HEZBOLLAH: ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, IDEOLOGICAL EVOLUTION, AND A RELEVANT THREAT MODEL

A Thesis
submitted to the Faculty of
The School of Continuing Studies
and of
The Graduate School of Arts and Sciences
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of
Masters of Arts
in Liberal Studies

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December 3, 2009
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ABSTRACT

As a movement and as an organization, Hezbollah represents an emerging model of oppositional contention in which a group is capable of coordinating the use of violence, social services, and legitimate political discourse in a coherent campaign of resistance. While the use of violence as a mode of contention within political discourse is not a novel concept, its manifestation in groups such as Hezbollah presents an intellectual challenge to the current conceptualization of terrorism and state security. Namely, Hezbollah is not using violence to pursue social or political change as an alternative to the existing political system in Lebanon; Hezbollah is using violence as a complement to its participation in the Lebanese sectarian system, effectively translating the use of violence into sufficient political capital to compel change from within the system. This dynamic presents a unique set of theoretical and practical challenges: will a group’s participation in legitimate political discourse necessitate the group’s moderation (e.g. will the group abandon the use of violence)? And perhaps more importantly, what are the risks involved in the process of moderation (e.g. what threat does a group pose as it participates in political discourse while it remains committed to the use of violence as a mode of contention)?
To assess Hezbollah’s potential for moderation, this thesis presents case studies of the organizational development and ideological evolution that enabled Hezbollah to accommodate political discourse into its broader campaign of resistance and subsequently maintain a coordinated campaign of violence, social services, and legitimate participation in the Lebanese sectarian system. The case study findings indicate that there are significant organizational and ideological constraints to moderation: rather than compelling moderation, Hezbollah’s political success is largely dependant on its effective use of violence and thus encourages it to continue an active campaign of armed resistance to maintain structural integrity and ideological resonance.

To assess the threat implications of Hezbollah’s organizational and ideological constraints to moderation and its continued use of violence as a complement to political discourse, this thesis evaluates Hezbollah’s role as a destabilizing force in Lebanon within an extending model of state security and stability. Extending the concept of state security beyond the traditional defense model (e.g. security as a measure of how effectively a state can defend its territorial integrity or national interests from external attack) to include the conceptualization of the security-stability model (e.g. security as a measure of the internal and external vulnerabilities that threaten governing regimes institutionally) indicates that Hezbollah has a destabilizing effect on Lebanon which makes it more susceptible to external influence from regional powers and more
vulnerable to escalating interstate conflict, as evident by the Israeli-Hezbollah War of 2006.
CONTENTS

ABSTRACT........................................................................................................... ii

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY................................. 1

CHAPTER 2: ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORKS............................................. 21

CHAPTER 3: HEZBOLLAH’S ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT........... 35

CHAPTER 4: HEZBOLLAH’S IDEOLOGICAL EVOLUTION.................... 62

CHAPTER 5: IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION.................................... 95

BIBLIOGRAPHY.............................................................................................. 124
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

Since the end of the Cold War, organizations that use violence as a repertoire of contention have emerged as significant threats to global security and to local and regional stability. For a variety of internal and external reasons, many of these groups have experienced vastly different patterns of institutional development, specifically in terms of organizational structure and ideological adaptation. Structurally, while some have evolved into decentralized affiliations that share a common world-view but have limited operational coherency, others have developed into highly centralized hierarchies capable of coordinating vast networks of political activists, commercial enterprises, social services providers, and militant or terrorist wings. Ideologically, while some organizations have maintained relative consistency in the core tenants of their ideology, others have proved more willing to compromise, adjust, or redefine the core tenants of their ideology to accommodate structural changes.

Since the catastrophic terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, America’s “Long War against violent extremist movements”\(^1\) and the broader international “war on terror” have been described as “history’s first protracted conflict between nations on one side and networks on the other.”\(^2\) Within this context, scholars and policy makers have


devoted a great deal of time to studying al-Qaeda’s development into an amorphous
global Islamic jihadist organization as the model for the emerging threat of the network:
the *decentralized affiliation* of organizations and even individuals that share an
ideological worldview and are capable of striking autonomously or swarming with little
warning. Such networks are difficult to accurately define and target because they do not
have a traditional hierarchical command structure; instead, they rely on complex
informal associations to recruit, mobilize, plan, resource, and execute operations largely
outside of reach of legitimate government control.

However, another dangerous variation of the network model is also emerging
among terrorist groups: the *centralized hierarchy* that directly controls an entangled web
of social, political, and military institutions to consolidate popular support, political
capital, and military capability, while emerging as a quasi-legitimate national, regional,
and global actor. This adaptation has had striking results, allowing organizations such as
Hezbollah and Hamas to coalesce from radical fringe terrorist groups to recognized
political parties with broad national support and international legitimacy.

The latter manifestation of the network, the centralized hierarchy, presents a
unique set of theoretical and practical challenges: will a group’s participation in
legitimate political discourse necessitate the group’s moderation (e.g. will the group
abandon the use of violence as an alternative to the accepted forms of political
participation)? And perhaps more importantly, what are the risks involved in the process
of moderation (e.g. what threat does a group pose as it participates in political discourse while it remains committed to the use of violence as a mode of contention)?

It is convenient to discuss the potential for groups to become more moderate overtime through a continual exercise of the democratic process or active involvement in political discourse. The idea is both reassuring and in many ways logical. However, there is also the relevant and timely assertion that such a process involves risk. Quantifying this assertion requires rigorous analytical consideration within a flexible framework capable of accommodating complex organizational change and ideological evolution and interpreting their correlation to an expanded conceptualization of threat in the modern world.

This is not to state or imply that active participation in constructive political discourse may not encourage organizations that use violence as a repertoire of contention to moderate overtime; instead, it highlights the need to understand the inherent risk of a naturally contentious process. The term naturally contentious means that the transition from violence to moderate political discourse will not be an automatic or natural sequence of events. Organizations that utilize violence due so for multiple and complex reasons; however, while ideological justifications and historical accounts differ, the fact remains that throughout history, violence has proven itself an effective tool for mobilizing support, gaining legitimacy, and producing either results or the perception of results. As long as an organization can maintain the use of violence as a
corollary to conventional means (e.g. as long the access to accepted political discourse and violence coexist) there will considerable tension to the idea of abandoning the use of violence. The nexus of that process lies in the organizational development of a group (e.g. the group’s hierarchal coherence and its internal decision making architecture), as well as its ideological evolution (e.g. its ability to conform the fundamental principals that maintain its popular resonance to changing political realities).

**Groups that Use Violence as a Repertoire of Contention and Terrorism.**

Groups that use violence as a repertoire of contention have always been active agents in political development and the political discourse. However, as the relationship between the use of violence and political discourse has evolved, the threshold for acceptable violence has changed, and thus the conceptualization of terrorism has also evolved.

The experience of early state building in Europe demonstrates the crucial role of violence in the process of state building that predicates modern political discourse. It took four to seven hundred years for Western Europe to develop into a functioning system of nation-states. During the critical early stages of their development, “state makers attempt[ed] to impose order, monopolize instruments of violence, and demand the exclusive loyalties of their populations. . . . This process was painfully slow and extraordinarily violent.”\(^3\) However, consolidating a monopoly of the use of violence to

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compel political affiliation during early European state building has never been considered terrorism in the modern sense, regardless of the scope or severity of the violence utilized; the use of violence to consolidate power was the process. Those groups that used violence most effectively, and more importantly monopolized the use of violence most effectively, developed into legitimate governing bodies by allowing them to “extract resources, build institutions, acquire political legitimacy, and deepen and broaden the state’s penetration of society – that is, to make their states’ existence secure territorially and institutionally.”

However, the first modern conceptualization of terrorism was applied to a governing nation-state using a deliberate campaign of violence against its own citizens: the “Reign of Terror” of the Jacobin government in late eighteenth century France. Over the next couple of hundred years, the conceptualization of terrorism continued to evolve. In the first chapter of his book, Inside Terrorism, Bruce Hoffman sketches the historical evolution of the term through its initial application to French Revolution to the current challenges with adequately defining terrorism. As a result of his analysis, Hoffman offers the following definition and expanded conceptualization for modern terrorism:

We may therefore now attempt to define terrorism as the deliberate creation and exploitation of fear through violence or the threat of violence in the pursuit of political change. . . . Terrorism is specifically designed to have far-reaching psychological effects beyond the immediate victim(s) or

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4 Ibid.

object of the terrorist attack. It is meant to instill fear within, and thereby intimidate, a wider ‘target audience’ that might include a rival ethnic or religious group, an entire country, a national government or political party, or public opinion in general. Terrorism is designed to create power where there is none or to consolidate power where there is very little. Through the publicity generated by their violence, terrorists seek to obtain the leverage, influence and power they otherwise lack to effect political change on either a local or an international scale.\(^6\)

Hoffman’s definition and expanded conceptualization of terrorism highlights a significant component of the current conceptualization of groups that use violence to pursue political change: groups that use violence as a repertoire of contention do so to gain political access and influence as an alternative to moderate political discourse. This implies political disenfranchisement and relegates the use of violence to an alternative to political discourse (e.g. groups who seek political or social change, yet do not have adequate access or influence within the existing political structure, must circumvent that structure and use violence to compel change through terror). While the preceding discussion on the relationship between the use of violence and political discourse is not intended to offer an exhaustive history of violence in political discourse, it does provide historical evidence that structurally there is space or opportunity for the use of violence within political development and political discourse. Thus, while the idea that the use of violence in political discourse is not a novel idea (i.e. Jacobin France, Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, Stalinist Russia, the Irish Republican Party in Northern Ireland, the Basque movement in Spain, or even the American Revolutionaries), the recognition that sub-

\(^{6}\) Ibid., 40-41.
state groups can and do use violence as a supplement to moderate political discourse within a political system in which they have substantial access and political leverage instead of as an alternative to inaccessible political discourse does challenge the current conceptualization of terrorism and the threat model for groups that effectively use violence as a repertoire of contention. Specifically, how does one articulate and measure the threat of groups that effectively uses the currency of violence as tangible leverage within an existing political system?

**Divergent Network Models.**

As previously mentioned, to understand the threat of a group that uses violence as a supplement to political discourse, it is useful to understand a group’s organizational development and its ideological evolution. The organizational development and structure of a group has two interrelated components: one, the real physical structure or organization (e.g. the composition and disposition of discrete bodies within the organization); and two, the functional structure or organization (e.g. the group’s internal decision making architecture and hierarchal coherence). The structural-functional dynamic within organizations is often difficult to delineate clearly and can change considerably as a function of time or as a function of the level of analysis (e.g. focusing the analysis on a group’s core leadership versus operational cells). As a result two considerable challenges exist when discussing a group’s organizational development: first, the challenge of classifying an organization, which is particularly challenging
when attempting to differentiate between traditional hierarchal organizations and networked organizations;\textsuperscript{7} and second, the challenge of understanding an organization’s internal decision making process, which is particularly challenging when attempting to understand the capabilities, limitations, and constraints that govern how and why groups act or do not act certain ways.\textsuperscript{8}

As organizations of all types have become more complex and diversified, the structural perspective for classifying organizations as traditional hierarchies or networked organizations has become largely irrelevant when not considered within the context of the group’s functional organization. For example, a commercial business that retains a highly centralized decision making, reporting, and accountability structure will likely also consist of multiple, maybe hundreds, of discrete sections that operate autonomously of each other due to their highly compartmentalized skill sets or the nature of their individual tasks. Thus, both the unqualified term hierarchy, which actually implies function more than structure, and the unqualified term network, which can imply either structure or function, are neither mutually exclusive nor adequately explanatory. A more useful conceptualization of the classification of an organization’s structure is a functionalist approach which designates a hierarchical organization as


centralized and non-hierarchical organization as decentralized (note that structurally, both organizations can be very similar “networks”). This conceptualization accommodates the analysis of groups that can effectively use violence as one component of a broader campaign for political or social change that often includes legitimate political discourse, social service providers, commercial enterprises, and armed resistance: the centralized (or hierarchical) network.

For this analysis, the classification of a group as a centralized network or a decentralized network has important implications on that group’s potential to use violence effectively within the framework of political discourse. For a highly decentralized organization such as al-Qaeda, the group’s organizational structure constrains its capability to use violence effectively within a campaign of political discourse. After September 11, 2001, al-Qaeda’s organization changed dramatically. Operation Enduring Freedom successfully defeated the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, effectively denying al-Qaeda the physical sanctuary required to plan, train for, and command and control operations effectively. Since the decline in al-Qaeda’s structural coherence, al-Qaeda has metastasized into a looser conglomeration of three elements that Audrey Cronin aptly defines as:

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9 Shapiro, “Organizing Terror,” 10-12.

• a core central group of leaders and strategists directly associated with bin Laden and Zawahiri;

• a nebula of more traditional groups that are formally or informally aligned with the core and sometimes respond to central guidance (often called the ‘network’);

• localized factions (even individuals) that have no physical contact with the centre, but strive to associate themselves with the worldview of al-Qaeda and its vaunted label.11

While there is debate on the relevancy and operational control of al-Qaeda’s remaining core leadership,12 as an organization, al-Qaeda lacks the organization coherence or mass ideological control to coalesce into an organization that resembles a functional political party or to influence significant ideological evolution throughout its affiliated network of organizations. In contrast, groups such as Hezbollah and Hamas have coalesced into the alternative classification of the network: the centralized hierarchy capable of controlling the use of violence as an effective mode of contention that complements its involvement in legitimate political discourse, social services, and commercial enterprise.

The second challenge to understanding the implications of a group’s organizational structure and its use of violence within political discourse is the group’s internal decision making process. The group’s classification as centralized or


decentralized focuses primarily on the mechanisms that control the operational
directives and logistics of a group: for example, what bodies within an organization
issue orders, how those orders are disseminated, to what extent the subordinate bodies
are accountable to follow those orders, and how compliance is monitored and enforced.
Although similar and interrelated to the group’s degree of centralized control, the
group’s internal decision making process focuses on how a group makes the decision on
how, when, and why it acts. Conceptually, this is the process that governs the
origination of the orders that will later be disseminated, monitored, and enforced
throughout the hierarchy.

Structurally, the internal decision making process of a group is significant
because while hierarchical networks may be highly centralized in execution (e.g. they
can enforce strict compliance from subordinate bodies), they often display a highly
fragmented and contentious decision making process. Applying a network approach to
internal decision making assumes that every group consists of multiple actors with
overlapping concerns and varying degrees of influence and involvement. Therefore, a
group’s decisions are a function of a continuous process of negotiating, bargaining, and
compromise. This “process of endless interpretation and persuasion” constrains how
quickly a group can make significant structural and ideological changes, including its
decision to abandon the use of violence, especially while its use of violence remains an effective supplement to political discourse.\textsuperscript{13}

\textbf{Ideological Evolution: The Potential for Moderation.}

The second component useful to understanding the threat of a group that uses violence as a complement to political discourse is the group’s ideological evolution. The analysis of the group’s internal decision making process offers a structural perspective on the constraints of ideological evolution (e.g. what actors are positioned to exert influence within the organization and participate in negotiation, bargaining, and compromise). Similarly, the analysis of the group’s actual ideological evolution offers a contextual perspective of the group’s core beliefs and how those beliefs constrain the group’s potential to change (e.g. how inclusive or exclusive are the group’s core beliefs, how rigid or flexible, and how central are those beliefs to the group’s core constituency’s daily lives).

The idea of ideological evolution is central to the discussion of political moderation because many groups, specifically religiously motivated groups, assign an ideological significance to violence beyond its practical utility. Such groups deliberately elevate their localized struggle into what Mark Juergensmeyer describes as a “cosmic struggle,” a broader metaphysical struggle between good and evil that absolutely binds personal salvation and political redemption to armed conflict through religious motivations.

\textsuperscript{13} Mishal, “Palestinian Hamas,” 572-574.
commitment.\textsuperscript{14} Therefore, to discuss the potential of political moderation and to evaluate the threat of groups that continue to use violence as a complement to political discourse, it is necessary to understand the contentious process through which an organization develops, refines, and often redefines its ideology: a process that operates within the framework of competing internal forces (i.e. the internal decision making structure) and external forces (i.e. the beliefs and life experiences of its core constituency, the ideology of rival organizations, the political reality in which it operates, and the opinions of the international community).

Robert Benford and David Snow offer a useful framework for understanding ideological development by presenting an model in which groups deliberately create, refine, and redefine ideology as interpretations of reality through a contentious process of diagnostic framing, prognostic framing, and motivational framing.\textsuperscript{15} The process is an extension of the organizational network dynamic. Significantly, to enter political discourse, groups often have to redefine their ideology or their interpretation of reality to accommodate political participation and the use of the violence. Once successful at this, there is less incentive to move away from violence as long as violence complements political discourse and is effective at mobilizing mass support.


\textsuperscript{15} Robert D. Benford and David A. Snow, “Framing Processes and Social Movements: An Overview and Assessment,” \textit{Annual Review of Sociology} 26 (2000), 611-639.
A Relevant Security Model

Thus far, the discussion of organizational development and ideological evolution has revealed two significant implications concerning groups that use violence as a repertoire of contention within political discourse. First, the groups most capable of effectively integrating the use of violence as a useful supplement to political discourse (e.g. centralized or hierarchical networks) will be structurally resistant to change because of the contentious nature of their internal decision making process. Second, such groups will also be ideologically resistant to change because once they have redefined their core ideology to accommodate the use of violence and participation in conventional political discourse there will be less incentive to abandon the use of violence as long the use of violence is effective at mobilizing mass support. However, to adequately translate the implications of organizational development and ideological evolution into a relevant threat assessment requires an extended model of security: a model of security capable of conceptualizing threat from both a traditional defense perspective (e.g. security as a measure of how effectively a state can defend its territorial integrity or national interests from external attack) and a stability perspective (e.g. security as a measure of the internal and external vulnerabilities that threaten governing regimes institutionally).

As a group becomes more hierarchical, it appears to become less of a threat within traditional defense threat models. For example, its leadership becomes more exposed, its
lines of logistics and communications become more transparent, and the opportunities for targeting the group, communicating with the group, and even negotiating with the group become more available. However, as a group becomes more hierarchal, it also becomes more capable of effectively coordinating its efforts, of synchronizing a campaign of armed resistance with a social service provider network, commercial enterprises, and political participation. Thus, traditional defense models of security are insufficient in identifying the full threat potential of groups that use violence as a supplement to political discourse because such models do not consider the impact of the groups in terms of stability. Further, traditional defense models do not account for the implications of instability at the regional and global level.

Mohammed Ayoob offers a useful framework for evaluating a group’s threat within the context of local, regional, and global stability by developing a concept of security that goes beyond the defense perspective of security and considers security as a function of a regime’s institutional vulnerabilities (both internal and external). This is not meant to imply that current security models focusing on the threat of decentralized networks such as al-Qaeda are invalid or irrelevant. Clearly, extremist networks, groups, and even individuals that operate outside of or beyond the parameters of traditional security apparatuses pose a viable threat to the United States and the international community. However, such groups are not the only threat. Expanding the concept of
security and broadening the analysis of more hierarchical networks such as Hezbollah is an important complement to the on-going study of threat in the modern world.

Methodology.

This thesis is organized into five chapters. This first chapter provides an introduction to the basic concepts developed throughout the remainder of the thesis. Specifically, it argues that while the current conceptualization of terrorism maintains that the use of violence is an alternative to political discourse, historically groups that use violence as a repertoire of contention have been active agents within political discourse. Further, two models of networks have developed among groups that currently use violence as a repertoire of contention: the decentralized network such as al-Qaeda and the centralized or hierarchical network such as Hezbollah. The latter group, the centralized network, poses a distinct threat from the former group in that a centralized network is capable of coordinating its efforts and effectively using violence as a complement to political discourse instead of as an alternative to political discourse. Although it is possible that such a group will moderate overtime (e.g. abandon the use of violence as it becomes more involved in the political process), there are structural and functional constraints to moderation that create risks while the group continues to use violence as a complement to political discourse. Those structural and functional constraints are evident in the group’s organizational development and ideologically evolution and can be interpreted as local, regional, and global threats by applying an
adequate security model that goes beyond the defense perspective of security and considers security as a function of a regime’s institutional vulnerabilities (both internal and external).

Chapter 2 of this thesis reviews the analytical frameworks used to structure the case studies and analysis throughout the remainder of the thesis. For organizational structure, this chapter outlines two important analytical frameworks: one, Jacob Shapiro’s framework for classifying the degree to which an organization can be described as centralized or decentralized as a function of (1) the organization’s control over its members’ operations and (2) the organization’s control over the distribution of its resources (money, personnel, and expertise); and two, Shaul Mishal’s network approach to understanding internal decision making within fragmented polities as a contentious process of negotiation and bargaining. For ideological evolution, this chapter introduces Robert Benford and David Snow’s concept of ideological development as a contentious process of diagnostic framing, prognostic framing, and motivational framing. Finally, to develop a relevant threat model, this chapter introduces Mohammed Ayoob’s concept of security as a function of internal and external vulnerabilities and the implications of instability at the local, regional, and global level.

The following two chapters, Chapter 3 and Chapter 4, present a case study of Hezbollah as a group that has effectively integrated the use of violence into a broader campaign of political discourse. Chapter 3 focuses specifically on Hezbollah’s
organizational evolution from two perspectives: first, the consolidation of Hezbollah into a centralized hierarchy and its capability to initiate and maintain a coordinated campaign of armed resistance, social services, and political discourse; and second, the development of Hezbollah’s contentious internal decision making process and the implications of Hezbollah’s need to produce change through inter-organizational negotiating and bargaining. Understanding the group’s level of centralized control over operations and resources is critical to discussing its capacity to control the use of violence within political discourse. Similarly, understanding the group’s internal decision making process is critical to discussing a viable threat assessment of the group while it continues to use violence effectively as a repertoire of contention within political discourse and moves towards moderation.

Chapter 4 focuses specifically on Hezbollah’s ideological evolution within the framework of collective action frames as the process of constructing reality. To establish an ideological baseline for Hezbollah, chapter 4 deconstructs its 1985 Open Letter within the framework of the framing process to identify the central components of its diagnostic frame, its prognostic frame, and its motivational frame. It then deconstructs Hezbollah’s subsequent parliamentary election programs as well as selected interviews and organizational statements to identify how Hezbollah has refined or redefined the components of its core ideology to accommodate its use of violence and its active participation in Lebanese political system. As with understanding the group’s internal
decision making process, understanding the internal and external forces that have
enabled and constrained the group’s ideological evolution is critical to understanding the
extent of the group’s risk as it continues to use violence effectively as a repertoire of
contention within political discourse and moves towards moderation.

For consistency, each chapter considers Hezbollah’s development over two
broad timeframes: its foundation and consolidation from its 1985 Open Letter to its
acceptance of the Taif Accords and reorganization; and its expansion and
institutionalization from its 1989 acceptance of Taif Accords and reorganization to the
present. Although the goal of this thesis is a better understanding of the threat
implications of groups that use violence as a repertoire of contention within political
discourse, the analysis of organizational development and ideological evolution is not
bound by political opportunity structure. In contrast, to avoid any undue (or
unsubstantiated) assumptions on the primacy of political opportunities and constraints,
the political realities in which Hezbollah operates are only discussed within the broader
context of the competing internal and external forces that shape the contentious
processes of organizational development and ideological evolution.

The final chapter of this thesis, Chapter 5, interprets the implications of
Hezbollah’s organizational development and ideological evolution within Ayoob’s
security-stability framework to develop a relevant threat model at the local, regional,
and global level. To develop a coherent threat model for Hezbollah, this chapter
considers the case study findings from both an inductive and deductive perspective. From the inductive perspective, it follows that if Hezbollah displays certain organizational and ideological characteristics (the case study findings), and operates within a certain environment (Ayoob’s security-stability framework), then certain outcomes can be expected (the threat model). While predicatively useful, the conclusions from this process are contingent on the accuracy of the case study findings and the validity of Ayoob’s security-stability framework. To test the validity of those predictive conclusions, this chapter includes a deductive analysis of the 2006 Israeli-Hezbollah War.
CHAPTER 2
ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORKS

This chapter provides an introduction to the analytical frameworks that structure the case studies and analysis throughout the remainder of this thesis. For organizational structure, this chapter outlines two important analytical frameworks. First, Jacob Shapiro’s framework for classifying the degree to which an organization can be described as centralized or decentralized as a function of (1) the organization’s control over its members’ operations and (2) the organization’s control over the distribution of its resources (money, personnel, and expertise). Second, this chapter introduces Shaul Mishal’s network approach to understanding internal decision making within fragmented polities as a contentious process of negotiation and bargaining. For ideological evolution, this chapter introduces Robert Benford and David Snow’s concept of ideological development as a contentious process of diagnostic framing, prognostic framing, and motivational framing. Finally, to develop a relevant threat model, this chapter introduces Mohammed Ayoob’s concept of security as a function of internal and external vulnerabilities and the implications of instability at the local, regional, and global level.

Organizational Development: A Conceptual Introduction to Networks.

A Functionalist Approach to Organizational Classification

As a unit of analysis for social movement theory, the mobilizing structure for the group, can be defined structurally in terms of the mode of mobilization (e.g. formal
hierarchy, informal network, legitimate, or illegal)\(^1\) and functionally in terms of the ‘establishment of mechanisms to challenge specific government policies and respond quickly to pressing social, economic, and political developments.’\(^2\)

Jacob Shapiro posits that one of the analytical problems when dealing with the current concept of networks is the lack of conceptual clarity on what actually differentiates a hierarchical organization and a network. For example, Shapiro cites Arquilla and Rondeldt (1999) who argue that Hamas is an example of a networked organization while Mishal and Sela (2000) demonstrate that Hamas has an effective hierarchy capable of regulating the use of violence among its operational cells.\(^3\)

In an effort to provide a useful analytic framework for determining the degree to which an organization can be described as a hierarchal group or a decentralized network, Shapiro posits that the two most significant variables are (1) the organization’s control over its members’ operations and (2) the organization’s control over the distribution of its resources (money, personnel, and expertise). As a functionalist approach, Shapiro designates a hierarchical organization as \textit{centralized} and non-hierarchical organization as \textit{decentralized} (note that structurally, both organizations can be very similar “networks”) and offers the following scale:


• An organization is *centralized* when the center directly controls operations and resources.

• An organization is *de facto centralized* when either: (1) the center controls resources, delegates operations, but has a credible ability to monitor operations and withhold resources if operations are not carried out to its liking; or (2) the center controls operations, delegates resource procurement, but has a credible ability to engage in violence against factions.

• An organization is *de facto decentralized* when either: (1) the center controls resources, delegates operations, but does not have a credible ability to monitor operations; or (2) the center controls operations, delegates resource procurement, but does not have a credible ability to engage in violence against factions. In this case, control is exercised only at the whim of the factions.

• An organization is *decentralized* when the center provides only ideological guidance and cells self-fund or coordinate among themselves regarding operations and resources.\(^4\)

This conceptualization accommodates the analysis of the centralized (or hierarchical) network that can effectively use violence as one component of a broader campaign for political or social change that often includes legitimate political discourse, social service providers, commercial enterprises, and armed resistance. Thus, understanding the group’s level of centralized control over operations and resources is critical to discussing its capacity to control the use of violence within political discourse.

*A Network Approach to Internal Decision Making*

While hierarchical networks may be highly centralized in execution (e.g. they can enforce strict compliance from subordinate bodies), they often display a highly fragmented and contentious decision making process. To explain this tendency, Shaul

Mishal’s offers two conflicting models for a group’s internal decision making process: the categorical approach to analysis and the network approach to analysis.

Mishal finds that the categorical approach is inadequate for explaining the internal decision making process in complex organizations, specifically in the Middle East. The categorical approach is predicated on a Western view of conflict resolution that considers actors as discrete entities with set preferences and solutions as a finite number of opposing and static outcomes. This approach has become less relevant as traditional distinctions such as “rural” versus “urban” or “backward Islamism” versus “modernist secularism” fail to account for empirical reality or the tendency for many Muslims to reject social modernization yet embrace economic and technological modernization.5

Accordingly, Mishal offers the network approach as a more useful framework for understanding a group’s internal decision making process by considering groups as “fragmented polities” in which “the mode of an organization’s action is bargaining and negotiating rather than controlling, reinventing rather than coercing, and steering rather than rowing.”6 Further, the network approach challenges the perspective that solutions are bounded by the choice between a finite number of opposing and static outcomes; instead, the network approach argues that groups “create a political reality that is based

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6 Ibid., 572-573.
on perceptions of bounded instability, negotiated coexistence, blurred boundaries, and conflicting, competing, and overlapping preferences. ”

A significant feature of the network approach to understanding a group’s internal decision making process is that it introduces the idea of agency and reality construction at the inter-organizational level. This poses a significant analytical problem for relatively closed groups such as Hezbollah: the lack of access to adequate information to create a complete model of its internal decision making process. However, creating such a model is beyond the scope of this thesis. Understanding every linkage in a decision making event, identifying the individual preferences involved, and understanding the complex system of negotiating and bargaining that shaped the final outcome is less important than recognizing the broader system of constrains and the implications of those constraints on a group’s capacity to change in general. Understanding those constraints is critical to discussing a viable threat assessment of the group while it continues to use violence effectively as a repertoire of contention within political discourse and moves towards moderation.

**Ideological Evolution: The Framing Process.**

*C Collective Action Frames as Meaning Construction*

Within social movement theory, the verb “framing” conceptualizes the work involved in the struggle to mobilize and counter-mobilize ideas and meanings; a process which Benford and Snow define as “an active, processual phenomenon that implies

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\(^{7}\) Ibid., 573.
agency and contention at the level of reality construction.”

Significantly, framing implies agency because it involves the real work of members of the organization or movement activists, and it is contentious because “it involves the generation of interpretive frames that not only differ from existing ones but that may also challenge them.”

The result of the active and often contentious process of framing is the creation of collective action frames, which “help to render events or occurrences meaningful and thereby function to organize experience and guide action.” Collective action frames are interpretative devices that serve multiple functions: they simplify or condense shared world experiences; they mobilize existing constituencies and garner by-stander support; they often demonize and attempt to demobilize antagonists; and, they provide legitimacy for organization and action. However, unlike psychological concepts such as the “schema,” collective actions frames are more than the cognitive constructs built around individual attitudes and perceptions: collective action frames are the more deliberate worldviews engineered through an interactive and constructionist process of “negotiating shared meaning.”

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9 Ibid.

10 Ibid.

11 Ibid.
**Core Framing Tasks**

The process through which constituencies negotiate a shared understanding and develop a collective action frame to address a perceived social, cultural, economic, or political problem consists of three core frame tasks: diagnostic framing, prognostic framing, and motivational framing. Diagnostic framing involves identifying the problems and attributing blame or responsibility to the underlying causes of those problems. The attributional component of diagnostic framing is often a source of contention within social movements and social movement organizations as different perspectives emerge to explain whom or what should be blamed for a shared problem. During this process, activists within social movement organizations often engage in adversarial framing or boundary framing: the “attributional processes that seek to delineate boundaries between ‘good’ and ‘evil’ and construct movement protagonists and antagonists.”\(^{12}\)

The second core framing task, prognostic framing, articulates a proposed solution to the problems identified during the diagnostic framing process. During prognostic framing, activists within social movement organizations agree on the general strategy for confronting the adversarial other as well as the general strategy for maintaining support within and mobilizing their broader constituency. Research indicates that the strategy for confronting the adversarial other is highly dependent on the nature and scope of diagnostic framing (e.g. “the identification of specific problems

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\(^{12}\) Ibid., 616.
and causes tends to constrain the range of possible ‘reasonable’ solutions.”)\textsuperscript{13} Further, competing framing perspectives within social movement organizations, from opponents, from the broader constituency, from the media, and from third party observers all create significant constraints on the prognostic framing strategies for maintaining support within and mobilizing the broader constituencies.\textsuperscript{14} Prognostic framing is thus an interactive and adaptive process in which the social movement activists must continually redefine, expand, contract, or refocus their prognoses to maintain relevancy and influence within their constituency.

The third core framing task, motivational framing, “provides a ‘call to arms’ or rationale for engaging in ameliorative collective action, including the construction of appropriate vocabularies of motive.”\textsuperscript{15} Through motivational framing, social movement organization activists create a broader sense of agency through socially constructed vocabularies such as vocabularies of severity, urgency, efficacy, and propriety. However, motivational framing is also an interactive and adaptive process; different combinations of specific vocabularies (such as vocabularies of severity and urgency) can have unexpected and counterproductive effects (such as degrading the perception of

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., 616-617.

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., 617.
efficacy). Therefore, social movement organizations must continually adapt their motivational framing to remain relevant to and effective with their constituency.\textsuperscript{16}

\textit{Variable Features of Collective Action Frames}

Social movement theory scholars have developed multiple variable features to describe collective action frames, to observe and potentially measure changes within the frames, and to develop predicative models for social movement organizations’ development and effectiveness. Among those variable features are the closely related concepts of flexibility and rigidity, inclusivity and exclusivity, and variation in interpretive scope and influence. Flexibility and inclusivity describe how open or elastic a social movement organization is to incorporating and articulating new themes or ideas and can measured by the real number of distinct themes or ideas the social movement organization absorbs over time. Predicatively, the more inclusive and flexible a collective frame is, the more likely that frame will become broad in terms of interpretive scope and influence. When a collective action frame becomes broad enough in scope and influence to function as “a kind of master algorithm that colors and constrains the orientation and activities of other movements,” then it is referred to as a “master frame.”\textsuperscript{17} However, the evolution of a collective action frame into a master frame involves a great deal of concession and contention. Attempting to incorporate the themes and ideas from a broad constituency will inevitably dilute or distort the

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., 617-618.

\textsuperscript{17} Ibid., 618.
underlying compromises from the core constituency and risk weakening and fragmenting the organization as their original utility diminishes. As a result, there are few collective action frames that have successfully evolved into master frames (i.e. rights frames, injustice frames, environmental justice frames, and sexual terrorism frames).  

Another significant variable feature for collective action frames is resonance: “the effectiveness or mobilizing potency of proffered framings . . . attending to the question of why some framings seem to be effective or ‘resonate’ while others do not.”  

Resonance is a function of two interacting factors: (1) the credibility of the proffered frame and (2) its relative salience. Further, the credibility of the proffered frame is a function of three factors: (1) frame consistence, (2) empirical credibility, and (3) the credibility of the frame articulators or activists. Finally, the relative salience of any frame is a function of three factors: (1) its centrality (e.g. “how essential the beliefs, values, and ideas associated with the movement frames are to the lives of the targets of mobilization”), (2) its experiential commensurability (e.g. “are the framings congruent or resonant with the personal, everyday experiences of the targets . . . or are the frames too abstract or distant”), and (3) the narrative fidelity (e.g. “to what extent do they resonate with the targets’ cultural narrations”).

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18 Ibid., 619.
19 Ibid.
20 Ibid.

In his monograph *The Third World Security Predicament: State Making, Regional Conflict, and the International System*, Mohammed Ayoob challenges the relevance of the enduring concept of security within the Western discipline of international relations when applied to Third World or developing nations in the post Cold-War world. By tracing the concept of security from the Peace of Westphalia through the end of the Cold War, Ayoob asserts that the Western concept of security has three defining characteristics: one, its external orientation (e.g. “that most threats to a state’s security arise from outside its borders, and . . ., that these threats are primarily, if not exclusively, military in nature”); 21 two, its strong link to systemic security (e.g. “that various segments of the international system are interlinked to such an extent that their security and welfare depend on each other”); 22 and three, its binding ties with the security of the two major alliance blocs during the Cold War era (e.g. “the concept of alliance security [within the framework of mutual assured destruction capability] was superimposed on the concept of state security”). 23

Ayoob argues that this framework for security offers no significant explanatory power when applied to the context of Third World states. Instead, a review of conflict in Third World states indicates that: one, the greatest threat to state stability and security

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22 Ibid., 5.

23 Ibid., 6.
emanates from within its own boarders; two, global systemic security actually increases risk in Third World states by creating a low risk and low cost environment for settling disputes as proxy wars; and three, alliances do not offer security to Third World states on the periphery of the global superpowers’ core interests.\textsuperscript{24} As a result, Ayoob presents a refined definition of security more appropriate for an analysis of Third World states:

security-insecurity is defined in relation to vulnerabilities- both internal and external- that threaten or have the potential to bring down or weaken state structures, both territorial and institutional, and governing regimes.\textsuperscript{25}

To help determine the potential risk of groups that contribute to instability, Ayoob also offers a framework for understanding state vulnerabilities as a function of basic characteristics shared by Third World states:

- Lack of internal cohesion, in terms of both great economic and social disparities and major ethnic and regional fissures;
- Lack of unconditional legitimacy of state boundaries, state institutions, and governing elites;
- Easy susceptibility to internal and interstate conflicts;
- Distorted and dependent development, both economically and socially;
- Marginalization, especially in relation to the dominant international security and economic concerns;
- Easy permeability by external actors, be they more developed states, international institutions, or transnational corporations.\textsuperscript{26}

\textsuperscript{24} Ibid., 7.
\textsuperscript{25} Ibid., 9.
\textsuperscript{26} Ibid., 15.
However, the implications of groups that use violence as a repertoire of contention are not contained within the states in which they operate; the implications of local instability extend regionally and internationally. At the regional level, Ayoob posits that the two primary sources of interstate conflict and insecurity are “(1) the intermeshing of domestic insecurities with interstate antagonisms, and (2) the autonomous dynamic of regional conflict, which is often centered on the aspirations of preeminent regional powers.”27 Both of these assertions follow from the premise of reciprocal interdependence. Within the current system of states, especially within a regional dynamic of developing or less stable states, internal instability in one state can create or encourage similar instability in other states, as with irredentist movements and secessionist conflicts.28

All of these frameworks are useful in determining the potential threat of groups that use violence as a repertoire of contention within political discourse. Determining a group’s level of centralized control is the first step; it reveals the capability for a group to coordinate its efforts and use violence effectively as one component in a broader campaign of political resistance. Once a group enters political discourse, there are two interrelated sets of constraints to its moderation (e.g. its decision to abandon the use of the violence): the structural constraints of its internal decision making process and the ideological constraints to constructing a reality that excludes violence from its repertoire

27 Ibid., 47.  
28 Ibid., 47-52.
of contention. Within Mishal’s framework of the network approach to internal decision making, it becomes possible to identify the significant structural challenges to moderation, even in the absence of sufficient data to reconstruct the exact model of a group’s internal decision making process. Within Benford and Snow’s framework of ideological framing, it becomes possible to identify the significant ideological challenges to divorcing the use of violence from political discourse once a group has constructed a reality in which the use of violence is a complement to its political activities. Finally, within Ayoob’s security model, it is possible to interpret a group’s threat at the local, regional, and international level as a function of the instability it creates within the political structure in which it operates.
CHAPTER 3
HEZBOLLAH’S ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The following chapter considers Hezbollah’s organizational development from two perspectives. First, it outlines Hezbollah’s evolution into a centralized hierarchy as it consolidated control over the operations and resources of multiple disparate organizations and its own network of diverse activities overtime. Functionally, this centralized control was a prerequisite for Hezbollah to initiate and maintain a coordinated campaign of armed resistance, social services, and political discourse. Second, this chapter outlines the development of Hezbollah’s internal decision making process and the implications of Hezbollah’s need to produce change through inter-organizational negotiating and bargaining. Both structurally and functionally, Hezbollah’s need to maintain centralized control and structural coherence constrained its potential for radical change and necessitated an accommodation between the religious-revolutionary approach to resistance and the secular-reformist approach to resistance.

Evolution into a Centralized Hierarchy.

Hezbollah is a diverse organization; it is simultaneously a vast social services provider,¹ a recognized political party with elected representation in the Lebanese

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National Assembly\textsuperscript{2}, an illegally armed militia\textsuperscript{3}, and a terrorist organization implicated in a variety of criminal enterprises around the world.\textsuperscript{4} However, a review of Hezbollah’s organizational development and current structure indicates that functionally it has consolidated centralized control over its operations and resources overtime. While Hezbollah does rely on a global “network” of cells active throughout Europe, the Middle East, South America, and South East Asia “to raise money, prepare the logistic infrastructure for attacks, disseminate propaganda, and otherwise ensure that the organization remains robust and ready to strike,”\textsuperscript{5} those cells cannot allocate resources or plan and execute operations autonomously.

Hezbollah emerged as a Shi’a communal defense organization within the context of Lebanese social and political instability, within the context of a regional rise of Shiite political activism, and as direct response to Israel’s invasion of southern Lebanon in 1982. Throughout the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, large numbers of Shiite men and women, “whose ethos emphasized its exploitation and dispossession by the ruling

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{2} CIA Factbook, “Lebanon,” available on-line at \url{https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/le.html}.
\item \textsuperscript{5} Daniel Byman, “Should Hezbollah Be Next?” \textit{Foreign Affairs}, Vol. 82, Number 6, (November/December 2006), 58.
\end{itemize}
elite," first became involved in secular opposition parties (commonly communist
parties such as the Lebanese Communist Party, the Organization for Communist Labor
Action, and Arab Socialist Ba’th Party) which condemned the tribal, religious, or ethnic
bases of discrimination that had come to dominate Lebanese politics. After the 1960s,
Shiite political mobilization galvanized around four dominate themes- secularism,
liberation, Islamism, and reformism. At the same time, the impending Lebanese Civil
War and armed Palestinian presence created the political and economic opportunity
structure in which many young Shiite became involved as soldiers in one of many fida’i,
or guerrilla fighter organizations.7

Israel’s invasion of southern Lebanon in 1982 served as the trigger to mobilize
the population of politically active, disenfranchised, and militant Shiite into Hezbollah,
an organization that took both inspiration and direction from the Shiite Revolution in
Iran in 1978-1979.8 Hezbollah stated its original purpose and objectives in a 1985 Open
Letter to the Downtrodden in Lebanon and the World: “first, to rid the Lebanese
territory of foreign aggression, namely Israel, and US and France, and second, it had as
its ultimate goal the creation of an Islamic Republic in Lebanon, thus negating the

2007), 15.

7 Ibid., 15-16.

19.
Lebanese confessional system.”\textsuperscript{9} Hezbollah’s organizational development since its Open Letter can be broadly defined within two phases: pre-1989 reorganization, and post-1989 reorganization.

\textit{Organization: Pre-1989.} Prior to Hezbollah’s 1989 reorganization, Hezbollah was well known, especially in the U.S., for its extensive use of terrorist tactics such as the 1983 suicide bombing of the U.S. Marine Barracks in Beirut that killed 241 Americans and the 1985 skyjacking of TWA flight 847 during which a U.S. sailor on leave was beaten and shot in the head. However, the extent of Hezbollah’s core leadership’s involvement in many of the terrorist attacks during that time remains unclear. In fact, August Richard Norton argues that during that time, Hezbollah’s external security organization operated autonomously of the party and was more closely aligned operationally to Iranian intelligence.\textsuperscript{10}

Further, tracing Hezbollah’s development through the stages of organizational development (foundation, consolidation, expansion, institutionalization, and seizing the reigns) indicates that during its consolidation phase, Hezbollah served primarily as an organizational umbrella in which “extremist groups with affinity to Islam operated independently or in direct activation of radical elements in the Iranian leadership,” but


\textsuperscript{10} Norton, \textit{Hezbollah}, 75-78.
lacked institutional control over the activities of the movement.\footnote{Eitan Azani, \textit{Hezbollah: The Story of the Party of God, From Revolution to Institutionalization} (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009), 73} As a consolidating movement, Hezbollah served as organizational framework for multiple pro-Iranian groups, including:

1. \textit{The Ulema}: This group comprised the leadership backbone of the movement in the 1980s and 1990s. It included the graduates of the seminaries in Najaf and Qom, who headed institutions and religious seminaries in Lebanon. Some belonged to the Lebanese Dawah movement and operated as an opposition group with the Amal movement. Among the notable members of this group were Subhi al-Tufayli, Abbas al-Musawi, and Sheik Mohammed Yazbek.

2. \textit{The Amal Al-Islami movement}: The Amal Al-Islami movement was an important and essential component of Hezbollah. It was founded in the summer of 1982 by Hussein al-Musawi, the deputy of Berri, who left with followers and took control of some of the Amal handholds in the Beqaa region. The movement adopted the pro-Iranian line and received support and funding for its military and militia activity.

3. \textit{The members of the “Kabadiat” arm}: The Lebanese system, including the Shiite community, was teeming with thugs—veterans of the battles between the rival militias in Beirut and other places in Lebanon. With the crushing of the Sunni-Palestinian militia, the Shiite groups, and the individuals working within it, were expelled into the Lebanese “job market.” Those who were unsuccessful, for various reasons, in joining the Amal movement, lent their services to the new movement.

4. \textit{Dawlat Hezbollah Libnan}: It constituted one of the central pillars of the Hezbollah movement. The spiritual leader of this group was Fadlallah.

5. \textit{Al Iitihad Al Libnani Llulaba Al Muslimin}: The Lebanese Muslim Student Organization, which had an intimate affinity to the
Lebanese Dawah party and, similarly, regarded Fadlallah as its spiritual leader, joined the movement with the consent of Fadlallah.

6. Tajamu Al Ulama Al Muslimin Fee Lubnan: The creation of the this organization was inspired by the Iranian revolution, constituting both Shiite and Sunni Ulema, working toward the advancement of the Islamic revolution in Lebanon, from the vision of combining the two trends. This organization was supported by the Iranians and later merged with the Hezbollah movement.

7. Tajamu Al Ulama Fee Jabel Amel: This group included clerics who operation in Jabl Amel, and some of its members belonged to the Amal movement. Their common denominator was their clear affinity to Iran. This group controlled and influenced a network of community and educational institutions in southern Lebanon, including mosques, schools, religious seminaries, and charitable organizations. . . .

During this early period of development, Hezbollah could best be described functionally as _de facto centralized_, arguably on the fringes of _de facto decentralized_ depending on its external security organization’s true level of autonomy in conducting operations and its reliance on Iran for resources independent of the Hezbollah’s core leadership.

_Organization: Post-1989_. However, Hezbollah’s decision to accept the 1989 Taif Accords and participate in the 1992 parliamentary elections marked a period of transition. Hezbollah reorganized in 1989, officially splitting into two organizational structures, a political wing governed by a 15-member Politburo (the _Majilis al-Shura_) and a military wing (the Islamic Resistance). While the Islamic Resistance was thought

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12 Ibid., 61-62.
to be largely controlled by the regional commanders, Nasrallah reinforced Hezbollah’s centralized control over its military wing during a Lebanese television interview after the 2006 Israel-Hezbollah War when he stated that: “If any of us [on the fifteen-member political-military council] had a 1 percent concern that Israel was going to reply in this savage manner we would not have captured those soldiers.”

**Political Organization.** Since its initial decision to participate in the 1992 elections, Hezbollah has consolidated considerable political capital within Lebanon’s confessional system that distributes governmental posts among religious sects through compulsory coalition building. Largely under the direction of the party’s deputy-head, Sheik Naim Qassem, Hezbollah had eight members elected into the Lebanese Parliament in 1992. Hezbollah continued to build political alliances within Lebanon and to participate in the parliamentary elections throughout the 1990s, however after Hariri’s assassination and the subsequent withdrawal of Syrian troops from Lebanon in 2005, Hezbollah became more deeply involved in Lebanon’s domestic political process. As part of the Shiite Bloc (a Hezbollah-Amal Alliance that won 33 total seats), Hezbollah won fourteen seats in the parliament and two Hezbollah members joined the Cabinet.

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15. Staten, “From Terrorism to Legitimacy,” 40-41.

after the 2005 elections (arguably to offset the loss of the Syrian presence which had prevented the Cabinet from acting against Hezbollah).  

_Hezbollah also embraced Fadlallah’s concept of the *dawlat al-insan*, or the “human state,” as a means to provide Shiite communal social services through private associations._ In the early 1980s, Hezbollah quickly became an umbrella organization absorbing existing Shiite social groups in southern Lebanon such as the former Amal group led by Hussein al-Musawi, the Lebanese Da’wa Party (led by Fadlallah), the Association of Muslim Ulema in Lebanon, and the Association of Muslim Students.

Currently, Hezbollah owns and operates multiple construction companies, at least four hospitals, twelve clinics, twelve schools, two agricultural centers that provide training and technical assistance to farmers, and provides about 750 small loans per month as part of micro-finance initiatives. As a result, Hezbollah quickly took the lead in the post-2006 Israeli-Hezbollah War reconstruction efforts. Within days of the end of the armed conflict with Israel, Hezbollah soldiers transitioned to reconstruction efforts.

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18 Norton, _Hezbollah_, 107.

19 Staten, “From Terrorism to Legitimacy,” 38.


activities providing immediate relief to southern Lebanon. For example, Hezbollah paid as many as fifteen thousand homeless families $10,000 to $12,000 grants to compensate for their lost homes, leveraged their affiliated architects, engineers, and construction companies to plan the construction of new homes, provided free medicine through their network of hospitals and clinics, and distributed an estimated twenty-five thousand free meals daily in the weeks following the ceasefire.22

As a result of Hezbollah’s immense budget and its ability to deliver aid outside of the political turmoil that constrained the Lebanese government:

Hezbollah’s leader Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah acquired a folk-hero status as his organization was widely hailed both for its military prowess in the conflict with Israel and for its perceived ability to initiate disaster relief projects far more quickly and efficiently than the regular governmental organizations.23

*Military Organization.* As previously mentioned, Hezbollah is well known, especially in the U.S., for its extensive use of terrorist tactics during the 1980s and early 1990s. Prior to the al-Qaeda terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, Hezbollah was responsible for killing more Americans than any other terrorist organization (it remains second only to al-Qaeda). Prominent examples of Hezbollah’s use of terrorist tactics include: the 1983 suicide bombing of the U.S. Marine Barracks in Beirut that killed 241

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Americans, the 1985 skyjacking of TWA flight 847 during which a U.S. sailor on leave was beaten and shot in the head, the 1992 bombing of the Israeli Embassy in Buenos Aires that killed 29, and the 1994 suicide bombing of the Buenos Aires-based Israeli association that killed 85.  

However, since its reorganization in 1989, Hezbollah has developed an increasingly professional and capable military wing, the Islamic Resistance or *Al-Muqawama al-Islamiyya*. Israel’s withdraw from southern Lebanon in 2000 (except for the disputed Shi’ba Farms area) gave Hezbollah widespread popular support in southern Lebanon, thus providing complete freedom of movement and political protection from any Lebanese or international efforts to disarm, demobilize, or reintegrate (DDR) Hezbollah. As a result:

In the six years since the Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon, Hezbollah devoted considerable efforts to constructing an extensive defensive infrastructure, providing substantial training to its personnel, establishing distributed stockpiles of supplies throughout the area, and preparing operational plans. All of these activities are reported to have received a very high level of support from Iran in the form of funds, equipment, and personnel.  

Hezbollah’s military performance during the 2006 Israeli-Hezbollah War demonstrates the extent of its military capability. In a September 2006 Congressional

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24 Norton, *Hezbollah*, 75-78.

25 Staten, “From Terrorism to Legitimacy,” 38.

Research Service (CRS) Report, Jeremy Sharp, the Coordinator for Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Trade Division, outlines a number of factors that contributed to Hezbollah’s ability to successfully defend attacks from the larger and arguably better trained and equipped IDF forces:

• Perhaps the most significant factor in Hezbollah’s ability to withstand the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) is [the] extensive network of fortified sites and underground facilities. These provided protection for both personnel and equipment against repeated Israeli air attacks, forcing the IDF to move to ground operations.

• Fighting from prepared positions and very well equipped with a range of modern weaponry that included antitank and anti-ship missiles, night vision equipment, and computer assisted targeting, relatively small Hezbollah units were able to maintain stiffer resistance than expected.

• Hezbollah’s stockpiled supplies and local support significantly mitigated the Israeli interdiction efforts. Though isolated by the IDF air and ground offensive, Hezbollah units were often sufficiently provisioned to continue fighting without immediate need for re-supply.

• Close familiarity with their area of operations, widespread support among the population, and effective communication networks enhanced Hezbollah’s ability to slow Israeli advances, often conducting ambushes and rapidly withdrawing in classic guerrilla style warfare.

• An estimated 4,000-5,000 rockets were fired; however, this represents only a third of Hezbollah’s estimated rocket/missile arsenal. The rockets/missiles supplied to Hezbollah by both Iran and Syria carried a variety of conventional warheads and had ranges of up to 120 miles. Though most are of relatively low
accuracy by modern standards, they remain effective terror weapons against urban populations.\textsuperscript{27}

Additionally, Hezbollah’s military operational headquarters reportedly includes top-ranking officers of Iran’s Islamic Revolution Guard who provide critical logistic support and coordinate training in mobile training sites in Lebanon for Hezbollah fighters and advanced training in the Islamic revolutionary training camps in Iran for Hezbollah’s elite commando forces.\textsuperscript{28}

Thus, Hezbollah’s development since its 1989 reorganization has been characterized by a coordinated campaign of extensive political involvement, vast social service activities to consolidate political capital, and an evolution from “terrorism” to “guerrilla warfare tactics” specifically targeting IDF military outposts in southern Lebanon to a professional military wing that resembles a legitimate army more than a guerrilla insurgent force or terrorist network.\textsuperscript{29} After Israel’s withdraw from Lebanon in 2000 and Hezbollah’s relative success in the 2006 Israeli-Hezbollah War, Hezbollah recognized the opportunity to take a primary role rebuilding the country politically and economically. Accordingly, Hezbollah has developed functionally into a centralized hierarchy in which the Majilis al-Shura (the Shura Council) headed by its Secretary

\textsuperscript{27} Sharp, “Lebanon,” 10.

\textsuperscript{28} Nizar A. Hamzeh, \textit{In the Path of Hizbullah} (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2004), 71.

\textsuperscript{29} Staten, “From Terrorism to Legitimacy,” 37-43.
General, Nasrallah, maintains direct control over its structurally “networked”
organization.

The Contentious Internal Decision Making Process.

The preceding discussion on Hezbollah’s evolution into a centralized hierarchy
demonstrates that as a movement, Hezbollah institutionalized control over its diverse
organization to pursue a coordinated campaign on three levels: the ideological-religious
level (e.g. “with the aim of mobilizing society and incorporating into it motifs such as
religious activism, resolve, and willingness for personal sacrifice for the sake of the
whole”);30 the social level (e.g. “with the aim of abolishing ethnic discrimination and
social injustice and improving the living conditions of the Shiite population”);31 and the
military level (e.g. “with the aim of bringing about the expulsion of all foreigners from
Lebanon”).32 Structurally, this centralized control made it possible for Hezbollah to
enter political discourse in Lebanon as a legitimate political party. However, applying
Mishal’s network approach offers insight into contentious internal process of
negotiation and bargaining that allowed it to accommodate its absolute position of
conflict no matter what the cost to the pragmatic posture necessary for political survival
and access to resources.33

31 Ibid.
32 Ibid.
33 Shaul Mishal, “The Pragmatic Dimension of Palestinian Hamas: A Network Perspective”
_Armed Forces & Society_, Vol. 29, No. 4, Summer 2003, 574.
Identifying the specific internal mechanisms that govern decision making in groups such as Hezbollah is difficult for a number of reasons. The first challenge is collecting sufficient data to recreate the decision making process. In contrast to extremely covert organizations such as al-Qaeda, Hezbollah must operate as an apparently transparent hierarchical organization to claim credit for and capitalize on its military and social activities and to adequately translate those activities into political capital useful in political discourse. Therefore, its structure must somewhat replicate the structure of traditional political parties in which party leadership can demonstrate consistent guidance, control, and thus political utility.

However, the requirement to create an external image of consistency also compels Hezbollah to limit access to internal fragmentation, negotiation, and bargaining. When al-Musawi was elected to replace Al Tufieli as the Secretary General of Hezbollah just prior to the 1992 elections, al-Musawi stressed that the elections were a routine administrative action that did not indicate change within the movement: a “declaration [that] filled his need to create a sense of continuity between the present, past, and the future.” Similarly, when Nasrallah was elected Secretary General after al-Musawi’s assassination in 1992, Nasrallah immediately stressed that al-Musawi’s policies as secretary general did not reflect al-Musawi’s personal preferences, but the collected, consistent, and unified perspective of the movement’s leadership, specifically the Shura Council. Accordingly, Nasrallah publicly assured Hezbollah as an

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organization and its broader constituency that “I will adopt the line adopted by al-Musawi and I will work in accordance with the line that the Hezbollah has always followed.”\textsuperscript{35} Thus, Hezbollah’s need to present itself as a functioning and consistent entity at the political level compels it to actively conceal the contentious nature of its internal decision making process, limiting adequate access to the data required to reconstruct its internal decision making process.

The second challenge to identifying the specific internal decision making process within Hezbollah is interpreting the data that is available. Applying the network analysis approach to organizations such as Hezbollah suggests that “to understand these networks we just need to ‘connect the dots’ and then isolate the key actors who are often defined in terms of their ‘centrality’ in the network.”\textsuperscript{36} However, even in relatively transparent groups such as Hezbollah, the information available to conduct pattern matching is often incomplete, inaccurate, out-of-date, and intentionally misleading. Further, it is difficult to account for dynamic characteristic of the network itself which causes variations in the model temporally as the actual group dynamic changes overtime and structurally as the model of the group dynamic changes to accommodate an expanding or contracting sample of the network.\textsuperscript{37}

\textsuperscript{35} Ibid., 92.


\textsuperscript{37} Ibid.
Acknowledging the constraints to developing an accurate model of Hezbollah’s internal decision making process, applying Mishal’s network perspective to Hezbollah’s decision making process overtime is still useful in determining the structural resistance to moderation as Hezbollah effectively integrates the use of violence and legitimate discourse into its broader campaign of resistance. For consistency, the following discussion adopts a similar format to the discussion of Hezbollah’s organizational development to identify structurally relevant inter-organizational actors during Hezbollah’s pre-1989 foundation and consolidation and Hezbollah’s post-1989 reorganization and expansion.

**Internal Structure: Pre-1989.** Prior to its 1989 reorganization, Hezbollah served as an organizational framework for focusing multiple disparate groups with overlapping objectives and policies within the framework of the weakness of the Lebanese government, the social and economic turmoil of the civil war, and enduring presence of Israeli troops in Lebanon. During this period, the vertical leadership structure of Hezbollah was still developing and its success as a movement was primarily dependant on its capacity to build horizontal coalitions and increase popular support within the Shiite community. The most significant example of this phenomenon was Hezbollah’s struggle with Amal, the most influential Shiite group in Lebanon at the time.38

To a large degree it was the internal fracturing of the Amal organization in the early 1980s that facilitated Hezbollah’s foundation and consolidation. In the early

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1980s, Amal faced a challenge similar to the challenge Hezbollah would face in the early 1990s: the challenge of maintaining organizational coherence while negotiating a compromise between a religious revolutionary approach to resistance and a secular reformist approach to resistance. This had two significant implications for Amal. First, Amal’s leader, Berri, chose the more secular approach, deciding to cease active resistance against Israel’s advances and to join the “national salvation”39 government as a minister in the Lebanese national unity government in 1984. This decision alienated large portions of the Shiite community by relegating Berri, and the Amal movement, to a part of the dysfunctional Lebanese system that could no longer advance the community goals in a meaningful way.40

The second implication of Amal’s internal struggle between religious revolution and secular reform was the dissatisfaction of prominent Islamist leaders within the organization. As a result, al-Musawi, an Amal co-founder, and Nasrallah left Amal in 1984 and joined the movement taking shape in the Bekaa that would later crystallize into Hezbollah.41 After Hezbollah’s formal foundation (i.e. Hezbollah’s 1985 Open Letter), assimilating dissatisfied Amal defectors would continue to play a significant role in Hezbollah’s organizational consolidating and expansion. Another significant


40 Azani, Hezbollah: The Story of the Party of God, 63-64.

41 Noe, Voice of Hezbollah, 5.
example of this was Mustafa Dirani’s defection from Amal to Hezbollah. Dirani was the commander of Amal’s security apparatus and terrorist acts wing, the “faithful resistance.” Hezbollah’s capacity to absorb Dirani and his loyal followers was instrumental in Hezbollah’s expanding control over southern Beirut in 1986.\textsuperscript{42}

However, Amal remained a significant player in the Shiite community and Lebanon and Hezbollah’s most power rival, predicking the outbreak of real war between Hezbollah and Amal between 1988 and 1990. The Hezbollah-Amal war consisted of three periods of brutal violence: April 1988 to May 1988, concluding with a cease fire between Hezbollah and Amal; January 1989, concluding with the first Damascus Agreement; and March 1990 to September 1990, concluding with the second Damascus Agreement, which was brokered and signed under pressure from Iran and Syria. Interestingly, the second Damascus Agreement coincided with the Taif Accords and the Lebanese efforts to disarm Lebanese militias. Berri saw this as an opportunity to restore Amal’s status through full integration into the emerging Lebanese political system and Lebanese army and immediately ordered his commanders to disarm the Amal militia. However, Hezbollah maintained that its militant wing was not a Lebanese militia, but a resistance force whose weapons were used solely against Israeli occupation.\textsuperscript{43} Hezbollah’s deliberate political campaign and public relations efforts resulted in the Lebanese government recognizing its military wing, the Islamic

\textsuperscript{42} Azani, \textit{Hezbollah: The Story of the Party of God}, 64.

\textsuperscript{43} Ibid., 76-82.
Resistance, as a resistance movement instead of a militia and granting it a notable exception to the requirement to disarm under guidelines of the Taif Accords. The organizational significance and implications of Hezbollah’s efforts to accommodate its commitment to armed resistance with its participation in the Lebanese political system is discussed in more detail in the following section addressing Hezbollah’s internal decision making structure in its post-1989 reorganization period of development.

**Internal Structure: Post-1989.** As previously discussed, Hezbollah’s decision to accept or reject the 1989 Taif Accords and participate in the 1992 parliamentary elections marked a period of transition and organizational risk. Hezbollah’s secretary general at the time, Al-Tufeili, opposed participation in the Lebanese confessional-based political system as a contradiction to the principal’s of the 1985 Open Letter. However, al-Musawi and Nasrallah encouraged a more pragmatic approach believing that a presence in parliament would strengthen Hezbollah’s resistance through access to the political and economic mechanisms that directly affected the daily lives of its Lebanese constituency. There are indications of a deeper personal conflict between Al-Tufeili and Nasrallah, such as when Nasrallah left Lebanon in 1989 to continue his religious studies in Iran because he reportedly decided that “he could no longer work under Al-Tufeili.” However, their disagreement over Hezbollah’s participation in the Lebanese elections

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also represents a broader struggle within the organization: the struggle between ideological purity and pragmatism or, to put it in other terms, a struggle between a religious revolutionary approach and a secular reformist approach.46

Nasrallah had planned to spend five years completing his religious studies in Qom; however, he was persuaded to return to the Beirut and resume his duties within Hezbollah within a few months.47 This combined with Hezbollah’s decisions to replace Al Tufeili with al-Musawi as the secretary general at the movement’s second organizational conference in May 199148 demonstrates the movement’s trend toward the more pragmatic approach of accommodating political participation within its broader campaign of resistance.

Structurally, Hezbollah formed a twelve man committee, the seven-member Shura Council and five of Hezbollah’s leading cadre, to contain the inter-organizational debate, assess the issues, and make a recommendation concerning Hezbollah’s participation in the parliamentary elections. According to Naim Qassem, the committee focused on answering four fundamental questions:

1. The key question dealt with the legitimacy of participating in a parliament that is part and parcel of a political-sectarian system that does not reflect [Hezbollah’s] vision towards the best regime.

46 Azani, Hezbollah: The Story of the Party of God, 75.
47 Noe, Voice of Hezbollah, 7.
2. Supposing the issue of legitimacy is solved, does participation mean an implicit recognition of the reality of the political system, a recognition that might ultimately lead [Hezbollah] to defend the system and adopt it, forgoing its Islamic vision?

3. Are there clear and certain interests, which outweigh the vices?

4. Does participation lead to an adjustment in [Hezbollah’s] priorities, to the extent that giving up the Islamic Resistance for the sake of integration in the domestic Lebanese political game?49

The committee’s framing of the questions and its subsequent findings are significant from two perspectives: one, as a demonstration of pragmatic cost-benefit analysis within the existing political opportunity structure; and two, as a demonstration of inter-organizational negotiation and bargaining within Hezbollah as a fragmented polity. After objectively discussing the advantages and disadvantages of political participation, the committee cited a list of rational and pragmatic reasons that supported Hezbollah’s participation in parliament. The advantages included access to parliament as a political forum to further the cause of the resistance, the ability to draft legislation that directly impacted Hezbollah’s constituency, access to and the ability to influence all other draft legislation, a measure of legitimacy for Hezbollah as a resistance movement that reflected popular representation, and the ability to keep its Islamic vision at the center of national debate. The committee also articulated significant disadvantages such as the fact that the confessional Lebanese system restricted the number of candidates thus preventing a true numerical representation of popular support, the potential for the

49 Alagha, The Shifts in Hizbullah’s Ideology, 152.
Lebanese parliament to enact laws that contradict shari’a law in spite of Hezbollah opposition, and the difficulty for Hezbollah to ensure the delivery of campaign promises while working within the Lebanese political system. The committee’s final assessment maintained that from a cost-benefit perspective, the advantages outweighed the disadvantages and Hezbollah should participate in the 1992 parliamentary election.\footnote{Ibid., 152-155.}

However, the committee’s consideration of the religious legitimacy of political participation and the implications of political participation on Hezbollah’s priorities and future as a resistance organization also demonstrates Hezbollah’s need to maintain inter-organizational coherence through bargaining and negotiating rather than controlling. As evident during Hezbollah’s formation and consolidation, specifically Hezbollah’s struggle with Amal, Hezbollah’s success as a movement was predicated on its commitment to Islamic values and its utility as an armed resistance. Compromising either of these positions risked losing the support of significant blocks within Hezbollah and splintering the organization.

To address the religious legitimacy of political participation, Hezbollah requested a formal legal opinion from Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the Supreme Leader of Iran. In May 1992, Khamenei issued a fatwa supporting Hezbollah’s political participation, thus providing Nasrallah with the religious legitimacy and moral justifications necessary to claim that Hezbollah could remain true to its ideological
vision while reinforcing its resistance activities through political participation.\textsuperscript{51}

Although the decision to participate in the elections did alienate some of the “revolution-oriented clerics in the leadership,”\textsuperscript{52} the religious stamp of approval from Khamenei prevented systemic dissention and internal splintering by successfully negotiating a compromise between Hezbollah’s Islamic ideology and its pragmatic participation in the secular Lebanese government.

To address Hezbollah’s continued utility as an armed resistance movement, Hezbollah developed a clear line of propaganda stressing its continued commitment to armed resistance and emphasizing that political participation was only one part its broader struggle. For example, in an August 1992 interview, Nasrallah stated that:

From time immemorial the Hezbollah has fought to defend the land and liberty of Lebanon. However, we do not intend to waiver in our resistance or to adopt a defeatist attitude. The Hezbollah also does not intend to sink into the swamp of petty haggling that is the Lebanese political system or to abandon shaping awareness of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The Islamic resistance will continue to make a sacrifice for Lebanon.\textsuperscript{53}

Hezbollah’s deputy secretary general, Qassam, reinforced this sentiment on the eve of the 1992 elections by declaring that:

Participating in the parliament will not bring about a change in the principles that we exalt and we will continue to fight for . . . our struggle in the parliament will be conducted at the same time as the


\textsuperscript{52} Staten, “From Terrorism to Legitimacy,” 40.

I want to emphasize that our participation in the elections will not cause us to give up our principles and there is no reason for fear on that front.\(^{54}\)

Additionally, one of the Hezbollah candidates elected to parliament, Fneich, emphasized the mutually supporting relationship between Hezbollah’s political participation and continued resistance by stating that:

> Our entrance to parliament is one of the types of resistance on the political level. That is because it is natural that the resistance fighters have a political base to back them up. And that is because the armed resistance needs assistance in the political arena. . . . Our entrance to parliament will be a source of assistance to the armed resistance to the occupation.\(^{55}\)

As with Khamenei’s fatwa and Hezbollah’s emphasis on the religious justification for political participation, Hezbollah’s deliberate propaganda campaign to reinforce its commitment to armed resistance and its use of political participation as one mode of contention was deliberately targeted at multiple audiences. As a broader movement and as a political party, Hezbollah simultaneously spoke to its constituency of supporters, its opponents, the media, passive bystanders, and the international community. However, within Mishal’s framework of internal decision making as a process of bargaining and compromise, the statements of Hezbollah’s leadership also demonstrate its need to speak to itself and maintain structural integrity as an organization. Successfully negotiating a compromise between its religious-revolutionary

\(^{54}\) Ibid.

\(^{55}\) Ibid.
tradition and its integration into the Lebanese secular political system was essential for Hezbollah to prevent the internal fracturing and disintegration that plagued Amal in the early 1980s.

Conclusion.

Hezbollah’s organizational development demonstrates two mutually dependant but antithetical structural dynamics that govern the capacity of a group that uses violence as a repertoire of contention to enter political discourse and potentially moderate while maintaining internal coherence. The first structural dynamic is the requirement for a group to consolidate centralized control over its operations and resources. During a group’s foundation and consolidation phase of development, centralized control is often more dependant on establishing horizontal relationships between existing groups and building a coalition within an organizational framework than strict control through a vertical command structure. Hezbollah was successful at this during the early and mid-1980s as it co-opted multiple Islamic and militant groups and successfully assimilated dissatisfied factions of its primary rival, Amal.

However, to function as a political party, Hezbollah had to demonstrate consistency, continuity, and utility as a singular entity. As a result, it reorganized in 1989 and established a formal command structure that delineated its political wing from its military wing and established the primacy of the Shura Council. Structurally, this allowed Hezbollah to participate in legitimate political discourse while accumulating
political capital through a coordinated campaign of armed resistance against Israel and providing social services to the Shiite community in Lebanon.

While centralized control is a prerequisite for political participation and potential moderation, the necessity to maintain centralized control also presents a significant structural constraint: the second structural dynamic is the requirement for a group such as Hezbollah to maintain structural coherence through internal negotiation and bargaining. Structurally, organizations such as Hezbollah cannot accommodate radical changes without risking internal dissention and potential organizational fracturing, as with Amal in the early 1980s. Hezbollah was able to integrate political discourse into its broader campaign of resistance while maintaining structural coherence by containing the debate within a twelve man committee composed of the seven man Shura Council and five of Hezbollah’s leading cadre and by demonstrating that participation in the Lebanese political system was consistent with its Islamic ideology and its continued armed struggle against Israeli occupation.

Thus, Hezbollah’s organization development offers the first component in understanding the constraints to moderation and inherent risks of a group that uses violence as a repertoire of contention within legitimate political discourse. Structurally, Hezbollah had to consolidate centralized control of its operations and resources to effectively control a campaign of organized violence and political discourse. However, maintaining that control necessitates an internal process of bargaining and negotiation to ensure structural coherence. Once Hezbollah negotiated a reality in which political
discourse and the use of violence can coexist as mutually supporting efforts, separating the two activities and giving up either (the use of violence in the case of moderation) becomes even more challenging and presents a greater risk for structural disintegration. The following chapter addresses the second component in understanding the constraints to moderation and inherent risks of a group that uses violence as a repertoire of contention within legitimate political discourse: the actual process and content involved in negotiating the shared reality within the framework of evolving diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational frames.
CHAPTER 4
HEZBOLLAH’S IDEOLOGICAL EVOLUTION

As an Islamic resistance movement, Hezbollah’s formation and ideological evolution was significantly influenced by the historic political and social oppression of the Shiite Muslims, the Iranian Shiite Revolution, and its primary rival in Lebanon, Amal. Iran’s ideological influence over Hezbollah dates back to at least 1978, when Sayyid ‘Abbas al-Musawi moved from Najaf to Lebanon and became active in spreading the emerging social movement of Islamic Revolution among the Lebanese Shiite community with other Iranian clergy, including Hassan Nasrallah.\(^1\) In the early 1980s, Al-Musawi and Nasrallah were prominent members of the Shiite militant group Amal. However, in 1984, Amal’s leader, Berri, chose the more secular approach for Amal, deciding to cease active resistance against Israel’s advances and to serve as a minister in the Lebanese national unity government.\(^2\) This decision alienated large portions of the Shiite community and compelled al-Musawi and Nasrallah to defect from Amal and join the growing religious-revolutionary movement in the Bekaa that would later crystallize into Hezbollah.\(^3\)

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Thus, within the framework of a weak Lebanese government, the social and economic turmoil of the civil war, and the enduring presence of Israeli troops in Lebanon, Hezbollah’s early identify as a resistance movement developed largely as an Islamic revolutionary counter-frame to Amal’s secular reformist movement. During Hezbollah’s early formative years, an initial comparison between Hezbollah and Amal reveals significant ideological and political differences that would shape Hezbollah’s subsequent organizational development and ideological evolution:

1. **The status of the movement:** At the time of the foundation and crystallizing of Hezbollah, Amal was already a secular social protest movement in the state of institutionalization. Its power and influence on the community peaked in early 1984. Hezbollah was a new movement in the stage of foundation within a rising trend, which invested in the widening of its popular base.

2. **The ideological aspect:** The ideological framework of Hezbollah was religious and pan-Islamic, regarding Khomeini and his successors as the source of authority. It aimed at the establishment of an Islamic regime in Lebanon. As such it considered the Lebanese government as illegitimate and worked toward its overthrow in a revolutionary act. In contrast, Amal defined itself as a secular, national Lebanese movement, striving to reform the existing political system with the aim of abolishing ethnic discrimination and advancing the community’s interests.

3. **The source of support:** Iran was Hezbollah’s patron. It provided inspiration, funding, training, weapons, from a generous close accompaniment in the initial years of the movement. In return, Hezbollah took a clear pro-Iranian stance, compatible with the positions of its benefactor. In contrast, Amal leaned on Syria, from which it won reserved support according to the Syrian interests in the Lebanese system. This support was expressed by guarding the movement’s status within the Lebanese system.
4. **The goals:** Hezbollah defined three main goals, which were derived from its political and ideological platform: first, the expulsion of all foreigners from Lebanon; second, the liberation of Jerusalem; and third, the establishment of an Islamic regime in Lebanon. These goals committed the movement to confront three very powerful elements in significantly inferior conditions, even if in front of each one separately: the foreign forces in Lebanon, the Lebanese government, and Israel. The achievement of its goals necessitated actions outside the borders of Lebanon. Amal, in contrast, was opposed to the overthrow of the Lebanese government and worked from inside the borders of the political system. It supported the goal of removing foreigners from Lebanon, but not in a sweeping manner and not with Hezbollah’s methods. In addition, it was not interested in the ideological goal of liberating Jerusalem and in action outside the borders of Lebanon.

5. **The target audience:** The two movements competed for the same target audience, the Shiite community. Hezbollah was engaged in seeking the part to all strata in the Shiite society. The fact that it was outside the establishment assisted it in offering numerous groups in the community an alternative to the path of Amal and provided them the springboard they were seeking for the improvement of their condition. The existence of Hezbollah as a movement in the first few years was conditional on its abilities to develop as a popular movement. This task was not easy at all. Hezbollah was forced to compete with Amal, which experienced in that period (1982-1985) a significant surge in its power within the community and, at the same time, in the intra-Lebanese system.⁴

The following sections of this chapter trace Hezbollah’s ideological evolution by analyzing selected source documents within the social movement theory framework of the framing process as meaning construction. Many of the Hezbollah texts used in this analysis were translated and reproduced in their entirety by Joseph E. Alagha in his book, *The Shifts in Hizbullah’s Ideology: Religious Ideology, Political Ideology, and...

Accordingly, excerpts from those primary sources are referenced with his name and the corresponding page number within his book, not the author or page number of the original document. However, unless otherwise noted in this chapter, the interpretation of those texts and the subsequent implications to Hezbollah’s ideological evolution represent an independent analysis within the framing process.

**An Ideological Baseline: The 1985 Open Letter.**

As a highly religious proclamation, the language, style, and tone of the 1985 Open Letter reflects Hezbollah’s deliberate Islamization of the Lebanese occupation as a counter-frame to Amal’s secular nationalism and international peace efforts. By deliberately framing the conflict with Israel in religious terms, Hezbollah effectively elevated their localized struggle into what Mark Juergensmeyer describes as a “cosmic struggle,” a broader metaphysical struggle between good and evil that absolutely binds personal salvation and political redemption to armed conflict through religious commitment.\(^5\) This Islamization served as a powerful mobilizing frame and ultimately shaped the diagnostic conceptualization of the conflict’s causes, the prognostic conceptualization of desirable and religiously acceptable solutions, and the motivational conceptualization of the acceptable modes of contention to pursue those solutions.

Diagnostically, the Open Letter attributes the current hardships in Lebanon to (1) the Israeli occupation, (2) foreign aggression led by the US, and (3) the Lebanese

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sectarian system of government. In the text of the Open Letter, Hezbollah makes the clear by stating: “Let us put it truthfully: the sons of Hizballah know who are their major enemies in the Middle East – the Phalanges, Israel, France and the US.”6 While other groups such as Amal participated in the local resistance against Israeli occupation, Hezbollah expanded the adversarial frame to include a broader set of protagonists and antagonists:

We declare openly and loudly that we are an umma which fears God only and is by no means ready to tolerate injustice, aggression and humiliation. America, its Atlantic Pact Allies [NATO], and the Zionist entity in the holy land of Palestine [Israel], attacked us and continue to do so without respite. Their aim is to make us eat dust continually. This is why we are, more and more, in a state of permanent alert in order to repel aggression and defend our religion, our existence, our dignity.7

The above passage has two implications within the adversarial framework of Hezbollah’s diagnostic frame. First, Hezbollah frames itself as part of the holistic Muslim community, the umma, thus extending the protagonist frame and reinforcing its Islamic scope and legitimacy. Later in the Open Letter, Hezbollah states the implications of its role within broader umma and its “religious duty” of resistance more clearly:

Therefore, we in Lebanon are neither a closed organizational party nor a narrow political framework. Rather, we are an umma tied to the Muslims in every part of the world by a strong ideological-doctrinal, and political bond, namely, Islam, whose message God completed at the hands of the last of His prophets, Muhammad . . .


7 Ibid., 225.
God has established Islam as a religion for the world to follow . . . Therefore, what befalls the Muslims in Afghanistan, Iraq, the Philippines, or elsewhere befalls the body of our Islamic nation of which we are an indivisible part and we move to confront it out of a “religious duty” (wajib shar‘i) primarily and in light of a general political visualization decided by the leader waliyy al-faqih. 

The second implication of Hezbollah’s extended adversarial frame is elevating the localized struggle with Israel to include a broader struggle against all foreign aggression and identifying the US as the primary cause of Lebanese hardship. Thus, in the following two excerpts from the Open Letter, Hezbollah constructs a diagnostic reality in which the US becomes its primary adversarial antagonists and supports this position within its broader obligations as part of the Islamic umma:

We combat abomination and we shall tear out its very roots, its primary roots, which are the US. All attempts made to drive us into marginal actions will fail, especially as our determination to fight the US is solid.

Imam Khumayni has stressed time and again that America is behind all our catastrophes, and it is the mother of all vice. . . When we fight it, we only exercise our legitimate right of defending our Islam and the dignity of our umma.

Hezbollah’s diagnostic construct had significant implications for the scope and nature of its strategy to confront the perceived causes of Lebanon’s current state of humiliation and oppression. Accordingly, Hezbollah constructed a relatively rigid, yet inclusive prognostic frame in which (1) armed resistance was the only means that could

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8 Ibid., 224.

9 Ibid., 225.
adequately confront foreign aggression, (2) participation in the current Lebanese political system or cooperation with the international community was counterproductive, and (3) instituting an Islamic state was the only means to ensure security and freedom to all Lebanese, Muslims and Christian. In the following excerpt from its Open Letter, Hezbollah outlines the objectives of its strategy:

Let us put it truthfully: the sons of Hizballah know who are their major enemies in the Middle East – the Phalanges, Israel, France and the US. The sons of our umma are now in a state of growing confrontation with them, and will remain so until the realization of the following three objectives:

a. To expel the Americans, the French, and their allies definitely from Lebanon, putting an end to any colonialist entity on our land;

b. To submit the Phalanges to a just power and bring all to justice for the crimes they have perpetrated against Muslims and Christians;

c. To permit all the sons of our people to determine their future and to choose all the liberty to form a government they desire. We call upon all of them to pick the option of Islamic state, which alone, is capable of guaranteeing justice and liberty for all. Only an Islamic state can stop any further tentative attempts of imperialistic infiltration into our country.\(^\text{10}\)

In subsequent passages of the Open Letter, Hezbollah is explicit that armed resistance is the only acceptable course of action capable of confronting foreign aggression and ending Israel’s occupation of Lebanon:

We have no alternative but to confront aggression by sacrifice. . . . Our people could not bear any more treachery. It decided to oppose infidelity – be it French, American or Israeli – by striking at their

\(^{10}\) Ibid., 227.
headquarters and launching a veritable war of resistance against the Occupation forces.\textsuperscript{11}

Within its prognostic framing, Hezbollah argues that armed resistance is the only acceptable mode of contention because Israel is an illegitimate and inherently aggressive entity which must be destroyed completely to protect the Muslim \textit{umma}. Within this framework, cooperation, compromise, negotiating, and bargaining all become futile and violent resistance is the only effective means of confrontation:

Our primary assumption in our fight against Israel states that the Zionist entity is aggressive from its inception, built on lands wrested from their owners, at the expense of the rights of the Muslim people. Therefore our struggle will end only when this entity is obliterated. We recognize no treaty with it, no cease-fire, and no peace agreements, whether separate or consolidated.\textsuperscript{12}

Further, Hezbollah explicitly rejects any attempts of change through non-violent reform within the existing system because such efforts will only strengthen that system. In the Open Letter, Hezbollah is clear that it rejects political participation in the sectarian Lebanese political system. However, Hezbollah is also clear that it rejects participation in the current Lebanese political system from a utility standpoint rather than an ideological or religious standpoint. Hezbollah explicitly favors an Islamic state, but states that it opposes political participation as a mode of contention because Hezbollah does believe that an agent within the current system is capable of producing the fundamental changes required to protect the interests of the Lebanese people:

\textsuperscript{11} Ibid., 226.

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., 231.
We consider that all opposition in Lebanon voiced in the name of reform can only profit, ultimately, the present system. All such opposition, which operates within the framework of the conservation and safeguarding of the present constitution without demanding changes at the level of the very foundation of the regime, is hence, an opposition of pure formality, which cannot satisfy the interests of the oppressed masses.\textsuperscript{13}

By deliberately discussing political participation as a mode of contention in terms of pragmatic utility, Hezbollah’s Open Letter was able to produce an effective counter-frame to its rival Amal while increasing Hezbollah’s resonance within the Lebanese community. Berri’s decision, as the leader of Amal, to enter into political discourse as a minister in the Lebanese national unity government in 1984 alienated large portions of the Shiite community by relegating Berri, and the Amal movement, to a part of the dysfunctional Lebanese system that could no longer advance the community’s goals in a meaningful way.\textsuperscript{14} In contrast, Hezbollah’s rejection of that system increased its credibility and the relative salience of its proffered frame by reinforcing the direct role of the dysfunctional Lebanese political system, and those within the system, to the everyday hardships of the Lebanese people (thus increasing Hezbollah’s experiential commensurability at the expense of the Lebanese political system and Hezbollah’s rival, Amal).

The final component of Hezbollah’s prognostic frame maintains that instituting an Islamic state is the only means to ensure security and freedom to all Lebanese,

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., 229.

\textsuperscript{14} Azani, \textit{Hezbollah: The Story of the Party of God}, 63-64.
Muslims and Christian. As a counter-frame to Amal’s secular approach of reform through participation in the Lebanese political system, Hezbollah leverages the narrative fidelity of the Iranian revolution and the centrality of Islam to the daily lives of the Shiite community to construct its prognostic reality. To appeal to the narrative fidelity of the Iranian revolution, Hezbollah evokes the image of itself as the next wave of the “glorious Islamic renaissance:”

We, the son’s of Hizbullah’s umma, whose vanguard God has given victory in Iran and which has established the nucleus of the world’s central Islamic state, abide by the orders of a single wise and just command represented by the guardianship of jurisprudent (waliyy al-faqih), currently embodied in the supreme Ayatullah Ruhallah al-Musawi al-Khumayni . . . who has detonated the Muslim’s revolution, and who is brining about the glorious Islamic renaissance.15

As the next wave in the Islamic renaissance, Hezbollah is unequivocal in its commitment to Islam as a complete system of religious and social ideology, political doctrine, and the only legitimate mode of governance. However, Hezbollah also draws a distinction between its commitment to the use of violence as a mode of contention against foreign aggression and Israeli occupation, and its rejection of the use of violence to impose an Islamic government on Lebanon by force. While Hezbollah draws inspiration from the Iranian revolution and uses it as a model to increase resonance through narrative fidelity, the Open Letter openly rejects the idea of imposing an Islamic state in Lebanon through violence:

15 Alagha, The Shifts in Hizbullah’s Ideology, 224.
We stress that we are convinced of Islam as an ideology, doctrine, political order, and mode of governance. If our populace could freely choose the system of government in Lebanon, then they would definitely opt for Islam. From this perspective, we call for the implementation of an Islamic order on the basis of direct and free choice as exercised by the populace, and not on the basis of force, as others might entertain.

We are an umma, which adheres to the message of Islam. We want all the oppressed to be able to study the divine message in order to bring justice, peace and tranquility to the world: “There is no compulsion in religion.”

This is why we don’t want to impose Islam upon anybody, as much as we don’t want others to impose upon us their convictions and their political systems. We don’t want Islam to reign in Lebanon by force, as is the case with political Maronism today.\(^{16}\)

Thus, Hezbollah constructs a complex prognostic frame in which there is a subtle distinction between its commitment to the use of violence to reach its first two objectives (the end of foreign aggression and Israeli occupation and the end of the Lebanese sectarian political system) and its third objective (the establishment of an Islamic state in Lebanon). As a counter-frame to Amal, Hezbollah’s commitment to armed resistance and rejection of political participation in the dysfunctional Lebanese government within the model of Iranian revolution resonated with its Lebanese constituency through the centrality of its Islamic foundation, its experiential commensurability with the everyday hardships in Lebanon, and the narrative fidelity of the successful Iranian revolution. However, the Open Letter indicates that once Hezbollah has successfully used violence to end foreign aggression and destroy the

\(^{16}\) Ibid., 228.
existing Lebanese political system it would “call for the implementation of an Islamic order on the basis of direct and free choice as exercised by the populace”\textsuperscript{17} without using violence to impose an Islamic state. Although Hezbollah is unclear on the mechanisms which would allow the populace to freely choose an Islamic order (i.e. open elections), the prognostic frame that it creates indicates a sophisticated understanding of the implications of the use of violence as a mode of contention outside of political discourse (e.g. using force to impose an Islamic state) and the implications of the use of violence as a mode of contention within political discourse (e.g. using force to accumulate political capital and compel regime change through political channels).

As an Islamic movement, Hezbollah constructs a motivational frame, a call to arms against foreign aggression, Israeli occupation, and the sectarian Lebanese political system, that utilizes religious imagery in creating a vocabulary of (1) defensive resistance, (2) religious obligation to struggle, and (3) the ultimate promise of victory through faith and sacrifice. In the dedication to the Open Letter, Hezbollah evokes the image of itself as part of the continuation of the Islamic revolution, a figurative torch that both provides direction and inspiration to the oppressed in Lebanon and consumes its enemies with the sacrifice of its followers:

To the torch that increased in light and brightness, so that it lit, to the oppressed in Lebanon, the path to a free dignified life, and burned, with its pure glittering blood [jihad and martyrdom], the strength of the “Zionist Entity” [Israel] and its myth.\textsuperscript{18}

\textsuperscript{17} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{18} Ibid., 223.
The first component to Hezbollah’s motivational frame is establishing itself as a defensive resistance movement by emphasizing the crimes against the collective Muslim umma at the hands of the foreign aggressors, the Israeli occupation, and the complicit Lebanese political system. As a motivational tool, emphasizing the crimes against its constituency and establishing itself as a defensive resistance has significant implications for Hezbollah as a movement. First, it increases the relatively saliency of Hezbollah’s proffered frame by leveraging the experiential commensurability between Hezbollah’s message and the hardship and oppression that characterize the daily lives of Hezbollah’s constituency. For example, beyond simply referencing the Lebanese plight in an abstract or conceptual manner, Hezbollah clearly articulates specific grievances, including a list of destroyed cities with which the Lebanese populace can readily relate:

A hundred thousand victims – this is the approximate balance sheet of crimes committed by them and by the US against us. Almost half a million Muslims were forced to leave their homes. Their quarters were virtually totally destroyed in Nab’a, my own Beirut suburb, as well as in Burj Hammud, Dekonaneh, Tel Zaatar, Sinbay, Ghawarina and Jubeil – all in areas controlled today by the ‘Lebanese Forces.’

The second implication of establishing itself as a defensive resistance movement is Hezbollah’s ability to leverage the narrative fidelity of defensive Jihad within Islamic tradition. Introducing the concept of defensive Jihad provides the religious legitimacy required to rationalize Hezbollah’s use of violence, even in extreme cases such as

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19 Ibid., 226.
suicide bombings, and reinforces its resonance by creating a view of reality that increases the credibility and relative salience of Hezbollah’s proffered diagnostic and prognostic frames. Thus, by establishing the transgressions of its enemies and its role as a defense resistance movement, Hezbollah establishes its frame consistency, empirical credibility, and Hezbollah’s own credibility, as well as the centrality, experiential commensurability, and narrative fidelity of its diagnosis and prognosis.

The second component of Hezbollah’s motivational frame is extending the conceptualization of justified defensive resistance to the conceptualization of a religious obligation of armed struggle or defensive Jihad. The idea of a religious obligation to defensive Jihad resonated with Hezbollah’s constituency’s cultural narrations in a very immediate sense because of the success of the Iranian revolution and the well known writings of Sayyid Qutb. Qutb, the highly influential author of *Signposts*, the watershed text and foundation for the jihadist movement, stressed two fundamental beliefs: “[1] modern societies, including Muslim ones, are in Jahiliyyah, the state of ignorance that existed in pre-Islam Arabia before the perfect revelations of the Koran. [2] True Muslims must free themselves from the ‘clutches of jahili society,’ and the only way to that is by jihad.”

Hezbollah’s motivational frame leveraged these beliefs and provided a counter-frame to Amal’s secular reformist approach to change by emphasizing the

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religious responsibility of the Lebanese people to answer the call of *Jihad* in accordance with their faith:

\[ \ldots \text{Each of us is a combat soldier when the call of jihad demands it and each of us undertakes his task in the battle in accordance with the “legitimate and religious responsibility” (taklif shar’i) of the Wailayat al-Faqih, the leader.}^{21} \]

The final component to Hezbollah’s motivational frame was assuring an ultimate victory through faith and sacrifice. Beyond demonstrating the religious justification and subsequent obligation of armed resistance, Hezbollah had to demonstrate that it was a viable alternative to Amal’s secular reformist approach. To demonstrate the utility of its prognostic frame of armed resistance, Hezbollah appealed to the Islamic tradition that God would restore the Muslim *umma* to its rightful position of ruling and emphasized the tangible battlefield successes that Hezbollah had achieved over Israel:

\[ \text{God is behind us with His care, putting fear in our enemies’ hearts, and giving His clear and resounding victory against them.}^{22} \]

\[ \text{The dignified Islamic Resistance, which has underscored and still is underscoring the best epics of heroism against the occupying Zionist forces [Israeli Army], has destroyed, with the religious belief of its fighters, the myths of the invincible Israel. It has put the “Rapist Entity” in real trouble . . .}^{23} \]

\[ \text{The Islamic Resistance was able, with the blood of its martyrs and the jihad of its heros, to force the enemy [Israel], the first time in} \]

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22 Ibid.

23 Ibid., 231.
the history of struggle against, to take the decision and withdraw from Lebanon without any American influence.\textsuperscript{24}

As a founding document and Hezbollah’s initial manifesto to the world, its 1985 Open Letter represents a comprehensive and coherent articulation of the movement’s worldview (its diagnostic frame), its objectives and plan of action (its prognostic frame), and its rationalization of both (its motivational frame). Accordingly, the above analysis of the Open Letter within the framework of collective action frames as meaning construction provides a suitable baseline for understanding Hezbollah’s ideological foundation and its subsequent evolution. Thus far, the analysis reveals that Hezbollah constructed a diagnostic frame which attributes the current hardships in Lebanon to three factors: (1) the Israeli occupation; (2) foreign aggression led by the US; and (3) the Lebanese sectarian system of government. Further, Hezbollah constructed a prognostic frame in which: (1) armed resistance was the only means that could adequately confront foreign aggression and dissolve the dysfunctional sectarian Lebanese political system; (2) participation in the current Lebanese political system or cooperation with the international community was counterproductive; and (3) instituting an Islamic state through un-articulated but non-violent means was the only means to ensure security and freedom to all Lebanese, Muslims and Christian. Finally, Hezbollah constructed a motivational frame in which: (1) it established the transgressions of its enemies and its role as a defensive resistance movement; (2) the religious obligation of all Lebanese to

\textsuperscript{24} Ibid., 232.
support the armed struggle in accordance with the Islamic faith; and (3) the demonstrated certainty of ultimate victory through faith and sacrifice.

**Ideological Evolution: Post Taif Accord and Political Discourse.**

The signing of the Taif Accord in 1989 marked a period of social and political transition for Lebanon. By negotiating an end to the costly Lebanese Civil War and reconstructing the National Pact political system to better accommodate the demographic shift to a Muslim majority, the Taif Accord “symbolized the end of Lebanon’s ‘old order,’ in which the militias set the tone and agenda, and the beginning of the new order, in which the Lebanese government . . . assumed the responsibilities of the state.”

This transition was useful to Amal, which already defined itself as a secular, national Lebanese movement. However, from a practical standpoint, Hezbollah faced the challenge of determining how it would reconcile its ideological rigidity with the new political reality and how it would define a constructive and popular role for itself within the emerging political structure of the post Taif Accord political construct.

From an organizational perspective, the previous chapter of this thesis discusses the process of inter-organizational negotiation and bargaining that resulted in Hezbollah’s acceptance of the Taif Accord and decision to participate in the 1992 parliamentary elections. The following analysis focuses on the Hezbollah’s subsequent parliamentary election programs as well as various other interviews and official party statements to determine how and to what extent Hezbollah has refined or redefined the

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core components of its ideology (specifically the diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational frames established in the Open Letter) to accommodate political participation in its campaign of resistance.

**Hezbollah’s 1992 Parliamentary Elections Program**

In its 1992 Parliamentary Elections Program, Hezbollah articulates a diagnostic frame consistent with the diagnostic frame it constructed in its 1985 Open Letter. In the introduction to its elections program, Hezbollah asserts that Lebanon is in a dangerous period of its history because of the culminating forces of foreign aggression (again, led by the US), Israeli occupation, and Lebanon’s compliant sectarian government whose efforts to normalize relations with Israel is enabling the economic exploitation responsible for the everyday hardships endured by the Lebanese masses:

> In this sensitive and grave period of the history of our wounded country; in the midst of grand international changes that ravaged out of existence and led to the collapse of regimes and changed the features of policies and alliances; at the time when the Zionist enemy [Israel] is still occupying a beloved section of our country, while the project of the oppressors, spearheaded by the US, continues its bet on subduing Lebanon and the region [Middle East] in order to seal the deal of recognition in the legitimacy of the Zionist Entity, and normalize relations with it, thus melting/fusing the cultural identity of the people of the region and tying its destiny to the [market] economy and Western mode of production and what it leads to in the sense of plundering riches and natural resources, the imposition of regimes, and the execution of programs [policies and plans].

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Later in the text, Hezbollah is explicit that although it is participating in the parliamentary elections, it retains political sectarianism as a central component of its diagnostic frame:

Political sectarianism is one of the gravest ills for the corruption of the system in Lebanon. It is also the result behind all cultural, political, security, social, and developmental misfortunes and disasters that have plagued the Lebanese people.  

Similarly, the prognostic frame maintains that liberating Lebanon from Israeli occupation and foreign aggression through armed resistance and destroying the existing sectarian political system are only way to redress the grievances of Lebanon’s oppressed masses:

These convictions became embedded in our peoples’ souls, rendering them [i.e. convictions] a daily *jihadi* and political path, which revolves around two basic objectives:

1. Lebanon’s liberation from the Zionist occupation and from the oppressors’ influence and following.
2. The abolishment of political sectarianism.

Significantly, the first section of Hezbollah’s 1992 Parliamentary Elections Program is titled “The Resistance” and explicitly reinforces Hezbollah’s commitment to armed resistance as “the only choice that is capable of standing out against the enemy and its extortions.”

Opening its political program with a declaration of its commitment to resistance was useful to Hezbollah in many ways. Internally, it helped to maintain

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27 Ibid., 251.
28 Ibid., 249.
29 Ibid., 250.
structural coherence by constructing a compromise between the more revolutionary factions and the more pragmatic-reformist factions within Hezbollah. Externally, the declaration of its commitment to resistance maintained Hezbollah’s relevancy as a counter-frame to Amal. While Amal and other militias agreed to disarm in accordance with the Taif Accord to gain access to the emerging political system, Hezbollah successfully established itself as a unique resistance movement, exempt from the requirement to disarm as a militia, yet capable of legitimately participating in the new Lebanese system of governance. Thus, Hezbollah maintained its appeal to the revolutionary theme within its constituency’s cultural narrations while expanding its capability to confront the more tangible everyday problems of the Lebanese people (increasing Hezbollah’s experiential commensurability).

However, to accommodate political participation in its campaign of resistance, Hezbollah had to refine its prognostic frame, maintaining the requirement for armed resistance to confront Israeli occupation and foreign aggression, but redefining the role of participation in the current Lebanese political system. While the Open Letter was explicit that participation in the current Lebanese political system would only strengthen the existing system and prove counter-productive to the resistance, the 1992 Parliamentary Elections Program asserts that as the first elections in over twenty years, the 1992 Parliamentary Elections offer a unique opportunity to compel change from within the system. Significantly, Hezbollah does not modify its ideology to support the sectarian system as a justification for participation within that system; instead, it
reconstructs the political reality so that participation within the existing system becomes a useful way of compelling change from within:

And if it assumed that the performance of the parliamentary elections will be conductive in finding an new formula for the [political] system that repels political sectarianism and builds the foundation of a state that personifies the will of the Lebanese people, then Hizbullah’s decision to participate, with its brothers and friends, in these elections is based on perpetual principled political convictions, enforced by the blood of its martyrs, and the suffering and pain of its prisoners of war, detainees, wounded, families of martyrs, and the oppressed. . .  

Interestingly, Hezbollah does not explicitly mention instituting an Islamic state in Lebanon (the third component of its prognostic frame from its 1985 Open Letter) in its 1992 Parliamentary Elections Program. However, Hizbollah’s stated commitment to abolish political sectarianism and its recommendations for amending electoral law are consistent with its prognostic position in the 1985 Open Letter. In fact, Hezbollah’s recommendations to consolidate Lebanon into one election district and reduce the voting age to eighteen represents and expansion and clarification of the how Lebanon can transition non-violently to an Islamic state. This is consistent with Hezbollah’s position that it will not seek to impose an Islamic state through force, but given the opportunity to vote freely, the Lebanese people will chose an Islamic system of government for themselves.

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30 Ibid., 248.

31 Ibid., 251.
As a political platform, Hezbollah also extends its prognostic frame to address political solutions for numerous administrative, social, and educational issues in a pragmatic way. Presenting concrete policy positions on these issues allowed Hezbollah to demonstrate its utility as a political entity and to increase its resonance with the Lebanese people. However, an analysis of Hezbollah’s specific political goals indicates that as Hezbollah expanded its prognostic frame to include specific political objectives, those objectives remained consistent with Hezbollah’s core ideology. For example, when discussing administrative policy objectives, Hezbollah maintains its opposition to sectarianism and the corruption of the current Lebanese system, as evident in the following two objectives:

- Abolish the sectarian factor in public and private jobs and appointments.
- Merit and open examination should be used as a basis for selecting employment instead of favouritism.\(^{32}\)

Similarly, Hezbollah’s policy for economic development stresses the need to focus on building infrastructure and utilities for the poorer and previously neglected areas of Lebanon, such as its call to “develop the infrastructure of the oppressed [deprived] areas; enhance the lines of transportation, communication, electricity, and water.”\(^{33}\) Its policy for educational and cultural reform, while promising to increase the emphasis on applied science at the Lebanese University, also seeks to “reinforce and

\(^{32}\) Ibid., 252.

\(^{33}\) Ibid.
protect religious education” while “rewriting the history [school] books based on an objective curriculum, and be[ing] committed to the standards of the cultural belonging of Lebanon to its Arab and Islamic milieu.”

Hezbollah also expands its motivational frame to accommodate political participation while remaining consistent with the motivational components it established in its 1985 Open Letter. In the excerpt below from the introduction to its 1992 Parliamentary Elections Program, Hezbollah frames its political participation as a religiously legal responsibility to the oppressed people in Lebanon, again emphasizing the degrading situation in Lebanon and Hezbollah’s legitimate role as a resistance movement in accordance with its Islamic faith and endorsed by Ayatollah Ali Khamenei:

From the stance of our legal (shar‘i) responsibilities towards our oppressed people in Lebanon that gives due concern to the populace’s grand destining causes and its neglected daily demands; in light of a deep-conscientious reading to the nature of the degrading situation in Lebanon, . . ., and the need to stand up against conspiracies that are being contrived against the land, rights, and dignities of our populace; based on a realistic diagnosis of the clear and possible dangers as well as the opportunities available to the Islamists in order to take a leading role, while avoiding slippery slopes, in the path to fortify the Islamic project, and consolidate its steps and fruits; in harmony with the jurisprudential (fiqhi) stipulations that, for us, act as a guide and an authority of emulation (marja’). . . We [Hizbullah] made up our mind, rely on God, and decided to participate in electoral politics on the basis of a comprehensive political program. . .

34 Ibid., 253.

35 Ibid., 247.
Thus, by incorporating political participation into its program of resistance, Hezbollah was able make the political process part of its struggle while maintaining its core ideology and its commitment to a program of armed resistance.

Subsequent Political Discourse and Hezbollah Statements

In its 1996 Electoral Program, Hezbollah indicates a potential ideological shift away from its original disdain for the Lebanese confessional system when it stated:

“after four years, during which we had the honor of contribution in serving the Lebanese from the parliamentarian post, we run with you for the scheduled parliament elections with established responsibility and greater insistence on shouldering the trust that our dear Lebanese people make us carry.”36 However, the 1996 Program still calls for “establishing a Just State” and “abolishing political sectarianism that represents the center of the essential flaw in the formula of the Lebanese political system.”37 Thus, embracing its role and celebrating successes within the sectarian system is not necessarily a sign of moderation or ideological evolution: instead, it is consistent within Hezbollah’s extended prognostic and motivational frames in which political participation has become a religiously obligatory form of resistance.

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37 Hezbollah, “Electoral Program.”
In a June 20, 1997 television interview, *Hezbollah: Views and Concepts*, Manar TV, a Hezbollah spokesman reinforces Hezbollah’s disdain for the sectarian Lebanese government and emphasizes that Hezbollah participates in that system as a means to compel change (i.e. abolish sectarianism) from within:

Lebanon’s political system which is based on the principals of political confessionalism can never achieve justice or realize right and peace. . . The Taif Charter of National Reconciliation did not resolve this dilemma, but rather established it and re-distributed the sectarian quotas anew. This implies the foundation for a future crisis.

This document, nevertheless, is viewed by Hizbullah as a bridge to transfer Lebanon from the state of bloody conflicts to a new state of internal peace that we, in Hizbullah, very strongly and definitely desire.

In spite of that, it never calls off our looking forward to more change and development in the Lebanese political system in order to abolish the abhorred sectarian discrimination and achieve justice among the citizens.  

In the same interview, the Hezbollah spokesman also reinforces its commitment to armed resistance as a legitimate response to foreign aggression and Israeli occupation. Interestingly, in this interview, Hezbollah does not frame it grievances in religious terms. Instead, Hezbollah displays a level of sophistication, directing its message at a broader audience by framing its grievances in secular terms, evoking images of international terrorism against Lebanon and Palestine as a contradiction to democracy and a violation of human rights:

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Hizbullah has a strong belief in the necessity of achieving the security and peace that are based on right and justice in Lebanon, the region and the world. Consequently, it rejects all forms of aggression and terrorism; at the same time Hizbullah views the Zionist Jews’ occupation of Palestine, displacing its people and establishing the entity of Israel on its usurped land as the living materialization of the most hideous kinds of aggression and organized terrorism that is supported by the USA, the sponsor of international terrorism, and some other states that claim to be democratic and protecting human rights whilst they support Israel that was founded on invasion, killing and blood-shed, besides its daily violations of human rights in Lebanon and Palestine.\(^{39}\)

Accordingly, Hezbollah draws comparisons between its resistance against foreign aggression and Israeli occupation and the French resistance against Nazi occupation and the American resistance against colonialism:

Hizbullah has benefited from the experience of the nations and peoples of the world and read the history of the French people’s resistance against the Nazi occupation, and the resistance of the American people against the colonialists as well; it saw how the free world countries and the peoples of the world respect these resistances and annually commemorate their memory because they had expressed the will of freedom and the longing for right, justice and peace.\(^{40}\)

Thus, Hezbollah offers a rational secular justification for its continued armed resistance against the aggression that it considers terrorism. This indicates that Hezbollah’s participation in the Lebanese parliament and its increasing legitimacy at the regional and international level has not moderated its prognostic frame (i.e. Hezbollah has not abandoned the use of the violence); instead, Hezbollah has expanded its

\(^{39}\) Ibid., 239-240.

\(^{40}\) Ibid., 240.
motivational frame to justify its use of violence beyond its original Islamic Jihadist rational. This creates a mutually reinforcing relationship between participation in legitimate political discourse and the use of violence within a campaign of armed resistance. While Hezbollah initially had to modify its ideology (e.g. redefine its prognostic frame and expand its motivational frame) to justify political participation within its campaign of armed resistance, Hezbollah can now use its position within the Lebanese political structure to justify its continued use of violence as a legitimate resistance movement:

When Hizbullah resists in Lebanon against the Zionist Jewish occupation lying heavily on its soil in the South and West Bekaa, it is exercising its legitimate and sacred right that was once exercised by the French and American people. . . Therefore we call on the peoples of the world to distinguish between aggression, which is none other than terrorism, and the honest resistance that is the only way to deter the aggression and confront the terrorism resulting from the aggression. Israel is an aggressive entity that practices terrorism; occupation is one of the forms of terrorism. Hizbullah of Lebanon is a popular resisting trend against occupation and terrorism.\(^{41}\)

A Statement of Purpose from the Hezbollah Press Office on March 20, 1998, demonstrates a consistent articulation of Hezbollah original distinction between the use of violence to confront foreign aggression and the use of violence to enforce Islamic rule. While Hezbollah defines itself as an inherently violently organization, “an Islamic freedom fighting movement founded after the Israeli military seizure of Lebanon in 1982, which resulted in immediate formation of the Islamic resistance units for the

\(^{41}\) Ibid.
liberation of the occupied territories and the expulsion of the aggressive Israeli forces,“\textsuperscript{42} it also maintains that:

We don’t seek the application of Islam by force or violence but by peaceful political action, which gives the opportunity for the majority in any society to adopt or reject it. If Islam becomes the choice of the majority then we will apply it, if not, we will continue to coexist and discuss till we reach correct beliefs.

We hereby affirm that our Islam rejects violence as a method to gain power, and this should be the formula for the non-Islamists as well.\textsuperscript{43}

Significantly, this does not indicate an ideological evolution or moderation for Hezbollah. The conceptualization of establishing an Islamic state through non-violent means was well articulated in Hezbollah’s 1985 Open Letter. Further, Hezbollah’s 1992 Parliamentary Elections Program established that participation in the Lebanese sectarian system was the most effective means of compelling change from within the system, enabling Hezbollah to abolish sectarianism and institute an Islamic state through the accumulation of sufficient political capital. Thus, while Hezbollah rejects the use of violence to compel a regime change through violent revolution (e.g. a religious coup), it has consistently leveraged its role as a popular resistance movement (e.g. its effective use of violence against Israeli forces and foreign aggression) to accumulate the popular

\textsuperscript{42} Hezbollah, “Statement of purpose,” Retrieved from the Hezbollah Official Website, available on-line at \url{http://almashriq.hiof.no/lebanon/300/320/324/324.2/hizballah/statement01.html}.

\textsuperscript{43} Ibid.
support and political leverage required to compel change from within the Lebanese system.

As a final observation, the first section of each of Hezbollah’s first three parliamentary elections programs focused specifically on Hezbollah’s broader campaign of resistance: in 1992 the first section was titled “The Resistance;” in 1996 the first section was titled “Resisting the Occupation;” and in 2000 the first section was titled “Resistance and Liberation.” However, in Hezbollah’s 2004 Parliamentary Elections Program, there is no section that specifically references the resistance and the only significant reference to Hezbollah as a resistance movement comes in the first two points of the introduction of 2004 political program:

1. Hizbullah’s principal’s dictate that the populace constitute the main pillars behind its movement. From this perspective, Hizbullah is under a responsibility to fend of all oppression and injustice in order to serve them and protect their dignity.

2. One of Hizbullah’s aims is to adopt the plight of the oppressed and the disenfranchised populace by protecting them and actively working for putting an end to oppression and discrimination towards the deprived areas in order to raise its standards (of living) in all respects.

The subsequent political analysis and recommendations of the 2004 Parliamentary Elections Program reflects a highly sophisticated and pragmatic exercise

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45 Ibid., 255.

46 Ibid., 262.

47 Ibid., 271.
in political discourse. Hezbollah discusses specific issues concerning “the efficiency of the municipal council and boosting the confidence of the citizens in it,” 48 “expanding[ing] the financial revenues of the municipalities,” 49 and “giving importance to environmental conditions within the municipal jurisdiction.”50 Further, Hezbollah offers specific development goals such as: “Prepare topographies and computerized maps that clearly indicate real estate, roads, planned projects in order to make use of them in all engineering, development, and financial studies for the town.”51

However, Hezbollah’s emphasis on pragmatic policy concerns in its 2004 Parliamentary Elections Program does not reflect a broader trend toward moderation within the organization. During the time between its 2000 Parliamentary Elections Program and its 2004 Parliamentary Elections Program, Hezbollah’s actually devoted considerable efforts and resources to strengthening its military capability and capitalizing on Israel’s withdrawal from Southern Lebanon in 2000.52 From an internal perspective, Israel’s withdrawal from Southern Lebanon in 2000 gave Hezbollah the credibility it needed to continue its political discourse without having to explicitly

48 Ibid.

49 Ibid., 272.

50 Ibid., 274.

51 Ibid., 273.

justify it in terms of the resistance. From an external perspective, Hezbollah’s 2004 Parliamentary Elections Program was its first political platform since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. Thus, omitting the explicit connection between its program of armed resistance and its political program allowed Hezbollah to accumulate regional and international legitimacy in the wake of the international war on terrorism as a legitimate political entity within the Lebanese sectarian system while continuing to accumulate local support and political capital through its effective use of violence as a resistance movement.

**Conclusion.**

An analysis of Hezbollah’s ideological evolution, as articulated in its original Open Letter and subsequent political programs, interviews, and official statements, indicates two ideological implications for a group that uses violence as a repertoire of contention while participating in legitimate political discourse. The first ideological implication is that moderation (i.e. abandoning the use of violence) is not a prerequisite for entering into or successfully engaging in legitimate political discourse. Although Hezbollah’s decision to participate in Lebanon’s 1992 parliamentary elections indicated a policy shift for Hezbollah, a review of its subsequent political platforms and other communications indicates that Hezbollah did not attempt to conform its core diagnostic or prognostic frames to accommodate more moderate and constructive political discourse. Instead, Hezbollah actively sought to redefine the existing political structure
within its established prognostic frame and thus extend its motivational frame to justify its political participation.

To maintain the support of its constituency, as well as internal coherence, Hezbollah constructed a reality in which political participation became a useful, justified, and even religiously obligatory component of its broader campaign of armed resistance. Expanding its prognostic and motivational frames to include political participation was only possible because Hezbollah demonstrated that its participation was: one, consistent with its enduring diagnostic frame targeting Israeli occupation, foreign aggression, and the Lebanese sectarian system of government; and two, supportive of its enduring prognostic frame that remained dedicated to the primacy of armed resistance.

The second ideological implication is that once a group that uses violence as a repertoire of contention successfully integrates political participation into its broader campaign of resistance, moderation (i.e. abandoning the use of violence) becomes counter-productive to maintaining popular support and accumulating political capital. This is particularly relevant for Hezbollah as long as its constructed diagnostic frame remains consistent with the daily experiences of its constituency and its prognostic frame remains productive in addressing the perceived hardships. While Hezbollah has remained relevant as a political party because of its increasingly sophisticated political platforms and its perceived lack of the corruption within the dysfunctional Lebanese government, Hezbollah has also become increasingly popular because of its ability to compel Israel’s withdraw from Lebanon in 2000 and its successful military performance.
during the 2006 Israeli-Hezbollah War. Thus, after constructing an ideological framework that accommodates political participation as a component of resistance and successfully leverages the use of violence to accumulate political capital, it becomes counter-productive and ideologically difficult for Hezbollah to separate the two modes of contention and abandon the use of violence while maintaining resonance with its core constituency.
As an organization and as a movement, Hezbollah represents an emerging middle ground that challenges the conceptual polarity between traditionally violent groups and non-violent groups. Traditionally violent groups have relied on the use of violence to compel change from outside of a political or social structure to which the group has limited or inadequate access to compel change from within the existing system. In contrast, traditionally non-violent groups have worked within the existing political or social structure to accumulate the required support and political or social capital to compel change through existing non-violent mechanisms. Hezbollah, however, has successfully constructed a reality in which it simultaneously accommodates the use of violence and legitimate political participation, allowing it to not only continue its campaign of armed resistance, but to directly translate its use of violence into significant political capital within the Lebanese sectarian system that it seeks to abolish.

The preceding chapters’ analyses of Hezbollah’s organizational development and ideological evolution indicate that there are significant organizational and ideological constraints to moderation for a group that can successfully integrate the use of violence and political discourse into a coordinated campaign of resistance. Organizationally, for Hezbollah to be capable of coordinating a campaign of armed resistance and political discourse, it had to consolidate centralized control over its operations and resources. However, maintaining that centralized control necessitates a
contentious internal decision making process that relies on negotiation and bargaining to ensure structure coherence. By its nature, the contentious internal decision making process of negotiation and bargaining constrains a group’s capacity for radical change. This is evident in the deliberate process Hezbollah used to negotiate a shared understanding of its political participation as a component of its campaign of resistance: Hezbollah centralized the debate within a small committee composed of the seven man Shura Council and five of Hezbollah’s leading cadre; Hezbollah appealed to Khamenei for religious legitimacy and justification; and, Hezbollah developed a clear line of propaganda stressing its continued commitment to armed resistance and emphasizing that political participation was a useful part of its broader struggle. However, this also indicates that once Hezbollah negotiated a reality in which political discourse and the use of violence can coexist as mutually supporting efforts, separating the two activities and giving up either (the use of violence in the case of moderation) becomes even more challenging and presents a greater risk for structural disintegration.

The analysis of Hezbollah’s ideological evolution revealed similar constraints to moderation. Ideologically, Hezbollah’s evolution indicates that moderation (i.e. abandoning the use of violence) is not a prerequisite for entering into or successfully engaging in legitimate political discourse. In contrast, entering political discourse required Hezbollah to construct a reality in which political participation became a useful, justified, and even religiously obligatory component of its broader campaign of armed resistance to maintain the support of its constituency, as well as internal
coherence. Thus, once Hezbollah successfully integrated political participation into its broader campaign of resistance, moderation (i.e. abandoning the use of violence) became counter-productive to maintaining popular support and accumulating political capital. As long as Hezbollah’s constructed diagnostic frame remains consistent with the daily experiences of its constituency and its prognostic frame remains productive in addressing the perceived hardships (as both its use of violence and political participation have), it remains ideological difficult for Hezbollah to separate the two modes of contention and abandon the use of violence while maintaining resonance with its core constituency.

Interpreting these organizational and ideological implications for a group that uses violence as a repertoire of contention while participating in legitimate political discourse and understanding the threat of a group such as Hezbollah presents a challenge to scholars and policy makers, who have sought new intellectual and practical models to explain, understand, predict, and influence changes in the emerging global system since the end of the Cold War and the events of September 11, 2001. Although not writing specifically on Hezbollah or Lebanon, Mohammed Ayoob presents a useful framework for analysis in his monograph, *The Third World Security Predicament: State-Making, Regional Conflict, and the International System* (1995), by focusing on a state’s security in terms of both internal and external vulnerabilities and those vulnerabilities’ destabilizing effects on the state. Extending the concept of state security beyond the traditional defense model (e.g. security as a measure of how effectively a
state can defend its territorial integrity or national interests from external attack) to include the conceptualization of the security-stability model (e.g. security as a measure of the internal and external vulnerabilities that threaten governing regimes institutionally) accommodates the analysis of Hezbollah’s local and regional-global threat as a destabilizing force within Lebanon. Further, applying this framework to the Israeli-Hezbollah War of 2006 provides a useful case study for understanding Hezbollah’s threat as a destabilizing force within Lebanon for three important reasons: one, its control of a powerful military wing that undermines Lebanon’s control of its borders and Lebanon’s monopoly violence within its borders; two, its implementation of vast social works and reconstruction programs that undermines the Lebanese Government’s capability to provide basic services to its population; and three, its role as a conduit for external influence and/or control over Lebanese politics.

**A Predicative Threat Model.**

A brief review of Lebanese history reveals that Lebanon exhibits the basic characteristics of a Third World state as defined by Ayoob and indicates the utility in applying Ayoob’s concept of security to Hezbollah’s role in Lebanon. Established as a parliamentary democracy in 1943, the Lebanese government consists of a power-sharing arrangement between Maronite Christians, Sunni Muslims, and Shiite Muslims. The original arrangement required a Maronite Christian President, a Sunni Muslim Prime
Minister, and a Shiite Muslim Speaker of the National Assembly, and required a ratio of six Christians to five Muslims for National Assembly seats and civil services jobs.¹

Over time, the power-sharing arrangement, based on a 1932 census,² created an environment in which Muslims, growing in numerical superiority, increasingly sought political change to redress what they considered political, economic, and social marginalization at the hands of a minority political elite.³ This prompted a devastating fifteen year civil war from April 1975 to October 1990 which left the GDP per capita in 1990 at one third of the GDP per capita in 1974, destroyed much of the economic infrastructure, killed an estimated 131,000 people, displaced an additional 500,000 people, and significantly weakened state institutions including the military, security forces, and all administrative capacities.⁴ As a result, Lebanon demonstrates the most basic characteristic of a Third World state as defined within Ayoob’s model: “a lack of internal cohesion, in terms of both great economic and social disparities and major ethnic and regional fissures.”⁵


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Lebanon has also exhibited a lack of unconditional legitimacy of state boundaries, state institutions, and governing elites, making Lebanon susceptible to the influence of external actors, most notably in its relationship with Syria. In recent history, Syria has exercised considerable formal and informal control over the Lebanese government. Prior to the 2000 national elections, the then Syrian pro-consul in Lebanon, general Ghazi Kanaan, directed the redrawing of electoral districts in Beirut in an effort to ensure the election of a dominate pro-Syrian regime. However, Rafiq Al-Hariri, a popular opposition opponent and former prime minister of Lebanon, confounded the Syrian “master plan” by winning a majority of the seats in Beirut and regained his position as prime minister. Despite al-Hariri’s popular support and political success, he was unable to effect any significant change or challenge Syrian control of the Lebanese government because of continual grid lock, political frustration, and animosity with Lebanese President Emile Lahoud, who was widely understood to be the “deputy” of the Syrian president. Syria demonstrated its influence over the Lebanese government once again in 2004 when it extended Lahoud’s six year term as president another three years even though the Lebanese constitution does not allow a president to serve two consecutive terms as president, prompting al-Hariri’s resignation as prime minister.⁶

After his resignation in 2004, al-Hariri became the de-facto leader of an anti-Syrian political movement that pledged to enter the 2005 elections with no Syrian-

imposed candidates on its ticket. In February 2005, al-Hariri was assassinated by a car bomb in Beirut. Although the assassins have never been identified, it is widely believed that Syria ordered the assassination because of al-Hariri’s growing support and overtly anti-Syrian platform. Al-Hariri’s assassination caused a significant domestic and international reaction against Syria’s continued armed presence and political influence in Lebanon. Domestically, popular opposition to Syrian influence in Lebanon became known as the “Cedar Rebellion.”

Accordingly, Lebanon’s lack of internal cohesion, its lack of unconditional control of state boundaries and institutions, and its easy permeability by external actors has made Lebanon susceptible to interstate conflicts. As a result, Lebanon has been the site of multiple proxy wars resourced by rival political and military sponsors including Iraq, Iran, Syria, Libya, Israel, the United States, France, Saudi Arabia, and the Soviet Union since the 1980s.

Localized Threat Implications

Within Lebanon, Hezbollah’s ability to effectively integrate the use of violence, social services, and political discourse into a coherent campaign of resistance and its organizational and ideological constraints to moderation have significant threat implications. Consistent with Ayoob’s assertion that the greatest threat to a Third World

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7 Ibid., 126-128.
8 Ibid., 72.
state’s stability and security emanates from within its own borders,9 Hezbollah’s impact as a destabilizing force within Lebanon is apparent in three fundamental struggles: the struggle for the monopoly of violence; the struggle for political-institutional legitimacy (e.g. the struggle to develop a functioning and responsive political system that adequately represents the population and can take action on its behalf); and the struggle for social legitimacy (e.g. the struggle to provide basic social services to the population).

While Hezbollah has consistently maintained that it will not seek to overthrow the Lebanese political system through direct violence (i.e. an Islamic revolution), its effective use of violence and its control of a significant sub-state military organization challenges the most basic prerequisites of a stable state: the control of its borders and the monopoly of violence within its borders. Hezbollah’s growing legitimacy as an effective resistance force, as the only capable defenders of the Lebanese against Israeli occupation and foreign aggression, prohibits the Lebanese government from fulfilling these fundamental functions of the state. In fact, Hezbollah’s mass support compelled the Lebanese government to recognize Hezbollah as a legitimate resistance organization and exempt it from mandatory disarmament under the Taif Accord. Predicatively, this indicates a vicious cycle: as long as the Lebanese government cannot exert its legitimate control over the use of violence within its borders, there will be a continual violent struggle for legitimacy through force.

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The violent struggle for legitimacy through force in Lebanon, such as the fifteen year civil war, has directly impacted Lebanon’s struggle for political-institutional legitimacy. On a very tangible level, the financial cost of perpetual violence to the Lebanese economy and infrastructure has constrained the Lebanese government’s ability to develop a functioning and responsive political system that adequately represents the population and can take action on its behalf, creating a dysfunctional system susceptible to widespread corruption. This has created the political opportunity for Hezbollah to enter into political discourse as an adversarial outsider, simultaneously accumulating political capital at the expense of the dysfunctional Lebanese system while maintaining the cycle of violence that prevents its progression. Predicatively, this indicates that as long as Hezbollah can function as sub-state militant organization that perpetuates the violent struggle for legitimacy, it will remain a destabilizing force within a political system incapable of developing the necessary institutional coherence to adequately address the needs of the Lebanese population.

As a result, the Lebanese political system will remain incapable of providing the most basic social services to its constituency, creating the opportunity for Hezbollah to accumulate social legitimacy as well as political capital through its vast network of social service providers. Considered as an independent initiative, Hezbollah’s work as a social service provider has done considerable good throughout much of Lebanon and helped a large portion of the Lebanese population. However, within the extended security-stability threat model, Hezbollah’s role as a social service provider cannot be
considered in isolation. As a component of its larger campaign of resistance, Hezbollah’s struggle for social legitimacy is an important component of its threat to Lebanon’s stability: Hezbollah’s ability to accumulate mass support through its social service activities directly enables its program of armed resistance and political discourse, which together perpetuate the cycle of violence and institutional instability that prevents a legitimate functional governing regime from developing in Lebanon.

*Regional and Global Threat Implications*

The cycle of social and political instability in Lebanon also has significant implications at the regional and global level. Within the regional dynamic of the Middle East, instability in Lebanon allows its domestic insecurities to become intertwined with broader interstate antagonisms, escalating the potential scope of interstate conflict. This is particularly apparent in Lebanon’s relationship and enduring conflict with Israel. After its withdrawal from Lebanon in 2000, Israel continued to occupy Shib’a Farms, a disputed ten-square mile enclave near the Israeli-Lebanese-Syrian tri-border area, claiming that Shib’a Farms was part of the Israeli-occupied Syrian Golan Heights, not part of Lebanon.\(^\text{10}\) From a localized perspective, Israel’s mass withdrawal from Lebanon and the relatively small scope of the Shib’a Farms dispute could have mitigated the risk of an escalating conflict between Lebanon and Israel. However, Hezbollah has used Israel’s enduring occupation of Shib’a Farms both as justification for maintaining its military capability and for framing Lebanon’s dispute with Israel as part of the broader

\(^{10}\) Prados, “Lebanon,” 15.
Muslim-Zionist struggle shared by Lebanon, Iran, Syria, and Palestine. Predictably, Hezbollah’s role in maintaining instability within Lebanon and emphasizing the Lebanese position within the broader regional conflict creates the risk for escalating conflict beyond the scope of the enduring dispute between Lebanon and Israel over the occupation of Shib’a Farms.

Another component of Hezbollah’s threat to regional security as a destabilizing force within Lebanon is Hezbollah’s potential role as a surrogate for the aspirations of other regional powers. The capacity for external regional powers, such as Iran and Syria, to exert direct and indirect control over Lebanon’s internal political institutions and its regional policies towards other states, again most notably Israel, has two significant implications for Lebanon’s impact on regional security. The first and most obvious implication is the potential for Iran or Syria to use Lebanon as a proxy state to engage Israel in open conflict without suffering the negative effects (i.e. destruction of economic infrastructure and loss of life) within its own borders. This potential is closely related to the concept of Lebanon’s internal insecurities becoming intertwined with broader interstate antagonisms; however, it implies a greater degree of control on the part of the external state.

The second implication of Hezbollah’s potential role as a surrogate for the aspirations of Iran or Syria is that it also influences Israel’s policies towards Lebanon. This dynamic is independent of the true nature and scope of Iranian or Syrian influence over Lebanese policy towards Israel. As long as Israel believes that Lebanon is acting in
accordance with Iranian or Syrian interests, Israel will perceive Lebanon as a greater threat, regardless of the actual nature of the bi-lateral dispute between the two states (e.g. the Shib’a Farms dispute). Thus, although Hezbollah as an organization or as a movement is not the systemic cause of the conflict between Lebanon and Israel, Hezbollah increases the threat to both by perpetuating the cycle of violence that prevents Lebanon from developing stable internal political institutions and by serving directly or indirectly as a surrogate within Lebanon for external regional powers. The following section of this chapter offers a case study of the Israeli-Hezbollah War of 2006 to evaluate the credibility of the security-stability model when applied to Hezbollah’s threat as a destabilizing force within Lebanon.

The Israeli-Hezbollah War of 2006.

Control of Borders and the Monopoly of Force

On July 12th, 2006, a Hezbollah unit conducted a cross border raid into Israel, attacked an Israeli army patrol, killed three Israel Defense Forces (IDF) soldiers, and captured two IDF soldiers. Although the systemic causes are far more complex, this incident was the trigger for the ensuing conflict often referred to as the Israeli-Hezbollah War of 2006. However, both in word and in deed, it is apparent that Israel did not consider the conflict as limited to Hezbollah:

Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert declared that Hezbollah’s attack was “an act of war, without any provocation, on sovereign
territory over which there is no argument” and promised that Lebanon would suffer the consequences of Hezbollah’s actions.\textsuperscript{11}

Olmert argued that “Hizbullah’s actions constituted an ‘act of war’ by the government of Lebanon and, as such, ‘Lebanon is responsible and Lebanon will bear the consequences of its actions.’”\textsuperscript{12} Although the Lebanese government denied any prior knowledge or involvement in Hezbollah’s operation, Israeli Defense Minister Amir Peretz warned that “if the government of Lebanon fails to deploy its forces, as is expected from a sovereign government, we shall not allow any further Hizbullah to remain on the borders of the state of Israel.”\textsuperscript{13}

Israel proceeded to bomb Beirut’s International Airport, impose a total land, sea, and air blockade on Lebanon, and expand its attack to “include civilian areas and infrastructure throughout Lebanon, including Beirut.”\textsuperscript{14} Thus, the Lebanese government found itself at war as a result of Hezbollah’s cross-border raid into Israel and Lebanon’s inability to secure its southern borders with its legitimate Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF).


\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., 15.}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{14} Ibid.}
It is important to note that some challenge Israel’s right to declare a war on Lebanon in response to the actions of Hezbollah (which Israel considers a terrorist organization) and Israel’s extensive military response under international law. For example, Karim Makdisi argues that beyond the initial response to Hezbollah’s raid, Israel was “obligated by the UN Charter under Articles 2(3) and 2(4) to take steps to seek pacific settlement of its dispute with Lebanon and not to escalate its attacks on Lebanon,” as Hezbollah’s raid did not “constitute a *casus belli* for Israel to expand its attacks on Lebanon after the first exchange of fire with Hizbullah ended.”\(^\text{15}\) Makdisi also argues that Israel’s response violated the international standards of proportionality by responding to a limited border raid with an excessive military campaign targeting the civilian and economic infrastructure of Lebanon.\(^\text{16}\) Israel contends that its response was proportional in view of Hezbollah’s repeated violations of the Blue Line and its known stockpile of short, medium, and long range rockets. Israeli Foreign Minister Livny summarized this view when she stated that “proportionality is against a threat, and it is not an answer to a concrete situation on the ground.”\(^\text{17}\)

While interesting, the legal and/or moral implications of Hezbollah’s actions and Israel’s response is not the focus of this analysis; the focus of this analysis is Hezbollah as a destabilizing force in Lebanon. The Israeli-Hezbollah War of 2006 demonstrates the

\(^{15}\) Ibid., 17.

\(^{16}\) Ibid., 19.

\(^{17}\) Ibid.
destructive capability of a sub-state actor who controls a significant military capability within a fragile Third World state and is thus able to engage itself and its parent state in a trans-national war. Because of Hezbollah’s massive military component, “the Lebanese government finds itself unable to exercise the most fundamental elements of state sovereignty: the control of borders and a monopoly on the use of force.”¹⁸

*Reconstruction in Lebanon: The Roots of Insecurity*

It is difficult to estimate the full cost of the Israeli-Hezbollah War on Lebanon and to comprehend the scope of the required reconstruction efforts. Estimates attempting to account for the vast destruction of economic infrastructure and the indirect costs (i.e. “the loss of tourism revenue, export revenue, government revenue, loss of foreign investment flows, the cost of stabilizing the currency, and failure to achieve a positive growth rate”) range from $9.5 billion to UN estimates of $15 billion or higher.¹⁹ In essence, the fifteen years of reconstruction following the devastating Lebanese Civil War had been wiped out during the one month conflict: “the state of Lebanon was once again decimated.”²⁰ The following chart offers a snap-shot of the direct costs of the Israel’s War on Lebanon as of the end of July 2006:

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The Direct Costs of the War on Lebanon as of End of July 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Estimated cost of destruction (in million of US dollars)</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Housing and Trade</td>
<td>1,464</td>
<td>Does not include losses due to loss of furniture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>404</td>
<td>Bridges and Roads (94 roads and 70 bridges; 349 million)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Airports (3 airports; 55 million)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Does not include the cost of destruction of hundreds of cars, trucks,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>and other transport modes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electricity</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>Power Generation (80 million)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Power transmission (128 million)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial Establishments</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>10 large factories and more than 700 small and medium industrial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>establishments destroyed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telecommunication</td>
<td>99</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water</td>
<td>74</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military Installations</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gas Stations</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>22 Gas stations destroyed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


To understand the implications of such a vast reconstruction effort in Lebanon, it is useful to consider Ayoob’s concept of the roots of insecurity within Third World states and their implications on state stability. In the wake of the Israeli-Hezbollah War of 2006, Lebanon was clearly in the early stages of state-making as Ayoob defines it: “when state makers attempt to impose order, monopolize instrument of violence, and demand the exclusive loyalties of their populations. . . that is, to make their states’ existence secure territorially and institutionally.”  

During this period in a state’s development, Ayoob defines three roots of insecurity:

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22 Ayoob, Third World Security Predicament, 28.
1. The lack of unconditional legitimacy for state boundaries, state institutions, and regimes;

2. Inadequate societal cohesion;

3. The absence of societal consensus on fundamental issues of social, economic, and political organizations.

Within this analytic framework, the Lebanese government must demonstrate its capacity for reconstruction (e.g. its ability to provide basic social services to its constituency) to maintain its legitimacy as a regime. This creates a highly unstable environment for Lebanon in which a proxy war of armed conflict has been extended into a proxy war of relief that threatens to perpetuate the cycle of violence that has plagued Lebanon throughout its history:

While fighting has come to a halt, Iran and Hezbollah are vying with the United States and its international and Arab partners over which side can help rebuild southern Lebanon the fastest and win the “hearts and minds” of many distraught Lebanese civilians who have lost homes and businesses due to the war.24

Unfortunately, the Lebanese government’s capacity to plan, resource, and implement an effective nation-wide reconstruction plan remains questionable. Even prior to the financial shocks of the Israeli-Hezbollah War, the Lebanese government suffered from severe financial constraints and a post-Taif reconstruction debt burden that made it difficult to finance its own reconstruction initiatives or promote foreign

23 Ibid.

investment. Further, the post Civil War reconstruction initiatives tended to focus on the
capital and the surrounding areas, generally ignoring the remote southern regions except
through direct appropriations to Shiite militias, including Hezbollah, for investment
limited to the agriculture sector. While the Lebanese Prime Minister Fu’ad Siniora has
insisted the Lebanese government wants full control of all international aid in the post
Israeli-Hezbollah War of 2006 reconstruction effort, it is doubtful that the Lebanese
government has the administrative capacity or the political will to implement vast
reconstruction initiatives as efficiently, effectively, or as quickly as required.25

These internal political challenges have created an opportunity for Hezbollah to
emerge as a significant reconstruction actor in southern Lebanon, simultaneously
consolidating its base of support and weakening the Lebanese government’s legitimacy.
Within days of the end of the armed conflict with Israel, Hezbollah soldiers transitioned
to reconstruction activities providing immediate relief to southern Lebanon. For
example, Hezbollah paid as many as fifteen thousand homeless families $10,000 to
$12,000 grants to compensate for their lost homes, leveraged their affiliated architects,
engineers, and construction companies to plan the construction of new homes, provided
free medicine through their network of hospitals and clinics, and distributed an
estimated twenty-five thousand free meals daily in the weeks following the ceasefire.26

26 Norton, Hezbollah, 140.
As a result of Hezbollah’s immense budget and its ability to deliver aid outside of the political turmoil that constrained the Lebanese government:

Hezbollah’s leader Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah acquired a folk-hero status as his organization was widely hailed both for its military prowess in the conflict with Israel and for its perceived ability to initiate disaster relief projects far more quickly and efficiently than the regular governmental organizations.27

An analysis of the destabilizing implications of Hezbollah’s social service and reconstruction efforts after the 2006 Israeli-Hezbollah War deserves a nuanced approach. Clearly, Hezbollah has provided crucial support to otherwise marginalized regions in southern Lebanon, specifically in the Shiite community. It would be inappropriate to condemn those efforts and ignore the real relief that Hezbollah has provided simply because Hezbollah is Hezbollah. However, it would be equally inappropriate and misinformed to view Hezbollah’s social service and reconstruction efforts in isolation because they are not isolated initiatives. Instead, it is useful to recognize that everything that Hezbollah does is part of a coherent and coordinated campaign of resistance. Daniel Byman recognized this nuanced perspective in 2003 when he wrote in a Foreign Affairs article that “although such social and political involvement does not indicate a fundamental reversal in the movement, as some

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apologists suggest, it does reflect a broadening of Hezbollah’s functions beyond political violence.\textsuperscript{28}

Hezbollah’s use of social service and reconstruction as an extension of political violence has had two immediate and significant effects: first, it has made it politically impossible for Lebanon to pursue a disarmament, demobilizing, and reintegration (DDR) program with Hezbollah; and second, it has made it impossible for the United Nations peacekeeping force in Lebanon, UNIFIL, to succeed without Hezbollah’s cooperation.\textsuperscript{29} This has lead some analysts to question the long term utility of UNIFIL’s expanded mission under Resolution 1701 and the prospect for enduring peace in Lebanon as those efforts will “fail to change the fundamental political and military dynamics on the ground that started the war in the first place – the presence of a well-armed Hezbollah militia on Israel’s borders.”\textsuperscript{30}

\textit{The Regional Dynamic and External Vulnerabilities}

Thus far, this case study has discussed Hezbollah’s role as a destabilizing force from an internal perspective: how Hezbollah’s control of significant military and social service/reconstruction capabilities exacerbate Lebanon’s internal vulnerabilities and the roots of insecurity. This section transitions to Hezbollah’s role as a destabilizing force from an external perspective: how Hezbollah’s role as a conduit for interstate

\textsuperscript{28} Daniel Byman, “Should Hezbollah Be Next?” \textit{Foreign Affairs}, November/December 2006, Vol. 82, Number 6, pp. 53-66, 60.

\textsuperscript{29} Norton, \textit{Hezbollah}, 141.

\textsuperscript{30} Sharp, “Lebanon,” 5.
antagonisms promotes broader interstate conflict and regional instability. A review of Hezbollah’s relationship with Iran and Syria in the context of 2006 Israeli-Hezbollah War demonstrates the relevancy of Ayoob’s assertion concerning interstate conflict and regional insecurity:

There are two major sources of interstate conflict and insecurity in the Third World: (1) the intermeshing of domestic insecurities with interstate antagonisms, and (2) the autonomous dynamic of regional conflict, which is often centered on the aspirations of preeminent regional powers.\(^{31}\)

Within the global and regional political reality surrounding the 2006 Israeli-Hezbollah War, two general hypotheses have emerged to explain Iran’s and Syria’s motivation for engaging Hezbollah in an armed conflict with Israel:

1. Hezbollah acted at the behest of or with the approval of Iran, its main sponsor, because Iran also questions Israel’s right to exist, also supports Hamas, and perhaps wanted to divert international attention from its nuclear program.

2. Hezbollah acted to advance the interests of Syria, which may have sought to reclaim influence in Lebanon from which it withdrew in 2005 by showing the weakness of the Lebanese government.\(^{32}\)

The complex dynamics of the Hezbollah-Lebanon-Iran-Syria-Israel-Palestine relationship(s) make it difficult to determine the exact role any of those players had in influencing Hezbollah’s decision to conduct the cross border raid and initiate the 2006 war with Israel. However, Iran and Syria were both in a position to benefit from the


\(^{32}\) Migdalovitz, “Israeli-Arab Negotiations,” 1.
conflict and both have a demonstrated history of influence over Hezbollah and its operations. That dynamic demonstrates the destabilizing effects that Hezbollah has in Lebanon as a conduit for external influence capable of engaging Lebanon in a devastating proxy war.\textsuperscript{33}

Israel’s perception of the Israeli-Hezbollah War as a proxy war is also significant. Israeli’s massive retaliation to the limited cross border raid indicates that “Israel views the problem of Hezbollah geostrategically, as a proxy military challenge supported by its long-term enemies Syria and Iran.”\textsuperscript{34} From the geostrategic perspective, Hezbollah’s close associations with Syria and Iran presented both a greater threat to Israel and a greater opportunity for Israel to use Lebanon as the proxy battleground in its struggle against Syria and Iran, once again demonstrating that:

As is the case with most proxy wars, the highest price was paid by the host country, Lebanon, which found itself the arena of regional and international war. The terrible toll on civilian life, housing, and infrastructure made this one of the most devastating wars in Lebanon’s recent history.\textsuperscript{35}

As a case study, the Israeli-Hezbollah War of 2006 demonstrates the utility of Ayoob’s security-stability framework in assessing the threat of Hezbollah as a group that integrates the use of violence and legitimate political discourse into a coherent campaign of resistance. As an emerging middle ground between traditionally violent


\textsuperscript{34} Mooney, “Stabilizing Lebanon,” 28.

\textsuperscript{35} Salem, “Future of Lebanon,” 1.
and non-violent groups, Hezbollah can function as a sub-state militant organization that perpetuates a violent struggle for legitimacy in Lebanon while participating in the political system it seeks to abolish. This creates a dangerous recursive dynamic in which Hezbollah can accumulate political capital at the expense of the dysfunctional Lebanese system while maintaining the cycle of violence that prevents its progression. This has a destabilizing effect on Lebanon which makes it more susceptible to external influence from regional powers and more vulnerable to escalating interstate conflict, as evident by the Israeli-Hezbollah War of 2006.

**Conclusion.**

A brief literary review indicates that there are multiple cross-disciplinary arguments supporting the idea that participation in political discourse will ultimately encourage a group that uses violence as a repertoire of contention to abandon the use of violence as it becomes assimilated into the existing political system. From a national security studies and strategic policy prospective, Audrey Kurth Cronin posits that historically one of the six ways in which terrorist campaigns have ended and groups have de-militarized is through politicalization or “moving towards a legitimate political process.”\(^36\) From a policy prospective Cronin advocates government level negotiation with terrorist organizations as “a durable strategic tool for managing violence,

splintering the opposition and facilitating its longer-term decline.”\textsuperscript{37} Her model does not explicitly accommodate groups that use violence as a repertoire of contention while actively participating in political discourse as with Hezbollah; however, from a policy perceptive, her model is a starting point for the strategic logic that engaging a terrorist organization in political discourse (even at a rudimentary level of negotiation) will necessarily isolate the more radically violent factions of the organization and encourage moderation.

In an article for \textit{The Online Journal for Peace and Conflict Resolution}, Cliff Staten expands the conceptualization of moderation through politicalization considerably in a case study of Hezbollah’s participation in the Lebanese system. From a political science perceptive, Staten uses political opportunity structure to identify the factors that enabled Hezbollah to become active in the Lebanese political process in an effort to understand its transformation from a terrorist group into a legitimate political party. As with Cronin, Staten’s analysis is predicated on the explicit assumption that “participation in an electoral process forces any party, regardless of ideology, to moderate its position if it wants to attract voters in large numbers.”\textsuperscript{38} Staten’s subsequent analysis provides credible evidence to support his findings that the Hezbollah case study “clearly relates changes in the political opportunity structure to

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{37} Ibid., 43.

\end{footnotesize}
However, his analysis does not present a compelling argument that moderation (i.e. abandoning the use of violence) is a necessary component of Hezbollah’s political transformation, prompting Staten to concede toward that end of his analysis that although Hezbollah has integrated successfully into the Lebanese political system “it is true that Hezbollah has yet to disarm; that it continues to provide support for Hamas; that it still engages in terrorist acts against Israel, and that it is still opposed to the existence of the state of Israel.”

These facts, when considered in the context of Hezbollah’s organizational development and ideological evolution, indicate a significant gap in the conceptual model of moderation through politicalization: assuming that successful political participation necessitates moderation does not accommodate the reality that a group like Hezbollah can not only maintain a successful campaign of violence and political discourse, but is dependant on their mutual support to maintain organizational integrity and ideological resonance. While political participation could enable, or even encourage, moderation over a long enough time horizon, political participation does not necessitate moderation in an immediate sense. Instead, the process of accommodating the use of violence and political discourse into a coordinated campaign of resistance creates organizational and ideological constraints to separating the two modes of contention and abandoning either (e.g. the use of violence in the case of moderation).

39 Ibid., 45.
40 Ibid., 43.
However, Hezbollah is not a singular anomaly: further study into groups such as Hamas is required to build a better understanding of groups that have effectively accommodated the use of violence, social services, and legitimate political participation into broader campaigns of resistance. A comparative analysis of the organizational development and ideological evolution of Hezbollah and Hamas will provide insight into each group’s transformation into a functioning political entity, its prospects for moderation overtime, and significantly, its immediate threat at the local, regional, and global level.

A cursory analysis suggests that there are significant deviations in the organizational development and ideological evolution of Hezbollah and Hamas and that these deviations are directly correlated to each organization’s political saliency and potential threat. Organizationally, while Hezbollah coalesced overtime by building a coalition of multiple discrete organizations, Hamas was essentially established by the already powerful Muslim Brotherhood of Palestine in response to the First Intifada of 1987.\textsuperscript{41} Further, in the wake of the Second Intifada of 2000, Israel carried out a successful campaign of targeted assassinations against Hamas leadership, including Hamas’s leader Sheik Ahmed Yassin and his successor Dr. Abdul Aziz Rantisi. While Israel’s campaign was tactically successful, it had the unintended consequence of reinforcing Hamas’s hierarchical structure, effectively making it a leaner organization.

less capable of moderation through internal negotiation or bargaining even over an extended time horizon. Thus, while the internal decision making process in Hamas is also dependant on the contentious process of negotiation and bargaining, Hamas represents a more rigid structure which is more likely to preclude the extended debate that could ultimately compel the group to abandon the use of violence as a mode of contention.

Similarly, Hamas’s ideological evolution reflects a high degree of inclusivity and rigidity. As with Hezbollah, Hamas’s decision to participate in Palestinian Authority system of governance did not represent an attempt by Hamas to conform its core diagnostic or prognostic frames to more moderate and constructive political discourse; instead, it actively sought to reconstruct the existing political reality and thus expand its prognostic and motivational frames to include political participation. However, Hamas’s ideological evolution does not display the same level of political sophistication as Hezbollah’s evolution: Hamas never developed a coherent political campaign independent of its program of armed resistance. This is most likely because of Israel’s overwhelming presence and influence in Palestine, specifically the Gaza Strip. Unlike the majority of Lebanese, the daily experiences of all Palestinians are directly impacted by Israel, accentuating the experiential commensurability of active resistance. Thus,

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ideologically, Hamas has little chance of maintaining resonance through an independent political campaign or eventually abandoning the use of violence as a repertoire of contention.

Accordingly, a more rigorous analysis of Hamas’s organizational development and ideological evolution can provide useful insight into Hamas’s 2006 political victory in the Palestinian Authority as well the ensuing instability and escalating armed conflict in Gaza and the West Bank. More importantly, a comparative analysis of Hezbollah and Hamas’s organizational development and ideological evolution can provide insight into the emerging threat of centralized networks that can effectively coordinate the use of violence, social services, and political discourse while simultaneously perpetuating local, regional, and global instability and accumulating national support and international legitimacy.

An analysis of Hezbollah’s organizational development and ideological evolution indicate that there are significant constraints to moderation once a group has effectively integrated the use of violence and political discourse into a coordinated campaign of resistance. After negotiating an organizational compromise that recognizes the mutually supporting utility of the use of violence and political discourse and constructing an ideological reality that correlates both to religious obligation, it will be difficult for Hezbollah to separate the two modes of contention and abandon either while maintaining structural integrity and ideological resonance. As a result, Hezbollah has become an active agent in the Lebanese political system that challenges the current
conceptualization of terrorism in which groups use violence as an alternative to political discourse: Hezbollah uses violence as a complement to its political program by directly translating its use of violence into the political capital required to compel change from within the existing political system.

The coexistence of the use of violence and political participation together with the organizational and ideological constraints to moderation are significant because they translate directly into a relevant threat when considered within an extended stability-security model. Hezbollah’s ability to coordinate a campaign of armed resistance, social services, and political participation has perpetuated instability within Lebanon at the political-institutional level and the social level. As a result, Lebanon has remained internally unstable, in a violent struggle for political and social identity and legitimacy, and externally vulnerable to escalating regional conflict. After almost fifteen years of credible participation in the legitimate Lebanese political system, Hezbollah’s role as the trigger for the costly Israeli-Hezbollah War of 2006 demonstrates its threat locally to Lebanon and beyond in the globally significant Middle East region.
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