muhammad Al-Sulayman.[115, 116]

When women marry, they do not generally take their husband's name. Instead, a title such as *Haram*, *Hurma*, or *Hurmat* (wife of) is placed in front of the husband's name. Hurma Mustafa Ali is, literally, "wife of Mustafa Ali."

First names in Yemen often have historical and religious significance. These names include Mohammad, Ahmed, and Ali for boys and Aisha and Fatima for girls. Yemeni personal names derive from natural objects, the time or conditions of a baby's birth, willed attributes or qualities (often of a religious nature), a baby's physical or behavioral characteristics, place names, and even weapons.[117]

Endnotes

1 Hoda Rashad, Magued Osman, and Farzaneh Roudi-Fahimi, "Marriage in the Arab World" (paper, Population Reference Bureau, 2005), 1, http://www.prb.org/pdf05/marriageinarabworld_eng.pdf

2 "Republic of Yemen," *CultureGrams Online Edition*, Proquest, 2014.

3 Social Institutions and Gender Index, "Yemen: Discriminatory Family Code," 2012, http://genderindex.org/country/yemen

4 United Nations Development Programme, "Improve Maternal Health," 2012, http://www.ye.undp.org/content/yemen/en/home/mdgoverview/overview/mdg5/

5 Hoda Rashad, Magued Osman, and Farzaneh Roudi-Fahimi, "Marriage in the Arab World" (paper, Population Reference Bureau, 2005), 1–2, http://www.prb.org/pdf05/marriageinarabworld_eng.pdf

6 *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Yemen: Daily Life and Social Customs," 2014, http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/652831/Yemen/273063/Daily-life-and-social-customs

7 Paul Dresch, "Chapter 2: The Language of Honor," in *Tribes, Government, and History in Yemen* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1993), 54–55.

8 "Republic of Yemen," *CultureGrams Online Edition*, Proquest, 2014.

9 *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Yemen: Daily Life and Social Customs," 2014, http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/652831/Yemen/273063/Daily-life-and-social-customs

10 Yemen Ministry of Public Health, "3: Main Characteristics of Households," in *Family Health Survey* (report, 2004), 28, http://www.mophp-ye.org/arabic/docs/Familyhealth_english.pdf

11 Laurie Krieger et al., "North Yemen: Gender Roles," in *The Yemens: Country Studies*, 2nd ed., ed. Richard F. Nyrop (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1986).

12 Elham Manea, "Yemen," in *Women's Rights in the Middle East and North Africa: Progress Amid Resistance*, eds. Sanja Kelly and Julia Breslin (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2010), 7–14, http://www.freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/inline_images/Yemen.pdf

13 Susanne Dahlgren, "Islam, Custom and Revolution in Aden: Reconsidering the Background to the Changes of the Early 1990s," in *Yemen into the Twenty-First Century: Continuity and Change*, eds. Kamil A. Mahdi, Anna Würth, and Helen Lackner (Reading, UK: Ithaca Press, 2007).

14 Mohammed Baobaid, "Chapter 9: Masculinity and Gender Violence in Yemen," in *Islamic Masculinities*, ed. Lahoucine Ouzgane (London, UK: Zed Books Ltd, 2006), 161–62, 169.

15 Social Institutions and Gender Index, "Yemen," 2012, http://genderindex.org/country/yemen

16 Social Institutions and Gender Index, "Yemen," 2012, http://genderindex.org/country/yemen

17 Human Rights Watch, "World Report 2013: Yemen," http://www.hrw.org/world-report/2013/country-chapters/yemen?page=3

18 Olivia Hadreas, "Yemen: Worst Place to Live as a Woman," The Borgen Project, November 2013, http://borgenproject.org/yemen-worst-place-live-woman/

19 Human Rights Watch, "Yemen: Child Marriage Spurs Abuse of Girls and Women," 8 December 2011, http://www.hrw.org/news/2011/12/08/yemen-child-marriage-spurs-abuse-girls-and-women

20 United Nations Children's Fund, *Yemen: MENA Gender Equality Profile Status of Girls and Women in the Middle East and North Africa* (report, October 2011), 2, http://www.unicef.org/gender/files/Yemen-Gender-Eqaulity-Profile-2011.pdf

21 Jumana Al Tamimi, "'65% of Females in Yemen Marry Underage,'" GulfNews.com, 26 January 2014, http://gulfnews.com/news/gulf/yemen/65-of-females-in-

yemen-marry-underage-1.1282224

22 Human Rights Watch, "Yemen: Child Marriage Spurs Abuse of Girls and Women," 8 December 2011, http://www.hrw.org/news/2011/12/08/yemen-child-marriage-spurs-abuse-girls-and-women

23 United Nations Children's Fund, *Yemen: MENA Gender Equality Profile Status of Girls and Women in the Middle East and North Africa* (report, October 2011), 3–4, http://www.unicef.org/gender/files/Yemen-Gender-Eqaulity-Profile-2011.pdf

24 Central Intelligence Agency, "Yemen: People and Society," in *The World Factbook*, 7 January 2014, https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ym.html

25 United Nations Children's Fund, *Yemen: MENA Gender Equality Profile Status of Girls and Women in the Middle East and North Africa* (report, October 2011), 3, http://www.unicef.org/gender/files/Yemen-Gender-Eqaulity-Profile-2011.pdf

26 J. Henry, "Yemenis," in *Worldmark Encyclopedia of Cultures and Daily Life*, vol. 4, eds. Timothy L. Gall and Jeneen Hobby (Detroit, MI: Gale Cengage Learning, 2009), 1051–52.

27 Al Arabiya, "Al-Qaeda Targets Yemeni Women for Not Wearing Face Veils," 1 May 2012, http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/05/01/211446.html

28 World Bank, "Least Developed Countries: UN Classification," 2014, http://data.worldbank.org/region/LDC

29 United Nations Development Programme, *Human Development Report 2013* (report, 2013), 2, http://data.worldbank.org/region/LDC

30 United Nations, "1: Socio-Economic and Political Context Analysis," in *Common Country Assessment: Republic of Yemen* (report, 2011), 18, https://www.cimicweb.org/cmo/ComplexCoverage/Documents/Yemen/United%20Nations%20Common%20Country%20Assessment%20-%20Yemen%20(2011).pdf

31 International Labour Organization, "More than 1.3 Million Child Labourers in Yemen," 15 January 2013, http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_201431/lang--en/index.htm

32 United States Department of Labor, "Yemen: 2012 Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor," http://www.dol.gov/ilab/reports/child-labor/yemen.htm

33 United States Department of Labor, "Yemen: 2012 Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor," http://www.dol.gov/ilab/reports/child-labor/yemen.htm

34 Human Rights Watch, "World Report 2013: Yemen," 2013, http://www.hrw.org/world-report/2013/country-chapters/yemen

35 United States Department of Labor, "Yemen: 2012 Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor," http://www.dol.gov/ilab/reports/child-labor/yemen.htm

36 United States Department of Labor, "Yemen: 2012 Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor," http://www.dol.gov/ilab/reports/child-labor/yemen.htm

37 Central Intelligence Agency, "Yemen: People and Society," in *The World Factbook*, 7 January 2014, https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ym.html

38 United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, "Table 10: Population Distribution by Broad Age Groups in Yemen, 1980–2050," in *The Demographic Profile of Yemen*, 2011, http://www.escwa.un.org/popin/members/yemen.pdf

39 Anna Hestler and Jo-Ann Spilling, "The Family," in *Cultures of the World: Yemen* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish Benchmark, 1999), 75.

40 "Republic of Yemen: Lifestyle," *CultureGrams Online Edition*, Proquest, 2014.

41 Christine Huda Dodge, "Respect for Parents and Elders," Understanding Islam, n.d., http://www.netplaces.com/understanding-islam/the-extended-muslim-family/respect-for-parents-and-elders.htm

42 "Witness: Divorce in Yemen," Link TV, n.d., http://www.linktv.org/programs/al-jazeera-english-divorce-in-

yemen

43 PBS, "Child Marriage: What We Know," 2010, http://www.pbs.org/now/shows/341/facts.html

44 "Laws Failing to Stop Child Marriage, Rights Group Reports," thestar.com, 19 January 2014, https://www.google.com/search?q=young+girls+married+in+yemen+to+avoid+financial&ie=utf-8&oe=utf-8&aq=t&rls=org.mozilla:en-US:official&client=firefox-a

45 IRIN News Agency, "Yemen: Deep Divisions Over Child Brides," 28 March 2010, http://www.irinnews.org/report/88589/yemen-deep-divisions-over-child-brides

46 Human Rights Watch, "How Come You Allow Little Girls to Get Married?," 8 December 2011, http://www.hrw.org/node/103334/section/6

47 Jumana Al Tamimi, "'65% of Females in Yemen Marry Underage,'" GulfNews.com, 26 January 2014, http://gulfnews.com/news/gulf/yemen/65-of-females-in-yemen-marry-underage-1.1282224

48 IRIN News Agency, "Yemen: Government Body Calls for End to Child Marriage," 3 August 2008, http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=79584

49 IRIN News Agency, "Yemen: Deep Divisions Over Child Brides," 28 March 2010, http://www.irinnews.org/report/88589/yemen-deep-divisions-over-child-brides

50 IRIN News Agency, "Yemen: Deep Divisions Over Child Brides," 28 March 2010, http://www.irinnews.org/report/88589/yemen-deep-divisions-over-child-brides

51 IRIN News Agency, "Yemen: 'I'd Rather Die than Go Back to Him,'" 21 February 2010, http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=88138

52 Hoda Rashad, Magued Osman, and Farzaneh Roudi-Fahimi, "Marriage in the Arab World," (paper, Population Reference Bureau, 2005), 2, http://www.prb.org/pdf05/marriageinarabworld_eng.pdf

53 Abdulrahman Shamlan, "Women Victimized by Yemeni 'Exchange Marriages,'" *Yemen Times*, 11 April 2013, http://www.yementimes.com/en/1667/report/2220/Women-victimized-by-Yemeni-%E2%80%98exchange-marriages%E2%80%99%C2%A0.htm

54 *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Yemen: Cultural Life: Daily Life and Social Customs," 2014, http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/652831/Yemen

55 J. Henry, "Yemenis," in *Worldmark Encyclopedia of Cultures and Daily Life*, vol. 4, eds. Timothy L. Gall and Jeneen Hobby (Detroit, MI: Gale Cengage Learning, 2009), 1051–52.

56 *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Yemen: Cultural Life: Daily Life and Social Customs," 2014, http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/652831/Yemen

57 Rozzet Jurdi and Pre, C. Saxena, "The Prevalence and Correlates of Consanguineous Marriages in Yemen: Similarities and Contrasts with Other Arab Countries," *Journal of Biosocial Science* 35, no. 1 (2003), http://www.archive-iussp.org/Brazil2001/s60/S62_P04_Jurdi.pdf

58 A.A. Gunaid, N.A. Hummad, and K.A. Tamim, "Consanguineous Marriage in the Capital City of Sana'a, Yemen," *Journal of Biosocial Science* 36, no. 1 (January 2004): 114,116–17.

59 Yemen Ministry of Public Health, "6: Marriage Patterns," in *Family Health Survey* (report, 2004), 59, http://www.mophp-ye.org/arabic/docs/Familyhealth_english.pdf

60 Abdul Rahim Al-Showthabi, "Marriage Choice for Women in Yemen: Early Marriage or No Marriage," *Yemen Post*, 19 January 2009, http://www.yemenpost.net/64/Reports/20081.htm

61 *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Yemen: Cultural Life: Daily Life and Social Customs," 2014, http://search.eb.com/eb/article-273063

62 Yemen Ministry of Public Health, "6: Marriage Patterns," in *Family Health Survey* (report, 2004), 60–61, http://www.mophp-ye.org/arabic/docs/Familyhealth_english.pdf

63 Abdul Rahim Al-Showthabi, "Polygamy Marriage Seeing More Acceptance in Society," *Yemen Post*, 10 March 2008, http://www.yemenpost.net/20/Reports/20082.htm

64 "Witness: Divorce in Yemen," Link TV, n.d., http://www.linktv.org/programs/al-jazeera-english-divorce-in-yemen

65 Faisal Darem, "Divorced Women in Yemen Suffer Social Stigma," Al-Shorfa.com, 31 July 2010, http://al-shorfa.com/en_GB/articles/meii/features/main/2010/07/31/feature-02

66 Faisal Darem, "Divorced Women in Yemen Suffer Social Stigma," Al-Shorfa.com, 31 July 2010, http://al-shorfa.com/en_GB/articles/meii/features/main/2010/07/31/feature-02

67 Sahar, "Divorced Women in Yemen," World Pulse, 9 February 2011, http://worldpulse.com/node/34395

68 Yemen Ministry of Public Health, "6: Marriage Patterns," in *Family Health Survey* (report, 2004), 61–62, http://www.mophp-ye.org/arabic/docs/Familyhealth_english.pdf

69 Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2012: Yemen*, 2013, http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/#wrapper

70 Law School, Emory University, "Yemen, Republic of," n.d., http://www.law.emory.edu/ifl/legal/yemen.htm

71 Marta Colburn, "Chapter IV: Development Challenges Today: Gender and Development," in *The Republic of Yemen: Developmental Challenges in the 21st Century* (London: Catholic Institute for International Relations, 2002), 66–67.

72 Amal Al-Yarisi, "The Daily Threat of Divorce," *Yemen Times*, 12 September 2013, http://www.yementimes.com/en/1711/report/2883/The-daily-threat-of-divorce.htm

73 Law School, Emory University, "Yemen, Republic of," n.d., http://www.law.emory.edu/ifl/legal/yemen.htm

74 Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2012: Yemen*, 2013, http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/#wrapper

75 Law School, Emory University, "Yemen, Republic of," n.d., http://www.law.emory.edu/ifl/legal/yemen.htm

76 Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2012: Yemen*, 2013, http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/#wrapper

77 Marta Colburn, "Chapter IV: Development Challenges Today: Gender and Development," in *The Republic of Yemen: Developmental Challenges in the 21st Century* (London: Catholic Institute for International Relations, 2002), 66–67.

78 Law School, Emory University, "Yemen, Republic of," n.d., http://www.law.emory.edu/ifl/legal/yemen.htm

79 Human Rights Watch, "How Come You Allow Little Girls to Get Married?" 8 December 2011, http://www.hrw.org/node/103334/section/5

80 Marta Colburn, "Chapter IV: Development Challenges Today: Gender and Development," in *The Republic of Yemen: Developmental Challenges in the 21st Century* (London: Catholic Institute for International Relations, 2002), 66–67.

81 Water, Environment, Social and Rural Development Department, The World Bank, "Republic of Yemen: Country Social Analysis" (report, 11 January 2006), 16, http://siteresources.worldbank.org/BOLIVIA/Resources/Yemen_CSA.pdf

82 Anna Hestler and Jo-Ann Spilling, "Chapter 7: Lifestyle," in *Cultures of the World: Yemen*, 2nd ed., (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish, 2010), 76.

83 Social Institutions and Gender Index, "Yemen," 2012, http://genderindex.org/country/yemen

84 IRIN, News Agency, "Yemen: What is Blocking Progress on MMR," 20 January 2009, http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=82463

85 Jumana Al Tamimi, "'65% of Females in Yemen Marry Underage'," GulfNews.com, 26 January 2014, http://gulfnews.com/news/gulf/yemen/65-of-females-in-yemen-marry-underage-1.1282224

86 Olivia Hadreas, "Yemen: Worst Place to Live as a Woman," The Borgen Project, November 2013, http://borgenproject.org/yemen-worst-place-live-woman/

87 Fritz Piepenburg, "A Traditional Wedding," in *Insight Guide: Yemen*, 2nd ed., ed. Hans Höfer (Singapore: APA Publications, 1992), 121.

88 Zawaj, "A Traditional Yemeni Wedding," n.d., http://www.zawaj.com/weddingways/yemeni.html

89 Zawaj, "A Traditional Yemeni Wedding," n.d., http://www.zawaj.com/weddingways/yemeni.html

90 Tyler, "Yemeni Wedding," Blogpot.com, 22 July 2007, http://dukeengage2007yemen.blogspot.com/2007/07/yemeni-wedding-by-tyler.html

91 Nikahnama, "Muslim Marriages in Yemen," 2012, http://www.nikahnama.com/yemen/index.html

92 Law School, Emory University, "Yemen, Republic of," n.d., http://www.law.emory.edu/ifl/legal/yemen.htm

93 Tyler, "Yemeni Wedding," Blogpot.com, 22 July 2007, http://dukeengage2007yemen.blogspot.com/2007/07/yemeni-wedding-by-tyler.html

94 Nikahnama, "Muslim Marriages in Yemen," 2012, http://www.nikahnama.com/yemen/index.html

95 Daniel McLaughlin, "Weddings," in *Yemen: The Bradt Travel Guide* (Guilford, CT: The Globe Pequot Press, Inc., 2007), 32–33.

96 Sam Webb, "The Wedding for 2,000 Grooms who can Bring Knives but not Wives: Huge Ceremony where Yemeni Tradition Bans Brides," Daily Mail, 1 November 2013, http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2483138/The-wedding-2-000-grooms-bring-knives-wives-Thousands-men-wield-swords-huge-Yemeni-ceremony-women-banned-Muslim-rules.html

97 Tyler, "Yemeni Wedding," Blogpot.com, 22 July 2007, http://dukeengage2007yemen.blogspot.com/2007/07/yemeni-wedding-by-tyler.html

98 Fritz Piepenburg, "A Traditional Wedding," in *Insight Guide: Yemen*, 2nd ed., Hans Höfer, ed. (Singapore: APA Publications, 1992), 121–23.

99 IRIN News Agency, "Yemen: Mass Weddings Help Ease Financial Strains," 1 February 2005, http://www.irinnews.org/report/24592/yemen-mass-weddings-help-ease-financial-strains

100 Farea al-Muslimi, "The Social Politics of Weddings in Yemen," al Monitor, 20 November 2013, http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2013/11/yemen-weddings-politics-social-discrimination.html#

101 Erin Biel, "In Yemen, the More the Merrier?" The Yale Globalist, n.d., http://tyglobalist.org/politics-and-economy/in-yemen-the-more-the-merrier/

102 Habib Toumi, "Yemen Mass Wedding Believed to Be the Largest in the World," Gulfnews.com, 1 November 2013, http://gulfnews.com/news/gulf/yemen/yemen-mass-wedding-believed-to-be-largest-in-the-world-1.1249906

103 Sam Webb, "The Wedding for 2,000 Grooms Who Can Bring Knives but not Wives: Huge Ceremony Where Yemeni Tradition Bans Brides," Daily Mail, 1 November 2013, http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2483138/The-wedding-2-000-grooms-bring-knives-wives-Thousands-men-wield-swords-huge-Yemeni-ceremony-women-banned-Muslim-rules.html

104 Haley Sweetlands Edwards, "The Yemeni Tradition of Firing Automatic Weapons at Weddings Succumbs to Public Safety," *Minnpost*, 17 November 2009, http://www.minnpost.com/globalpost/2009/11/17/13502/the_yemeni_tradition_of_firing_automatic_weapons_at_weddings_succumbs_to_public_safety

105 Farea al-Muslimi, "The Social Politics of Weddings in Yemen," alMonitor, 20 November 2013, http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2013/11/yemen-weddings-politics-social-discrimination.html#

106 Bilal Abu Aisha, "Funeral Rites and

Regulations in Islam," n.d., http://www.missionislam.com/knowledge/funeral.htm

107 Steven C. Caton, "Chapter 11: Travel Advisory," *Yemen Chronicle: An Anthropology of War and Mediation* (New York, NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005), 329–30.

108 Financial and Banking Information Infrastructure Committee, United Kingdom, *A Guide to Names and Naming Practices* (report, March 2006), 33–34, http://www.fbiic.gov/public/2008/nov/Naming_practice_guide_UK_2006.pdf

109 Financial and Banking Information Infrastructure Committee, United Kingdom, *A Guide to Names and Naming Practices* (report, March 2006), 33–34, http://www.fbiic.gov/public/2008/nov/Naming_practice_guide_UK_2006.pdf

110 Financial and Banking Information Infrastructure Committee, United Kingdom, *A Guide to Names and Naming Practices* (report, March 2006), 34, http://www.fbiic.gov/public/2008/nov/Naming_practice_guide_UK_2006.pdf

111 James Richards, "Know Your Customer—Naming Conventions for Arabic, Russian, Chinese, Vietnamese, Western African, and Hispanic Cultures" (paper, 14 January 2002), 4–5, http://www.bankersonline.com/tools/namingconventions.pdf

112 Financial and Banking Information Infrastructure Committee, United Kingdom, *A Guide to Names and Naming Practices* (report, March 2006), 33, http://www.fbiic.gov/public/2008/nov/Naming_practice_guide_UK_2006.pdf

113 Financial and Banking Information Infrastructure Committee, United Kingdom, *A Guide to Names and Naming Practices* (report, March 2006), 33–34, http://www.fbiic.gov/public/2008/nov/Naming_practice_guide_UK_2006.pdf

114 Financial and Banking Information Infrastructure Committee, United Kingdom, *A Guide to Names and Naming Practices* (report, March 2006), 33–34, http://www.fbiic.gov/public/2008/nov/Naming_practice_guide_UK_2006.pdf

115 Financial and Banking Information Infrastructure Committee, United Kingdom, *A Guide to Names and Naming Practices* (report, March 2006), 34, http://www.fbiic.gov/public/2008/nov/Naming_practice_guide_UK_2006.pdf

116 James Richards, "Know Your Customer—Naming Conventions for Arabic, Russian, Chinese, Vietnamese, Western African, and Hispanic Cultures" (paper, 14 January 2002), 4–5, http://www.bankersonline.com/tools/namingconventions.pdf

117 Abdul Wahed Qasem Ghaleb Al-Zumor, "A Socio-Cultural and Linguistic Analysis of Yemeni Arabic Personal Names," *GEMA Online Journal of Language Studies* 2 (2009): 18–23, http://www.ukm.my/ppbl/Gema/pp%2015_27.pdf

Overview: Chapter 6 Assessment

1. The extended family is the most typical family structure in Yemen.

   TRUE

   The traditional Yemeni household consists of a large extended family. Several generations of relatives often live in the same home or compound.

2. Rural families are generally larger than urban families.

   FALSE

   Yemeni families tend to be large and average seven members per household. There is no difference in the average size of rural and urban families.

3. Yemen has one of the poorest records of gender equality in the world.

   TRUE

   Yemen ranked third from last on the gender equity index in 2012, which was a slight

   improvement from last place on the 2011 index.

4. The legal age for marriage is 15 for girls and 18 for boys.

   FALSE

   There is no minimum legal age for marriage in Yemen; often, girls as young as 7 or 8 are married. More than half of women in Yemen are child brides, according to a Yemeni official.

5. Women commonly take their husband's name after marriage.

   FALSE

   When women marry, they do not generally take their husband's name. Instead, titles such as Haram, Hurma, or Hurmat (wife of) would be placed in front of the husband's name. Hurma Mustafa Ali would mean "wife of Mustafa Ali."

Yemini Cultural Orientation: Final Assessment

1. Parts of Yemen were once controlled by Great Britain.
   True or False?

2. Insurgency has plagued Yemen for years.
   True or False?

3. Al-Qaeda operates inYemen.
   True or False?

4. Yemen is one of the richest of Arab countries.
   True or False?

5. Yemen officially protects freedom of speech.
   True or False?

6. Islam promotes male dominance in Yemen.
   True or False?

7. Seclusion of women takes place in Yemen.
   True or False?

8. Religious differences in the country can negatively impact Yemenis.
   True or False?

9. The Yemen government allows Muslims free rein to practice their faith.
   True or False?

10. Yemeni women worship alongside their men.
    True or False?

11. Honor is a minor concept to Yemeni people.
    True or False?

12. Tribal law practices remain constant throughout Yemen.

True or False?

13. Honor is a personal issue for Yemenis.

True or False?

14. Honor killings occur in Yemen.

True or False?

15. Gift-giving is a respected tradition in Yemen.

True or False?

16. Despite wireless communications, Yemenis' ability to communicate is tenuous.

True or False?

17. Urban Yemen supports modern healthcare facilities.

True or False?

18. Government programs exist to immunize children.

True or False?

19. Education is not compulsory in Yemen.

True or False?

20. Souks are common in urban Yemen.

True or False?

21. Approximately 40% of rural residents live in poverty.

True or False?

22. Tribal sheikhs are the formal heads of district governments in rural Yemen.

True or False?

23. The two most significant tribal confederations in Yemen are the Hashid and the Bakil.

True or False?

24. Only six governorates in Yemen are known to be contaminated with mines.
True or False?

25. One's tribal affiliation depends on blood relations and common ancestors.
True or False?

26. Women are not allowed to vote in Yemen.
True or False?

27. Children as young as 11 are recruited into the ranks of the police and military.
True or False?

28. Divorce is extremely rare in Yemen.
True or False?

29. Approximately 40% of marriages are to kin such as first cousins.
True or False?

30. Yemeni families are strongly patriarchal.
True or False?

Caton, Steven Charles. *"Peaks of Yemen I Summon": Poetry as Cultural Practice in a North Yemeni Tribe*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990.

Caton, Steven Charles. *Yemen Chronicle: An Anthropology of War and Mediation*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005.

Colburn, Marta. *The Republic of Yemen: Developmental Challenges in the 21st Century*. London: Catholic Institute for International Relations, 2002.

Dresch, Paul. *A History of Modern Yemen*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

Hansen, Eric. *Motoring with Mohammed: Journeys to Yemen and the Red Sea*. New York: Random House, 1992.

Mackintosh-Smith, Tim. *Yemen: The Unknown Arabia*. Woodstock, NY: Overlook Press, 2000.

Mahdi, Kamil A., and Anna Würth, Helen Lackner, eds. *Yemen into the Twenty-First Century: Continuity and Change.* Reading, UK: Ithaca Press, 2007.

McLaughlin, Daniel. *Yemen*. Guilford, CT: Globe Pequot Press, 2007.

Weir, Shelagh. *A Tribal Order: Politics and Law in the Mountains of Yemen.* Austin: University of Texas Press, 2007.

Day, Stephen. *"The Political Challenge of Yemen's Southern Movement."* Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Yemen on the Brink: A Carnegie Paper Series, March 2010.

Egel, Daniel. *"Tribal Diversity, Political Patronage and the Yemeni Decentralization Experiment."* University of California, Berkeley, Center for Global Development, 12 January 2010.

Phillips, Sarah. *"What Comes Next in Yemen? Al-Qaeda, the Tribes, and State-Building."* Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Yemen on the Brink: A Carnegie Paper Series, March 2010. Read it here.

The World Bank. *"Republic of Yemen: Country Social Analysis."* 11 January 2006.

A New Day in Old Sana'a. Directed by Bader Ben Hirsi. London, 2005.

Dardasha Socotra. Directed by Safaa Fathy. Paris, 2002.

The English Sheik and the Yemeni Gentleman. Directed by Bader Ben Hirsi. London, 2011.