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MA in Religion, Conflict and Globalization

***HOW DID HEZBOLLAH'S HYBRID IDENTITY HELP THEM TO ESTABLISH
 AN INFLUENTIAL PRESENCE AND POWER IN LEBANON? A CASE STUDY
 ON THE RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATION OF HEZBOLLAH.***

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ABSTRACT:

This Thesis aims to investigate Hezbollah's Hybrid Identity and how it helps them establish its presence and power in Lebanon. Hezbollah is a political entity with a large influence and history that shapes the modern history of Lebanon. I've collected a variety of viewpoints and perceptions about the organization and I have analyzed Hezbollah as a political entity. It would focus on key aspects such as the hybrid identity, policy and ideology of Hezbollah. In the first section, I would focus on the internal organization and domestic policy but also on what secular characteristics the organization borrows from other groups in Lebanon. The second part is on its ideological framework that defines its ideology of resistance and similarities with other resistance movements in Lebanon and the rest of the world. Last but not least, the comparison to other Islamic fundamentalist groups in other sections of academia and the label of "terrorist organization. This thesis showcases an alternative view on Hezbollah that goes beyond the labels and exams the organization as a sociopolitical entity rather than as an Islamist Fundamentalist group.

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CHAPTER 01: INTRODUCTION:

Human history has been characterized by brutal wars and conflicts between different ideologies, cultures, and religions with all of them fighting for supremacy and a place in human history. In modern times the issue of conflict and violence based on religious lines has been studied by a variety of security social analysts to determine if “religion” causes violence¹. Western Civilization is dominated by secularism and cosmopolitical schools of thought that believe that religions can cause violence. Religion traditionally was used by the ruling classes to their benefit in order to justify their reason for conflict with other nations or religious groups to their masses in order to mobilize them for war². With this in mind, we should study conflict in the context of religion based on a critical view of history that draws from dialectical materialism³. No other region in Human history has been “scarred” by conflicts like the Middle East and the Levant. For centuries, this region has been shaped by foreign empires trying to take over the region and exploit its resources⁴. The role of the three Abrahamic Religions (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam) is synonymous with the history of the region. Every empire that holds sovereignty over this region used the tactic of divide and conquer in order to subdue the population of this region based on sectarian lines. The country I have chosen to focus on in my thesis is rich in history and conflict that is rooted in sectarian lines that empires have drawn in the past. Lebanon was always a highly contested region throughout history and is a microcosmos of the Middle East with a plethora of religions and ideologies existing in a state of “frozen sectarian conflict”. In recent times, the country of Lebanon is in decline leading to stagnation, poverty and a humanitarian crisis⁵. In this crisis once again, we observe elements of extremism that can reignite sectarian conflict once again. The United Nations and the European Union warns the international community to take further action on combating those elements and bring stability once again to Lebanon. As I have mentioned, within Lebanon they are a variety of political organizations with religious affiliations because of the sectarian lines that divide the country. One of those organizations is Hezbollah which is classified by the United States as an Islamic fundamentalist terrorist organization. Islamic Fundamentalism has been studied by many fields of academia to explain it from security studies, social science, and psychology with different approaches towards this issue⁶.

¹ William T. Cavanaugh, *The Myth of Religious Violence: Secular Ideology and the Roots of Modern Conflict.*, *The Blackwell Companion to Religion and Violence*, 2009 <<https://doi.org/10.1002/9781444395747.ch2>>.

² John Fulton, ‘Religion and Politics in Gramsci: An Introduction’, *Sociology of Religion: A Quarterly Review*, 48.3 (1987), 197–216 <<https://doi.org/10.1093/socrel/48.3.197>>.

³ Nikolai Bukharin, ‘Historical Materialism: A System of Sociology’, *Historical Materialism: A System of Sociology*, 2013, 1–318 <<https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203806302/HISTORICAL-MATERIALISM-NIKOLAI-BUKHARIN>>.

⁴ Süveyda Karakaya, *Ethno-Political Organizations in the Middle East: When Do They Opt for Violence?*, *Politics and Religion*, 2016, ix <<https://doi.org/10.1017/S1755048316000195>>.

⁵ United Nations Security Council, ‘Resolution 2591 (2021) Adopted by the Security Council at Its 8845th Meeting, on 30 August 2021 The’, in *United Nations*, 2021, 1, 9 <<https://doi.org/10.1017/S002081830000223X>>.

⁶ Michael O. Emerson and David Hartman, ‘The Rise of Religious Fundamentalism’, *Annual Review of Sociology*, 32 (2006), 127–44 <<https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.soc.32.061604.123141>>.

Why Hezbollah?

As a social scientist who would like to understand better the conflicts and especially conflicts in the Middle East, I have chosen Hezbollah as my case study for this thesis. Hezbollah and to extend the country of Lebanon is a great case study to understand conflict and the different factions that are engaging in those conflicts. Hezbollah in Arabic translates as the “party of God”, the creators of the organization adopted this title to emphasize their religious devotion to the Shiite sect of Islam⁷. This organization has been studied by various academics and security organizations in a variety of approaches. I choose to analyze Hezbollah’s identity because Hezbollah in my viewpoint has a hybrid identity that adapts characteristics of religious fundamentalism and elements from secularist movements from across the world and the political spectrum. The reason I chose to focus on its identity is that I believe there is a misconception in academia about this organization that focuses more on its militant activities rather than its impact on Lebanon. Hezbollah maintained a status of a legitimate resistance movement within its borders after the Taif Agreements in 1991. Also, Hezbollah is viewed as a formidable force in Lebanese politics and what makes it unique compared to other religious fundamentalist group is that it does not reject the existence of the Lebanese state but rather embrace it on its ideological framework. My general aim while I was studying Hezbollah, was to analyze with an unbiased viewpoint and to prove that is not as easy to label an organization like Hezbollah as an Islamic fundamentalist organization.

THE LAYOUT OF MY THESIS:

The methodological approach I chose for studying Hezbollah is a qualitative methodology base that allows me to have a critical and grounded theory about its Hybrid Identity. This methodology allowed me to develop my theory and expand my knowledge about the subject that I’m presenting in this thesis. First of all, I will be laying out the theoretical framework that guided me throughout my theoretical analysis of the organization and what theories inspired me while I was drafting my thesis. As in every qualitative analysis, there must be an analysis of the Literature Review and what other analysts had found and studied about Hezbollah’s identity, policy and structure in order to have a complete understanding of the views of academia until now. Chapters 4 to 7 will be my separate chapters of analysis that I will be discussing Hezbollah. In chapter 4, I will be reviewing Hezbollah’s internal structure and how the organization adopts organizational characteristics from other secular organizations in Lebanon like the LNM. Hezbollah is also a political party in addition to being an Islamic Resistance movement, thus in chapter 5, I will be analyzing Hezbollah’s domestic policy in Lebanon and how Hezbollah accepted the state of Lebanon. Hezbollah claims to be the party of resistance in Lebanon so in chapter 6 I will be reviewing the origins of its “Islamic Resistance” and what similarities it has with other secular resistance movements across the world. Concluding my chapters of analysis, the issue of Islamic Fundamentalism in its relation to Hezbollah will be addressed, and how many western political and security analysts label Hezbollah as an Islamic Fundamentalism movement rather than an organization with a Hybrid identity.

⁷ Niam Qassem, *Hezbollah: Story from Within*, 1st edn (Beirut: SAQI, 2006).

CHAPTER 02 LITERATURE REVIEW:

For me to have a complete and clear understanding of my subject, I will need to study and analyze how other scholars and researchers view Hezbollah's identity. I decided to follow the epistemological approach for my thesis which will require an analysis of the Literature Review regarding my subject. Hezbollah existed since the late 70s that and it has been analyzed and observed by several academics and analysts, especially in Political and Counter-terrorism circles of academia. I will try to identify how those sources identified and categorize Hezbollah as an organization that falls into either a religious fundamentalist group or a resistance movement. For me to answer my research question, I will require to find credible sources that will help identify elements that support my theory but also have a complete approach to how academia views this organization. The formation, existence, and success of Hezbollah in Lebanon can only be understood by analyzing those sources with concrete elements that support my theory of Hybrid Identity.

HEZBOLLAH AS A TERRORIST ORGANIZATION.

The first literature I would like to examine is literature from official strategic sources that categorize Hezbollah as an Islamist Terrorist group. According to security analysts, a group can be categorized as terrorists if they have a history of violence by targeting civilian or political groups to spread fear and among people. The United Nations consider terrorism and terrorist acts as a threat to international peace and security and prohibits terrorism at the international and domestic level⁸. Ever since the 90s and especially after the attacks in the United States and the declaration of the "War on Terror" there is a large emphasis on counter-terrorist operations, especially in the Middle East. Even though the label "terrorism" existed since the Cold War with many liberation movements being declared as "Terrorist organizations" there was a large emphasis, especially on Islamic terrorism across the globe⁹. Since Hezbollah is labeled to be an Islamist Fundamentalist group with a history of violence and terrorism, it is fitted to begin studying Hezbollah through the lenses of Counterterrorism. Hezbollah often falls in counterterrorist and security studies that categorize it as an "A Team" in Terrorist groups, which means that an organization is very cable and innovative¹⁰.

A variety of institutions have studied Hezbollah through the lenses of Counterterrorism or Security studies forming their own reports and views about the organization. According to the Rand Corporation which is a non-profit organization that operates as an American policy think tank and labels Hezbollah as a Shi'ite

⁸ Reuven Young, 'Defining Terrorism: The Evolution of Terrorism as a Legal Concept in International Law and Its Influence on Definitions in Domestic Legislation', *Boston College International & Comparative Law Review*, 29.1 (2006), 23–106.

⁹ Young.

¹⁰ Marc R Devore, *Exploring the Iran-Hezbollah Relationship: A Case Study of How State Sponsorship Affects Terrorist Group Decision-Making*, *Terrorism Research Initiative*, 2012, vi.

Islamist terrorist organization that is a threat to American Domestic Security but also to other Western Allies¹¹. They view Hezbollah as a very capable organization with a web connection across the world that can influence events, but also have affiliation with other groups that are not considered to be in the same religious groups or have more secular views. After the war in Iraq, the magazine *Foreign Affairs* published an article about the Bush Administration's next target for the War on Terror which suggested that Hezbollah should be next in line after Al-Qaida¹². This article labels Hezbollah as "pioneers" of modern terrorism as they were the ones that used the method of suicide bombing in Lebanon that help inspire other Terrorist organizations. The main enemy of Hezbollah is the West and especially Israel where most operations take place, with bombings of military facilities and Israeli embassies abroad. The article also mentions that as an organization they mostly focus on guerrilla warfare rather than acts of terrorism¹³. Hezbollah had changed through the years and a significant percentage has to do with its participation in Lebanese Domestic policy to gain more legitimacy in the region. While they still consider themselves as Anti-Israeli and against Western Imperialism, they are incredibly careful in how they preach their propaganda compared to the past. Hezbollah also funds and trains other organizations with similar goals such as the PLO of Yasser Arafat and the Return Brigades¹⁴. Another element we can identify in Counter-Terrorist Literature is the relation of Hezbollah with the Shiite Fundamentalist Regime in Iran. According to security analyst Hezbollah is being funded and promoted by the state of Iran which allow them to have influence, mobilization, and most importantly military equipment¹⁵. An adversary state to the United States and the West funding and arming Hezbollah means that the organization will faction as a proxy against Western interest in the region. According to Devore financial assistance by Iran is the reason Hezbollah can adapt to the changing times in the regions and be able to mobilize quickly in response to Western Influence and power in the region. Thus, for Western Counter Terrorism it will be much more difficult to combat this organization compared to other terrorist groups such as Al-Qaida or Hamas¹⁶. The Council of Foreign Relations which is also a Western Institution also classifies Hezbollah as a "Shia Muslim Political party and militant group" that was born out of the violent clashes of the Lebanese Civil war and also as a reaction to the "Shia families that hold power in Lebanon"¹⁷.

Based on the three articles that I have mentioned Daniel Byman, Devore and the Rand Corporation Hezbollah fall into the category of a sophisticated terrorist organization with ties to a Shia Fundamentalist Regime in Iran. This narrative is the main Western narrative that many security agencies and counterterrorist analysts and scholars project toward Hezbollah. By analyzing Hezbollah through the

¹¹ Rand Corporation, *Beyond Al-Qaeda: The Outer Rings of the Terrorist Universe.*, Rand Corporation: Project Air Force, 2006 <<https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv1r4xd2h.38>>.

¹² Daniel Byman, 'Should Hezbollah Be Next?', *Foreign Affairs*, 82.6 (2003), 54–66 <<https://doi.org/10.2307/20033756>>.

¹³ Byman.

¹⁴ Byman.

¹⁵ Devore, vi.

¹⁶ Devore, vi.

¹⁷ Kali Robinson, 'What's Is Hezbollah?', *Council on Foreign Relations*, 2021, p. 14.

lenses of security studies, we can observe how western security institutions that have studied Hezbollah see the organization's faction and work in comparison to other organizations. Both Byman and Devore classified Hezbollah as an "A Team in Terrorism". This means as a terrorist organization it's highly organized and better funded than other organizations. Also, their ties to Iran it's considered the main source of their power at the moment. Because Iran it's considered an adversary to the US and its allies its ties to Hezbollah are carefully monitored by the security service¹⁸. Despite the fact they classified Hezbollah as "A Team" terrorist group, they have observed that Hezbollah's tactics had changed especially after the declaration of the "War on Terror" by the Bush Administration.

Hezbollah and Political Islam.

Hezbollah's identity is up for debate in the literature. While many Western Security analysts categorize Hezbollah as a Religious Fundamentalist terrorist group other academics view Hezbollah's identity as a "religio-political organization"¹⁹. While Hezbollah was born as a Shia Militant group with an Islamist agenda of resistance against the Israeli occupation of South Lebanon during the Civil war, it had some secular characteristics within its ranks. Hezbollah's identity according to Adham is an extension of the Islamist teachings of Khomeini in Iran. Those teaching gave rise to "Political Islam". The political ideology of Hezbollah especially at the time of the Civil war was heavily inspired by the Iranian Revolution and the emergence of Political Islam. Political Islam was used by Hezbollah as a way to unite the Shia Community in Lebanon under a banner of Resistance during that time according to Adham²⁰. Hezbollah accepts the Western secular governance, nationalism, and the political system of Lebanon and works within the framework of this system based on their Islamic beliefs and teachings of Political Islam²¹. The form of Political Islam that Hezbollah uses also allows it to maintain secular characteristics that are vital for them in Lebanon.

Hezbollah is a political entity.

Despite the "western secular" attitude towards Hezbollah we have to analyze the organization based on the conditions that lead to Hezbollah's formation. August Richard Norton is an American professor of international relations with a specialization in the Middle East. In his book Hezbollah, he provides us with a great analysis of how the organization was formed and its factions in Lebanon²². Politics in Lebanon are

¹⁸ Gary C. Gambill and Ziad K. Abdelnour, 'Hezbollah: Between Tehran and Damascus', *Middle East Intelligence Bulletin*, 4.2 (2002) <https://www.meforum.org/meib/articles/0202_11.htm> [accessed 5 March 2022].

¹⁹ Saouli Adham, 'Hezbollah: Socialisation and Its Tragic Ironies: Being Hezbollah', 2017, 45–85.

²⁰ Saouli Adham.

²¹ Reza Simbar and Mehdi Zibaei, 'Political Islam: Moderation or Radicalism? Case Study of Political Islam with Respect to Lebanon Hezbollah', *Journal of International and Area Studies*, 18.1 (2011), 65–86 <http://iia.snu.ac.kr/iia_publication/iia_publication_jias.htm%5Cnhttp://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ecn&AN=1262916&site=ehost-live>.

²² Augustus Richard Norton, *Hezbollah: A Short History* (Princeton University Press, 2018) <<https://doi.org/10.1515/9781400851447>>.

related to the formation of Hezbollah. Traditionally the Shia Community of Lebanon was more appealing to secular political parties mainly in the left spectrum of politics, such as the socialist, communist, and with exception to the Pan-Arabic Party Ba'th²³. The civil war in Lebanon between Christians and Sunni Muslims and their secular allies deeply affected the internal politics of the Shia community. Before Hezbollah there was Amal. Amal was a Shia movement that was trained and supported by PLO and was made out of Shia Fedayeen fighters during the Civil War²⁴. The Amal movement was important as it was the only Shia movement that challenge the traditional political authority of Shia families (Zuma) that belong to the Lebanese establishment. Despite the alliances and their common goal to fight against the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, there were clashes among allies and the Shia-led Amal Movement over disagreements in the south of Lebanon according to Norton²⁵. In chapter 2 Norton explains the motivation for the formation of Hezbollah. The Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982 radicalized even more young members of the Shia community in Lebanon that were already inspired by the Iranian revolution²⁶. Hezbollah's resistance to the Israeli occupation especially in South Lebanon attracted even more members to join the organization. Hezbollah's formation was also welcomed by the Assad regime in Lebanon as a force that can be allied with Syrian political interests in Lebanon something that we can observe even in the modern day²⁷. Hezbollah's worldview according to Norton is a "third way" between the East (Soviet Union) and the West (the United States and their allies) with an Islamic agenda. In their worldview, the world is divided between "oppressors and oppressed" with the guiding light of hope being the teachings of the Islamic Revolution of Iran. To them, there is no negotiation or compromise against "imperialism and its agents"²⁸. The only solution is to fight against them and an Islamic banner by any means necessary. Hezbollah also embraces a form of Sharia law that is inspired by Khomeini's teachings in Iran. Despite the religious differences between Shia and Sunnis, they welcome a form of Sharia law that can co-exist with Sunnis but also "convert them to the Shia doctrine of Islam". After the Civil war in Lebanon Hezbollah was faced with a dilemma. Either boycotting the Lebanese elections of 1992 or participating as a political wing in the parliament. The dilemma should have been analyzed based on Islamic law according to the Leadership of the organization for them to decide to participate. To them, it was a very ideological debate that will determent the future of the organization in the confessional system of Lebanon. In the end, the debate was directed to the Iranian clerics to be resolved, with them giving their blessing to participate. This for critics was a provocation of Hezbollah being a puppet of the Iranian regime and challenging their independence²⁹. Hezbollah's participation in the elections was welcomed by the Shia community of

²³ Augustus Richard Norton, 'Hezbollah: A Short History: Chapter 3 - Origins and Prehistory of Hezbollah', in *Princeton University Press*, 2018.

²⁴ Norton, Hezbollah - Chapter Title : Origins and Prehistory of Hezbollah, 2018.

²⁵ Norton, Hezbollah - Chapter Title : Origins and Prehistory of Hezbollah, 2018.

²⁶ Augustus Richard Norton, 'Hezbollah: A Short History: Chapter 2 -The Founding of Hezbollah Book', in *Princeton University Press*, 2018, pp. 12–26.

²⁷ Norton, 'Hezbollah: A Short History: Chapter 2 -The Founding of Hezbollah Book'.

²⁸ Norton, 'Hezbollah: A Short History: Chapter 2 -The Founding of Hezbollah Book'.

²⁹ Norton, Hezbollah: A Short History: Chapter 5 - Playing Politics.

Lebanon because it will give the organization a legitimacy and public podium in Lebanese politics. The electoral results can be considered a success as it granted Hezbollah 12 seats in the parliament with a 10%. The platform for the election was emphasized battling economic issues and inequality in the political system and continuing the fight for religious independence of the Shia community. Hezbollah as a political party provided a pragmatic alternative to other secular political forces such as the Communist and the Nationalist party. Like any other political party Hezbollah also participated in Municipal elections where it was able to form alliances with the party doing especially well in the South of Lebanon³⁰. Hezbollah was also effective in providing a variety of social services that will prove very successful and influential across the Shia community of Lebanon, where a lot of communities suffer from the harsh period of the Civil war. Norton in his analysis of the history of Hezbollah identified an important ideological change in the second manifesto of the organization. While the 1985 manifesto was emphasizing Islamic domination in Lebanon, their new manifesto promotes a more “patriotic” face of unity appealing to all of Lebanon (Sunnis and Maronite communities) as a united front against Israel and the United States³¹.

HEZBOLLAH’S POLITICAL ECONOMY

Joseph Daher is another political analyst that emphasizes the political economy of that Hezbollah and how that helps the organization to spread its political influence in Lebanon. In his book, Daher tries to analyze the Political Islam that Hezbollah expresses in a historical dialectic materialism analysis in order to understand how this ideology evolved and developed especially after the end of the Lebanese Civil War³². Hezbollah’s political economy is rooted in Lebanese sectarian and class divisions, especially between Christian Maronite and Shia Muslim communities. According to Daher, the Lebanese Shia community was one of the poorest and poorly educated people before the war. Also, there was another growing problem during that time which was a growing Shia diaspora across the world that came to play a significant role in Lebanese power relations in Lebanon³³. Another important group in the Shia community before Hezbollah was the Higher Islamic Shia council that help organize the Shia community of Lebanon and consisted of the Zu’uma (Lebanese Clerics) and upper-middle-class members of the community. Those groups had dominated the Lebanese Shia community, especially before Hezbollah’s formation. Hezbollah’s formation was heavily influenced by domestic Islamic armed groups in Lebanon but also by the Iranian Revolution that “exported its revolution” in Lebanon. After the Civil war, there was a need of reconstructing and rebuilding Lebanon after years of destruction and fighting. Economic Liberalism was a dominant economic model of this change that had several of social-economic consequences across the country. The organization stands opposed to neoliberal policies that are implemented in Lebanon and proclaim that is the defender of farmers and workers in the country. Many theorists according to Daher are providing an Islamic interpretation of economics where private ownership still exist while being

³⁰ Norton, *Hezbollah: A Short History. Chapter 5 - Playing Politics*.

³¹ Norton, ‘Hezbollah: A Short History: Conclusion’, 2018.

³² Joseph Daher, *Hezbollah The Political Economy of Lebanon’s Party of God*, Pluto Press (London: Pluto Press, 2016), I.

³³ Joseph Daher, I.

carefully monitored by the state. Daher also observes a changing attitude similar to Norton after the Taif Agreement³⁴. Hezbollah transforms from an Islamic organization that rejected the system and stood opposed to sectarian divides, to an organization that participates in politics and policymaking in the Lebanese government. Daher notes also that Hezbollah adopts a political strategy that is different from other Islamic movements. While is in favor of privatization, it addresses economical inequalities and supports social justice which is different from any other Islamic political movement that sees social justice causes with suspicion³⁵. The organization also has good tides and shows its support to Trade Unions across Lebanon that support Workers' and Farmers' rights, especially in the areas of Bekaa Valley where large landowners control vast agricultural land. The organization is also in favor of land redistribution among Lebanese citizens. But in some cases, critics of the organization blame Hezbollah for benefiting from agreements with large landowners. Hezbollah's economic policy has contributed to the economic "success" of south Lebanon as the area is no longer the poorest³⁶. They have contributed millions with the help from abroad (Iran and Healthy Shia Lebanese Muslims) to infrastructure and business in Shia majority areas and also by favoring policies that help for further development in those areas. This contribution also explains their political success in those areas. According to Daher, the organization has experienced a boost in membership from middle and upper-middle-class Shia Muslims. The majority of Hezbollah's membership was and still is traditionally working class but the recent boost from highly educated members is changing and affecting the organization³⁷. While this increasing membership from educated middle-class members has made Hezbollah even more successful as a political entity it also broads some friction among their hardline membership that are closer to the "old ways". The existence of its military wing is vital for the survival of the organization but also for spreading Islamist values. Any threat to Hezbollah's hegemony is counterbalanced by its ability to mobilize and defend its sphere of influence either by policies or the use of arms. Daher concludes that Hezbollah adopted and evolved based on socio-economic changes in Lebanon and does not create "counter-society" rather it includes itself among the sectarian system and operate within in it very successfully³⁸.

Hezbollah's Mobilization and Social Welfare.

Another important observation from literature about Hezbollah is its ability to mobilize and, in some cases, take the form of "state within a state". Being an organization with an active militant group that participates in a variety of conflicts across the middle east they are very well organized in giving back and supporting victims and "martyrs" of the Islamic Resistance that they fight for. According to Aurélie Daher the organization looks after the families of those martyrs by providing their services from housing, medical support and financial aid when needed. The organization gives a large emphasis on the legacy of those

³⁴ Joseph Daher, I.

³⁵ Joseph Daher, I.

³⁶ Joseph Daher, I.

³⁷ Joseph Daher, I.

³⁸ Joseph Daher, I.

who died fighting for Hezbollah by keeping their memory alive and honoring them by renaming buildings and streets after them³⁹. A large emphasis also is given to the children of those fighters as they receive education, medical coverage and food through special programs that the organization provides. The organization also provides special treatment to veterans and wounded of Hezbollah by giving them one of the best treatments in the country in hospitals that they created and funded. Prisoners are also given the proper attention by taking care of their families and providing information to them. Also, the organization has a list of prisoners regardless of if they are a member of the organization (Christian, Sunnis or secular fighters) that are still held by opposing forces like Israel in previous conflicts and engage in prisoner exchanges. In periods of conflict the organization also works as Civil Defense (IHC) by providing aid and support to victims of conflict through medical shelters and designated bomb shelters. Additional attention is also given to the poor by providing them aid and services that are funded by the organization or non-members that ally with those causes. Hezbollah also has its own media publication and TV channel that is necessary for the new coverage of its political agenda and also for proving entertainment and educational programs to their subscribers. Daher also mentions that Hezbollah embraces clientelism in order to have a better connection with their base by providing jobs and a variety of social services that the state lacks or is unable to provide them⁴⁰.

WHAT LITERATURE TEACH US.

What we can observe from the literature for Hezbollah it's a variety of opinions and diagnoses from academia and research centers that view the organization from different viewpoints. From those viewpoints, we can observe characteristics of a Hybrid Identity that support my theory about Hezbollah. First of all, the western security organizations that I have mentioned in the literature classified Hezbollah as a terrorist threat to international security. The way that Hezbollah is been portrait in by western institutions is based on the tactics and violence that Hezbollah mostly used during times of conflict such as the Lebanese Civil war during the 80s and also in the 90s⁴¹. Also, a large emphasis is given to the relationship between Hezbollah and the Islamic Revolutionary movement of Iran, as they view Hezbollah as a proxy of Iran in the region of Levant. This relationship is motivated due to ideological and financial backing from the Iranian government. For some analysts, this can is considered as a Western Bias towards Hezbollah and Iran as they did during the 80s towards the Taliban during the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan⁴². This bias of course was a change after the events of 9/11 and the war on terror by the Bush administration. The ideology of Hezbollah is a form of Political Islam which is a form of government based on Islamic principles that are very similar to Iran. This form of political ideology seems to change especially after the end of the civil war in Lebanon and the changing approach toward Lebanese politics. The participation of Hezbollah in Lebanese politics has transformed the organization and developed it into a

³⁹ Aurélie Daher, *Chapter 4: A Social Entrepreneur?, Hezbollah: Mobilization and Power*, 2019
<<https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780190495893.003.0005>>.

⁴⁰ Daher, *Chapter 4: A Social Entrepreneur?*

⁴¹ Fawwaz Traboulsi, 'A History of Modern Lebanon', *Pluto Press*, 2007, 5–24.

⁴² Michael Rubin, 'Who Is Responsible for the Taliban', *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, 6.1 (2002), 1–16.

suitable political force in the country. The way that Hezbollah is participating in politics is similar to any other secular political party. Their participation in Lebanese politics is pushing Hezbollah to adopt and develop from a militant fundamentalist organization to a more Hybrid organization that is able to govern and transform the Lebanese society. Their political economy also does not reject the western model of a free market economy like other secular political parties do such as the Communist and Socialist but accept it through the Keynesian economical approach. That allows it to draw funding and guide economic policies toward Shia majority communities where they used to be the poorest and most uneducated parts of Lebanon. By providing social services and education there were able to lift the Shia community of Lebanon out of poverty and have a rising middle-class base that is currently changing and developing the organization. While Hezbollah still maintains "identity" as an Islamic Resistance movement they are beginning to change their approach towards their struggle by having a more open call towards all Lebanese people.

CONCLUSION.

Hezbollah is an organization with a troublesome past and violence, but it seems that the organization outside of the realm of counterterrorism is more than just a Muslim fundamentalist group. Hezbollah's identity has changed after its decision to participate in sectarian politics in 1992 and cooperate with the system. Their Hybrid identity now enables them to mobilize and gather large support of people to their side from both secular and non-secular backgrounds.

Chapter 2: THEORETICAL METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK.

INTRODUCTION:

Studying and analyzing an organization that shares both secular and religious characteristics is not easy to label it as secular or religious. Thus, we must be able to see beyond those "labels" in order to understand their importance in the current and past conflicts in Lebanon. Like many other scholars before me who have studied Hezbollah and other religious fundamentalist groups across the world, I will also have to analyze Hezbollah through different theories and concepts. It is necessary to understand those theories and concepts in order to develop an advanced understanding of group identity and a sense of belonging in Hezbollah's worldview in Lebanon. In this chapter, I will explain my theoretical framework for my analysis and also the appropriate methodology for my thesis that will help me answer my research question on Hezbollah's Hybrid Identity.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK:

In order to understand the theory of Hybrid Identity, we must understand key concepts and theories that prove its existence. Hezbollah has both secular and religious characteristics that make it difficult to label it as a secularist or religious fundamentalist movement. Many scholars especially in the field of security studies and terrorism classified Hezbollah as a religious fundamentalist organization based on its methods

and records of violence⁴³. While Hezbollah through the eyes of counterterrorism can be classified as a religious fundamentalist movement it also shares characteristics with other “secular or nationalist” movements across the world with similar records and methods of violence.

RADICALIZATION THEORY AND VIOLENCE.

The term radicalization refers to the process of developing radical or extremist behavior based on ideas and beliefs against a system or a political authority with violent means⁴⁴. The theory of Radicalization is a great tool when it comes to understanding why people join a radical organization with extremist activity. It is important to understand why people form radical or extremist groups and what motivates them into taking part in terrorist or extremist activities such as a suicide attack against a military base or the burning of a symbolic monument. Their different theories and motivations on why radicalization occur in our world and is based on the social-economic events that affect individuals or groups such as a religious or ethnic minority that push them to “take action”⁴⁵. Social scientists believe that radicalization is a process that a person goes through when it comes to face with radical changes in their lives such as the killing of a family member or the destruction of their house that “force” them to take action against the person or system that is the cause of their pain. But this is not in fact the case, there are instances when people don’t go through those phases of radicalization unless the “foundation” does not already exist. The “foundation” might be for example a radical political group that calls for the violent replacement of a government or the state. The importance of the “foundation” is crucial for the radicalization of the individual because it will use their anger in order to shape them into loyal subjects for the cause of the group. Many terrorist groups across the world use forms of propaganda that targets those individuals for their recruitment campaigns⁴⁶. The sense of belonging to a group identity gives meaning to people that are looking for something that is larger than themselves. Radicalization theory can help us understand why Hezbollah’s Hybrid Identity is so successful in recruiting members into their ranks at such a stable pace and what foundation Hezbollah uses as a form of recruitment.

THE MYTH OF “RELIGIOUS AND SECULAR VIOLENCE”.

In the discussion of religious fundamentalism, we always end up in the debate of what is considered to be this term and why there is a separation in terms of violence. Why for example when there is a terrorist attack somewhere in the middle east some analysts label it as an attack by “religious fundamentalist

⁴³ Congressional Research Service, ‘Lebanese Hezbollah’, *In Focus*, 2021 <<https://crsreports.congress.gov>>.

⁴⁴ Randy Borum, ‘Rethinking Radicalization’, *Journal of Strategic Security*, 4.4 (2011), 1–6 <<http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/jss>>.

⁴⁵ Andreas Beelmann, ‘A Social-Developmental Model of Radicalization: A Systematic Integration of Existing Theories and Empirical Research’, *International Journal of Conflict and Violence*, 14.1 (2020), 1–14 <<https://doi.org/10.4119/ijcv-3778>>.

⁴⁶ Kerem Övet, James Hewitt, and Tahir Abbas, ‘Understanding PKK, Kurdish Hezbollah and ISIS Recruitment in Southeastern Turkey’, *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 0.0 (2022), 1–21 <<https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610x.2022.2042897>>.

extremists” or the violence was caused due by “religious motives”? While an attack from a political movement is considered to be an act of “secular violence” in the example of a nationalist or a Marxist movement? This debate of labeling violence as religious or secular as being raging across academia for decades, especially in a post-9/11 world and “War on Terror”. For many scholars such as Juergensmeyer, a religious fundamentalist is more fanatical than other “secular” groups because of their commitment to a “holy war” against their enemies⁴⁷. The narrative of a “Holy War” justifies a divine struggle against their enemies that promotes acts of violence such as assassinations and symbolic violence in order to terrorize their opponents and establish their dominance. While religious fundamentalist groups use acts of “symbolic violence” this feature is not unique only to those groups. A nationalist or an anarchist can also use acts of “symbolic violence” for the same reason, which is to express their power outside of the peaceful operation of society⁴⁸. Violence for any movement can be considered the only way to win in their struggle. Many National movements across history used acts of terrorism against their occupiers in order to achieve their freedom⁴⁹. The motivation can be also an idea such as the creation of an independent state or a struggle for religious recognition of a minority. Another argument that scholars like Juergensmeyer suggest is that religion can be the motive of those extremist acts. Religion like any other set of ideas and beliefs can be considered also a motive for violence not because of the idea, but because of the person that acts with violence or terror in order to achieve his goals. Historically many intellectuals or political leaders used Religion as a rallying point in order to achieve their political goals⁵⁰. An ideology like Nationalism that emphasizes the importance of a nation above the individual, can result in tribalism against minorities or “undesirables”. This problem creates a labeling issue that is often incorrect. Especially in the case of Hezbollah. An organization both shares secular and religious characteristics in the way they operate in Lebanon. Hezbollah’s resistance struggle in Lebanon does not reject the secular confessional state that was agreed in the Taif Agreement and also participates in the system.

ORIENTALISM.

The theory of Orientalism by Edward Said has been one of the most influential theories on why we have a preconized notion about non-Western regions and people of the world and how that is influencing international relations and policymaking⁵¹. Said emphasized that Western Civilization claims that is superior to other civilizations such as those of the Oriental because those worlds are “full of savages” and not as developed as the West. This approach is rooted in deep historical misconceptions about the Middle East because of years of colonization of those regions. The West always tried to interpret those worlds through those lenses in order to justify their behavior towards these people. Having portrayed them as

⁴⁷ Juergensmeyer, ‘Terror of the Mind : Chapter 9 Cosmic War’, 2010.

⁴⁸ Claudio Colaguori, ‘Symbolic Violence and the Violation of Human Rights: Continuing the Sociological Critique of Domination’, *International Journal of Criminology and Sociological Theory*, 3.2 (2010), 388–400.

⁴⁹ Jeroen Gunning and Richard Jackson, ‘What’s so “religious” about “Religious Terrorism”?’ , *Critical Studies on Terrorism*, 4.3 (2011), 369–88 <<https://doi.org/10.1080/17539153.2011.623405>>.

⁵⁰ Gunning and Jackson.

⁵¹ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (London: Peguin Books, 1978).

“savages” and inferior gives justification to rule over them or dictated their policy for them⁵². The discussion about Orientalism is mostly focused on the Middle East and the Islamic World. Islam was portrayed as the antithesis that is in direct conflict with Western Civilization. Samuel Huntington predicted that after the collapse of the Soviet Union the next conflict of civilizations will be between the Western Civilization and the Islamic World⁵³. The way that the media portrays the middle east is the image of a region always in turmoil where peace is non-existence. This notion gives justification for Interventionalist policies like the “War on terror”, by intervening in the politics of foreign states or by invading another sovereign state in order to restore peace and justice⁵⁴. Religion (especially Islam) in Orientalism has a role that radicalizes people to choose paths of violence such as suicide bombings and attacks against their enemies (Westerners). This in fact is not true because the form of violence is not always motivated by religious motives rather it can be motivated by a political commitment against an occupying force⁵⁵. Hezbollah, being an organization that originated and operates in the Middle East requires an understanding of the theory of Orientalism in order to have a more open and critical idea about what they really are and represent. It’s better to understand Islamic Movements such as Hezbollah rather than fall into hegemonic preconceptions that produce more conflict rather than peaceful reconciliation between the West and the Islamic World⁵⁶.

METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK:

In this section of the chapter, I will outline and justify the methodological approach which I follow for my collection of primary and secondary data for my thesis. By laying out my methodology you will be able to understand the trail of thought and process that I’ve used for this thesis. This thesis will follow a qualitative methodology in order to examine Hezbollah from different perspectives and viewpoints. A qualitative analysis will reflect my epistemological approach to the subject and will help me use tools such as Literature Review and Data analysis for my case study on Hezbollah⁵⁷. Studying Hezbollah will require vast knowledge of how this organization works and function, but also how it identifies itself compared to literature and other academic analysis. The following methodology is:

Literature review:

⁵² Edward W. Said.

⁵³ Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order*. (New York: The Wall Street Journal, 1996).

⁵⁴ Nicholas Kitchen and Michael Cox, ‘Just Another Liberal War? Western Interventionism and the Iraq War’, April 2016, 2011, 65–84 <https://doi.org/10.1142/9789814324885_0004>.

⁵⁵ Stephen Morton, ‘Terrorism, Orientalism and Imperialism’, *Wasafiri*, 22.2 (2007), 36–42 <<https://doi.org/10.1080/02690050701336774>>.

⁵⁶ Tristan Dunning, “‘Mind Forged Manacles’: Hamas, Hezbollah and Orientalist Discourse’, July, 2008.

⁵⁷ Anthony J. Onwuegbuzie, Nancy L. Leech, and Kathleen M.T. Collins, ‘Qualitative Analysis Techniques for the Review of the Literature’, *Qualitative Report*, 17.28 (2012), 1–28 <<https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2012.1754>>.

The method of literature review is a core method tool for critical writing and analysis in a thesis, especially when is based on a case study such as a sociopolitical organization⁵⁸. I was able to collect literature from a variety of sources such as journal articles that were written about the organization and also books that were written or mention Hezbollah, that contained information that I considered useful and enlightening for my research. The Literature that was available for my thesis was categorized based on two approaches. The counterterrorist or security approach or the political economic and ideological approach of the organization. It is important to understand that Hezbollah is considered a sociopolitical organization that it can be analyzed from different viewpoints in regard to its fictionality as an organization, its sociopolitical significance in Lebanon and as a fundamentalist group. From studying those approaches I had observed conflicting views and positions about the organization, especially in regard to the classification of the organization. By using literature review I was able to understand and collect a variety of viewpoints that helped me form my theory and narrative about this organization. I was able to gather information and different analysis about Hezbollah by using search engines online (Google Scholar, Mendeley and other apps) and by accessing public and closed libraries online (Z library and the library of the University of Groningen).

Data Analysis:

Data Analysis is the process of collecting data for a subject that is being discussed and analyzed by the researcher. I will be focusing on the primary data that Hezbollah published itself such as public documents and books that give emphasis on its identity and its ideological struggle that the organization faced during its history. For this thesis, I would be using Niam Qassim book “ Hezbollah: A story from within” as a primary source of information about the organization’s history and ideological struggles⁵⁹. Niam Qassim is Hezbollah’s ideological and theological theoretician and an active member of the party’s leadership the Zumma since the 90s. Another primary source is Joseph Alagha’s collection of Hezbollah’s statements and documents that have to do with the organization’s political role in Lebanon⁶⁰. Hezbollah existed since the early 80s and has been studied by various political and historical analysts across the world. I will be using sources that are available on the web and were written about Hezbollah’s history, political economy and its violent activities throughout its history.

Comparative-Historical Methodology:

Comparative and Historical Methodology or Analysis is the use of systematic comparison and analysis of history that explains historical outcomes such as revolutions, regime change and emerging

⁵⁸ Diana Hicks, ‘The Four Literatures of Social Science’, *Handbook of Quantitative Science and Technology Research*, 1.1 (2006), 473–96 <https://doi.org/10.1007/1-4020-2755-9_22>.

⁵⁹ Niam Qassem.

⁶⁰ Joseph Alagha, *Hizbullah’s Documents: From the 1985 Open Letter to the 2009 Manifesto*, *Journal of Shi’a Islamic Studies*, 2014, vii <<https://doi.org/10.1353/isl.2014.0032>>.

movements⁶¹. This methodology uses a method of cause and effect to develop the outcome of a specific historical event (Revolution) or action (The formation of a revolutionary organization). Studying and analyzing history is an important tool to understand what patterns cause changes in history that affect the course of sociopolitical history. By developing a hypothesis, we can develop our theory about the Hybrid Identity of Hezbollah. The History of Hezbollah follows the same path as the history of Modern Lebanon, thus by understanding history and applying the methodology of the comparative and historical methodology we can conclude our theory. Any historical changes have a cause that is being studied and analyzed by scholars and an outcome that we develop a hypothesis for its existence. Thus, by using comparative and historical methodology we can have a better definition of Hezbollah's identity and why this is a result of historical changes and causes in Lebanon.

Conclusion:

Complaining the theoretical framework with the correct methodology I will be able to answer my research question on Hezbollah's identity. Radicalization theory will help me how and in what circumstances members of society radicalized and join Hezbollah as an active member, but also how they keep those members in line. It's also important to rise above interpretations that refer to a western oriental narrative about religious violence and the labeling based on records of violence. Last but not least, a correct methodology always produces good results especially in a qualitative of the subject, with a critical view of history.

CHAPTER 04: THE INTERNAL STRUCTURE OF HEZBOLLAH.

As I have discussed in the introduction, I will be discussing Hezbollah's Hybrid Identity and what better way to start than the organizational structure that is heavily inspired by other political movements across the political spectrum. It's impossible to analyze a political movement without taking a look at its organizational structure. Every movement, political or social organization has a structure that puts everything together to have the desired result. Like any other political organization, Hezbollah also has a structure that is admired by friends and foes of the organization. Security analysts in the west categorize Hezbollah as an "A list" terrorist group for its organization and ability to adapt to the changing landscape of Lebanon⁶². It's important to look at and analyze Hezbollah's organizational structure in order of how it developed and what has changed since its inception and its political entanglement with the Lebanese sectarian system. In this chapter, I will be discussing also the leadership, its paramilitary wing, and how it recruits and mobilizes people to their cause. Lastly, I will attempt to compare Hezbollah's organizational structure with other secular organizations in Lebanon and across the world.

THE BASIC STRUCTURE:

⁶¹ James Mahoney, 'Comparative-Historical Methodology', *Annual Review of Sociology*, 30.March (2004), 81–101 <<https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.soc.30.012703.110507>>.

⁶² Robinson.

The structure of Hezbollah's organizational level consists of different layers of councils and committees with general congresses being the highest authority of the party⁶³. The decision-making body of Hezbollah is Shura and consists of seven members and they are getting elected every three years. The majority of Shura are clerics and devoted intellectuals against Zionism. The Executive and Political Council were the action plan and communication, coordination and other actions that have to do with the political situation in Lebanon. Because Hezbollah is a political organization with participation in the sectarian Lebanese system since 1992 it has a political wing known as "Loyalty to the Resistance Block" and participates in local and legislative elections. The Resistance Block is Hezbollah's parliamentary force within the Lebanese Parliament and is the voice of Hezbollah in the policymaking of Lebanon. Next one of the most important parts of Hezbollah's organizational model is the Military Council that is tasked with the security of the party including its paramilitary wing "Islamic Resistance" that I will be discussing furthermore in the chapter below. Last but not least in terms of organization, it's the highest authority which is the General Congress that is the organ of decision and control of the party. It is tasked with discussing all of the policies of the organization and where the critic and support of the party's policies are being judged by the membership. The General Congress is also tasked with appointing the leadership of the party in the different communities depending on the specialization and the regions⁶⁴. Hezbollah also has its own trade unions of workers, teachers, healthcare operators and hospitals that provide social services to the community and families of martyrs of the Islamic Resistance⁶⁵.

The Leadership and Hassan Nasrallah:

No political organization can have such success in its field without solid and consistent leadership. The leadership of Hezbollah helped transformed the organization from a religious group representing the Shiite community's interests into a political party with a dominant role in domestic politics⁶⁶. In the position of the General Secretary is Hassan Nasrallah, a man that guided and shaped Hezbollah into what it is today⁶⁷. It's important to take a look at the personality of Nasrallah because his leadership helped shaped Hezbollah into what it is today. Nasrallah began as a Shiite cleric in the Amal Movement and was heavily influenced by the Iranian revolution. Nasrallah was approached by Moussawi to join the newly formed at the time Hezbollah and become the second in command⁶⁸. After the assassination of Abbas al-Moussawi by the IDF in 1992 which shocked the leadership of the party, Nasrallah was selected as the next leader of Hezbollah. In 1992, Hezbollah's leadership made a very important decision that defined its identity from 1992 onwards. After a long conference, the leadership and Nasrallah voted in favor of

⁶³ Aurélie Daher, 'Chapter 5: Hezbollah's Internal Organization Structure, Membership, Internal Operations', in *Hezbollah*, 2019, pp. 127–50 <<https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780190495893.003.0006>>.

⁶⁴ Daher, 'Chapter 5: Hezbollah's Internal Organization Structure, Membership, Internal Operations'.

⁶⁵ Joseph Daher, i.

⁶⁶ Krista E. Wiegand, 'Reformation of a Terrorist Group: Hezbollah as a Lebanese Political Party', *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 32.8 (2009), 669–80 <<https://doi.org/10.1080/10576100903039320>>.

⁶⁷ Niam Qassem.

⁶⁸ Middle East Eye, 'Profile | Who Is Hassan Nasrallah?', *YouTube*, 2022 <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SlDgx9VaRE0&t=19s>> [accessed 28 May 2022].

participating in the Lebanese elections winning 12 seats in the Lebanese parliament and defining Hezbollah as a political party in Lebanon⁶⁹. I would argue that Hassan Nasrallah and extension the people around him forever changed Hezbollah and allow its development to what it is today. For example, Nasrallah understood the importance of Mass Media and especially of Television. In a rising middle-class Lebanon in the 90s they decided to open a TV channel to broadcast their achievements, proclamations, and propaganda. The TV channel Al Manar is owned and controlled by Hezbollah and it's broadcasted around the whole of the Arab World including countries outside of the Middle East due to cable television. Despite the fact that the Lebanese government attempted to close the TV channel, it still persisted and it includes foreign correspondents from around the world from different races and religious backgrounds⁷⁰. This modernization of the party continued in 2013 when Hezbollah created various platforms in social media to promote its agenda⁷¹. The base of Hezbollah is deeply devoted to its leader, and they viewed him as a "father of a nation", the death of his son skyrocket Nasrallah's popularity as a man that was sharing the same sacrifices as any other member of Hezbollah. Hezbollah's new rebranding as a mainstream party allowed them to develop new tactics that resemble a traditional secular political party except for its paramilitary activity.

THE PARAMILITARY WING:

Hezbollah began as a resistance movement with the intention of establishing an Islamic State by first liberating Lebanon from Israeli occupation and foreign intervention. According to Hezbollah's Ideological leader Naim Qassem, they adopted a Defensive Jihad "that is obligated to defend Lebanon from any attempt of occupation that seeks to enforce their will over Muslim Lands"⁷². Like any other Islamic organization that seeks jihad against its enemies, it's rightful for Muslims to take up arms against their oppressors and they will be rewarded in the afterlife. By having this belief in mind, they can recruit more young Muslims to their cause by promising them a victory that they will be rewarded. Without a doubt, the existence of Hezbollah today is solid based on the existence of its armed militias that keeps the resistance and existence of Hezbollah alive. The organization of a paramilitary group is very advanced in its tactics and its equipment rivaling even the traditional Lebanese army. Hezbollah maintained its paramilitary wing even after the Civil War, thus ensuring the party's survival. The factor for Hezbollah's militia still operating it's the existence of Israeli Troops in South Lebanon which was legitimized by the Lebanese government as their right to retake back the land⁷³. It's a well-known fact that the organization

⁶⁹ Eitan Azani, *Hezbollah: The Story of the Party of God*, ed. by Turkish Studies Barry Rubin Director, Global Research International Affairs (GLORIA) Center Editor, Middle East Review of International Affairs (MERIA) Journal Editor and Turkish, 1st edn (New York: PALGRAVE MACMILLAN, 2009).

⁷⁰ Dina Matar, 'Hassan Nasrallah: The Cultivation of Image and Language in the Making of a Charismatic Leader', *Communication, Culture and Critique*, 8.3 (2015), 433–47 <<https://doi.org/10.1111/cccr.12089>>.

⁷¹ Matar.

⁷² Niam Qassem.

⁷³ Judith Palmer Harik, *Hezbollah: The Changing Face of Terrorism*, I.B.TAURIS, 2015, 1.

uses a variety of tactics that from “traditional guerilla warfare” to suicide bombing⁷⁴. There is an argument across academia about the tactic of a suicide bombing that is a characteristic of Islamic fundamentalism, according to Robert Pape, this is not the case because nationalist and religious motives overlap⁷⁵. Hezbollah used this tactic against foreign occupation (Western and Israeli) by embracing both religious and nationalist characteristics. Because Israel and the West are considered to be both ideological and religious enemies, the use of suicide bombing can be considered as an extreme act of National liberation⁷⁶. Also, Pape in his analysis mentions that 30 of the 41 attackers that committed suicide bombings against Israeli and Western forces did not fit the label of “Islamic Fundamentalist”. According to Hezbollah anyone who fights for the Islamic Resistance and dies for the cause is considered a martyr of his faith and his country. Thus, the family of the fallen martyr is being taken care of by the organization’s social services. By giving back to the families Hezbollah is able to maintain its number of recruits for the cause of Resistance⁷⁷. The Islamic Resistance has also cells outside of the middle east and worldwide, especially in Europe and Latin America⁷⁸. Levitt in his book “Hezbollah’s Global Footprint” gives us a detailed explanation of how Hezbollah operates outside of Lebanon and how it exploited the Shiite diaspora across the world to recruit more members.

MOBILIZATION:

In this section, I will be discussing how Hezbollah recruits members, what that membership looks like in regard to the members and what tactics Hezbollah mobilizes its membership. As a political force that consists of a political party, a paramilitary wing, social welfare unit, Hezbollah is very efficient in how it mobilizes its forces and people depending on the scenario that it faces. To begin with, the base of Hezbollah still remains Shiite like any other sectarian political party in Lebanon⁷⁹. Because the political system in Lebanon remains in sectarian lines of division among Lebanese people, it is logical for Hezbollah to operate within the sectarian lines. Hezbollah’s potential recruits are attracted in Joseph Daher in his book gives us a historical analysis of the composition of Lebanese society and the status of the Shiite community in Lebanon before Hezbollah⁸⁰. He argues, that before the existence of Hezbollah the Shiite

⁷⁴ J I Victoroff, *Tangled Roots : Social and Psychological Factors in the Genesis of Terrorism, NATO Security Through Science Series. E: Human and Societal Dynamics*, 2006
<<http://libraryproxy.griffith.edu.au/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=e000tww&AN=179003&site=ehost-live&scope=site>>.

⁷⁵ Robert A. Pape, *Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism*, RANDOM HOUSE NEW YORK (New York: RANDOM HOUSE NEW YORK, 2005), II <<https://doi.org/10.2202/1547-7355.1189>>.

⁷⁶ Pape, II.

⁷⁷ Nicholas Blanford, *Warriors of God: Inside Hezbollah’s Thrtly-Year Struggle Against Israel* (Random House, 2011).

⁷⁸ Matthew Levitt, *Hezbollah: The Global Footprint of Lebanon’s Party of God* (GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2013).

⁷⁹ Joseph Daher, I.

⁸⁰ Joseph Daher, I.

community used to be the poorest and the most uneducated people in Lebanon⁸¹. Thus, making the Shiites the weakest link in Lebanese society. The emergence of the teaching of Ayatollah Khomeini and the arrival of Hezbollah, help unite those people under the banner of resistance. Under this banner is how Hezbollah mobilizes the Shiite community⁸². The vast majority of Shiites come from working and farmer class backgrounds and are a growing community in Lebanon according to the UN World Population index⁸³. Thus, the organization adopts a political realist approach that is balanced between political activism and paramilitary action. Hezbollah's potential recruits are in majority Male young Shiites that attracted by their political message in massive rallies where are being recruited for the cause⁸⁴. Political activism allows Hezbollah to work within the sectarian political system and its institutions for the betterment of the Shiite community. This is a well-known fact because ever since the end of the Civil War in Lebanon, Hezbollah expanded and directed its economic resources toward social services and educational programs for the betterment of its community⁸⁵. A great example is the social services provided to lower-class members of Shiite Lebanese society, but also the humanitarian aid towards non-members of its religious sect such as the Palestinians. By providing them with social services that the state is unable or incapable to provide, Hezbollah secures future recruits and voters in their ranks. The help towards the Palestinians also is aligned with the organization's political and ideological goals. In chapter 5 I will be discussing even more about Hezbollah's role in domestic policy and how that is influencing Hezbollah's political path. As I previously mentioned, Hezbollah has its own media and TV station that acts as a propaganda tool in Lebanon and the Arab World. Al Manar is known as the Station of Resistance in Lebanon and the Arab world which is being broadcasted by cable television⁸⁶. From the Tv channel, Hezbollah is allowed to broadcast its message across the Middle East and mobilize its forces by promoting political programs that subscribe to an Islamic-Nationalist message against Israeli Zionism and Western Propaganda⁸⁷. From the channel, we can observe Hezbollah's political and paramilitary victories and narratives that give more fuel to the propaganda machine of the organization and keeps the memberships and friends of Hezbollah information from the organization itself. Despite the fact that Al Manar is affiliated with Hezbollah, it is a part of the Lebanese Media Group that it has all legal rights to operate⁸⁸. As I have mentioned, Al Manar is incredibly popular among Palestinians and Pan-Arabist for its coverage

⁸¹ Yusri Hazran, 'The Shiite Community in Lebanon: From Marginalization to Ascendancy', *Middle East Brief*, 2.2 (2009), 1–8 <<https://www.brandeis.edu/globalbrandeis/documents/MEB37.pdf>>.

⁸² Martin Kramer, 'Sacrifice and Fratricide in Shiite Lebanon', *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 3.3 (1991), 30–47 <<https://doi.org/10.1080/09546559108427114>>.

⁸³ Hazran.

⁸⁴ Major Leroy and Bryant Butler, *Hezbollah : The Dynamics of Recruitment*, *School of Advanced Military Studies*, 2011.

⁸⁵ Joseph Daher, i.

⁸⁶ Gabriel Weimann, 'Hezbollah Dot Com: Hezbollah's Online Campaign', *New Media and Innovative Technologies*, 2007, 17–38.

⁸⁷ Zahera Harb, 'Al Manar and Hezbollah: Creative Instances in Propaganda Warfare', *Islamism and Cultural Expression in the Arab World*, 1.1 (2015), 189–205.

⁸⁸ Harb.

of various conflicts across the middle east and for including reporters and journalists that bring a variety of views that are not directly in line with Hezbollah's, thus allowing for a plethora of discussions and debates⁸⁹.

HOW HEZBOLLAH BORROWS FROM OTHER ORGANIZATIONS AND WHAT THAT MEANS:

The organizational level of Hezbollah is very sophisticated and similar to other political organizations that developed in Lebanon throughout its political history. Daher in its book describes Hezbollah's organizational model as a mixture of the leftist LCP, the Amal movement and the Iranian model of government⁹⁰. The political and social organizational model is reminiscent or even more functional in some cases of the LCP. The general congress being the highest authority of the party is like a Marxist-Leninist principle that gives the ability to the membership to criticize and appoint the leadership of the party⁹¹. Within a political structure like that, the central authority of the party can guide the party towards a cohesive and divisive action for people to rally behind. Such is the case of the national issue of resistance in Lebanon that I will be discussing in chapter 6. The long Lebanese Civil War and the Invasion of Lebanon from Israel and Syria left Lebanon in ruins and political instability. Thus, Lebanon is a weakened state from all the infighting and wars making the state absent in many regions of the country, especially in the South⁹². Because of this situation, Hezbollah adopts a "state within a state" or an NGO role that directs those economic resources towards social services and projects that also help Hezbollah maintain as I have mentioned its influence. This tactic is also a humanitarian philosophy that liberal parties use in absence of the state⁹³. This, of course, does not come without signs of corruption and clientelism which is a large phenomenon in Lebanon and the Middle East⁹⁴. That's another sign of Hezbollah's transformation into an established political party. The decision to participate in domestic politics in Lebanon while still maintaining the legitimacy of its resistance is something that is changing Hezbollah and is bringing it against new challenges that transition the party's identity into a more hybrid identity that will help Hezbollah maintain a balance between the resistance and its political goals. In the next chapter, I will be discussing Hezbollah's political role in the Lebanese sectarian system and how Hezbollah beehives and what policies promote in reaction to the sociopolitical changes in Lebanon.

⁸⁹ Zahera Harb, 'Hezbollah, Al-Manar, and the Arab Revolts: Defiance or Survival?', *Bullets and Bulletins: Media and Politics in the Wake of the Arab Uprisings.*, 2016, 165–77.

⁹⁰ Daher, 'Chapter 5: Hezbollah's Internal Organization Structure, Membership, Internal Operations'.

⁹¹ Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, *THE REVOLUTIONARY PROLETARIAN PARTY OF A NEW TYPE*, PROLETARIAN PUBLISHERS, 1st edn (San Francisco: Proletarian Publishers, 1975).

⁹² Melani Cammett, 'Habitat for Hezbollah', *Foreign Policy*, 2006, 10–13
<http://www.foreignpolicy.com/story/cms.php?story_id=3572&print=1[http://www.foreignpolicy.com](http://www.foreignpolicy.com%0Ahttp://www.foreignpolicy.com/story/cms.php?story_id=3572&print=1%0Ahttp://www.foreignpolicy.com)>.

⁹³ Rob Reich, 'Gift Giving and Philanthropy in Market Democracy', *Critical Review*, 26.0 (2014), 408–22
<<https://doi.org/10.1080/08913811.2014.969095>>.

⁹⁴ Melani Cammett and others, 'Coethnicity beyond Clientelism: Insights from an Experimental Study of Political Behavior in Lebanon', *Politics and Religion*, 2021, 417–38 <<https://doi.org/10.1017/S1755048321000201>>.

CHAPTER 05: HEZBOLLAH'S DOMESTIC POLICY.

On the 15th of May 2022, Lebanon had its national elections after a turbulent period of protest and civil unrest. This election is following a period of instability and an economic crisis that Lebanon is facing right now due to its debt and corruption in the political establishment⁹⁵. Because of the socio-economic situation and the sectarian political system in Lebanon, a large majority of the Lebanese people abstained from the electoral process because they do not believe there can be any significant change. Hezbollah also participated in the elections with its own political wing and platform in Lebanon winning 13 seats out of the 27 Shiite seats in the “keenest” (Lebanese Parliament)⁹⁶. The Shiites are one of the highest percentages of participants in Lebanese elections compared to other sectarian groups in the country. The Shiites in the past used to be the least representative in Lebanese politics, but this has changed due to the role of Hezbollah.

In the previous chapter, I have discussed and analyzed the internal structure of Hezbollah and how that relates to its Hybrid identity. As I had mentioned Hezbollah is also a political organization with a political structure that claims to represent the most militant elements of the Shiite community⁹⁷. The “Loyalty to the Resistance Block” has participated in Lebanese elections since 1992 and has been a major player in Lebanese politics⁹⁸. Hezbollah as being categorized by many as a political party with an Islamist agenda inspired by the Iranian Revolution. In this chapter, I will be analyzing Hezbollah’s domestic policy and how that reflects its Hybrid Identity through policies that implicate and promotes Lebanese politics. I will be discussing the historic decision of the party to participate in Lebanese politics and how “legislative politics” change the composition and attitude of Hezbollah in Lebanon.

HEZBOLLAH'S ENTRANCE INTO LEBANESE POLITICS.

The year 1992 was a turning point for Hezbollah’s identity and it’s a year that changed that laid the foundations for what Hezbollah is today. Since its inception, Hezbollah was an armed militia in a sectarian conflict fighting both internal and external foes⁹⁹. During the party’s conference, Hezbollah’s leadership had to decide if it is going to participate in the legislative elections in Lebanon. There were several issues regarding this decision that had to do especially with the issue of the legitimacy of the Resistance and the re-organization of Hezbollah priorities due to this decision¹⁰⁰. Also, doing so would legitimize the Lebanese state in the eyes of members of the Islamic Resistance, but also would “legitimize” Hezbollah as a political force in domestic Lebanese politics. During that time, Nasrallah who was the newly elected leader of

⁹⁵ Dana Abed, Rihab Sawaya, and Nadim Tabbal, *Analyzing Voter Turnout and Behavior in Lebanon* (Oxford, 2022) <<https://doi.org/10.21201/2022.8823>>.

⁹⁶ Congressional Research Service, *Lebanon’s 2022 Parliamentary Elections* (Washington D.C, 2022).

⁹⁷ Niam Qassem.

⁹⁸ Hussain Abdul-Hussain, ‘Hezbollah: A State Within a State’, *The World’s Most Threatening Terrorist Networks and Criminal Gangs*, 2009.

⁹⁹ Azani.

¹⁰⁰ Niam Qassem.

Hezbollah wanted to transition the movement from a radical militia to a pragmatic political organization. Nasrallah wanted Hezbollah to have both an active political presence within the sectarian system, but also be able to continue the fight against Israel in the occupied regions¹⁰¹. The leadership argues that through participation in the elections they would have been able to gather support for the resistance but also have access to government resources that would benefit the Shiite community in the South of Lebanon. The main ideological debate was about if Hezbollah abandoning the establishment of an Islamic State in Lebanon, this debate was won by the pragmatic approach of the Leadership as it argues that establishing an Islamic State through violent means it's against the principle of Islam¹⁰². Nasrallah himself admitted later on in 1997 that since the decision to participate in the 1992 elections the party had followed an "open policy" line¹⁰³. I would argue that Hezbollah since then had shifted its identity towards a Hybrid Identity that allows it to adapt to the changing landscape of Lebanon, but also allows them to continue its struggle. This transition from an Islamic resistance movement with a clear agenda to a political organization that had to compromise in order to "produce" policies that would benefit its base. Qassim in his book from a first account view, mentions that there were ideological concerns about "sharing" space with other political forces within the parliament¹⁰⁴. Those arguments confirm an ideological struggle felt until now that has to do with Hezbollah's "pragmatic goals and identity". Also, Hezbollah was known as a movement that drew its power from lower-middle-class members of the Shiite community of Lebanon, but after its changing attitude towards the state, it was attracted by members of the upper middle class. With the composition of Hezbollah's membership changing, new ideas arose and contributed even more to Hezbollah's changing identity towards a political organization of the Lebanese establishment¹⁰⁵.

WORKING WITHIN THE SECTARIAN SYSTEM:

Hezbollah's participation in the parliament in 1992 was the first time Hezbollah had to organize within a sectarian political system and be able to cooperate with other political forces at the legislative level. Due to the destruction of the Lebanese Civil war, the organization campaigned on a program that had a lot of similarities with left-wing parties rather than a platform of liberalism that other Sunni and Christian parties campaigned on at the time¹⁰⁶. Hezbollah according to Qassim, believed that the state requires a social welfare state that would enable the state to reconstruct the county, especially in the South and the Bekka Valley that it saw the most fighting¹⁰⁷. Participation in the parliament would also mean participation in the government of the state. This was also another issue that needed to be addressed by the party's

¹⁰¹ Azani.

¹⁰² Azani.

¹⁰³ Niam Qassem.

¹⁰⁴ Niam Qassem.

¹⁰⁵ Joseph Daher, I.

¹⁰⁶ Joseph Daher, I.

¹⁰⁷ Niam Qassem.

leadership. How would an Islamic resistance movement that wants to establish an Islamic State participate in governments of the state that wants to abolish it? Especially when Hezbollah would share responsibility for any mismanagement of the state. According to Nasrallah, there is no other choice but to participate within the government in order for the resistance to have a voice and especially legitimacy for its cause¹⁰⁸. It seems that after the Civil War, Hezbollah's priority was to gain legitimacy in the broader Lebanese landscape that would allow them to have a better grip on Lebanese politics. We must also mention the intern-religious communication channels that Hezbollah open after the Taif Agreement between Christians and Muslims that allowed them to establish alliances between Christians and Muslims within the Lebanese parliament¹⁰⁹. Those channels of communication included also religious leaders of all sects of Lebanese sectarianism.

THE SOCIAL SERVICES AND THE ISLAMIC ECONOMIC MODEL OF HEZBOLLAH:

One of the primary policies that Hezbollah is implementing since the Civil War was that of providing social services¹¹⁰. As I have mentioned in the previous section, Hezbollah campaigned on an "Islamic socialist" agenda that would make govern Lebanon based on social welfare¹¹¹ Hezbollah created a social welfare service that is unrivaled anywhere in the country from hospitals to education. Hezbollah's social service strategy was created with the intention to provide necessary services to lower-class members of the organization but also "educate" their membership in the ways of Hezbollah. Many lower-class members of Hezbollah are well educated and have achieved a social status through Hezbollah's scholarships and universities. Education is an important tool that would allow the organization to evolve and create the next generation of fighters. Hezbollah promotes this policy not as a political duty to voters, but rather as a core pillar of Zakat Islam to provide social services to those in need¹¹². Zakat in Islam is an Islamic economic model that "decentralizes" and redistributes economic resources to resolve socio-economic inequalities among people¹¹³. The concept of retribution in political economy is mostly dominated by Marxist political theory. In Islamic economic theory, in order to achieve economic growth there must be social equality among people that would guarantee prosperity and development. In Lebanon, there is a large problem of economic inequality that contribute to the instability in the country. Even before the Civil War, inequality was always addressed by political forces on the Left that demanded redistribution of

¹⁰⁸ Reem Abu-Lughod and Samuel Warkentin, 'Understanding Political Influence in Modern-Era Conflict: A Qualitative Historical Analysis of Hassan Nasrallah's Speeches', *Journal of Terrorism Research*, 3.2 (2012) <<https://doi.org/10.15664/JTR.382>>.

¹⁰⁹ Niam Qassem.

¹¹⁰ James B Love, *Hezbollah: Social Services as a Source of Power, Joint Special Operations University Report* (Florida, 2010), Vol. 10-5.

¹¹¹ Imad Salamey and Frederic Pearson, 'Hezbollah: A Proletarian Party with an Islamic Manifesto—a Sociopolitical Analysis of Islamist Populism in Lebanon and the Middle East', *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, 18.3 (2007), 416–38 <<https://doi.org/10.1080/09592310701674358>>.

¹¹² Love, Vol. 10-5.

¹¹³ Dr. Hamida Lahjouji and Dr. Khalid Rouggani, 'Zakat and Distribution of Wealth on Islamic Economy: Case of Morocco', *International Journal of Islamic Economics and Finance Studies*, 2.3 (2016), 73–94.

land and economic resources for the establishment¹¹⁴. After the civil war and the weakening of the LNM (Lebanese National Movement – Lefts coalition in Lebanon), Hezbollah proclaimed itself as the protector of the oppressed. Hezbollah spends its budget on those services as it believes that is essential to achieve better conditions for Shiites in Lebanon. This money of course comes from Iran (its ideological motherland) and from governmental sponsorships that the state invests in social welfare programs and developments. Programs in the Hezbollah-controlled areas seem to be better organized and better funded rather in other regions of the country¹¹⁵. This economic model that Hezbollah adopted in Lebanon is in opposition to neo-liberal policies that are implemented by other political forces in Lebanon such as President Hariri's Horizon 2000¹¹⁶. Neo-liberalism was also heavily criticized by the left as it was in favor of privatization of production and lead to economic inequality. Their opposition to Neo-liberalism but also their Islamic economic model was always justified on a basis of Islamic Fundamental beliefs. Hezbollah views Islam more as an ideology rather than a religion that allows them to construct their manifesto and their policy¹¹⁷.

HEZBOLLAH'S RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER SECTARIAN PARTIES:

The relationship between Hezbollah and other sectarian political forces it's a relationship based on common political interests that do not compromise Hezbollah's resistance. Since 2000, Hezbollah's entrance into the parliament, the political wing of the party has never claimed less than 10 seats in the parliament¹¹⁸. Thus, making Hezbollah a formidable force within and outside of the parliament. Hezbollah participated for the first time in 2005 in the government of Maronite President Michel Anou on a National Unity Government along with other political parties in the 14th of March coalition¹¹⁹. Despite its identity, Hezbollah recognizes that it needs allies in other sectarian groups in order to keep its momentum going for its armed struggle. While in the past, the Maronite community that used to hold the most hardline stance against Hezbollah thought its coalition with the Free Patriotic Movement (a Christian sect) has made Hezbollah more acceptable a legitimate in the eyes of the community¹²⁰. Hezbollah appeals also to secular Nationalist groups of the parliament such as Pan-Arabist movements because of their foreign policy on Arab issues such as Palestine and the Syrian Civil War¹²¹. The strategy of Hezbollah after the Taif Agreement seems to be that of cooperation within the sectarian political system rather than isolation. If Hezbollah entered Lebanese politics with a hardline stance on domestic and sectarian issues, it would

¹¹⁴ Joseph Daher, i.

¹¹⁵ Love, Vol. 10-5.

¹¹⁶ Hannes Baumann, 'Citizen Hariri and Neoliberal Politics in Post-War Lebanon', 2012.

¹¹⁷ Simbar and Zibaei.

¹¹⁸ Ekrem Karakoç, Mesut Özcan, and Sevinç Alkan Özcan, 'Beyond Identity: What Explains Hezbollah's Popularity among Non-Shi'a Lebanese?', *Politics and Religion*, 15.1 (2022), 85–113
<<https://doi.org/10.1017/S1755048321000018>>.

¹¹⁹ Abdul-Hussain.

¹²⁰ Karakoç, Özcan, and Özcan.

¹²¹ Samir Shalabi, 'Hezbollah: Ideology , Practice , and the Arab Revolts' (Lund University, 2015).

have been isolated by other political forces with the risk of losing support for its military goals in Lebanon. Through coalitions, alliances and inter-religious relations between different sects Hezbollah transformed the public perspective about the organization from an armed Islamic resistance group to a legitimate political party.

LEBANONIZATION AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF ITS HYBRID IDENTITY:

In their Political Manifesto in 1992, Hezbollah opposed the sectarian system and wanted to replace it with a “democratic Islamic State” This political stance was changed in their new manifesto in 2009 when they finally accepted the sectarian system¹²². What we can observe is that throughout the years of working in the Lebanese parliament Hezbollah’s changing attitude toward a pragmatic strategy changes the organization’s relationship with other sectarian parties as it has to cooperate and work with them in order to reconstruct Lebanon and continue the battle against Israeli occupation. This change in Hezbollah’s domestic policy is called Lebanonization. Ayatollah Fadlallah, a prominent Shiite cleric of Hezbollah describes this term in order to explain how an Islamic Movement should operate in the exceptional sectarian system of Lebanon¹²³. Prominent members of the party including clerics wanted to oppose this policy because they fear it would undermine the resistance. While this transforms Hezbollah from an Islamic movement into a political party, it does not reject the primary goal of Hezbollah to continue the resistance against Zionism¹²⁴. As I have mentioned previously, the legitimacy of the resistance in Lebanon it’s for the party’s survival. Hezbollah’s leadership is well aware of the label of the terrorist organization that carries outside Lebanon and wants to promote an image of a political organization and a resistance movement.

The elections of the Lebanese Parliament in 1992 is a historical moment because it was the begging of the transition of Hezbollah from an Islamic Resistance group into a political party with a hybrid identity. After the Taif Agreement, Hezbollah realized the future of the movement. It needed to have more open and more participation within the Lebanese society. Focusing only on its religious sect would only lead to its demise. Isolating itself from the rest of the Lebanese people from other sects would only make its resistance less legitimate in the eyes of the rest of the country. Accepting the policy of Lebanonization and focusing more on domestic issues by working with other political forces would give the organization the legitimacy that it needed for its resistance. Based on its new manifesto in 2009, Hezbollah continues to want to abolish political sectarianism as it did in the past, but this time wants to do it through national dialogue with other sectarian forces based on sectarian grounds¹²⁵. Rather than an Islamic state that it uses to want in the past, wants a consensual democracy that respects public freedom and its cable of

¹²² Alagha, VII.

¹²³ Shaykh Muhammad, Hussayn Fadlallah, and Mahmoud Soueid, ‘Islamic Unity and Political Change . Interview with Shaykh Muhammad Hussayn Fadlallah Published by : University of California Press on Behalf of the Institute for Palestine Studies Stable URL : [Http://Www.Jstor.Org/Stable/2538105](http://www.jstor.org/stable/2538105) ISLAMIC UNITY AND’, 25.1 (2016), 61–75.

¹²⁴ Robert G. Rabil, ‘Hezbollah, the Islamic Association and Lebanon’s Confessional System Al-Infatih and Lebanonization’, *The Levantine Review*, 1.1 (2012), 49 <<https://doi.org/10.6017/lev.v1i1.2151>>.

¹²⁵ Alagha, VII.

protecting Lebanon's sovereignty from foreign interventions¹²⁶. Having a hybrid identity would allow Lebanon to be more acceptable by other sects of the Lebanese society and have more influence in the Lebanese society on issues that dictates Lebanon's future in the region.

CHAPTER 6: THE HYBRID IDENTITY OF HEZBOLLAH AND THE PARTY OF RESISTANCE.

Who are we, the Hezbollah, and what is our identity? We are the sons of the umma, the party of God. The vanguard of which was made victorious by God in Iran. There, the vanguard succeeded in laying down a Muslim state's bases, which plays a central role in the world¹²⁷.

INTRODUCTION:

The quote from the Open letter of Hezbollah's political program in 1985 states their introduction into Lebanon and their political purpose in the Country. Hezbollah claims to be the vanguard of the Lebanese people and the face of Resistance against Western Imperialism and the forces of Zion¹²⁸. In this chapter, I will be analyzing Hezbollah's "sacred resistance" against Western hegemony, Imperialism, and their fight against Zionist expansion in the Middle East. How does Hezbollah use the term "resistance" as part of their identity and how's that similar to other resistance movements (secularists) across the world with similar goals to the "Party of God".

DEFINING RESISTANCE AND RESISTANCE MOVEMENTS:

A large part of Hezbollah's identity is solid based on their cause of resistance" either against Israeli occupation or either because of a "patriotic duty against western intervention" in Lebanon. But to

¹²⁶ Alagha, VII.

¹²⁷ Alagha, VII.

¹²⁸ International Institute of Counter-Terrorism, *The Hezbollah Program*, 1985.

understand if Hezbollah can be considered a resistance movement, we have to compare it with other movements across the world and define “resistance” and what makes a resistance movement such. What defines resistance, is a reaction against an oppressive force that aims to enforce its power over the other. When is pressure enough by the ruling class of the country, civil society can break the civil contract between the state and civil society and resist it. In other cases, resistance can be motivated by nationalist goals such as the right to self-determination. Resistance can be developed by organized groups of people who aim to resist this oppressive force and disturb their ways of enforcing it in society. Political scientists and geopolitical researchers attribute the term resistance movement to “non-state actors” that take up arms for an armed struggle to achieve their goals¹²⁹. Sometimes those resistance groups can be labeled as a “terrorist organization” from the opposite side to justify their violent crackdown on that resistance. Resistance also can be achieved without the usage of arms. Such forms of resistance are called Civil Resistance, where non-violent actions are taken to achieve goals or put more pressure on the ruling elite¹³⁰. The character of a resistance movement is shaped based on its goal, for example, an organization such as the IRA (Irish Republic Army) is a Nationalist movement that aims to the liberation of all Irish Nationals in Northern Ireland and reunification with the rest of the Irish Island. Their character is shaped based on their Nationalist struggle¹³¹. The IRA during the 70s was viewed by the British as a terrorist-extremist organization that was willing to take up arms against the United Kingdom. Hezbollah and the IRA are often compared because of their religious struggle in their respective countries and are a good starting point for understanding and defining resistance.

HEZBOLLAH AND THE ISLAMIC RESISTANCE:

A key component of Hezbollah’s identity it’s the form of resistance that Hezbollah represents in Lebanon, that of the Islamic Resistance that originated from the teachings of Ayatollah Khomeini in Iran¹³². Since its formation Hezbollah’s leadership was inspired by the teaching of Ayatollah Khomeini as a new form of Shia Islam was spreading out in the Shi’ite community of the Islamic World. The successful Islamic Revolution in Iran gave way to the spread of those ideas in Lebanon and inspired nonsecular Shi’ite parts of the community to form Hezbollah¹³³. The Islamic Resistance in Lebanon also predates the foundation of Hezbollah as it was declared in the Manifesto of the Nine in 1982 and Hezbollah’s official formation was announced in 1985¹³⁴. Resistance was a major “ingredient” of Hezbollah’s identity as it defined its

¹²⁹ Veronique Dudouet, *From War to Politics: Resistance/Liberation Movements*, 2009 <www.berghof-center.org/%5Cnhttp://www.berghof-center.org/>.

¹³⁰ Sharon Erickson Nepstad, ‘Religious Support for Civil Resistance Movements: When and How Does It Contribute to Regime Change?’, *Socius*, 7.1 (2021) <<https://doi.org/10.1177/23780231211054997>>.

¹³¹ Victoroff.

¹³² T. Y. Ismael, J. S. Ismael, ‘The Purpose of This Study Is to Place the Political Thought of Ayatollah Khomeini in Historical Political and Social Perspective and to Examine the Persian Clerical Approach to 1) the Structure and Function of Government in Revolutionary Iranian Society’; 27.5 (1980).

¹³³ Norton, ‘Hezbollah: A Short History: Chapter 2 -The Founding of Hezbollah Book’.

¹³⁴ Marco Nilsson, ‘Hezbollah and the Framing of Resistance’, *Third World Quarterly* (Routledge, 2020) <<https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2020.1779587>>.

cause of action and reason for existence in Lebanon, which was the resistance against Israeli and Western occupation during the Civil War. The source of Hezbollah's power that motivates the Islamic resistance is the Shia community of Lebanon. The Shiite community of Lebanon was considered to be the poorest and most underdeveloped community in Lebanon before the rise of Hezbollah¹³⁵. The rise of Shiite Islamic Resistance in Lebanon promised a new future for the Shiite community that secularist movements were never able to promise and fulfill. The political Islam that Hezbollah's pre-date was drastically challenged during the Israeli invasion of South Lebanon where they come face to face with their "enemies". The Shiite community was caught between the PLO (a Palestinian secularist and leftist movement) and Israel and had a bloody conflict in the South of Lebanon that was an extension of the Civil War¹³⁶. The main goal of Hezbollah's Identity during that time was the resistance to Western Imperialist and Zionist interventions and the establishment of an Islamic state in the principles of the Iranian Revolution of Ayatollah Khomeini. The civil war "unintentionally forced" some ideological changes within Hezbollah, also on their narrative about resistance. While many scholars believe that Hezbollah's ultimate goal is the creation of an Islamic State similar to that of Iran, geopolitical and ideological changes have drifted away Hezbollah from its original vision¹³⁷. After the Taif Agreement and the end of the long civil war, Hezbollah's identity went into a period of crisis as it needed to redefine its "resistance". According to Nilsson, resistance to Hezbollah is a "continuous project that evolves of its political formation"¹³⁸. Thus, it evolves along with the changing world around it and it's in constant change. A very important point that Nilsson makes is the effort of Hezbollah's leadership to normalize resistance after the end of the civil war to keep the concept of the Islamic Resistance alive in Lebanese politics¹³⁹. For Hezbollah, as long as Israel exists in Palestine and controls territory in South Lebanon the resistance has every right to exist.

THE PALESTINIAN STRUGGLE AND HEZBOLLAH:

The Palestinian question is something that affected Lebanon ever the first Arab - Israeli war in 1948 and the mass immigration of Palestinian refugees into the neighbored countries including Lebanon¹⁴⁰. The identity of Hezbollah is solid based on the existence of Israel as an occupational force in the region and the calls for resistance against this occupation, thus making Lebanese Shiites and Palestinian resistance fighters as natural allies. The Palestinian issue and the fight against Zionism were always portrayed as Arab Issues due to the rise of the Pan-Arabist Movement¹⁴¹. Many Muslim communities in Lebanon and Arab Nationalists sympathized with Palestinians from 1948-to 67 despite the mistrust of many Lebanese

¹³⁵ Simbar and Zibaei.

¹³⁶ Simbar and Zibaei.

¹³⁷ Judith Palmer Harik, i.

¹³⁸ Nilsson, 'Hezbollah and the Framing of Resistance'.

¹³⁹ Marco Nilsson, 'Hezbollah and the Framing of Resistance', *Third World Quarterly*, 0.0 (2020), 1595–1614 <<https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2020.1779587>>.

¹⁴⁰ James A. Bill, *Pan-Arabism and Arab Nationalism, Pan-Arabism and Arab Nationalism*, 1987 <<https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429300967>>.

¹⁴¹ Leila S. Kadi, *Basic Political Documents of the Armed Palestinian Resistance Movement* (Beirut, 1969).

Nationalists (Maronite Christians). Many Palestinians that lived in Lebanon were able to contribute to the country's economic development and were able to further integrate into Lebanese society. Many Palestinian refugees were located in the South of Lebanon where the Shiite communities were also traditionally located and were influenced and even joined the ranks of the PLO¹⁴². In their manifesto in 2009, Hezbollah views the existence of Israel as an "eternal threat to Lebanon" because it borders Palestine, and thus the existence of the Zionists is an excuse for armed struggle against this threat¹⁴³. The Palestinian question was dominated for years by secularist movements such as the PLO, but in recent times this has been challenged by Islamic groups such as Hamas, Islamic jihad, and even Hezbollah in Palestinian communities in Lebanon¹⁴⁴. If we look at the relationship between Shiites and Palestinians, we can observe that this relationship has its roots even before Hezbollah and the Iranian Revolution. Nowadays, the Arab countries such as Egypt, Morocco, and Jordan that traditionally supported the Palestinian struggle for independence are seeking normalization with Israel and this gives opportunity to Iranian and Hezbollah influence in Palestine. Unlike those countries, Hezbollah's position on Palestine is unchanged since its inception. For Hezbollah, there is no room for "reconciliation or surrender" to Zionist expansion in the West Bank or Gaza.

THE RESISTANCE OF HEZBOLLAH COMPARED TO OTHER RESISTANCE MOVEMENTS IN LEBANON:

It's important to study and compare other resistance movements in Lebanon that developed and predate Hezbollah. An example of a resistance movement that predates Hezbollah is the example of the various socialist and communist parties and movements that existed in Lebanon and addressed anti-colonial and imperialist issues¹⁴⁵. Those goals predated the teachings of Ayatollah Khomeini and Hezbollah's proclamation of an Islamic Resistance against Western Imperialism. The Secularist parties of the Lebanese left address various issues that affected the region but always had in mind an Arab Socialist republic that included Syrian, Egypt, Jordan, and Palestine¹⁴⁶. This goal of Arab Unity under socialist principles failed to take seed within Lebanon because of the changing conditions in the region of the Middle East. Another secularist political movement was that of Arab Nationalism or Pan-Arabism which also addressed similar goals. Pan-Arabism aims to unite all Arab countries under one Arab republic by liberating Arab countries from foreign rule (especially Western). The Ideas of Arab Nationalism were especially influential in secular political movements and were often allied with Arab Leftism in the region. Because Arab Nationalism transcends regional boundaries such as Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Egypt were very influential among resistance movements in the region. In some cases, the Arab identity was used as an "umbrella term" to

¹⁴² Michael C. Hudson, 'Palestinians and Lebanon: The Common Story', *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 10.3 (1997), 243–60 <<https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/10.3.243>>.

¹⁴³ Hezbollah, 'The New Hezbollah Manifesto', November, 2009, 12 <<http://www.lebanonrenaissance.org/assets/Uploads/15-The-New-Hezbollah-Manifesto-Nov09.pdf>>.

¹⁴⁴ Ayad Mardan, 'Hezbollah and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine - a Comparative Study', 2021.

¹⁴⁵ Tareq Y. Ismael, *The Communist Movements in the Arab World., Law, Personalities, and Politics of the Middle East: Essays in Honor of Majid Khadduri*, 2019 <<https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429052477-10>>.

¹⁴⁶ Ismael.

unite Arabs across the region for a common fight against Imperialism and Zionism¹⁴⁷. While those movements strived to unify Arabs under a secularist agenda (Arab Nationalism or Arab Socialism) failed to address the issue of religion in Lebanon causing those movements to go through a crisis. The crisis of secularism in the Middle Eastern region gave way to the rise of Islamic movements. In times of crisis, the Arabs turned to religion for answers¹⁴⁸. This combined with the wars against Israel and western intervention in the region gave way to more popularity for other Islamic movements that were growing at the time. Also, secularist movements failed to address traditionalist issues that were up for debate, and religion (in this situation Islam) came to fill the void. A great example is a retreat of the influence of the secularism movement on the political Left of the Lebanese politics after the Taif Agreement where they failed to address key issues for the Lebanese people. Palmer in his book "Hezbollah: Changing the Face of Terrorism" addresses how Hezbollah's Islamic resistance filled the void of other secularist movements, especially in the fight against Israel¹⁴⁹. While during the civil war in Lebanon, most of the secular forces were falling into disarray and were fighting among themselves even within their factions. With the help of Iran, Hezbollah continues the fight against occupation and was able to address the key issues that disconnected the Shiite population felt during the conflict.

HOW HEZBOLLAH'S RESISTANCE REFLECTS ITS HYBRID IDENTITY:

In continuation in the development of the hybrid identity hypothesis, Hezbollah's Islamic Resistance has various influences from secularist resistance movements across history. One of those secularist characteristics I can identify is the concept of the National struggle against an enemy or an occupying force. For Hezbollah, Israel is what the British were for the IRA during their revolution in 1922. Fighting this occupation force in South Lebanon during and after the Lebanese Civil war was a top priority for the survival of the Shiite community and Lebanon. In their view of Israel, the struggle against Israel is a struggle between oppressors and oppressed, this view is a reminiscence of both Leninist political thought on the national issue and the struggle between oppressive and oppressed nations across the world¹⁵⁰. Hezbollah uses this idea and modifies it in their cosmological viewpoint by using Israel and the West as a nation of "oppressive colonial regimes" that enforce their will against Muslims and Arabs in the region¹⁵¹. Another element of a secularist characteristic is their proclamation to fight imperialism in the middle east and Lebanon. The concept of Imperialism is something that reflects a lot of anti-colonial national movements in Africa and Latin America. This concept was developed and expanded also by Vladimir Lenin, explaining how imperialist nations (United States, Britain, France and the central European Powers) used their political and economic power to influence and exploit less "developed nations"¹⁵². As I have discussed in

¹⁴⁷ Bill.

¹⁴⁸ Judith Palmer Harik, i.

¹⁴⁹ Judith Palmer Harik, i.

¹⁵⁰ Stanley W. Page, 'Lenin and Self-Determination.', in *The Slavonic and East European Review* (Modern Humanities Research Association, 1950) <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/4204138>> [accessed 19 May 2022].

¹⁵¹ Najma Assadi and Marcel Benchechi, 'Hezbollah – A Symbol of the Struggle for National Liberation or a Terrorist Organization?', *Moldoscopia*, 1.1 (2016), 148–65 <https://ibn.idsi.md/vizualizare_articol/43853>.

¹⁵² V.I.Lenin, *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism*, *Resistant Marxist Library*, 1st edn (Australia, 1999).

the previous section of the chapter, the Palestinian Issue goes hand to hand with the Islamic Resistance of Hezbollah. While in the past this was considered first an Arab (nationalist) issue nowadays due to the crisis of secularism in the Middle East the Palestinian question is more of an issue of the Muslim world in general. While many political analysts consider Hezbollah as a proxy organization of Iran in Lebanon, the Palestinians are used by Hezbollah as a proxy against Israel in the geopolitical struggle for supremacy in the Levant. The resistance is also reflected in their stance against the rest of the world and the status quo in the international system. During the cold war, they rejected both forms of political systems like the capitalist (USA and Western World) and the socialist (USSR and Warsaw Pact) and claimed that the only righteous way was the establishment of an Islamic State in Lebanon. After the withdrawal of the IDF in south Lebanon, Hezbollah's leadership reexamined the establishment of an Islamic State in Lebanon because the composition of Lebanese society is based on sectarian lines of political management. While they participated in Lebanese politics as I demonstrated in the chapter on domestic politics, they don't fully reject their primary goal of the establishment of an Islamic state in the principles of Khomeini's Iranian Revolution. They believe that this goal should be achieved mostly by a more pragmatic and moderate approach to this role. This moderated approach is something that affects Hezbollah ideologically by the rising middle class-educated membership of the party that wants a Hezbollah to give a more emphasis on domestic Lebanese issues rather than Islamic struggles. As history unfolds, we might see a different approach towards Resistance that might adopt more nationalist characteristics rather than religious, thus pushing even more the organization towards a more secular path.

CHAPTER 7: HEZBOLLAH'S IDENTITY COMPARED TO OTHER ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALIST GROUPS

THE DEBATE ON RELIGIOUS VIOLENCE AND THE ISSUE OF ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALISM.

Modern conflicts have been categorized as a conflict between large armies against non-state actors in small, organized groups committing acts of violence motivated by a strong will to resist the enemy by any means necessary. This will for violence can be motivated by a variety of reasons and motivations, but in recent years because of the "war on terrorism," there is a large emphasis on religious violence. Religious Violence is something that bothered social and security analysts for decades trying to come up with an explanation of what causes this phenomenon and if the ingredient of religion is the motivation for those acts of violence¹⁵³. If acts of violence are being perpetrated by religious fundamentalist people that mean that religion is the cause of the violence? But that is not the case. Religions are just another social construct that unites people under a banner of costumes, traditions and history¹⁵⁴. The issue when those people commit acts of violence is usually their culture and religious backgrounds that are the cause of

¹⁵³ M. Cherif Bassiouni, 'The New Wars and the Crisis of Compliance with the Law of Armed Conflict by Non-State Actors', *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology*, 98 (2007) <<https://heinonline.org/HOL/Page?handle=hein.journals/jclc98&id=719&div=&collection=>> [accessed 4 June 2022].

¹⁵⁴ Paul Lichterman, 'Religion and the Construction of Civic Identity', *American Sociological Review*, 73.1 (2008), 83–104 <<https://doi.org/10.1177/000312240807300105>>.

violence. Usually, those actions are detected as symbolic violence against an occupying force of a foreign entity (In my case Hezbollah against Israel and the Western occupying forces in Lebanon) that aim to send a message against the enemy that they reject and are willing to fight them with unconventional means¹⁵⁵. For example, a form of symbolic violence that Hezbollah used was the bombing of the Israeli embassy in Buenos Aires after the assassination of its general secretary by Israeli security services¹⁵⁶. We must acknowledge that when we are discussing religious fundamentalism and religious violence mostly in the west, we focus on cases of Islamic fundamentalist extremism¹⁵⁷. Unfortunately, in recent years because of the “war on terror” there is a large emphasis on the case of Islam and if it’s inherently “evil”, thus an example of how religious fundamentalism causes violence¹⁵⁸. I would argue that this emphasis on Islam as an extremist religion is rooted in post-Colonial – orientalist political thought that portrays Islam and the Arab world as a direct opposite of Western Civilization¹⁵⁹. Samuel Huntington in his famous book “The Clash of Civilizations” describes how Islam resurge as a reaction to western modernization and how political Islamization took over after the crisis of secularization in the majority of Arab countries and gave rise to Islamic Fundamentalism¹⁶⁰. The west always viewed the middle east and Islamic countries as backward and “uncivilized” and blame their culture and religion for their failures to modernize and industrialized at the same pace as the West¹⁶¹. This bias toward Islam and extension of the Arab World ignores political changes and circumstances that gave birth to “Islamic Fundamentalism” and “religious violence”. For example, the deposition of Saddam Hussein’s government and the political instability in Iraq after the invasion of Iraq gave birth to extreme circles of terrorists that created ISIS¹⁶². Also, the fight against communism and the Soviet Union in Afghanistan during the Cold War gave birth to the Islamist terrorist groups like Al Qaeda and the Taliban that committed the terrorist attacks on 9/11. Foreign interventions and political instability can cause poverty and dissatisfaction among people against their current situation can lead them to take extreme actions against violent methods against their oppressors. Religions, ideologies, and beliefs are just social constructs that people adopt to identify with their respective communities, extreme acts of violence do not represent the whole community of those peoples but a small minority. The issue is to recognize the conditions that give birth to those factors that give birth to violence.

OTHER ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALIST TERRORIST GROUPS:

¹⁵⁵ Colaguori.

¹⁵⁶ Niam Qassem.

¹⁵⁷ Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence (Updated Version)*, 2017.

¹⁵⁸ Cavanaugh.

¹⁵⁹ Edward W. Said.

¹⁶⁰ Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order.*, This Simon (new y: SIMON & SCHUSTER, 1996).

¹⁶¹ Edward W. Said.

¹⁶² Michael Kyle and Fawaz A. Gergez., ‘ISIS: A History’, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03068374.2018.1487705>, 49.3 (2018), 515–17 <<https://doi.org/10.1080/03068374.2018.1487705>>.

After we analyzed Hezbollah's domestic policy, internal structure, and ideological resistance I will be comparing Hezbollah to other Islamic Fundamentalist groups that security and counter-terrorism analysts often look up to when they label Hezbollah an Islamic Fundamentalist terrorist Group. According to the Council of Foreign Affairs of the United States, Hezbollah is categorized as an A-list Group compared to other Islamic Fundamentalist organizations such as Hamas, Taliban, and ISIS. The closest group to Hezbollah of the three is without doubt the Palestinian Islamist group Hamas. Hamas without a doubt is a very organized organization with a large stable membership and following and similar in a tactic to Hezbollah. Hamas also represents the Sunni sect of Islam and is considered to be a separated entity from the secular resistance group of the PLO¹⁶³. The Afghan enemy of both the Russian and the US after the invasion of Afghanistan is another interesting case of Islamic Fundamentalism because of its extremist jihadist approach towards the occupation. Unlike Hezbollah, the Taliban have ethnic and tribal origins mixed with Sunni Islam¹⁶⁴. Last but not least, the most extreme example of Islamic Fundamentalism is ISIS. The successful campaign of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria surprised the Western World how efficient and quickly defeated the Iraqi army. Also, its ability to export extreme acts of violence abroad in the hearts of western civilization¹⁶⁵.

METHODS OF VIOLENCE AND THE ISSUE OF MARTYRDOM:

The issue of "religious violence" is often characterized by the methodology of violence that "Religious fundamentalists" often use in acts of terrorism. In this section of the chapter, I will be discussing the different methods that Islamic Fundamentalist groups use in their operations. In Islam, Jihad is considered to be a struggle of the human soul against an enemy and a confrontation between the oppressor and the oppressed¹⁶⁶. A "Jihad" can take a variety of forms from personal to religious to a nationalist level. As I had discussed in previous chapters, Hezbollah uses a variety of methods to attack its enemies. From guerilla warfare, kidnapping, bombings of embassies to suicide bombings against military installations¹⁶⁷. In their methodology, their Military Jihad is their primary weapon against oppression that they use against their enemies, either that being Israel or the "Western occupying forces"¹⁶⁸. In international security records their a plethora of information about Hezbollah's terrorist activities and circles across the world¹⁶⁹. Many security analysts attribute Hezbollah's suicide bombing methodology as the pioneers of this method that was used and continued by other Islamic Fundamentalist groups. Robert Pape in his book

¹⁶³ Joshua L. Gleis and Benedetta Berti, *Hezbollah and Hamas : A Comparative Study*, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012, i.

¹⁶⁴ Tom Smith, 'Ethics and Efficacy of Global War on Terror', *Journal of International Relations Research Violence and Terroism Issue*, 1, 2012 <<https://doi.org/10.21428/99608f92.72befc2a>>.

¹⁶⁵ Sinan Ekim, 'ISIS: Inside the Army of Terror', *Global Affairs*, 1.4–5 (2015), 471–73 <<https://doi.org/10.1080/23340460.2015.1095702>>.

¹⁶⁶ Niam Qassem.

¹⁶⁷ Robinson.

¹⁶⁸ Niam Qassem.

¹⁶⁹ Robinson.

“Dying to win” mentions a variety of reasons to explain the methodology of suicide bombing one of them being as a strategy for national liberation and the ultimate sacrifice for a cause to give up their lives¹⁷⁰. This is something that also Niam Qassem touches upon when he gives his own explanation of the methodology of suicide bombing. He believes that the act of suicide is not the same as the act of martyrdom and that members who give their lives for the cause are committing not an act of cowardness but an act of supreme manifestation of self-giving in the context of Islamic theology¹⁷¹. Meaning they accept their fate as warriors of the jihad against their foreign enemy and they are willing to pay the ultimate sacrifice. Pape argues also that the use of suicide bombing from those groups resulted in the withdrawal of Israel from South Lebanon in the case of Hezbollah and the withdrawal from Gaza because it was much more difficult to deal with an enemy using such tactics against you¹⁷². This is something that was also observed by the US Army in their occupation of Iran and Afghanistan. Since the withdrawal of Israel from Lebanon the methodology has changed, Hezbollah no longer uses methods of suicide bombing and it rather focuses to develop its militant group (Islamic Resistance) as a modern-day military force with the help of Iran. They have realized that in this time and age martyrdom can only be used as a last resort and they would rather focus on developing their militant team into a force formidable in Lebanon to rival even the Lebanese forces in strength and equipment¹⁷³.

IS HEZBOLLAH COMPARABLE TO ISIS, HAMAS AND THE TALIBAN?

In the West, we are used to look at the Middle East as backward, undeveloped and dysfunctional and because of those circumstances, the existence of Islamic Fundamentalism justified its existence¹⁷⁴. This Orientalist approach towards the Middle East “blind” us from understanding what really happened in those places. Taking into account my analysis of Hezbollah in the previous chapters, I would argue that it is a mistake to put Hezbollah in the same “basket” as the Taliban and ISIS in order to compare them. Because of its affiliation with Iran, Hezbollah is viewed as an anti-western and anti-American organization and that’s how the similarities with other religious fundamentalist groups began. First of all, Hezbollah enjoys the legitimacy of the Lebanese political system by participating and contributing to the political system of the country. Despite the fact that Hezbollah has its own agenda about Lebanon and sometimes acts like an Iranian proxy in the Levant, we must admit that Hezbollah shapes and develops along with the Lebanese state. ISIS and the Taliban for example work in order to abolish their respective states and establish their own Islamic Sharia Law state by the use of force. Some would argue that Hezbollah also works to establish an Islamic State in Lebanon. Hezbollah’s approach toward the foundation of an Islamic State in Lebanon is based on “free public choice” that embraces also other religious and non-religious sects under the banner of Islam¹⁷⁵. To Hezbollah Islam still remains the answer and the guide to

¹⁷⁰ Pape, II.

¹⁷¹ Niam Qassem.

¹⁷² Pape, II.

¹⁷³ Judith Palmer Harik, I.

¹⁷⁴ Edward W. Said.

¹⁷⁵ Niam Qassem.

sociopolitical issues in the country, but when compared to Islamic beliefs in organizations such as ISIS and Taliban are not so tolerant of other religions and forms of government rather than sharia law. There is a large misconception about Hezbollah that is made out of religious fanatics of a lower-class background. This is false, Hezbollah compared to ISIS and the Taliban is well organized and has a variety of members from all economic and social classes from within and out of Lebanon¹⁷⁶. While now we are seeing the true capabilities of the Taliban after the takeover of Afghanistan in 2021, we can observe that the Taliban are not as well organized and effective in taking the responsibility to govern Afghanistan and also are failing to gain legitimacy in the international stage¹⁷⁷. Moreover, Hezbollah despises extremism within its ranks and punishes those who don't follow the hardline of the party on issues of Resistance. The only organization that has an almost identical characteristic to Hezbollah is Hamas. Hamas being an Islamic resistance group in Gaza also face similar issues and challenges as Hezbollah, both organizations are well funded and well equip. Both organizations were developed out of an ongoing Islamization of their respective communities (Hezbollah – Shiite, Hamas -Sunni Muslim brotherhood). Hamas and Hezbollah share a common enemy in the face of Israel and in numerous times had collaborated together in regard to militant operations¹⁷⁸. In regard to other Islamic fundamentalist groups, we must acknowledge the role of Hezbollah in combating those groups in places like Iraq and Syria but also internally in North Lebanon¹⁷⁹. Organizations such as ISIS and the Taliban do not share the same hybrid characteristics that Hezbollah has, so comparing them to Hezbollah under the label of an "Islamic Fundamentalist organization" is a mistake. Yes, Hezbollah in the past has used terrorist tactics against Israeli and Western forces in Lebanon and abroad but so do other non-religious organizations with nationalist or socioeconomic motives¹⁸⁰. If we want to combat those organizations, we must analyze them under the correct identity. That's why I believe Hezbollah has a hybrid identity that allows them to operate and work according to their needs which is essential for their survival in a hostile environment.

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION

In this thesis, I have explored and analyzed Hezbollah as a political organization from different categories and angles in order to develop my theory about the Hybrid Identity. I have discussed its internal structure, its role in domestic policy, resistance and how it compares to other religious fundamentalist groups. It is important to understand Hezbollah as a political organization and look beyond narratives that label and categorize those groups in a singular identity. My general aim was to go beyond those narratives and interpret those views in an alternative narrative that analyzes Hezbollah as a political entity in domestic affairs and tries to understand its own narrative about itself. In the concluding chapter, I would answer

¹⁷⁶ Joseph Daher, i.

¹⁷⁷ Frederick Betz, 'Political Theory of Nation-Building: Case of the Failed State of Afghanistan in 2021: Part', *Advances in Social Sciences Research*, 2022 .

¹⁷⁸ Gleis and Benedetta Berti, i.

¹⁷⁹ Randa Slim, 'Hezbollah and Syria: From Regime Proxy to Regime Savior', *Insight Turkey*, 16.2 (2014), 61–68.

¹⁸⁰ Cavanaugh.

my research question and I will provide my own findings on researching this organization based on its identity and behavior in Lebanon.

WHY DOES HAVING A HYBRID IDENTITY WORKS FOR HEZBOLLAH?

My main theory in this thesis was that Hezbollah right now holds a Hybrid Identity that allows it to establish an influential presence in domestic politics in Lebanon. In the West, we use classification and labeling in order to have an easy interpretation of the world around us. In the field of Political Science, we have classified civilizations according to their ideas, religions and economic systems to interpret them individually and understand how those civilizations connect and clash¹⁸¹. This political philosophy expands also on the identities that political organizations have. Hezbollah has developed a Hybrid Identity based on sociopolitical changes in Lebanon that affected the survival of the organization. Amartya Sen in his book "Identity and Violence" give us a perspective that individuals and groups can adapt their identities based on changes in their environment and can prioritize identities based on those changes¹⁸². The environment in the Middle East and especially in Lebanon consists of ethnoreligious groups fighting for supremacy in a changing landscape¹⁸³. After the Taif Agreement and the failed attempt of Hezbollah to find a coalition to resist this settlement, the organization realized that it needed to change aspects of its identity in order to avoid complete isolation and risk losing the support of its "resistance"¹⁸⁴. Even before its transition towards a sectarian political party that represents the Shiite community, Hezbollah since its inception had also secular characteristics in its organizational structure. The way that Hezbollah organizes and mobilize is reminiscent of that of nationalist or leftist political parties across the world. Having already this organizational structure, made the transition to adapt to the sectarian system much easier. In their 2009 manifesto, Hezbollah maintains an "anti-globalization" strategy with a large emphasis on western capital that influences the Middle East and Latin America¹⁸⁵. This anti-capitalist and anti-western critic appeal to secular leftists and Pan-Arabic nationalists that are opposing this philosophy¹⁸⁶. The fight against Zionism and Western Imperialism transcends also the boundaries of Islamic political philosophy of "protecting the Islamic world from foreign intervention" and develops into a duty of protecting the state of Lebanon. In the past, Hezbollah rejected the state of Lebanon due to the sectarian political system that separates people into different categories based on religious sects. After years of fighting Israel in the occupying regions of Lebanon and working within the sectarian system, this approach has changed. Defending Lebanon means defending also the sectarian system of Lebanon¹⁸⁷. Thus, the goal of the resistance has developed into a national duty toward the state. Also, the resistance that Hezbollah

¹⁸¹ Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*.

¹⁸² Amartya Sen, *Identity and Violence: The Illusion of Destiny*, ed. by HENRY LOUIS GATES JR, *Angewandte Chemie International Edition*, 6th edn (New York: W.W Norton & Company, 2006).

¹⁸³ Karakaya, IX.

¹⁸⁴ Shalabi.

¹⁸⁵ Alagha, VII.

¹⁸⁶ Norton, *Hezbollah: A Short History*.

¹⁸⁷ Alagha, VII.

presents is more related to early anti-colonial resistance movements that wanted self-determination from colonial powers. The whole history of the Middle East is based on sectarian and colonial conflict. The characteristic of Hezbollah is that it brings religion as a uniting factor against the oppressors. This is also the case for their support of Palestinian self-determination. They believe that is both an Islamic and anti-colonial duty to liberate Palestine and support its independence.

Despite all these changes in issues such as the sectarian political system and the structure of the party, Hezbollah still remains an Islamic political organization. A hybrid identity allows Hezbollah to navigate the changing environment that operates and allows for changes within the basis of the Islamic ideology that Hezbollah follows. Maintaining, both secular and fundamentalist belief within the organization avoids isolation from the rest of the political and social system of Lebanon. The Taif Agreement taught Hezbollah the need for legitimacy in the eyes of the Lebanese people¹⁸⁸. An Islamic fundamentalist identity would only isolate Hezbollah in the eyes of Lebanese society and would reduce support for the resistance. In times of crisis such as the second invasion of Israel in 2006, Hezbollah called upon its members to defend the state of Lebanon and fight off the invaders by invoking both their Islamic and patriotic duty to the motherland. Thus, Hezbollah used its Hybrid narrative to mobilize the Lebanese resistance against foreign intervention. The biggest challenge to Hezbollah now is the association of the organization with the Lebanese corrupt establishment that threatens to damage Hezbollah as a political entity but also as a resistance movement. This threat comes not from foreign intervention as it did in the past, but rather from Lebanese people that are fed up with the corruption in the sectarian system.

CURRENT RESEARCH AND BEYOND:

Hezbollah as a case study is an organization that blurs the line between secularism and religious fundamentalism because of the way that the organization developed and is developing according to the sociopolitical changes in Lebanon. Based on my thesis I have tried to go beyond western narratives and try to give an alternative analysis of my views on this organization. Organizations such as Hezbollah cannot be analyzed from a singular viewpoint. It needs to be analyzed by based on how it represents itself, what influence it has and how it operates within its environment. Like any other political organization that holds multiple identities, the future is uncertain for its survival.

However, my analysis and conclusion of Hezbollah's hybrid identity have trier limitations. In a changing sociopolitical environment such as Lebanon, a lot of things can change and new ideas about Hezbollah's identity can form. The main issue in studying Hezbollah is the access to information directly from the organization itself and the Lebanese parliament. Because of this limitation, I had to work with information that is mainly written in the West or has been translated into English such as the book of Niam Qassim and the documents that were collected by Joseph Alagha. These of course are language berries that can be avoided by knowing the native language of Hezbollah. Another limitation that can be exploited in the future by researchers it's the research on Hezbollah's membership. A qualitative or quantitative analysis

¹⁸⁸ Lina Khatib, 'How Hezbollah Holds Sway over the Lebanese State', June, 2021.

of the people who support Hezbollah such as voters, friends and active members can reveal new ideas and theories that explain even more how Hybrid Identity is so effective in the case of Hezbollah.

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