NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA

THESIS

POLITICAL INTEGRATION OF HEZBOLLAH INTO LEBANESE POLITICS

by

Thomas G. Esposito

June 2009

Thesis Co Advisors: Mohammed Hafez
Anne Marie Baylouny

Approved for public release; distribution unlimited

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE			Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188
Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instruction, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302, and to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (0704-0188) Washington DC 20503.			
1. AGENCY USE ONLY ***(Leave blank)***	**2. REPORT DATE** June 2009	**3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED** Master's Thesis	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Political Integration of Hezbollah into Lebanese Politics		**5. FUNDING NUMBERS**	
6. AUTHOR(S) Thomas G. Esposito			
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Naval Postgraduate School Monterey, CA 93943-5000		**8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER**	
9. SPONSORING /MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) N/A		**10. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER**	
11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES The views expressed in this thesis are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of Defense or the U.S. Government.			
12a. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release; distribution unlimited.		**12b. DISTRIBUTION CODE**	

13. ABSTRACT (maximum 200 words)

Hezbollah has proven itself to be a resilient, relevant, military and political force within Lebanon as well as across the Middle Eastern region. This thesis focuses on the approach through which Hezbollah, as a military, political and social organization integrates itself into Lebanese society and polity. This thesis looks at how an Islamic organization, perceived as a "terrorist-group" in the mid-1980s, continues to transform itself and achieve success in being perceived as a legitimate political actor participating in Lebanese government.

Political integration is problematic for Hezbollah, since it must balance its need to be a legitimate actor within Lebanon's political system with its original, and continuing, militant objectives of liberating Lebanon and other territories under Israeli control, and in general protecting the country from Israeli incursion. The first objective requires Hezbollah to be sensitive to the needs of Lebanon and its many political factions and internal interests. The second objective requires Hezbollah to maintain its radical stance toward a neighboring state, maintain a large armed militia, and form alliances with external actors such as Syria and Iran independent of the policies of the Lebanese government. How can Hezbollah balance these interests? This thesis explores how Hezbollah seeks to reconcile these seemingly contradictory objectives.

14. SUBJECT TERMS Hezbollah, Hizbullah, Lebanon, Political Integration, Social Movement Theory			**15. NUMBER OF PAGES** 79
			16. PRICE CODE
17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT Unclassified	**18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE** Unclassified	**19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT** Unclassified	**20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT** UU

NSN 7540-01-280-5500 Standard Form 298 (Rev. 2-89)
Prescribed by ANSI Std. 239-18

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

Approved for public release; distribution unlimited

POLITICAL INTEGRATION OF HEZBOLLAH INTO LEBANESE POLITICS

Thomas G. Esposito
Major, United States Marine Corps
B.S., Miami University, Ohio, 1994

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN SECURITY STUDIES
(MIDDLE EAST, SOUTH ASIA, SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA)

from the

NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL
June 2009

Author: Thomas G. Esposito

Approved by: Dr. Mohammed Hafez
Co-Advisor

Dr. Anne Marie Baylouny
Co-Advisor

Dr. Harold A. Trinkunas, PhD
Chairman, Department of National Security Affairs

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

ABSTRACT

Hezbollah has proven itself to be a resilient, relevant, military and political force within Lebanon as well as across the Middle Eastern region. This thesis focuses on the approach through which Hezbollah, as a military, political and social organization integrates itself into Lebanese society and polity. This thesis looks at how an Islamic organization, perceived as a “terrorist-group” in the mid-1980s, continues to transform itself and achieve success in being perceived as a legitimate political actor participating in Lebanese government.

Political integration is problematic for Hezbollah, since it must balance its need to be a legitimate actor within Lebanon's political system with its original, and continuing, militant objectives of liberating Lebanon and other territories under Israeli control, and in general protecting the country from Israeli incursion. The first objective requires Hezbollah to be sensitive to the needs of Lebanon and its many political factions and internal interests. The second objective requires Hezbollah to maintain its radical stance toward a neighboring state, maintain a large armed militia, and form alliances with external actors such as Syria and Iran independent of the policies of the Lebanese government. How can Hezbollah balance these interests? This thesis explores how Hezbollah seeks to reconcile these seemingly contradictory objectives.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION....1
- **A. MAJOR RESEARCH QUESTION....1**
- **B. IMPORTANCE....2**
- **C. PROBLEMS AND HYPOTHESES....2**
- **D. LITERATURE REVIEW....3**
- **E. METHODS AND SOURCES....7**
- **F. THESIS OVERVIEW....8**

II. A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE OF THE LEBANESE SHI'A POLITICAL SITUATION....9
- **A. INTRODUCTION....9**
- **B. IMPORTANCE....10**
  - **1. Historical Shi'a Discrimination....10**
  - **2. The Composition of Lebanese Shi'a....11**
  - **3. Where the Shi'a Settled in Lebanon....12**
  - **4. The Subjugation of Twelver Shi'a in Lebanon....13**
- **C. THE TWENTIETH CENTURY POLITICAL LOYALTIES OF THE LEBANESE SHI'A....15**
  - **1. Uneven Political Development....16**
  - **2. Watershed Events in Shi'a Political Development....17**
    - ***a. The 1948 Arab-Israeli "al Nakba" and Palestinian Refugee Immigration into Lebanon....18***
    - ***b. The Six Day War and the 1969 Cairo Agreement....18***
    - ***c. The Shi'a Militarize....20***
    - ***d. Full Political Mobilization of the Lebanese Shi'a....23***

III. HEZBOLLAH: FRAMING THE EVOLUTION OF ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALISM USING SOCIAL MOVEMENT THEORY....27
- **A. INTRODUCTION....27**
  - **1. Social Movement Theory and Islamic Activism....28**
- **B. THE ORIGINS OF THE HEZBOLLAH'S "FRAMING PROCESS"....32**
- **C. "POLITICAL OPPORTUNITY" AT LAST: THE ISRAELI INVASION OF LEBANON....36**
- **D. CULTIVATING A CONSTITUENCY....38**
- **E. HEZBOLLAH MOVES TOWARDS MODERATION: THE "*INFITAH*"....40**
  - **1. Restructuring....41**
- **F. CONCLUSION....43**

IV. CONCLUSION....45
- **A. EPILOGUE: JUNE 8, 2009-LEBANESE POST-ELECTION RESULTS....50**

APPENDIX. MAPS OF LEBANON....53

LIST OF REFERENCES **55**
INITIAL DISTRIBUTION LIST **63**

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Political Map of Lebanon.....53
Figure 2. Distribution of Religious Groups of Lebanon 54

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Hezbollah[1] presents itself as somewhat of an enigma to the casual observer. Popular culture depicts Hezbollah as Janus-faced organization,[2] simultaneously holding sinister and benevolent titles as a terrorist organization and benefactor of the needy. It has been–and elements of the organization continue to be–a highly secretive organization, infamous for its aggressive martial resistance to political rivals (e.g., Israel, Lebanese Government, rival domestic militias, the United States, etc.) and for its historical use of violence on the domestic, regional and international stage. Furthermore, it maintains a formidable militia that is well outside of the Lebanese government's control. Hezbollah has latitude in its freedom of action inside and outside of the state, imposing policies over which the Lebanese state has little or no control.

Conversely, Hezbollah earns admiration by an increasing number of supporters and grudging praise by critics as a positive societal force. This accolade stems directly from Hezbollah's generous domestic social programs, which fill a critical gap in services the Lebanese state is unable or unwilling to provide.

This thesis discusses the historical forces facilitating an atmosphere favorable to the formation of Hezbollah, the role of Hezbollah in Lebanese politics, and the future ramifications caused by Hezbollah's approach to participation in the Lebanese political process. The discussion attempts to provide a methodical, historical analysis using Social Movement Theory (SMT). When viewed through this analytical lens, Hezbollah should be seen as a flexible, nuanced and pragmatic political institution not merely a dogmatic religious organization, armed political militia, or simply a social-services movement. It is all of these combined.

[1] Spellings of Hezbollah will range from *Hezbollah* to *Hizbullah* due to various authors' transliterations.

[2] Augustus Richard Norton, *Hezbollah* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2007), 187.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank Professors Anne Marie Baylouny and Mohammed Hafez for their critical guidance and expertise, without which writing this thesis would have been unfeasible. I would also like to thank my editor, Nancy Sharrock.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

I. INTRODUCTION

A. MAJOR RESEARCH QUESTION

Hezbollah has proven itself to be a resilient, relevant, military and political force within Lebanon as well as across the Middle Eastern region. It has been argued that the initial reason for Hezbollah's existence came from resistance to Israeli occupation of Southern Lebanon, continuation of the "Islamic Revolution"[3] (started by Iran in 1979) and general "oppression by the superpowers of the third world."[4] However, as of May 24, 2000, and the final withdrawal of Israeli forces from most of Lebanon, the threat by which Hezbollah potentially defined itself had been (for the most part) physically removed. How then would a newly "liberated" Lebanese populous feel about a powerful, non-state actor within its borders? Does the Israeli toehold in the Shib'a Farms provide adequate political justification for Hezbollah's continued armed resistance? If so, what about Hezbollah's aggressive 2008 actions within Lebanon itself; specifically, the apparent will to exert their political opinion through the calculated application of martial coercion against the Lebanese political structure?

Elements of this thesis center on the approach in which Hezbollah as a military, political and social organization integrates itself into Lebanese society and polity. It will look at how an Islamic organization, perceived as a "terrorist-group" in the mid-1980s, continues to transform itself into a legitimate political actor participating in Lebanese government. How does Hezbollah balance its need to be a legitimate actor within Lebanon's political system with its original, and continuing, militant objectives of liberating Lebanon and other territories under Israeli control, and in general, protecting the country from Israeli incursion? The first objective requires Hezbollah to be sensitive to the needs of Lebanon and its many political factions and internal interests. The second objective requires Hezbollah to maintain its radical stance toward a neighboring state, sustain a large armed militia, and form alliances with external actors such as Syria and

[3] Norton, *Hezbollah*, 134.

[4] Ibid., 38.

Iran independent of the policies of the Lebanese government. How can Hezbollah balance these interests? This thesis explores how Hezbollah seeks to reconcile these seemingly contradictory objectives.

B. IMPORTANCE

Understanding the transformational dynamic of political inclusion leading to the potential moderation of a non-state, rational actor is critical to accurate analytic assessment and policy formulation. Since Hezbollah has been assessed to be a significant threat to the United States' domestic territory, global allies, and national interests, it is crucial to view the group through the proper analytical lens. If the spirit of former Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage's famously quoted passage of a 2002 speech addressing the threat posed by Hezbollah as, "the A-team of terrorists, while al-Qaida may actually be the B-team,"[5] is to be taken at face value, then sober examination of how credible a threat that Hezbollah actually poses is required. Hezbollah does not appear to pose a direct threat to the U.S., but it does threaten American regional interests by (1) acting as a proxy force for Iran; (2) threatening Israel; and (3) sponsoring radical factions in Palestine and Iraq. Therefore, it is important to understand the motivations and strategic drivers of Hezbollah to formulate effective policies to moderate it or contain it.

C. PROBLEMS AND HYPOTHESES

The challenge raised by some stereotypical, historical framing of Hezbollah as a criminal terrorist organization belies the fact that between 1985 and present day, significant changes have occurred within the organization's leadership, philosophy and style of political expression. If Hezbollah is neatly placed in the "terrorist column" of categorization, it is the author's opinion that doing so masks an important opportunity to evaluate the organization as a rational actor–an actor whose possible long-term goals are to moderate and seek legitimate inclusion in the political process.

[5] Eben Kaplain, "The Al-Qaeda-Hezbollah Relationship," *Council on Foreign Relations*, http://www.cfr.org/publication/11275/alqaedahezbollah_relationship.html.

In contradiction to the sentiment expressed by former Deputy Secretary of State Armitage, an alternate academic school of thought revolves around the theme of, "Hizbullah [is] more similar to the Irish Republican Army than to the Al-Qaeda network. They are a national resistance [movement] whose primary aim has been to end foreign occupation of their lands." Furthermore, "Simultaneously, [Hizbullah is a] political party that participate[s] in national politics… [and by doing so]... turn increasingly pragmatic. The result is that the leadership and rank and file [become] increasingly socialized into the culture of the democratic politics, leading one to believe that they were well on their way to become [a] "normal" [party]."[6]

This thesis explores three perspectives on Hezbollah: One views Hezbollah as a hardened ideological movement incapable of moderation and accommodation with the United States and the second views Hezbollah as a malleable and pragmatic organization on its way to moderation. The third perspective, argued in this thesis, takes the middle ground, arguing Hezbollah is strictly neither one; it comprises elements of both.

Two characteristic, archetypal themes appear: one casting Hezbollah as a villainous terrorist group bent on Islamic domination and the destruction of Israel, and the second caricature portraying Hezbollah as a victim of circumstance: a heroic resistance organization earnestly trying to moderate, obtain political credentials and join the legitimate political process. The author claims that the truth lies somewhere between these two poles, despite the emotional policy fog and rhetoric created by years of violence between Hezbollah and its critics and enemies.

D. LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature reviewed for this thesis approaches Hezbollah from three broad perspectives. The first perspective represents Hezbollah as a terrorist organization bent on the destruction of Israel and acting as a spoiler to all U.S. policy in the region. The second looks at Hezbollah as a rational actor with a legitimate roll as a resistance force against Israeli occupation of Lebanon, as well as a developing political force within the

[6] Mohammed Ayoob, *The Many Faces of Political Islam: Religion and Politics in the Muslim World* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2008), 129.

Lebanese political space. The third perspective is a balanced view, showing Hezbollah to be a political resistance organization whose past actions are not altogether "clean" (i.e., sponsorship of terrorist-like activities), yet which also has demonstrated responsible institutional behavior in line with international norms (i.e., providing social services to citizens, generally obeying rules of war and often acting with transparency as to their state's goals and actions). This thesis focuses on and argues for the third perspective.

Source material reviewed for this thesis included books, online newspaper articles and other publications. Generally, the books were neutral or sympathetic in their treatment of Hezbollah, and reasonably judgmental of both the good and bad actions of the group. Most literature rather hawkish towards Hezbollah was in the form of online policy papers and opinion pieces. These pieces, while containing some insightful observations, were minimized in analysis due to the outright bias they exhibited.

The best, most well-balanced and concise historical analysis is *Hezbollah: A Short History*, by Augusts Norton.[7] Norton chronicles the rise of Hezbollah from its origins as an offshoot of the southern Lebanese Shi'a group Amal. The narrative is straightforward, utilizing a historical narrative style, and revolves around the factors leading to Hezbollah's formation. Norton's narrative encompasses inception of the group to late 2006, describing the ramifications of the 2006 Israeli-Hezbollah war, and more significantly, the play for power Hezbollah made with a call (and some could argue "blackmail" tactics) for a unity government. Events of history have shown Norton's predictive analysis [in the concluding chapter] to be correct, with Hezbollah seemingly achieving its goals of establishing a unity government, under President Michel Suleiman in May 2008. The current structure of the Lebanese government gives Hezbollah what they have been seeking: an, "ability to veto government decisions." [8]

A balanced look at the reasons Hezbollah formed, is given by Mohammed Ayoob,[9] detailing a parallel, historical example between Hamas and Hezbollah showing

---

[7] Norton, *Hezbollah*, 187.

[8] Christopher M. Blanchard and Jeremy M. Sharp, "Lebanon," *CRS Report for Congress* (June 12, 2008), http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/RL33509.pdf.

[9] Ayoob, *The Many Faces of Political Islam: Religion and Politics in the Muslim World*, 213.

them to be two groups who have resistance to a foreign occupier as their primary reason for existence. Ayboob makes clear an important distinction of Hezbollah as a group that is not solely interested in sowing the seeds of local or trans-national terrorism. He demonstrates that Hezbollah's goals are very local in nature and have a clear strategic objective.

> It is clear from the discussion that Hizbullah and Hamas are more similar to the Irish Republican Army than to the Al Qaeda network. They are national resistance movements whose primary aim has been to end foreign occupation to of their lands. …They are political parties that participate in national politics with the aim of influencing their countries; domestic and foreign polices. …In the process they have turned increasingly pragmatic. …Their leadership is …becoming increasingly socialized into the culture of democratic politics, leading one to believe that they were well on their way to becoming "normal" political parties.[10]

A local, first-hand, historical perspective is offered by Hala Jaber"s, *Hezbollah, Born with a Vengeance*. Her narrative spans from local interviews with Hezbollah leaders from inception of the group concluding with the ending of the Israeli military Operation Grapes of Wrath in 1996. Jaber's factual, if somewhat sympathetic, account details multiple Lebanese perspectives on the Israeli occupation of Southern Lebanon, reasons for resistance, support for (and against) Hezbollah. Particularly stirring is a detailed account of the IDF shelling of the United Nations-occupied town of Qana and the dramatic death of 109 Lebanese refugees.[11] The upshot of the book is the point that Hezbollah appears to moderating and assimilating into the political arena. However, the major hindrance to assisting or speeding this transition is the branding of Hezbollah as a stereotypical terrorist organization. "So long as the West and Israel continue to regard the problem as a crusade against terrorism they are in effect denying their own responsibility for fostering the conditions which gave rise to Hezbollah. …[By branding the Resistance as "terrorists" it can continue to deny legitimacy to Hezbollah's cause]."[12]

---

[10] Ayoob, *The Many Faces of Political Islam: Religion and Politics in the Muslim World*, 129.

[11] Hala Jabar, *Hezbollah: Born with a Vengeance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 169.

[12] Ibid., 214.

A policy-focused book centering on Hezbollah is Judith Harik's, *Hezbollah, The Changing Face of Terrorism*. In it, she delves into a historically based account of Hezbollah's formation with a summation of U.S. policy reaction towards the group in a pre and post-9/11 world. Harik emphasizes the political motivations of the Bush Administration with regard to branding Hezbollah a terrorist organization, and the ramifications that label ultimately has on furthering U.S. foreign policy goals in Lebanon (and the region), as well as the hindrance it places on possibly aiding Hezbollah's assimilation into mainstream Lebanese politics. Additionally, the book explores the links between the Asad regime of Syria (and Iran) and its control/support for Hezbollah. Of special note is her point that perceptions of the United States as an impartial, "honest broker" in the region are greatly damaged by the policy of branding Hezbollah a terrorist organization as well as the seemingly passive acquiescence to any and all aggressive Israeli policies towards [and within] Lebanon.[13]

Lastly, a completely firsthand account is given by Naim Qassem, the Deputy Secretary General of Hezbollah, in *Hizbullah, The Story From Within*. Although a completely biased, outright supportive view of Hezbollah, it does offer insight into the group's philosophy as well as an intimate perspective of someone on the receiving end of U.S. and Israeli policy sanctions. Qassem's narrative does have the tendency to be tediously thorough; however, it is hard to argue with his comments on U.S. policy. Qassem is not myopic. He demonstrates an intellectual command of the issues at worst on par with, and at times superior to, most Western policy makers–this fact alone makes his discussion points most compelling. A telling passage illustrates his attitudes well with regard to the on-again, off-again offers of U.S. Congressmen to meet with Hezbollah.

> United States hostility has manifested itself through words and actions alike, and has encompassed all aspects and phases of the Party's presence. This stands in contrast with Hezbollah's beliefs and actual conduct, both being in harmony with Islam's principals and with the cause of legitimate resistance against Israeli occupation. As such, the Party considered calls for meeting and dialogue as communicated through some United States Congress officials to be futile. …The encounter between the Party and the

[13] Judith Palmer Harik, *Hezbollah; the Changing Face of Terrorism* (New York: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd, 2007), 201.

> United States administration would not add anything new to the acquaintance of each side with the other's views and would not alter the stance on either side.[14]

Due to the author's own Western, secular bias, Qassim's essay does lose credibility at times when he launches into anti-Western tirades about the seeming superiority of a Muslim way of governance, but his penchant for favoring an Islamic state is tempered by reasonable rationale. It is an alternative to the corruption of the current Lebanese secular government. Overall, the text is part guidebook–it methodically spells out the political goals of Hezbollah (down to the specifying the voting age of constituents)–and part editorial, sufficiently interspersed with political commentary steeped in anti-U.S. and Israeli opinions. It is a useful insight into seeing this group through their own eyes and offers excellent perspective into how they perceive the "carrots and sticks" offered to them by various U.S. administrations (sticks mostly) and regional neighbors (Syria and Iran, offering carrots).

E. METHODS AND SOURCES

Historical study method are used focusing on Hezbollah as well as possibly drawing analogies to "like sister resistance groups"–Hamas for example–to help tease out the metrics by which Hezbollah measures success of its policies. Primarily, sources that cite direct opinions of Hezbollah leaders, party members and general Lebanese citizenry are sought to see if, one, these individuals believe that their group is making progress and two, what types of milestones should be reached that would potentially symbolize goal-achievement.

The source material, which supports this approach is mainly newspaper and magazine articles (online) and opinion/ editorial pieces in regional newspapers (i.e., the Beirut based "Daily Star"). Excellent analytical background materials that outline the U.S.' policy dispassionately and paint an antiseptic, bird's-eye, world-view of the situation are CRS Reports for Congress.

---

[14] Naim Qassem, *Hizbullah, the Story from within*, trans., Dalia Khalil (London: Saqi, 2005), 249.

F. THESIS OVERVIEW

The crux of the thesis aims to show a refined analysis of key events in Hezbollah's historically demonstrated behavior and policy as well as show how it has adjusted itself to the shifting realities of the Lebanese political space and its Shi'a constituency.

The thesis is organized into thirds. One third deals with the political history of Lebanon and the Shi'a polity. The second third analyzes Hezbollah through the lens of Social Movement Theory (SMT). It looks at Hezbollah's possible moderation detailing significant contemporary events with respect to how those events position the party for integration into present-day Lebanese politics. The last third is the conclusion.

II. A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE OF THE LEBANESE SHI'A POLITICAL SITUATION

A. INTRODUCTION

Hezbollah is currently considered *the* force in Shi'a Lebanese political circles. Controversy surrounds the group and its dramatic history. It is a domestic political organization as well as an international resistance movement against Israel. Western governments consider it a terrorist organization. While these titles are correct, the sterility of these terms fails to capture the character of the group adequately. Hezbollah has undergone a significant evolution during its twenty-four year existence. It is a political movement in the unique position (within Lebanon) of maintaining exclusive control of a quasi or grudgingly tolerated, independent militia. As a result, the group is viewed as a destabilizing threat to the sclerotic balance of Lebanese state political sovereignty.

Conversely, this same "threatening" militia is also reluctantly supported for the sake of pan-Arab solidarity and in response to Israeli aggression felt by a majority of the populace. History has proven that Hezbollah has been an effective deterrent to Israeli invasion, a credible supporter of the Palestinian cause as well as a benevolent (and effective) domestic social services provider. These successes are completely independent of the government of Lebanon and have earned Hezbollah credibility. Even the most jaded of political detractors acknowledges Hezbollah's accomplishments.[15]

The duality of the love-hate relationship that Hezbollah has with the Lebanese polity creates an interesting study. Hezbollah's political goals do not always run in parallel to the majority of Lebanese Shi'a and this often causes tension. To be sure, Hezbollah takes care of itself first and foremost; however, it does garner respect. To understand fully why Hezbollah can be supported emotionally while at the same time

[15] Eitan Azani, *Hezbollah: The Story of the Party of God, from Revolution to Institutionalization* (New York: Palgrave MacMillian, 2009), 245.

disliked intellectually, it is helpful to look at the history of Shi'a Lebanese political suppression. The history demonstrates the oftentimes paradoxical, pragmatic choices Shi'a have made to either be involved in government, or simply be left alone to live.

This chapter explains the motivational foundations behind the current Shi'a political activism embodied by Hezbollah. As the chapter shows, Shi'a political mobilization did not happen overnight in 1979, but it did accelerate quickly in the second half of the twentieth century after being dormant under the Ottoman Empire. The historically deprived Lebanese Shi'a endured centuries of oppression and political quietism only to be politically mobilized by Sayyid Musa al-Sadr in the late 1950s, radicalized by the Palestinian Liberation Organization's presence within Lebanon in the late 1960s,[16] and energized by the demonstrative effect of the Iranian revolution in the late 1970s.

B. IMPORTANCE

1. Historical Shi'a Discrimination

At the heart of Hezbollah's success is the appeal the group holds for many economically and politically deprived Lebanese Shi'a. Political and social discrimination faced by Lebanese Shi'a is an unfortunate legacy of their religious history; however, this was not always the case. In the tenth century, Shi'ism was dominant in the Muslim world with the rule of the Baghdad-based Buyid, and Cairo-based Fatimid dynasties. Shi'ism was dominant from Persia [modern-day Iran] to Mesopotamia [Iraq], the Levantine region and throughout North Africa.

This situation changed in the 1100s, with the decline of both Shi'a empires and the rise of the Sunni Abbassid Empire. The Buyids gradually surrendered territory to Sunni Muslim and Saljuq Turks.[17] The Sunni-centric Abbassids replaced the Fatimid dynasty. "The downfall of the Fatimids and the conquest of Syria by Salah-al-Din-

[16] The PLO's autonomous presence within Lebanon was the major contributor leading to the civil war, which further radicalized the Shi'a.

[17] John L. Esposito, *Islam: The Straight Path,* 3rd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, Inc, 2005), 46.

Ayyubi (Saladin) in 1171 proved impossible to reverse. These events began centuries of oppression and persecution of Shiites throughout the Muslim world. The Lebanese Shiites, most of whom were Twelver [Shi'a], were no exception."[18]

2. The Composition of Lebanese Shi'a

The majority of the worldwide Shi'a religious community consists of one of two types: "Twelvers," formally called *Ithna Asharis* and "Seveners," formally known as *Ismailis*. The numerical designation of each group derives to which of the twelve original Imams (successors of the Prophet Mohammed) each group showed allegiance. This allegiance,

> stems from a crisis or was caused by the death or disappearance of their Imam and thus the disruption of hereditary succession. For the Twelvers, *or Ithna Asharis*, the end of imamate succession occurred in 874 with the disappearance of the twelfth Imam, the child *Muhammad al-Muntazar* (Muhammad, the awaited one). Shi'i theology resolved this dilemma with its doctrines of the absence or occultation of the Imam, and his return in the future as the *Mahdi* (the expected one). For Shi'i, the Imam had not died but had disappeared and gone into hiding or seclusion. He would return as a messianic figure, the *Mahdi*, at the end of the world to vindicate his loyal followers, restore the community to its rightful place, and usher in a perfect Islamic society in which truth and justice will prevail. During the absence of the hidden Imam, the community was to await his return and be guided by its religious experts, *mujtahids*, those ulama (religious scholars) who interpret God's will, Islamic law, for the community.[19]

The significance in twenty and twenty-first century Lebanon of seventh and twelfth century history is dramatic. On the one hand, there is the theme of deposed (or disappeared) Shi'a leadership and on the other, the Shi'a fall from political superiority, both having the promise of eventual return. Twelver Shi'a does not hesitate to draw a conclusive equivalence between the different centuries. The leaders, names and calendar

---

[18] Ahmad Nizar Hamzeh, *In the Path of Hizbullah* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2004), 9.

[19] Esposito, *Islam: The Straight Path*, 45.

dates may be different but the theme is the same. Just as the Shi'a fell from political power in 1171, they see today as fulfillment of their destiny as their 'religiously justified' time to regain political power.

The coincidence of mysterious disappearance and occultization is not lost upon the Lebanese Shi'a: it happened to the most important Shi'a leadership figure of the day in 874 (Muhammad al-Muntazar) and, for those who believe, it also happened recently, with al-Sadr in 1978. The fact that the "disappearance" of the Imam Musa al-Sadr happened 1,104 years later in 1978, is beyond coincidental and substantiates in the minds of many Shi'a, that al-Sadr carries the same divine importance as that of the Twelfth Imam. The reverence of this status was commensurately conferred onto the Lebanese religious and political movement he started: "The Movement of the Deprived."

The legitimacy was bolstered by al-Sadr's disappearance and the credibility of his Shi'a social movement solidified, by historical analogy. Consequently, in a creative extrapolation of Shi'a mysticism, the "vindication" of their faith is the current trend of Shi'a ascendancy toward political power, from Iran in 1979, to Iraq in 2003, to [potentially] Lebanon in June 2009.[20] The re-emergence of Shi'a political power across the Middle East lends credence to those who believe in the messianic return of the Mehdi. In receptive Shi'a minds, perhaps the prospect of returning to political power is one of the vital natural phases of the vindication prophecy of, "restoring the Shi'a community to its rightful place." Shi'a are experiencing this "vindication" in Lebanon and Hezbollah is using this resonating social and religious frame to further their base of support.

3. Where the Shi'a Settled in Lebanon

The urban poor of southern and eastern Beirut (also known as the "belt of misery"[21]) and the rural Shi'a of southern Lebanon and the Bekaa Valley are the population support-base of Hezbollah. Aiding in the analysis of Hezbollah and their

[20] June 2009 Lebanese Parliamentary elections will likely see a strong victory for Hezbollah-backed candidates.

[21] Vali Nasr, *The Shi'a Revival: How Conflicts within Islam Will Shape the Future*, 1st ed. (New York: W. W. Norton, 2006), 112.

support base, it is helpful to look at how the "base" came to reside where it did. Just as the Shi'a were politically marginalized through their share of representation mandated by the National Pact of 1943, they were geographically marginalized by displacement in the preceding centuries. The overriding theme is a story of political and economic domination, started by the physical relocation of Shi'a sects. This forced relocation started once interests of the Sunni Muslim empires clashed with the indigenous Shi'a residents. Conflict caused by medieval Levantine sectarian friction has been felt not only among the Twelver Shi'a of Lebanon, but also has been levied upon their religiously distant Lebanese cousins, the Druze, another Shi'a sect in Lebanon. Sometime between the tenth and eleventh century, the Druze religion was formed by two Fatimid Empire missionaries, Darazi and Hamzi ibn Ali. They had come to Southern Lebanon by direction of the Caliph Abu al-Hakim to proselytize and spread the *Ismaili* (Seveners) faith. Ironically, the cycle of Shi'a subjugation would come full circle in later centuries, when the Druze–having morphed into their own unique religious sect, thus dropping all trappings of "Shi'a-ness"–would, in turn, displace Shi'a within Lebanon.

4. The Subjugation of Twelver Shi'a in Lebanon

The precedent of displacement within Lebanon is not unique to the "Seveners." It also happened to the *Ithna Asharis ("Twelver")* sect, and from the eleventh century onward, reflects a history of persecution. Originally, the Twelver Shi'a settled throughout the entirety of terrain in what is today modern Lebanon, with the greatest concentrations located on the lower part of Mt. Lebanon and along the coastal cities. However, with the downfall of the Fatimid dynasty in 1171, military expeditions of the Mamluks between 1291 and 1305 expelled Shi'a from all land that was either commercially prosperous or tactically significant. The Shi'a, like the Druze, found refuge in what was at that time, extremely isolated parts of [modern-day] Lebanon: the Bekaa Valley in the northeast, and the arid, undulating, southern interior.

Once displaced, the new Shi'a areas of concentration were, "in the infertile zones of the Jebel Amil in the south and the Bekaa valley."[22] The fact that they were pushed to rugged, infertile and arid lands denote a pattern of economic dislocation that continued over the following decades resulting in the Shi'a permanently becoming the underclass of Lebanon.

> First the Shiites were replaced by the Sunnis because the coastal cities constituted vital trade centers for the Mamluks. Second, the Mamluks turned to expel Shiites from the mountains, in particular from Kisirwan, which overlooks the coastal roads. Subsequently, the Mamluks substituted the Shiites in North Lebanon by Turkman clans to keep watch over the coast and secure the mountain roads that led inland to Damascus.[23]

The disenfranchisement continued, "under Sunni Ottoman rule over Lebanon from 1516 to 1922. The Shiites lost almost all land and authority to the expanding Maronite and Druze communities."[24] In 1638, the Shi'a went so far as to request independence from the Ottoman Empire. The result was that the Shi'a were attacked, and re-subjugated with the loss of 1,500 men. "The persecution of the Shiites by the Ottomans was accompanied by a long-standing policy of discrimination. Unlike the Sunnis, Christians, and the Druze,[25] who were allowed by the Ottoman millet system to have their own personal status laws and courts, the Shiites were considered to be heterodox by the Ottomans."[26] Exemption from the millet system resulted somewhat from the heterodoxy espoused by Sunni Ottomans, but stemmed mostly from concerns over political loyalty. Once the Savafid Empire was firmly entrenched in Persia, the Ottomans became suspicious of all Shi'a living within their empire–particularly after the rulers of the Savafids established good diplomatic relations with the Shi'a living in the

---

[22] Gilles Kepel, *Jihad: The Trail of Political Islam* [Jihad: Expansion et Declin de l'Islamisme], trans., Anthony F. Roberts, 2nd ed. (United States of America: President and Fellows of Harvard College, 2002), 124.

[23] Hamzeh, *In the Path of Hizbullah*, 9.

[24] Ibid., 10.

[25] In an interesting twist of historical irony, the Druze tribes were actually placed in charge of watching over the Shi'a of the Jabal Amil region in the1600s. Frequent tribal military clashes resulted from this relationship. To this day, there is no love lost between the Lebanese Druze and the Shi'a, stemming from religious and political divergences.

[26] Hamzeh, *In the Path of Hizbullah*, 10.

Jabal Amil area of southern Lebanon. As the relations between the Lebanese Shi'a and the Persian Savafids improved, the brittle trust accorded the Lebanese Shi'a by their Ottoman rulers declined. So much so that, "the Ottomans placed [the Shi'a] under direct jurisdiction of Sunni Courts in personal status matters."[27] An illustration of the second-class citizenship given to the Shi'a was the fact that members of the Shi'a clerical class, the *ulama*, were conscripted during times of war while the Sunni *ulama* were exempt.

C. THE TWENTIETH CENTURY POLITICAL LOYALTIES OF THE LEBANESE SHI'A

After the World War I, the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire resulted in the French having a League of Nations "ruling mandate" over what is today modern Lebanon and Syria. Diverging from the political vision of their Muslim compatriots, the Maronite Christian sect pressed the French authorities for their own separate country. The Shiites of the newly-delineated "Greater Lebanon" had a conflict. They sensed that the political winds were blowing against them and with the Christian Maronites. Political pragmatism forced them to ally with their Sunni Muslim constituents.

Although Ottoman Sunnis had subjugated them over the years, Shi'a saw their political fortunes as running in parallel to their fellow Muslims rather than with the interests of the French-backed Christians. As a result, the Shi'a supported Sunni desires for the establishment of a contiguous Hashemite kingdom. This kingdom would consist of both Lebanon and Syria. Secondly, Lebanese Shi'a feared living in a Greater Lebanon where the domination of the Maronite state might sentence them to political and social, "oblivion."[28]

In a pattern of bad political luck that would similarly be repeated in the Lebanese civil war of the 1970s, the Shi'a ended up bearing the large majority of the consequences [casualties] of the struggle. The politically connected Ottoman Sunnis managed to side step the wrath of the French and allowed the Shi'a to end up being the focus of the Greater Lebanon proponents. In taking up arms in defense of Islam–and the Sunnis–the

[27] Hamzeh, *In the Path of Hizbullah*, 10.

[28] Ibid., 11.

Shi'a found themselves unwittingly manipulated into being the main target of the Maronite-French military campaign. This led to significant armed conflicts with the Maronites in 1919 and mid-1920, resulting in the Shi'a of Jabal Amin suffering the full brunt of a French force of 4,000 soldiers, aircraft and artillery.[29]

After an intense military campaign, Shi'a resistance was crushed and the Shi'a notables and *ulama* were forced to sign a surrender of sorts. This surrender made the establishment of Greater Lebanon an inevitability.

> [The surrender in June 1920] made it easier for the French to incorporate Jabal 'Amil and the northern Biq'a into the new state of Greater Lebanon, which was formally proclaimed on September 1, 1920. When Lebanon became independent on November 22, 1943, the Shiites felt that they were the despised stepchildren of a state governed by a Maronite-Sunni alliance. Overall, the feeling of Shiite suffering and persecution as a tragic experience presented Hizbullah in 1982 with a community vulnerable to mass appeal.[30]

1. Uneven Political Development

Once the new independent Lebanese government was functioning after 1943, what little political representation or economic benefit the Shi'a gained by controlling the largely ceremonial post of Presidency of the Chamber of Deputies, "was appropriated as a personal fiefdom by members of a few prominent Lebanese Shiite families."[31] Not only were the Shi'a locked out of the top positions that really mattered, but their own elites exacerbated the problem. In effect, since Shi'a were the lowest class in society, and thus possessed little influence as a population, the "system" was not compelled to concede them any significant power. Their relative developmental simplicity and quiescence prevented them from standing up and fighting for a bigger share of government. The inertia of centuries of subjugation effectively took political activism off the table as a

---

[29] This was not the first time Shi'a would fight and die in significant numbers for a cause that was tangentially theirs. A similar thing was to happen during the Lebanese civil war in 1978, when the Lebanese Shi'a and PLO were temporary allies. It was said the *Palestinian* Fedayeen was willing, "to fight to the last *Shi'a*."

[30] Hamzeh, *In the Path of Hizbullah*, 12.

[31] Kepel, *Jihad: The Trail of Political Islam*, 124.

ready option for the Shi'a. "The Shiites were mainly based in the countryside and had not shared to any great extent in the drive toward modernization and education that had created a class of elites within the other religious communities and had turned Beirut into the intellectual capital of the Arab world. In Shiite society, it was the religious dignitaries who maintained the strongest grip."[32]

This balance was not to hold forever. Through the force of simple geometric population growth, the demographics of Lebanon were about to change radically.

> The village traditions and poverty of the Shiites led to much higher birthrates that in other communities, so that by the 1970s their numbers had increased sufficiently to upset the demographic balance on which Lebanese politics was based, with no redress forthcoming. Worse, a sizable portion of the younger Shiite generation, who could no longer make a living on the land, began to migrate to the southern outskirts of the capital, where they constituted a poor, highly discontented, and very numerous bloc of urbanites who had little respect or time for the Lebanese state.[33]

2. Watershed Events in Shi'a Political Development

While changing demographics are helpful in explaining "how" the large base of support physically came into existence, several political components explain the "why." These elements radicalized and galvanized the new generation of Lebanese Shi'a from a historical stance of quietism and acceptance, to one of activity and intolerance to their unequal political and socioeconomic lot in life. These events center on two major events in Lebanese history: (1) the arrival of Imam Sayyid Musa al-Sadr in the late 1950s and (2) the arrival of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in the 1970s. These two events provided the spark (al-Sadr) and the fuel (the PLO) to set off a firestorm of Shi'a political mobilization. What started as a smoldering ember of political activism in the 1950s, lit by Imam al-Sadr, became a fire twenty years later due to the radicalizing effect the presence of the PLO had within Lebanon. It was to fire the emergence of radical Shi'a political activism.

---

[32] Kepel, *Jihad: The Trail of Political Islam*, 124.

[33] Ibid.

a. The 1948 Arab-Israeli "al Nakba" and Palestinian Refugee Immigration into Lebanon

The defeat of the Arab League during the 1948 Israeli war for independence displaced 750,000 Palestinians out of Palestine. The "catastrophe" or *al Nakba* caused 125,000, mostly northern Palestinians, to settle into refugee camps near the major Lebanese coastal cities.[34] The magnanimous acceptance of the refugees proved to be a voluntary, one-time event for the Palestinians as a Lebanese expression of solidarity with the Arab cause. Gradually, the refugees peacefully integrated into Lebanese society. "While many Palestinians lived in refugee camps, others took part in the economic and intellectual life of the country. It was not until the emergence of Nasser's militant platform that the Palestinians [became politically active] supporting pan-Arab politics. Leaderless, divided and dispersed, the bulk of the Palestinian population was until the early 1960s, politically passive."[35] The significance of this "passivity" was that it did not cause any societal friction with the Shi'a, nor more importantly, did it cause significant political competition. Once the PLO arrived from Jordan over the course of 1969 to 1971, this calm situation would change drastically. "After the 1970 PLO defeat in Jordan, the bulk of the PLO fighters relocated to south Lebanon, where they proceeded to supplant the legitimate authorities."[36] Starting in 1969, the Lebanese government would once again accept Palestinians within its borders; however, this time it was acquiescence to the PLO. The grudging, involuntary "acceptance" stemmed from PLO-sponsored, violent domestic political blackmail. The PLO's arrival in Lebanon was to have polarizing and radical effects upon the fragile political landscape.

b. The Six Day War and the 1969 Cairo Agreement

The Six Day War of 1967 had the effect of shattering the belief in Pan-Arab power based in Nasserism and cemented for the fledgling Shi'a political movement,

---

[34] Farid el Khazen, *The Breakdown of the State in Lebanon 1967-1976* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), 132.

[35] Ibid., 133.

[36] Augustus Richard Norton, *Amal and the Shi'a: Struggle for the Soul of Lebanon*, 1st ed. (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1987), 43.

quickly developing under Musa al-Sadr, the necessity of an *independent* Shi'a political movement. Only a political cause run *for* the Shi'a *by* the Shi'a within Lebanon would have any measure of effectiveness for the historically deprived sect.

The defeat of the Arabs under Nasserism also had the effect of causing political emotions of the Lebanese Arab "street" to reorient, aligning with the PLO's revolutionary cause. The baton for an "Arab Cause" had now been passed from Nasser to Arafat. After the 1967 war, the influx of Palestinian refugees from Jordan and the Occupied Territories of Palestine accelerated. The political atmosphere in Lebanon began charging up, illustrated by the observation that after 1967, "every refugee was a potential [PLO] guerilla."[37] PLO sponsored attacks into Northern Israel from Southern Lebanon had begun. The Israelis responded to these attacks with a commando raid on the Beirut airport, on December 28, 1968, blowing up thirteen [empty] civilian Lebanese commercial airplanes. This attack formally marked the beginning of the tit-for-tat military activity meted out in a messy three-way conflict between the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) and PLO, PLO and Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) and the IDF against the LAF. Of the three combatants, the under-strengthened and under-equipped LAF was haplessly caught in the crossfire as was the domestic Lebanese Polity. Geographically, southern Lebanon was the natural place for cross-border PLO guerilla activity to take place; the Shi'a living in southern Lebanon were about to become the most directly affected group by the years of warfare that were about to begin.

The conflict caused ever-present tensions between Lebanese sects to grow. Christians blamed the PLO for Israeli attacks on Lebanon.

> Lebanese Muslims, for their part, particularly Sunni leaders, had a different reading of the problem. For them, the Palestinian struggle was part and parcel of the Arab cause they had supported ever since Greater Lebanon was formed. At first, after World War I, there was the Faisal-led Arab nationalist movement in Damascus, which championed the cause of Arab unity. In the 1950s, Nasser emerged as the supreme leader and

[37] el Khazen, *The Breakdown of the State in Lebanon 1967-1976*, 137.

> articulator of pan-Arabism. And since 1967, the PLO, with its powerful revolutionary symbolism, became the cause to which many turned for inspiration and leadership.[38]

The Lebanese Shi'a were no exception to being caught up in the political fervor. Although Palestinian and Shi'a political goals were not identical, they were close enough to give the spirit of the PLO cause a resonant frame amongst the Lebanese Shi'a populace.

The Cairo Agreement, signed on November 3, 1969, formally allowed for the formation of the infamous PLO "state within a state." The autonomy of the PLO within Lebanon would continue until their expulsion from Lebanon in 1985. The net effect of the Lebanese government granting PLO autonomy within Lebanon had the appearance (and mechanics) of tacitly condoning guerilla activities against Israel. This perception was extremely volatile and radically destabilizing for the brittle confessional system.[39] The PLO's presence proved to be the *most* polarizing force within all of Lebanese politics. Consequently, it would lead to a sharpening of confessional sect lines, the formation (and/or strengthening of existing) of militias and the 1975 Lebanese Civil war.

c. The Shi'a Militarize

By 1974, the Shi'a of southern Lebanon had endured five years of disrupting, war-like events due to PLO-IDF cross border conflict. Although the Fatah branch of the PLO would at times train and equip the militant wing[40] of what would become Musa al-Sadr's *Harakat al-Mahrumin*, "Movement of the Deprived," this paradoxical alliance would not last. In the wake of the 1973 Yom Kippor war, the political situation inside of Lebanon was turning into a turbulent mess as the PLO looked

---

[38] el Khazen, *The Breakdown of the State in Lebanon 1967-1976*, 149.

[39] Confessionalism is a form of consociational democracy. It guarantees group representation in government along religious "confessional" lines. This is accomplished by reserving a proportional amount of high-level government and ministerial offices for representatives from various religious communities.

[40] The Lebanese Resistance Detachments, also known as *Afwaj al-Muqawama al-Lubnaiya*, or 'A.M.A-L.')

to consolidate and capitalize on any political gains made by the outcome of the war. This process caused upheaval within the PLO, manifesting itself through armed conflict between internal factions. The upshot of this was an arms build up inside the PLO, as well as by outside Lebanese political factions.

The PLO by this time were firmly (and literally) entrenched in refugee camps throughout the country, and were in geographic control of much of southern Lebanon, in what could be called a "rump state."[41] The "arms race" and de facto Palestinian autonomy created severe friction throughout political society from the offices of various Lebanese domestic political sects all the way up the chain of command to their representative Ministers of Parliament and cabinet-level positions of power. Lebanon was falling apart. The LAF could not enforce any of the "laws of conduct" established in the Cairo Agreement; they were too weak a military force and the PLO too strong. In taking the fight to the Israelis, the PLO was running roughshod over the LAF and any modicum of cooperation with their Lebanese "hosts." The southern Shi'a were getting it worst of all. Although politically sympathetic to the PLO, their sympathy had pragmatic limits. In March of 1974, those limits were reached.

Beginning in 1970, the guerrillas began to violate provisions of the Cairo Agreement liberally by extending military control over areas well outside of camps boundaries. "The display of weapons in public gatherings became a common occurrence; so were checkpoints to search passers-by on the outskirts of the camps."[42] This open display of militarization spread to areas well away from the "front-line" with Israel. To the Lebanese, there was no need for this and caused them to reconsider their hospitality towards the PLO. "The display of Palestinian military presence in civilian areas, away from the battlefront with Israel, was regarded as an act of defiance serving no purpose other that to intimidate the civilian population. This attitude was shared not only by the Christians but also by the Shi'a and the Druze, particularly in the south, where villagers bore the brunt of Palestinian-Israeli confrontations."[43]

---

41 el Khazen, *The Breakdown of the State in Lebanon 1967-1976*, 225.

42 Ibid., 165.

43 Ibid., 190.

The situation came to a head, marked by a speech given by Imam al-Sadr in Ba'albak, Lebanon on March 17, 1974, located in the future Hezbollah stronghold of the Biq'a Valley. His speech encapsulated the Shi'a's predicament: no protection from the Israelis, no protection from the PLO and no support from the Lebanese government. Al-Sadr had initially tried to work within the system using the Lebanese Supreme Islamic Shi'i Council (LSISC) to no avail.

> Government neglect was patent, Communists and Ba'athists were tapping the frustration and anger of the Shi'i community, and his earlier, more restrained efforts had borne little palpable success. The situation of the moment was well captured by his rhetorical query: 'What does the government expect, what does it expect except rage and revolution?' It was in the March rally that Imam Musa launched his popular mass movement, *Harakat al-Mahrumin*. With his movement he vowed to struggle until the security needs and social grievances of the deprived–in practice the Shi'a'–were satisfactorily addressed by the government.[44]

The last option was to form a mass movement, and a militant one if necessary.

Although an avowedly peaceful man, the onset of the Lebanese civil war one year later, in 1975, overcame any ideological reservations he may have had for the practical necessity of a militia to protect the residents of the south.[45] The complicated factional allegiances of various warring blocs during the civil war saw Amal take a relatively minor role in both numerical support and military action. The main contribution of al-Sadr was waking up the Shi'a with the "political mobilization of his co-religionists" and a reduction in the authority of the ineffective traditional Shi'a elites–the '*zu'ama*.' "It bears repetition that Imam Musa only led a fraction of his politically affiliated co-religionists. It was the multi-confessional parties and militias that attracted the majority of Shi'i recruits, and many more Shi'is carried arms under their colors than under the banner of Amal. And in war as in peace, the Shi'is suffered disproportionately; by a large measure, they incurred more causalities during the civil war than any other sect in Lebanon."[46]

---

[44] Norton, *Amal and the Shi'a: Struggle for the Soul of Lebanon*, 47.

[45] el Khazen, *The Breakdown of the State in Lebanon 1967-1976*, 306.

[46] Norton, *Amal and the Shi'a: Struggle for the Soul of Lebanon*, 49.

d. Full Political Mobilization of the Lebanese Shi'a

> Without question, the most important development in Lebanon during the 1980s has been the emergence of an assertive, politicized, but riven Shiite community.[47]

Although Amal was a minority player during the civil war, Musa al-Sadr served to energize the Shi'a politically. Only three more events would accelerate and definitively mobilize the Shi'a community: (1) the IDF's Operation Litani in March 1978, (2) the disappearance/ assassination of Musa al-Sadr in Libya in August 1978 and (3) the Iranian Islamic Revolution in January 1979. The Israeli invasion of Southern Lebanon in 1978 under Operation Litani was, for the most part, a tactical and strategic success. It strove to destroy the ability of the PLO to operate in southern Lebanon by driving a wedge between the increasingly resented PLO *fedayeen* and the locally victimized Shi'a. The dynamic of dispossession, political for the Shi'a and geographic for the Palestinians, fomented an initial natural allegiance. However, as the PLO's power grew within Lebanon, so did their corruption and negative impact upon their Shi'a hosts. By 1978, any sympathy the Shi'a may have had for the PLO in 1969 had run out and they became enemies of the PLO. The group that would take on this resistance was a revitalized Amal. In an effort to, "protect their families, homes and villages, many Shi'is either joined Amal or actively supported it."[48]

The disappearance of Musa al-Sadr elevated him to the status of a national martyr conferring a divine rightness upon his movement and to Shi'a political activism. Achieving great fame in "disappearance," al-Sadr boosted Amal's popularity and cast it as *the* legitimate Shi'a political party within Lebanon.

Lastly, the 1979 revolution in Iran illustrated the greatest political example of what Shi'a activism could accomplish. To any fence-sitting Lebanese Shi'a, the, "deposing of the Shah in January 1979 served as an important exemplar, demonstrating what a pious, well-organized and motivated *umma* (Islamic community) could

---

[47] Esposito, *Islam: The Straight Path*, 186.

[48] Norton, *Amal and the Shi'a: Struggle for the Soul of Lebanon*, 51.

accomplish in the face of oppression and unjustness. Furthermore, a new regime in Tehran promised to be an important source of material and political support."[49] More importantly, "It served as an important spur to the political mobilization of the Shi'a in Lebanon, without being a model for the emulation for the majority of the community."[50]

These three events are not the end of the story–they are just the end of the beginning and explain how the Lebanese Shi'a political environment could be shaped in such a way as to make it receptive to an Islamic revolutionary message. The defining line in the sand marking the start of Hezbollah would come in 1982. The Israelis would re-invade southern Lebanon in 1982, under Operation Peace of the Galilee, in a successful effort to expel the PLO from Lebanon permanently. However, despite this tactical success, the IDF had made a strategic blunder. "Within months of Israel's June 1982 invasion, when it became clear that Israel had no intention of disengaging from Lebanon anytime soon, a variety of groups across the political spectrum began to organize attacks against the Israeli occupation forces."[51]

The re-entrance of an "occupying force" inside of Lebanon forever changed the favorable paradigm IDF presence previously had had amongst the PLO-beleaguered Shi'a. It is important to note that the 1982 invasion provided the most significant political opportunity–*the root cause*–for the formation of Hezbollah. The importance of the three events of the late 1970s is that they *fully politically mobilized the Shi'a* transforming them into fertile political ground suitable for adherence to a movement. Hezbollah took root in this fertile ground by advertising a radicalizing message of Islamic resistance and revolution. Although their posture was radical, for the

[49] Norton, *Amal and the Shi'a: Struggle for the Soul of Lebanon*, 56.

[50] Ibid., 58. The 'emulation' problem is a very real challenge currently faced by Hezbollah. Whereby Lebanese Shi'a appreciate the political strides revolution has achieved for Iranian Shi'a, Lebanese Shi'a are, after all, Lebanese, and also desire, in concert with the wish for a louder political voice, to continue to live in the far more open Lebanese society. The shift to accommodate these uniquely Lebanese desires that has occurred within Hezbollah, as will be discussed later, is that Hezbollah must evolve from a revolutionary, resistance group to a mainstream political party that enables Shi'a political gain and reform from the inside. Overthrow may have worked in Iran, but it is not appropriate for the Lebanese system.

[51] Norton, *Hezbollah*, 80, 187.

frustrated Shi'a masses, the volatile Hezbollah message struck a popular cord in a resonant and contemporary way. Their previous standard bearer–the secular, "main-stream" (and perceived-as-corrupt[52])–Amal, no longer could.

[52] Norton, *Hezbollah*, 45.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

III. HEZBOLLAH: FRAMING THE EVOLUTION OF ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALISM USING SOCIAL MOVEMENT THEORY

A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter analyzes the historical factors responsible for the formation and support of the Islamist group Hezbollah utilizing the three components of modern social movement theory (SMT): political opportunity, resource mobilization and the framing process.[53] The formation and longevity of Hezbollah as a resistance group and social organization stems directly from their ability to exploit a confluence of historical factors as explained in Chapter II, coalescing primarily with Hezbollah's resistance posture against Israeli military harassment and incursion into Lebanese territory. The turbulent political history of Lebanon under the 1943, "*mithaq al-watani"* or national pact,[54] establishing the confessional division of political power, solidified the Lebanese Shi'a firmly into a disadvantaged political and social "third place" behind the [Maronite] Christians and Sunni Muslims, respectively. The consequence of this twentieth century arrangement was to give added grievance to pre-nineteenth century-old power struggles. This tension of political and economic inequity would galvanize and manifest itself as the Civil Wars in 1958 and 1975-89.[55]

The political and social subjugation of the Lebanese Shi'a culminated to form a powerfully resonant psychological "frame" upon which Hezbollah could build a foundation of support. The demonstrative effect and exporting efforts of the Iranian Revolution coupled with the historical miscalculations by the Lebanese and Israeli governments provided the opportunity context upon which to construct an organization and social movement. Finally, the resources enabling the "framing process" and the

---

[53] Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald, "Introduction: Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Framing Processes: Toward a Synthetic, Comparative Perspective on Social Movements," in *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings*, eds. Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald (New York: Cambridge University Press), 1996, 1-20.

[54] Ibid., 11.

[55] Jabar, *Hezbollah: Born with a Vengeance*, 219.

"political opportunity" were provided by sympathetic regional actors–Syria and Iran, and by the newly (and fully) mobilized Shi'a polity of Southern Lebanon and the Bekaa Valley.

Hezbollah's evolution towards moderation is apparent under the analytic lens of Social Movement Theory. Hezbollah's evolution resulted from variations through time in the "framing process," "political opportunity" and resource availability (or "resource mobilization"). These stages roughly divide into four distinct periods delineated by the resonance within society of the "frame," the availability of "political opportunity" and "resources." Stage one is the pre-nascent stage of early Shi'a mobilization under Imam Sayyid Musa al-Sadr where the resonant "frame" was a rejection of political quietism facilitated by the "opportunity" to embrace political mobilization within the Lebanese system. The second is the embryonic stage, embodied by the "opportunities"–some political, others ideological–offered by the Amal organization, the Lebanese civil war and the Iranian revolution. The third and most aggressive phase of Hezbollah's development is the emergent phase, facilitated by the "opportunity" provided by the 1982 Israeli invasion and the newly abundant "resource mobilization" provided by the Iranian Islamic Revolutionary regime. Lastly, the current phase, integration into mainstream Lebanese politics, consists of a germane repackaging of all three SMT elements. The "frame" is relevant Islamic resistance. The "opportunity" is participation in institutional government, and the "resource" is a combination of Iranian (and Syrian) largess, domestic support and organizational political momentum.

1. Social Movement Theory and Islamic Activism

Early SMT, or "first generation SMT,"[56] ascribed the support for Islamist fundamentalism to be a direct result of the "socio-psychological" school of thought and later on, to the "resource mobilization theory" (RMT). Both methods of study were accurate to a point, but fell short of explaining the complete picture as to why Islamist activism (of all types) emerged.

[56] Quintan Wiktorowicz, "Introduction: Islamic Activism and Social Movement Theory," in *Islamic Activism: A Social Movement Theory Approach*, ed. Quintan Wiktorowicz (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2004), 6.

The first generation of social movement theory, rooted in "functionalism," posited a linear relationship between problems arising in society and social mobilization in response to those problems.

The socio-psychological school tended to oversimplify the causal mechanisms for Islamic activism into two sub-groups. The first is that social movements are derived from "structural strains." "The underlying impetus for activism derives from the structural crises produced by the failure of secular modernization projects."[57] The second factor was a perceived "cultural imperialism" of western culture against Islamic culture in the post-colonial era of the region. "Rapid socioeconomic transformations tended to concentrate the wealth among the Western elite, state bourgeoisie, and corrupt state officials while concurrently generating negative side effects that impacted large segments of the population. …The sense of general economic malaise was compounded by exclusion from political power, which was monopolized by a small elite coterie that seemed to espouse an alien value system."[58] Socio-psychological explanations of societal strain and discontent proved to be necessary but not sufficient causal factors for Islamic activism. "The early socio-psychological approach to the study of social movements met with stark criticism for its overly simplistic formulation of an inexorable linkage between structural strain and movement contention, a criticism that is equally applicable to similar approaches in the study of Islamic activism."[59]

The paradox or flaw in the socio-psychological theory being, "Social movements do not correspond to the strain-movement paired logic."[60] In other words, drawing a direct causation-conclusion between a grievance in society and the creation of a social movement to address that grievance was too simplistic an analytical model. The analytical process needed more fidelity and the answer was to use the Resource Mobilization Theory.

---

[57] Wiktorowicz, "Introduction: Islamic Activism and Social Movement Theory," 6.

[58] Ibid., 7.

[59] Ibid., 8.

[60] Ibid., 9.

"Resource Mobilization Theory views movements as rational, organized manifestations of collective action,"[61] exactly what Hezbollah came to embody in the turbulent times of 1982-85. RMT filled the gap in detail of socio-psychological theory by analyzing and including, "resources and mobilizing structures, such as formal social movement organizations (SMOs). [These organizations] are needed to collectivize what would otherwise remain individual grievances."

For Hezbollah, the mosque and social services provided the necessary SMO vehicles on which to deliver their message. "Islamic NGOs constitute another set of widely used meso-level organizations. Islamic NGOs, such as medical clinics, hospitals, charity societies, cultural centers and schools, provide basic goods and services to demonstrate that "Islam is the solution" to everyday problems in Muslim societies."[62] As the quote implies, in lieu of a weak central Lebanese government, Hezbollah stepped in and provided all of the aforementioned services and was able to, "put a friendly public face"[63] on the medium that promotes the Islamic message without alienating the diverse sectarian polity of Lebanon. Hezbollah served as an "umbrella group" that deftly fused existing civil society and service organizations (and militia) under one "roof" or unifying organization. Hezbollah injected resources *in conjunction with* ideology to bolster these pre-existing, but weak organizations.

For example, Hezbollah set up Bahman hospital to service the sprawling slum of West Beirut. Through the utilization of extensive funding from Iran–some estimates put the monetary support of Hezbollah at up to $100 million per year–state-of-the-art, inexpensive health care is offered to the public. Judith Harik's interview with a young Shiite woman is demonstrative of Hezbollah's public relations/social services strategy,

> I was surprised when a young Shiite woman I knew expressed displeasure with the hospital. When asked for details, she said that her father had received excellent care there, but that she and her sisters had resented the fact that they were not allowed to accompany him inside the facility. This was because there were not wearing the headscarves required by the

[61] Wiktorowicz, "Introduction: Islamic Activism and Social Movement Theory," 10.

[62] Ibid., 11.

[63] Ibid.

> Islamic dress code! This anecdote illustrates the sorts of things that alienate some of the more secular-oriented members of the Shiite community who find Hezbollah too straight laced for their tastes and lifestyles. On the other hand, it also sheds some light on how the meeting of material needs might override such feelings and encourage political loyalty after all."[64]

By directly employing the "social services" strategy, Hezbollah is able to, "offer a concrete, visible example of what Islam can provide, in contradistinction to the state's secular modernization failures."[65]

Lastly, the final component of modern SMT is the "framing process." The "framing process" is the process through which grievance, resources and action are tied together. It is the "glue," which gives the social movement a resonant, tangible "thing" on which to rely. It can be a slogan, issue of the day or just a popular feeling in society. Three "tasks" must be accomplished to have an effective framing process.

> First, movements must construct frames that diagnose a condition or problem in need of redress. This includes attributions of responsibility and targets of blame. Second, movements offer solutions to the problem, including specific tactics and strategies intended to serve as remedies to ameliorate injustice. And third, movements provide a rationale to motivate support and collective action. Motivational frames are needed to convince potential participants to actually engage in activism, thereby transforming bystander publics into movement participants.[66]

Hezbollah has exploited the cultural framing process, as have other Islamic fundamentalist movements, by framing the movement as a struggle over meaning and values. Hezbollah used "meaning" and "values" as a potent "one-two punch" through which to deliver their message. The "value" was Islam and the "meaning" was resistance to Israel.

---

[64] Judith Palmer Harik, *Hezbollah; The Changing Face of Terrorism* (New York: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd., 2007), 84.

[65] Wiktorowicz, "Introduction: Islamic Activism and Social Movement Theory," 10-11.

[66] Ibid., 16.

Building upon the success of the Iranian revolution, the early founders of Hezbollah sought to latch onto the "values" component building upon the, "Islam is the solution" frame.

> An important component of most Islamic movement diagnostic frames is the blame placed on the spread of Western values and practices for a wide variety of social ills, including rising unemployment, stagnant economic development, soaring debt, housing shortages, dwindling public social and welfare expenditures and so forth. The argument is that the true path to development and success is outlined in the sources of Islam. So long as Muslims follow this 'straight path,' they will be rewarded for their faithfulness.[67]

In tandem with the legitimacy derived from wrapping themselves in the cloak of "golden age" Shi'a Islamic values, the message of resistance could resonate with equal, relevant legitimacy. In framing resistance as the Islamic action to take, resistance to Israel could take center stage as issue number one. Resistance became part-and-parcel of a larger, timeless struggle for Shi'a religio-political justice.

B. THE ORIGINS OF THE HEZBOLLAH'S "FRAMING PROCESS"

If Islam was to be the solution to the downtrodden Shi'a of southern Lebanon, the Bekaa Valley and the slums of Beirut, how did Hezbollah market their particular brand of Islamic fundamentalist activism? To examine this, it is first necessary to review once more the roots of Hezbollah through not only a historical perspective as was done in chapter II, but now specifically utilizing the analytical lens of SMT. The first phase of analysis centers on the secular Shi'a party of Amal and their resistance to Palestinian domination.

In the 1960s, Palestinians [further] displaced out of Israel by the 1967 war, flocked to southern Lebanon, and took up refuge. This influx of population taxed the already underdeveloped and rural Shi'a infrastructure of the region.

[67] Wiktorowicz, "Introduction: Islamic Activism and Social Movement Theory," 16-17.

At first, the Shi'a were sympathetic to the cause of the Palestinians as both classes of people were members of "deprived and dispossessed groups."[68] However, as time passed, cumulative effects turned Shi'a public opinion against the Palestinians and the PLO. These factors were: (1) The Palestinian Liberation Organization's (PLO) "state-with-in-a-state" authoritarian activities over the Shi'a residents of southern Lebanon ("its officials were accused of rape, robbery and extortion"),[69] (2) being perpetually caught in the crossfire over the cross-border fighting between the PLO and Israelis and (3), the general sense of war-weariness caused by the brutal Lebanese civil war. In fact, because the political interests of the PLO and Lebanese Shi'a were aligned for a time during the civil war, "once full-fledged civil war erupted in 1975, the Shi'a became the cannon fodder for the fedayeen. Indeed, more Shi'a died in the fighting than members of any other sect."[70] All these factors took their toll on the beleaguered Shi'a population's tolerance. "Against this background, the Lebanese Shi'i Muslims mobilized their political efforts."[71]

A defining and coalescing "political opportunity" was brought about in 1969, with the founding of the Lebanese Supreme Islamic Shi'i Council (LSISC) under the chairmanship of Al-Sayyid Musa al-Sadr. The official inclusion of the council as a Shi'a Muslim representative body into the Lebanese government gave Al-Sadr a prominent voice for Lebanon's Shi'a. Al-Sadr, also known as Imam Musa, was a widely respected Iranian-born Shi'a cleric of Lebanese ancestry who founded the militia-wing of the predominant Shi'a reform movement of the time: the "Movement of the Deprived." His militant offshoot was called the Lebanese Resistance Detachment that when translated and turned into an acronym, spells "Amal," the Arabic word for "hope." Leading Amal, and particularly with his chairmanship of the LSISC, Sadr's political star rose. Ultimately, he became a threat to the entrenched (and corrupt) Shi'a elite of the Lebanese political scene, and left a legacy of awakened Shi'a activism. It was his belief that the

---

[68] Norton, *Hezbollah*, 15.

[69] Jabar, *Hezbollah: Born with a Vengeance*, 14.

[70] Norton, *Hezbollah*, 17.

[71] Ibid., 14.

Shi'a were not to, "accept their deprivation fatalistically; he believed that as long as his fellow Shi'i could speak out through their religion they could overcome their condition."[72]

The goal of Imam Musa, when he moved to Lebanon in the 1950s, was to become the "paramount leader of the Shi'i community." To this end, his first significant act was the founding of a vocational institute in a southern Lebanese town.[73] Thus, al-Sadr was able to "frame" his nascent social movement with religion, leverage the "political opportunity" given him by the LSISC and mobilize "resources" to build institutions such as the vocational institute. All three of these components bolstered Amal, whose ultimate political philosophy revolved around the tenets of, "secularism (for government), liberation, Islamism and reformism–often couched in demands for more access to political privilege and for stamping out corruption."[74] It is important to note, however, that although the political atmosphere of Lebanon continued to devolve into one where violence and militias exerted more and more operative pressure upon the Lebanese political system, Sadr preferred to use Amal and his voice on the LSISC to work "within the system." Although he did vie for more power within the government, Sadr was never a proponent of the complete overthrow and rebirth as an Islamic Republic. It is clear from a May 1977 working paper penned by the LSISC, that al-Sadr truly believed in preserving the multi-sectarian diversity of the Lebanese state.[75] Likewise, the charter of Amal, "puts forward an idea of Lebanon as the outcome of 'a tolerant melting pot of patriotism.'"[76]

In 1978, Imam Musa mysteriously disappeared on a trip while in Libya. His [presumed] death cemented his legacy as an activist leader amongst a major bloc of Lebanese Shi'a with a twist of mystical irreverence; his "disappearance" (mostly likely an assassination by the Libyan government working on behalf of entrenched elites in

---

[72] Norton, *Hezbollah*, 18.

[73] Ibid.

[74] Ibid., 15.

[75] Marius Deeb, "Shi'a Movements in Lebanon: Their Formation, Ideology, Social Basis and Links with Iran and Syria," *Third World Quarterly* 10, no. 2 (1988), http://www.jstor.org/stable/3992662, 684.

[76] Ibid., 691.

Lebanon), coincided with the Shi'a legend of the "Hidden Imam." Al-Sadr's disappearance permanently inscribed Shi'a activism into the Lebanese political landscape. From this point forward, Musa Al-Sadr turned out to be the father of the first formal "frame" of the Lebanese Shi'a social movement that, many "frames" later, would become an Islamic fundamentalist movement: Hezbollah.

The evolution of Hezbollah from within Amal neatly corresponds to modern SMT that posits,

> that frequent disagreements and framing contests over meaning encourage competitive pressures as various groups produce and disseminate schemata. …Such competition takes place within the movement itself. …Intra-movement divisions (such as hardliner-soft-liner, conservative-liberal, young-old, ideologue-pragmatist) can create internal framing disputes as each faction attempts to assert its own frame for movement-wide adoption.[77]

This is precisely what happened as time passed within Amal. At the end of the Lebanese civil war, Amal went from being the "dynamic and progressive" movement founded by Al-Sadr, to one with a, "full-blown patronage system with all the corruption, inefficiency and inequity that Amal had [originally fought against]."[78] Hence, Amal became a corrupt fixture of the very political landscape it had hoped to change. This new reality did not resonate well with all members. The devolution into corruption, cooptation by the State, subservience to Syria[79] and other un-popular actions, further provided fuel to the smoldering fire of discontent brewing within some quarters of Amal. The time was ripe for an offshoot to form. Until this point, however, the "political opportunity" to do something about it had not availed itself.

[77] Wiktorowicz, "Introduction: Islamic Activism and Social Movement Theory," 17.

[78] Norton, *Hezbollah*, 23.

[79] Marius Deeb, "Shi'a Movements in Lebanon: Their Formation, Ideology, Social Basis and Links with Iran and Syria," 686.

C. "POLITICAL OPPORTUNITY" AT LAST: THE ISRAELI INVASION OF LEBANON

The successful overthrow of the Shah and the formation of the Islamic Republic of Iran provided the crucial framing mechanism on which Lebanese Shi'a Islamic radicals could further build an ideology. Against this backdrop, the leadership of Hezbollah emerged–at first a cabal,[80] but then by the mid-1980s, with the resources of Iran (and Syria), emerged to challenge Amal and the others. "[The] Iranian revolution had encouraged the growth of "Islamic" activism and aided the formation of Shi'i fundamentalist-militant groups."[81] According to Naim Qassem, the Deputy Secretary-General of Hizbullah, just after official victory was declared (in post-revolution Iran) and the Ayatollah Khomeini was declared the leader of the Shi'a Umma, dialogue with the Shi'a clerical community in Lebanon began in earnest. These dialogues lead to the establishment of formal lines of support. At the time in 1979, these lines of support were ideological in nature with most effort being applied to creating an, "appropriate means of liaising with the Islamic Revolution's leadership."[82]

Central to the emergence of Shi'a activism at the beginning of the 1980s was the small group of soon-to-be Hezbollah leadership, having studied theology in Najaf, Iraq. Qassem makes the case that if Qom was the intellectual birthplace of the Iranian Revolution, then Najaf was–if not the birthplace–the intellectual crossroads where all the future leaders of Hezbollah had studied at some point. The three main rising stars of Hezbollah at this time were Sayyid Abbas al-Musawi, Raghib Harb and Shaykh Subi Tufayli,[83] all of whom would go on to head the organization at various times.

The ideological and cohesive effects of the Iranian revolution with respect to striking a "resonating frame" with certain motivated radicals within Lebanon cannot be overstated as an absolutely critical "necessary condition" of Hezbollah's formation.

---

[80] Norton, *Hezbollah*, 34.

[81] Simon Haddad, "The Origins of Popular Support for Lebanon's Hezbollah," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 29, no. 1 (2006), http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10576100500351250, 24.

[82] Qassem, *Hizbullah, the Story from within*, 18.

[83] Norton, *Hezbollah*, 34.

Moreover, Norton argues that, "…there was little understanding of the developments under way among the Shi'i Muslims of Lebanon and no analysis was made of the impact of [the Israeli] invasion on them. Even if Israel had not launched its invasion of southern Lebanon in 1982, the young would-be revolutionaries among the Shi'a would have pursued their path of emulating Iran's Islamic revolution." However, "by occupying Lebanon rather than promptly withdrawing, Israel wore out its warm welcome and provided a context for Hezbollah to grow."[84]

On June 6, 1982, when Israel launched its attacks on Lebanon, two of Hezbollah's future leaders, Harb and Tufayli, were in Tehran, Iran at the annual Islamic Conference. "Iran immediately volunteered to help its Lebanese brethren and the Iranian Revolutionary Guards (IRGC) were swiftly dispatched to Baalbeck in the Bekaa Valley."[85]

Finally, the requisite ingredients for an Islamic fundamentalist social movement came together: (1) the political opportunity generated by the Israeli invasion, (2) the correct frame of resonance created by the Islamic Revolution and (3) a sufficient resource base: Iranian funding and IRGC technical advisors. The "official" declaration of Hezbollah as a political and social movement was not to take place until three years later, but the foundational seeds were finally sown in June of 1982. From their base in the Bekaa Valley, "the Iranian Revolutionary Guards took charge of Hezbollah's security and resistance operations. Iran's backing, combined with the presence of a core of dedicated [Lebanese Shi'a] men, [enabled] Hezbollah over the next two years to operate underground from its main base, Baalbeck, in the eastern Bekaa Valley. Baalbeck was not under Israeli occupation and provided the group and the Iranian Revolutionary Guards with a safe haven from which to work and organize the movement. It was also close to Syria, giving Hezbollah the freedom of movement to travel to Iran. Its fighters

[84] Norton, *Hezbollah*, 33.

[85] Jabar, *Hezbollah: Born with a Vengeance*, 47.

worked under the banner of the Lebanese National Resistance and did not claim credit for any of the new, daring attacks that had started to make an impact among the Israeli soldiers."[86]

With a full-blown resistance to Israeli occupation underway and material support from its patron Iran assured, recruitment of personnel became the number one priority for the organization. Hezbollah's clerics undertook this task by spreading the Islamic Revolutionary ideology in whatever venue they could–mosques, funerals, and community centers [Husseinyahs]. Building upon the "master frame" of Islam, the clerics painted the resistance and expulsion of the Israelis as an unjust grievance; a sub-frame that resonated well with resentful Shi'a throughout Lebanon.

D. CULTIVATING A CONSTITUENCY

Although Hezbollah was aggressive in their ideology and military tactics, this did not translate into assured success. The first years were marked with setbacks. An important lesson learned by Hezbollah in the first three years of their formation was how to be politically savvy and read their potential constituency base. Since their rationale for being was, "Islam is the solution," and, "neither east nor west" (in reference to favoring neither the U.S.'s nor the U.S.S.R.'s way of life), they imparted strict Islamic behavioral standards upon the areas they operated in and slowly took over. This was most evident in West Beirut and the beach towns of the south. From 1983 to 1986, as they gained ground, Hezbollah's social services were being established, most notably 17 medical clinics and two hospitals.[87] While the social services did garner support from the populous, Hezbollah suffered setbacks from the imposition of their social conduct standards.

As the Hezbollah's martial presence and influence spread out from the Bekaa Valley, to the southern Beirut suburbs, and to Southern Lebanon,

---

[86] Jabar, *Hezbollah: Born with a Vengeance*, 51.

[87] Nizar Hamzeh, "Lebanon's Hizbullah: From Islamic Revolution to Parliamentary Accommodation," *Third World Quarterly* 14, no. 2 (1993): 329.

> …by the end of 1983, it was becoming more noticeable that a new force was in town. Few Lebanese had yet comprehended the nature of the force, but late that year and in early 1984, West Beirut was turning into a bleak and frightening city. The face of the once famously cosmopolitan capital was undergoing a swift transformation. With the Shiite takeover of West Beirut, heavily bearded Hezbollah militiamen became increasingly visible in the city's battered streets. They wore green bands around their heads bearing inscriptions such as, 'Allah Akbar.' Women who were considered to be dressed in an improper manner were often harassed by the radical newcomers. Shops selling alcohol were sometimes sent a warning in the form of a few sticks of dynamite hurdled at their front doors. The few popular restaurants which remained open hung signs on their entrances with the words 'Family restaurant only' insinuating that they were 'dry' premises.[88]

> [By mid-1986] Hezbollah [had] begun to alienate itself from the people whose support it needed most: the residents of South Lebanon. …They were angered at having to bear the brunt of the reprisals [from the Israelis]. They were also outraged by the extreme transformation which was taking place in the South as it came under the influence of Hezbollah's religious militancy. Shortly after its arrival in the south, the group banned the sale of alcohol in shops and restaurants and prohibited parties, dancing and loud music.[89]

Inexplicably, they also closed coffees shops. This had the effect of depriving,

> the old men who used to frequent [the shops] in the afternoons and early evenings of their simple pastime of playing cards and backgammon. A strict code of Islamic behavior was imposed in the towns and villages bringing with it some extreme interpretations of what was considered permissible behavior. Although there were those who were happy to abide by the new regulations and restrictions, many others rejected them.[90]

> The conduct codes ruined the local service economies.

> Hezbollah's hard-line restrictions only served to isolate the area and further undermine the already battered economy. Popular weekend retreats on the coast became ghost towns. The Lebanese boycotted the restaurants and went in search of places without restrictions, where alcohol could be served without fear of harassment from the Islamic militants. Mixed

---

[88] Jabar, *Hezbollah: Born with a Vengeance*, 52-53.

[89] Ibid., 29.

[90] Ibid.

> bathing was banned and women were forbidden from wearing [swimsuits]. Tyre, which used to pride itself on having one of the best stretches of beach in Lebanon, spent many summer months empty of clients. Those who wanted to enjoy Lebanon's long season of sunshine simply stopped going south, while the residents of southern villages traveled north to the beaches around Sidon and Beirut. The region had become a warlike state severed from the rest of the country.[91]

Timur Goksel, a Lebanese academic and Senior Political Advisor to UNIFIL,[92] summarized the attitude and mistakes of Hezbollah at the time,

> Until 1988, [Hezbollah was] paranoid, very unkind to foreigners, too suspicious and secretive, impossible to talk to and communicate with. [They were] extremely, unrealistically fundamentalist. When they tried to take over people's lives, Hezbollah lost their support. They disregarded the one thing that the Lebanese, and in particular the southerners, are renowned for–the high level of importance they place on their individuality.[93]

It is a telling statistic that 38% of the medical facilities created from 1983-1987, to include both hospitals, clinics and pharmacies, were constructed in 1986.[94] This was the same year internal Hezbollah analysis appears to have identified that they had over-reached with the fundamentalist Islamic message and that their support-base was beginning to wane. There was also resurgent competition from the secular Amal party.

E. HEZBOLLAH MOVES TOWARDS MODERATION: THE "*INFITAH*"

Two significant events took place in 1985: the pull-back of the Israeli military from the outskirts of Beirut to south of the Litani River (in Southern Lebanon), and Hezbollah formally declaring itself as a resistance organization and Islamic fundamentalist movement. They did so with an 'open letter' to the Beirut Daily Star newspaper.[95] The 1985 "withdrawal" of the IDF signaled the legitimacy of Hezbollah's

---

[91] Jabar, *Hezbollah: Born with a Vengeance*, 30.

[92] Timur Goksel, "Short Biography," *American University of Beirut*, http://wwwlb.aub.edu.lb/~webpspa/Faculty_Profile/Short_Biography/t_goksel_bio.html.

[93] Jabar, *Hezbollah: Born with a Vengeance*, 30.

[94] Hamzeh, "Lebanon's Hizbullah: From Islamic Revolution to Parliamentary Accommodation," 329.

[95] Ibid., 221.

credentials as a formidable resistance force that could successfully exert pressure on the heretofore "invincible" IDF. "Hezbollah's singleness of purpose in terms of its pursuit of Islamic goals was apparently rock solid. Foremost among these goals, of course, was jihad against the Israelis."[96]

Following introspection by Hezbollah and its analysis that it was losing popular support, 1989 marked the restructuring of the organization. Hezbollah had a crisis of confidence. Three events provided the political opportunity for the moderates of the organization to enact these structural changes. First, the death of the Ayatollah Khomeini caused the once untouchable resource support levels that Iran had been furnishing Hezbollah to become a budgetary topic of debate within Tehran. Ultimately, assistance from that point forward would fluctuate from year to year based upon the economic fortunes of the oil market. Secondly, the notorious leadership cohesion that had been a hallmark of Hezbollah to this point fractured. With their leading spiritual and political mentor physically removed from the scene, suppressed dissent openly surfaced. Thirdly, the end of the Lebanese Civil war was in sight. This last factor most likely pushed elements of the group to conclude that some (or most) of the original sub-frames of resonance would have to change. It was one thing to believe in completely tearing down the Lebanese political structure when it was in the throes of a chaotic civil war–it was quite another to dismantle an established structure in peacetime.

1. Restructuring

Restructuring of Hezbollah came in the forms of moving away from the radical policies of kidnapping, militant jihad against [destruction of] the Lebanese political system and lifting the general cloak of secrecy that shrouded the organization's motivations and decision-making. The adjustments that allowed for this ideological shift were twofold, the most significant of which was the decision to participate in mainstream Lebanese politics–elections. This would be accomplished through the re-framing of classical "jihad," expanding its definition to allow for participation in elections.[97]

[96] Harik, *Hezbollah; the Changing Face of Terrorism*, 55.

[97] Ibid., 58.

Secondly, to aid the first objective, the militant arm of Hezbollah would be streamlined, downsized and completely separated from the political and social entities of Hezbollah.[98] This de-linkage (or delineation) of the militant from the civil within Hezbollah would give them the necessary internal political space to allow their candidates to enter mainstream politics.

The move from secret organization to a transparent one was not instantaneous; in fact, it is ongoing. Seemingly out of character for Hezbollah, the new tactic employed by this thoroughly decisive group upon their entrance to the mainstream political area was one of "deliberate vagueness" with respect to key issues of heated debate: namely their long-term aspirations for the structure of the Lebanese governmental system and the desired end state of the fight with Israel. Did the "new, restructured" Hezbollah still require a Lebanese "Islamic Revolution" to occur and was "annihilation" of Israel an ongoing strategic goal?

Political opportunity again opened up with the end of the Lebanese civil war, the signing of the Ta'if Accord. The Taif Accord of 1989, also known as the "Taif Agreement" and "National Reconciliation Accord," provided a plan for ending the civil war through national reconciliation, achieved by reform of the confessional system with an eye towards a more equitable distribution of political power-shares. Key to the provision was that it also called for dissolution of the various militias (under Syrian supervision) with one exception: Hezbollah was allowed to keep their militia due to its re-designation from "militia" to "resistance movement."[99] The unique status accorded to Hezbollah's armed wing stemmed from tacit consent in the form of a "*modus vivendi*" from Syria (and Iran).

The secure position of Hezbollah established with respect to maintaining its militia under the auspices of an "Islamic Resistance" group (not a confessional militia), "enjoyed wide, though not unanimous, support in Lebanon, where the Israeli occupation

---

[98] Harik, *Hezbollah; the Changing Face of Terrorism*, 37-38.

[99] Magnus Ranstorp, *Hizb'Allah in Lebanon: The Politics of the Western Hostage Crisis* (New York: St. Martin's Press, Scholarly and Reference Division, 1997), 51.

was seen as an impediment to the country's recovery."[100] With their role as resistance organization secure, the group could turn to fielding candidates for the upcoming 1992 Parliamentary elections. Participation in elections tested the "revolutionary" tenets of Hezbollah. However, Ayatollah Khamenei gave his blessing[101] and Hezbollah jumped into the process with both feet.

In tandem with this decision to participate in elections, were the election of Hassan Nasrallah to Secretary General in 1992,[102] and the dissent of the early radical leader Subhi al-Tufayli (who would later be expelled from the group). Hezbollah embarked upon a "get to know us" campaign sponsoring community outreach programs as part of is greater strategy of "*infitah*."[103] The result was winning 12 of 128 seats of Parliament. Hezbollah's political strategy was working. Despite its initial popularity setbacks in the early 1980s, Hezbollah had successfully framed its legitimacy as a resistance force and civic steward representative of the people.

> Acting like everyone else certainly convinces many Lebanese today that Hezbollah is not likely to try to supersede the limits of the system it has worked so hard to join, while at the same time broad interaction with Christians appears to have greatly reduced the threatening image with which Hezbollah began. These actions convinced many Lebanese that Hezbollah's radical militancy was reserved [exclusively] for the Israelis rather than the destruction of the freewheeling Lebanese way of life.[104]

F. CONCLUSION

Following the end of the Lebanese civil war, the decision by Hezbollah to participate in elections marked a sea change in the original founding precepts. Hezbollah clearly moderated its fundamentalist Islamic ideology from 1985 to 1992. This moderation culminated with electoral participation in 1992. The events of history following 1992, namely, the unilateral Israeli withdrawal from Southern Lebanon in

---

[100] Norton, *Hezbollah*, 83.

[101] Ibid., 100.

[102] Jabar, *Hezbollah: Born with a Vengeance*, 45.

[103] Harik, *Hezbollah; the Changing Face of Terrorism*, 77.

[104] Ibid., 78.

2000, the 2006 war with Israel and the 2008 civil strife following conflict over Hezbollah's telecommunications autonomy and unity government issues, further illustrate the pragmatic (if not further moderated) approach Hezbollah has taken towards integration into the established Lebanese political system.

Detractors of Hezbollah's moderation point to the martial method in which they chose to resist the 2008-attempted seizure of their telecommunications network as proof that Hezbollah has no genuine intention to act within mainstream political participation norms. Essentially, Hezbollah will participate in the system, but when it does not get what it wants, it will resort to using force. However, as important a component that having a resistance force is to the "brand" that is "Hezbollah," it is a telling fact that in the summer of 2000, following the Israeli withdrawal, "a serious debate arose within Hezbollah about whether to focus on Lebanese politics and themes, such as corruption, or to maintain the resistance posture both in Lebanon and the Middle East."[105] Hezbollah ultimately decided on the latter course of action (for now) as demonstrated by their vigorous resistance to Israel in the summer of 2006. However, just the fact that the subject of giving up the resistance element is openly considered lends credence to the larger argument of moderation delineated by Social Movement Theory and the adjunct that, "the ballot box is the coffin of radicalism."[106]

> The data indicate that when given the opportunity to participate in politics at the price of moderation, movements will alter their very nature to respond to this stimulus. Hezbollah's experience demonstrates this dynamic. Not only had the group moderated to enter electoral politics, but also it reframed its central objective, forgoing its objective of an Islamic state.[107]

---

[105] Norton, *Hezbollah*, 90.

[106] Anne Marie Baylouny, "Democratic Inclusion: A Solution to Militancy in Islamist Movements?" *Strategic Insights* III, no. 4 (2004), http://www.ccc.nps.navy.mil/si/2004/apr/baylounyApr04.asp, 2.

[107] Anne Marie Baylouny, "Emotions, Poverty or Politics: Misconceptions about Islamic Movements," *Strategic Insights* III, no. 1 (2004), http://www.ccc.nps.navy.mil/si/2004/jan/baylounyJan04.pdf, 3.

IV. CONCLUSION

If inclusion breeds moderation, then what conclusion should one draw from Hezbollah's actions since their entrance into politics in 1992 and the unilateral Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon in 2000? Even the most optimistic observer would not be faulted for concluding the Hezbollah is not moderating at all, it is simply superficially changing its public image. One could argue that,

> the 2008 model of Hezbollah is one of a pragmatic terrorist organization that is far more dangerous than that of the revolutionary Hezbollah of the 1980s. In fact, the movement hasn't abandoned its goals, but has changed its pace of application. It operates simultaneously within the Lebanese political system and outside it, a fact that grants it [freedom of action] in both arenas.[108]

If ostensibly, Hezbollah exists to counter Israeli aggression and occupation, then what happens when, in practical purposes, the source of aggression[109] and occupation no longer exists? Does this mean that Hezbollah will decide to simply cease to exist as a movement, or at the very least, lay down its arms and disband its militia? Several recent events of history can test this hypothesis: (1) the assassination of Rafik Hariri in February, 2005, and the resultant expulsion of Syrian military units from Lebanese soil in April 2005,[110] (2) the 2006 "July War" between Israel and Hezbollah, (3) the May 2008 military takeover of Beirut by Hezbollah (resolved by the Doha Agreement), and (4) the upcoming Hezbollah election strategy of June 2009.

The assassination of Prime Minister Hariri marked a sea change in Lebanese domestic politics. PM Hariri, and the March 14th Coalition that executes his political cause, represented a deliberate shift away from direct Syrian control in Lebanese politics.

---

[108] Eitan Azani, *Hezbollah: The Story of the Party of God, from Revolution to Institutionalization* (New York: Palgrave MacMillian, 2009), 246.

[109] Hezbollah would probably argue that so long as Israel exists as a state, the 'source' of aggression will always exist. However, for purposes of this discussion, the source of aggression is limited to the occupation of Lebanese soil and the unprovoked incursion of airspace and territory.

[110] With the implication that no longer could Syria exercise as much *direct* political influence upon the Lebanese political system if they had no troops physically stationed in Lebanon.

"Hariri was admired for spearheading the rebuilding of Beirut after the country's civil war, from 1975 to 1990. Many Lebanese blamed Syria for the killing, citing Hariri's patriotism and strong sense of Lebanese independence."[111] Whether the Syrian government or Hezbollah directly sponsored or was involved in the attack is not the immediate point or at least not currently. If the UN investigation does reveal definitive links, that would be a political bombshell and clearly demonstrate that Hezbollah is not moderating. Until such results are made public, perhaps Hezbollah deserves the benefit of the doubt, if for no other reason than the Hezbollah of today has learned a lot since their 1985 inception, becoming very sophisticated and politically savvy. Hezbollah appears to be too pragmatic to become implicated in such a (potentially) politically damaging plot. It is one thing to directly challenge the IDF through attacks (resistance), an action they cite as *raison d'être*, it is quite another to be a sponsor of domestic political assassination. This would mean that Hezbollah hypocritically rejects the mainstream political inclusion of which they have actively sought to become a part (and support).

What is apparent is that Hezbollah is a client of Syria, and with a decrease in Syrian influence in Lebanon (i.e., the Syrians no longer control *both* sides of the border), a decrease in Hezbollah's resource base is bound to occur. This is not in the interest of Hezbollah, particularly its militia, since the Lebanese-Syrian border is a source of weapons for Hezbollah. Assassination controversy aside, Hezbollah's actions are consistent with its own domestic political interests demonstrated by alignment with the pro-Syrian election bloc for this June's upcoming election.[112] Overall, Hezbollah's actions surrounding the Hariri assassination demonstrate moderation.

If one metric of moderation is a reduction in armed conflict perpetrated by Hezbollah, then standing in direct opposition to the "moderation theory" is the July 2006 war with Israel. Since the 2000 unilateral withdrawal of the IDF, Hassan Nasrallah, the Secretary General of Hezbollah, has skillfully played a game of brinksmanship with Israel. However, he overstepped his bounds with the July 12, 2006 Hezbollah abduction

---

[111] "Hezbollah Denies Link to Hariri Murder," *CNN.Com*, sec. World, May 24, 2009, http://www.cnn.com/2009/WORLD/meast/05/24/lebanon.hariri.hezbollah/.

[112] Elias Muhanna, "*What if Hezbollah Wins?*" *Foreign Policy* (May 5, 2009), http://experts.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2009/05/05/what_if_hezbollah_wins.

of two IDF soldiers, providing the pre-text for a full-blown IDF military campaign. Prior to July 2006, "Hezbollah's low-level campaign against Israel was carefully crafted to maximize its domestic political returns (vis-à-vis Syria) and support Iranian strategic objectives, while falling within the perceived limits of Israeli tolerance."[113] Nonetheless, the instigation of a maximal confrontation, although a miscalculation, was cleverly used by Hezbollah to garner support. Clearly, fighting with Israel that inflicted between $2.8 and $3.6 billion dollars worth of damage[114] upon the Lebanese state does not indicate a moderating stance on the part of Hezbollah. The group's demonstrated willingness to fight toe-toe with the IDF gains them domestic credibility and regional support. "Hezbollah won a resounding political victory at home, at the expense of constrained freedom of action to fight Israelis abroad, a state-sanctioned indulgence that most Lebanese Shiites would just as soon the group give up (while remaining armed)."[115] As long as the Lebanese state remains aloof (and tactically powerless) to the armed status of Hezbollah, there is no incentive for Hezbollah to change its brinksmanship behavior. The fact that the LAF cannot disarm Hezbollah if it wanted to is not lost on Hezbollah. The ability to use force at will is a political "ace-card" Hezbollah is more than willing to play. In this respect, Hezbollah has not moderated.

The evidence of the willingness of Hezbollah to "play their ace" (force) against domestic opponents manifested itself May 6, 2008[116] with fighting between pro-government militias and Hezbollah in the worst sectarian fighting since the end of the civil war in 1990. The fighting stemmed from direct confrontation over a government-sponsored move to shut down a telecom network operated by Hezbollah as well as the removal of the allegedly Hezbollah-friendly chief of security at the Beirut airport. Despite the root cause, the ramification was that Hezbollah was able to flex it muscles

---

[113] Gary C. Gambill, "Implications of the Israel-Hezbollah War," *Mideast Monitor* 1, no. 3 (2006), http://www.mideastmonitor.org/issues/0609/0609_2.htm.

[114] Dr. Nimrod Raphaeli, "Hizbullah-Israel War: Economic Consequences for Lebanon," *The MEMRI Economic Blog*, http://memrieconomicblog.org/bin/content.cgi?article=227.

[115] Gary C. Gambill, "Implications of the Israel-Hezbollah War," *Mideast Monitor* 1, no. 3 (2006), http://www.mideastmonitor.org/issues/0609/0609_2.htm.

[116] "Hezbollah Takes over West Beirut," *BBC.Com*, sec. Middle East, May 9, 2008, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/7391600.stm.

and, “show Prime Minister Fuad Siniora’s government who really is in charge.”[117] This event demonstrated two things: (1) that Hezbollah’s militia was not reserved strictly for fighting the IDF, confirming the worst concerns of their domestic political opponents, and (2) although Hezbollah may have overstepped its bounds in turning Hezbollah fighters loose in Beirut, Hezbollah quickly showed restraint by voluntarily turning any occupied city territory[118] over to the LAF after hostilities had subsided. This duality of action in this example: tactical excess and strategic restraint underscore why observers can see both earnest reform and malevolent self-interest in the actions of Hezbollah.

Lastly, the election strategy of June 2009 continues this duality of purpose: a willingness to form coalitions (with Amal, and the Christian-based Free Patriotic Movement) to win a majority stake in government, while at the same time, stating that it does not wish to extend control beyond the 11% (14 seats) of Parliament it already controls. “This is just one of the steps Hezbollah has taken to insulate itself and its allies from the likely portrayal of an opposition victory as a Hamas-style “take over” of Lebanon.”[119] This kind of politically astute strategy illustrates the important difference of pragmatism exercised between implementing Hezbollah’s political program versus putting into practice their political ideology. The politics of “the program” is far more liberal, inclusive and willing to compromise than the narrowly focused, radical and religious “ideological” platform. In short, Hezbollah makes calculated distinctions between theory and application.

The author concludes that the evidence shows that Hezbollah is no longer a revolutionary group bent on changing Lebanese society into an idyllic Islamic Republic, nor are they a well-adjusted, moderate and integrated mainstream political party. Hezbollah currently occupies the transitional middle ground. Until Hezbollah is willing to

---

[117] Sam F. Ghattas and Associated Press, “Hezbollah Sweeps over Beirut's Muslim Sector: Iranian-Backed Fighters Flex Muscle in Seizing Sunnis Loyal to the U.S.” *Beirut Times*, sec. News & Reports, May 9, 2008, http://www.beiruttimes.com/site2/index_en.php?subaction=showfull&id=1210401016&archive=&start_from=&ucat=&.

[118] “Hezbollah to End Beirut Seizure,” *BBC.Com*, sec. Middle East, May 10, 2008, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/7393982.stm.

[119] Muhanna Elias, “What if Hezbollah Wins?” *Foreign Policy*, (May 5, 2009), http://experts.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2009/05/05/what_if_hezbollah_wins.

stand upon the merits of its, "*infitah* policy in the Lebanese public sphere by agreeing to participate in a sectarian-confessional political process, while earning the reputation of probity, transparency, accountability, and integrity in its political and socio-economic work,"[120] and *not* rely upon use of the militia when political currents run against Hezbollah's favor, the jury is still out.

Hezbollah deserves credit for moderating their goals from that of creating an Islamic State to actively participating in mainstream Lebanese politics. Conversely, one could argue it is just the sign of the times. The late 1960s and 1970s were heady times when revolution was politically "in vogue." The 1990s and 2000s are a different time and the world has changed. Globalization has altered the socio-economic landscape. Do the leaders of Hezbollah really want Lebanon to become another Iran? After looking at the economic morass Iran has become makes divergence from an Islamic Republic less an exercise in political moderation and more a witness to simple mathematics and pragmatic economic policy.

Since 2000, Hezbollah's behavior has vacillated between positive signs of moderation: partial regret for the 2006 war, voluntarily giving back Beirut in 2008 and political teamwork with former rivals in 2009. There have been negative signs of Hezbollah acting like their 1985, "radical old-self:" *starting* the 2006 war with Israel, turning their militia on domestic rivals and coyly shying away from taking on the full responsibility of electoral consequence and governance in 2009 (thus far). Part of this can be attributed to classic Hezbollah political subterfuge. However, if Hezbollah wants to be taken seriously by the entirety of the Lebanese body politic, and looked at as a party that could actually administer Lebanon like rational politicians, it must align its ideology *and* practice by making further concessions to adopting a moderate stance of leadership.

Perhaps they have evolved as far as they can, given the external factors of their client-state benefactors: Iran and Syria. Given the frosty nature of Israeli-Iranian and Israeli-Syrian relations, Hezbollah is somewhat stuck propagating a proxy foreign policy

[120] Joseph Elie Alagha, *The Shifts in Hizbullah's Ideology: Religious Ideology, Political Ideology, and Political Program* (Lieden: Amsterdam University Press, 2006), 218.

of each. For there to be any change in Hezbollah harmonizing its ideology and practice, the next dominoes to fall must be a Syrian-Israeli rapprochement as well as a two-state Israeli-Palestinian solution.

> The real test of moderation will be if Hezbollah can lay down its arms.
>
> In Lebanon, the opening of the political system and the prospects for democracy hinge on inter-sectarian harmony. Amal has joined Hezbollah in creating a Shi'a front that has participated in elections and now joined the government. …As Lebanon moves in the direction of democracy, it will have to confront the question of distributing power among its various communities in accord with their numbers.[121]

Has the Hezbollah's militia become a strategic crutch upon which it unconsciously rests? Its organizational discipline, resource-base and numerical strength allow it to hold the political trump-card within Lebanon's wobbly confessional system. Hezbollah has demonstrated, "probity, transparency, accountability, and integrity" in its social service work, but can it maintain this same moral discipline when faced with the temptation of using force to get its way in the political sphere?

> Many think that a [Hezbollah-inclusive opposition bloc election] victory would embolden Hezbollah against attempts to dismantle its military wing. Others argue that political success might serve as a great moderating influence on the party by raising the stakes of a confrontation with Israel and saddling it with the mundane duties of making Lebanon's trains run on time. If Hezbollah and its allies prevail on June 7, 2009, both these theories will finally by put to the test.[122]

A. EPILOGUE: JUNE 8, 2009-LEBANESE POST-ELECTION RESULTS

Given the election results of the June 7, 2009 Lebanese elections and victory of the pro-western "March 14th" coalition ("M14") and the defeat of the "March 8th" Hezbollah-inclusive coalition,[123] Hezbollah's role in the next administration may largely

---

[121] Vali Nasr, *The Shi'a Revival: How Conflicts within Islam Will Shape the Future*, 1st ed. (New York: W. W. Norton, 2006), 249-250.

[122] Elias, "What if Hezbollah Wins?"

[123] Michael Slackman, U.S.-Backed Alliance Wins in Lebanon," *New York Times*, June 7, 2009, http://www.nytimes.com/2009/06/08/world/middleeast/08lebanon.html.

be limited to its role as a legislative spoiler with "veto power."[124] This is not to say Hezbollah lost per se: they won all 14 parliamentary seats they intended to win- even though their coalition lost.

While Hezbollah's potential veto power may stymie the efficient functioning of government, this type of political power is not inherently destructive of the state- as opposed to their militia's power. Two questions remain. Firstly, will the newly elected parties join together to form a functioning unity government? [125] Secondly–and squarely at the heart of this thesis–if the "unity" government fails to meet with the political expectations of Hezbollah leadership, will Hezbollah lay down its arms and "fully moderate" at long last, accepting a "normal" stake in the greater Lebanese polity, or will it rebel using force of arms? Hezbollah has accepted the elections and signals that it is willing to discuss the status of its militia. Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah's statements of June 8, 2009, regarding the election results seem to suggest a positive leaning in this direction:

> We accept these results... with sportsmanship and in a democratic way and we accept that the ruling camp [March 14] has achieved the parliamentary majority. [Lebanese] sovereignty needs the solidarity and cooperation of all parties. The opportunity to build a strong state is still present; it is linked to the will of all political parties. We want the majority to announce its real political platform, its priorities and objectives, and which path it will use to deal with the others. There is no reason [to] fear [Hezbollah's militia] as long as the people support the resistance... [A] national dialogue would be held over this issue. "They" warned you that Hizbullah's arms might be used to impose on people choices they don't want. During these elections, the arms did not have any role. The resistance arms are for facing the Israelis and defending the country.[126]

However, encouraging a future the quote above may imply, it is the author's opinion that although Hezbollah has shown significant moderation from 1982 to the

---

[124] Mohammad Arshad, "U.S. Relieved at Lebanon Elections," *Reuters.com*, June 8, 2009. http://www.reuters.com/article/joeBiden/idUSN08338663.

[125] Chip Cummins and Nada Raad, "Lebanon Begins Test of Forming New Government," *Wall Street Journal*, June 9, 2009. http://online.wsj.com/article/SB124447124331294319.html.

[126] Michael Jansen, "Lebanon's Ruling Parties Defy Polls to Retain Power." *Irish Times.Com*, June 8, 2009, http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/world/2009/0609/1224248419232.html.

present, history demonstrates that Lebanon as a country cannot remain politically stable and peacefully exist with a strong, non-state actor within its midst (e.g., the PLO experience). Conversely, if the Lebanese polity-- as a whole-- decides at some point not to support “the resistance” (against Israel) Nasrallah cryptically spoke of, then what? The true bellwether of Hezbollah’s “moderation” will be the future disposition of the militia. So long as Hezbollah holds a monopoly on the use of force within Lebanon, “passing” the true “test” of moderation and political integration will remain to be seen.

APPENDIX. MAPS OF LEBANON

Figure 1. Political Map of Lebanon[127]

[127] Central Intelligence Agency, *Lebanon (Political)* 2002, http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/middle_east_and_asia/lebanon_pol_2002.jpg.

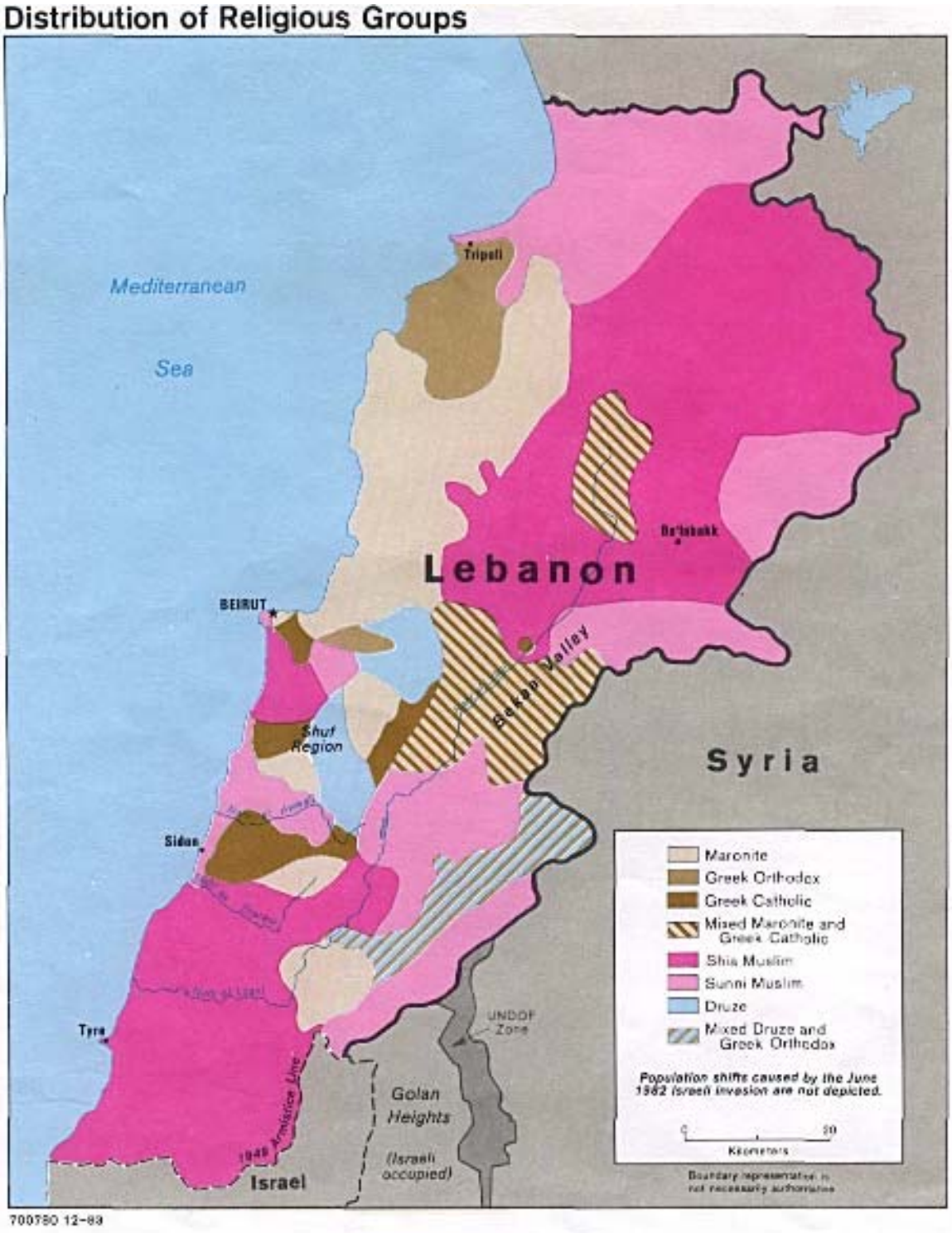

Figure 2. Distribution of Religious Groups of Lebanon[128]

[128] Central Intelligence Agency, *Lebanon- Distribution of Religious Groups*, 1983, http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/middle_east_and_asia/lebanon_religions_83.jpg.

LIST OF REFERENCES

Alagha, Joseph Elie. *The Shifts in Hizbullah's Ideology: Religious Ideology, Political Ideology, and Political Program*. Lieden: Amsterdam University Press, 2006.

"An Open Letter: The Hizballah Program." http://www.standwithus.com/pdfs/flyers/hezbollah_program.pdf (accessed December 2, 2008).

Aoun, Michel. "History Will Judge us all on our Actions." *Wall Street Journal*, July 13, 2006, sec. Opinion, http://online.wsj.com/article/SB115429780106621697.html (accessed May 25, 2009).

Arkin, William M. *Divining Victory: Airpower in the 2006 Israeli-Hezbollah War*. Maxwell AFB: Air University Press, 2007.

Associated Press. "Hezbollah Quits Lebanese Cabinet." *The Washington Post*, November 12, 2006.

Ayoob, Mohammed. *The Many Faces of Political Islam: Religion and Politics in the Muslim World*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2008.

Azani, Eitan. *Hezbollah: The Story of the Party of God, from Revolution to Institutionalization*. New York: Palgrave MacMillian, 2009.

Baylouny, Anne Marie. "Democratic Inclusion: A Solution to Militancy in Islamist Movements?" *Strategic Insights* III, no. 4 (April 2004): December 10, 2008, http://www.ccc.nps.navy.mil/si/2004/apr/baylounyApr04.asp (accessed December 10, 2008).

——. "Emotions, Poverty or Politics: Misconceptions about Islamic Movements." *Strategic Insights* III, no. 1 (January 2004), www.ccc.nps.navy.mil/si/2004/jan/baylounyJan04.pdf (accessed December 13, 2008).

Biddle, Stephen. *The 2006 Lebanon Campaign and the Future of Warfare: Implications for Army Defense Policy*, Strategic Studies Institute, 2008.

Blanchard, Christopher M. and Jeremy M. Sharp. "Lebanon." *CRS Report for Congress* (June 12, 2008), http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/RL33509.pdf (accessed May 20, 2009).

Central Intelligence Agency. *Lebanon (Political)*, 2002, http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/middle_east_and_asia/lebanon_pol_2002.jpg (accessed May 20, 2009).

——. *Lebanon–Distribution of Religious Groups*, 1983, http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/middle_east_and_asia/lebanon_religions_83.jpg (accessed May 20, 2009).

Chandler, Jennifer. "The Explanatory Value of Social Movement Theory." *Strategic Insights* IV, no. 5 (May 2005): December 13, 2008, http://www.ccc.nps.navy.mil/si/2005/May/chandlerMay05.asp#references (accessed December 13, 2008).

Cordsman, Anthony H., George Sullivan, and William D. Sullivan. *Lessons of the 2006 Israeli-Hezbollah War*. Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2007.

Cummins, Chip and Nada Raad. "Lebanon Begins Test of Forming New Government." *Wall Street Journal*, June 9, 2009, http://online.wsj.com/article/SB124447124331294319.html (accessed June 9, 2009).

Deeb, Marius. "Shi'a Movements in Lebanon: Their Formation, Ideology, Social Basis and Links with Iran and Syria." *Third World Quarterly* 10, no. 2 (April 1988): December 13, 2008, 683-698, http://www.jstor.org/stable/3992662 (accessed December 13, 2008).

——. *The Lebanese Civil War*. New York: Praeger Publishers, 1980.

Deeb, Mary Jane. "Militant Islam and the Politics of Redemption." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences* 254, no. 1 (1992): 524.

el Khazen, Farid. *The Breakdown of the State in Lebanon 1967-1976*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000.

Esposito, John L. *Islam: The Straight Path*. 3rd ed. New York: Oxford University Press, Inc., 2005.

Esposito, John L. and Dalia Mogahed. *Who Speaks for Islam?* New York: Gallup Press, 2007.

Gambill, Gary C. "Implications of the Israel-Hezbollah War." *Mideast Monitor* 1, no. 3 (September-October 2006), May 25, 2009, http://www.mideastmonitor.org/issues/0609/0609_2.htm (accessed May 25, 2009).

Garamone, Jim. "Iran Arming, Training, Directing Terror Groups in Iraq, U.S. Official Says." *American Forces Press Service*, July 2, 2007.

Ghattas, Sam F. and Associated Press. “Hezbollah Sweeps over Beirut's Muslim Sector: Iranian-Backed Fighters Flex Muscle in Seizing Sunnis Loyal to the U.S.” *Beirut Times*, May 9, 2008, sec. News & Reports.

Goksel, Timur. “Short Biography.” *American University of Beirut.* http://wwwlb.aub.edu.lb/~webpspa/Faculty_Profile/Short_Biography/t_goksel_bio.html (accessed December 2, 2008).

Gordon, Michael R. “Hezbollah Trains Iraqis in Iran, Officials Say.” *New York Times*, May 4, 2008.

Guitta, Oliver. “Hezbollah, an Imminent Danger.” *Middle East Times* (November 17, 2008), December 2, 2008, http://www.metimes.com/International/2008/11/17/hezbollah_an_imminent_danger/5433/ (accessed December 2, 2008).

Haddad, Simon. “The Origins of Popular Support for Lebanon's Hezbollah.” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 29, no. 1 (January 1, 2006): December 13, 2008, 21-34, http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10576100500351250 (accessed December 13, 2008).

Hafez, Mohammed M. *Why Muslims Rebel: Repression and Resistance in the Islamic World*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 2003.

Hamzeh, Ahmad Nizar. *In the Path of Hizbullah*. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2004.

Hamzeh, Nizar. “Lebanon's Hizbullah: From Islamic Revolution to Parliamentary Accommodation.” *Third World Quarterly* 14, no. 2 (1993): 321-337.

Harik, Judith Palmer. *Hezbollah; the Changing Face of Terrorism*. New York: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd., 2007.

Hersh, Seymour M. “The Redirection, is the Administration's New Policy Benefiting our Enemies in the War on Terrorism?” *The New Yorker*, March 5, 2007.

——. “Watching Lebanon, Washington's Interests in Israel's War.” *The New Yorker*, August 21, 2006.

“Hezbollah Denies Link to Hariri Murder.” *CNN.Com*, May 24, 2009, sec. World, http://www.cnn.com/2009/WORLD/meast/05/24/lebanon.hariri.hezbollah/ (accessed May 25, 2009).

“Hezbollah Takes over West Beirut.” *BBC.Com*, May 9, 2008, sec. Middle East, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/7391600.stm (accessed May 25, 2009).

“Hezbollah to End Beirut Seizure.” *BBC.Com*, May 10, 2008, sec. Middle East, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/7393982.stm (accessed May 25, 2009).

Jabar, Hala. *Hezbollah: Born with a Vengeance*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1997.

Jansen, Michael. "Lebanon's Ruling Parties Defy Polls to Retain Power." *Irish Times.Com,* June 8, 2009, http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/world/2009/0609/1224248419232.html (accessed June 8, 2009).

Kahil, Souhad. "A Rhetorical Examination and Critique of Hezbollah, the Party of God." PhD diss. Graduate College of Bowling Green State University, 2006.

Kaplain, Eben. "The Al-Qaeda-Hezbollah Relationship." *Council on Foreign Relations*. http://www.cfr.org/publication/11275/alqaedahezbollah_relationship.html (accessed December 2, 2008).

Katzman, Kenneth. "Iran: U.S. Concerns and Policy Responses." *CRS Report for Congress* (October 8, 2008).

Kepel, Gilles. *Jihad: The Trail of Political Islam* [Jihad: Expansion et Declin de l'Islamisme]. Translated by Anthony F. Roberts. 2nd ed. United States of America: President and Fellows of Harvard College, 2002.

Khalaf, Roula. "Hizbullah Denies Report it Plotted Hariri Slay." *Financial Times,* May 25, 2009, sec. Middle East, Politics and Security. http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/da9d90e0-488e-11de-8870-00144feabdc0.html (accessed May 25, 2009).

Khouri, Rami. "Hezbollah's Remarkable Transition." *The Globe and Mail*, October 17, 2007. http://thinkradio.com/forum/messages/26005.shtml (accessed December 2, 2008).

McAdam, Doug, John D. McCarthy, and Mayer N. Zald. "Introduction: Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Framing Processes: Toward a Synthetic, Comparative Perspective on Social Movements." In *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings*, edited by Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald, 1-20. New York: Cambridge University Press. 1996.

Mearsheimer, John J. and Stephen M. Walt. *The Israel Lobby and the U.S. Foreign Policy*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007.

Migdalovitz, Carol. "Israel: Background and Relations with the United States." *CRS Report for Congress* (July 8, 2008).

——. "Israeli-Arab Negotiations: Background, Conflicts, and U.S. Policy." *CRS Report for Congress* (September 8, 2008).

Mohammad, Arshad. "U.S. Relieved at Lebanon Election Result." *Reuters.Com,* June 8, 2009, http://www.reuters.com/article/joeBiden/idUSN08338663 (accessed June 8, 2009).

Muhanna, Elias. "W*hat if Hezbollah Wins?*" *Foreign Policy,* (May 5, 2009), http://experts.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2009/05/05/what_if_hezbollah_wins (accessed May 8, 2009).

Nasr, Vali. *The Shi'a Revival: How Conflicts within Islam will Shape the Future*. 1st ed. New York: W. W. Norton, 2006.

"Nasrallah and Free Patriotic Movement of Michel Aoun." *Egypt News.Com,* April 16, 2009, http://news.egypt.com/en/nasrallah-and-free-patriotic-movement-of-michel-aoun.html (accessed May 24, 2009).

Nasrallah, Sheikh Hassan. "What will be Hezbollah's Role in the War with Iraq?: Interview with Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah." By Anderson Cooper and Sheila MacVicar. *CNN Sunday 16:00*. March 16, 2003, edited by International NewsCable News Network, 2003.

Norton, Augustus Richard. *Hezbollah*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2007.

——. *Amal and the Shi'a: Struggle for the Soul of Lebanon*. 1st ed. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1987.

——. "Estrangement and Fragmentation in Lebanon." *Current History* 85, no. 508 (February 1, 1986): 58, http://libproxy.nps.edu/login?url=http://proquest.umi.com.libproxy.nps.edu/pqdweb?did=2757320&sid=1&Fmt=2&clientId=11969&RQT=309&VName=PQ D (accessed May 24, 2009).

Petersen, Roger D. *Understanding Ethnic Violence*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

Prados, Alfred B. "The Shib'a Farms Dispute and its Implications." *CRS Report for Congress* (August 7, 2001).

Qassem, Naim. *Hizbullah, the Story from within*. Translated by Dalia Khalil. London: Saqi, 2005.

Rabil, Robert G. "Hezbollah: Lebanon's Power Broker." *The Journal of International Security Affairs* no. 15, (Fall 2008), http://www.securityaffairs.org/issues/2008/15/rabil.php (accessed December 11, 2008).

——. *Syria, the United States, and the War on Terror in the Middle East*. Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2006.

——. *Embattled Neighbors: Syria, Israel & Lebanon*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 2003.

Ranstorp, Magnus. *Hizb'Allah in Lebanon: The Politics of the Western Hostage Crisis*. New York: St. Martin's Press, Scholarly and Reference Division, 1997.

Raphaeli, Nimrod, Dr. "Hizbullah-Israel War: Economic Consequences for Lebanon." *The MEMRI Economic Blog*. http://memrieconomicblog.org/bin/content.cgi?article=227 (accessed May 25, 2009).

Rohland, Pam. "The Druze Overview." *American Druze Heritage*. http://www.americandruzeheritage.com/the%20druze%20overview.html (accessed February 20, 2009).

Sfeir, Therese. "Nasrallah Accepts Election Results, Calls for 'Solidarity'." *The Daily Star (Beirut)*, June 9, 2009, http://www.dailystar.com.lb/article.asp?edition_id=1&categ_id=2&article_id=102820 (accessed June 9, 2009).

Sharp, Jeremy M. "U.S. Foreign Aid to Israel." *CRS Report for Congress* (January 2, 2008).

——. "Lebanon: The Israel-Hamas-Hezbollah Conflict." *CRS Report for Congress* (September 15, 2006).

Slackman, Michael. "U.S.-Backed Alliance Wins in Lebanon." *New York Times*, June 7, 2009, sec. Middle East, http://www.nytimes.com/2009/06/08/world/middleeast/08lebanon.html (accessed June 7, 2009).

Tartici, Ayten, and Lee H. Teslik "Lebanon's Parliamentary Elections (June 7, 2009)." *Council on Foreign Relations*. http://www.dailystar.com.lb/article.asp?edition_id=1&categ_id=5&article_id=102811 (accessed June 8, 2009).

Voice of Hezbollah: The Statements of Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah . Translated by Ellen Khouri, edited by Nicholas Noe. New York: Verso Books, 2007.

Weinberger, Naomi Joy. *Syrian Intervention in Lebanon: The 1975-76 Civil War*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1986.

Wiktorowicz, Quintan. “Introduction: Islamic Activism and Social Movement Theory.” In *Islamic Activism: A Social Movement Theory Approach*, edited by Quintan Wiktorowicz, 1-33. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2004.

Young, Michael. “Lebanon's Elections: An Early Inquest.” *The Daily Star (Beirut)*, June 9, 2009, sec. Opinion, http://www.dailystar.com.lb/article.asp?edition_id=1&categ_id=5&article_id=102811 (accessed June 8, 2009).

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

INITIAL DISTRIBUTION LIST

1. Defense Technical Information Center
   Fort Belvoir, Virginia

2. Dudley Knox Library
   Naval Postgraduate School
   Monterey, California

3. Marine Corps Representative
   Naval Postgraduate School
   Monterey, California

4. Director, Training and Education, MCCDC, Code C46
   Quantico, Virginia

5. Director, Marine Corps Research Center, MCCDC, Code C40RC
   Quantico, Virginia

6. Marine Corps Tactical Systems Support Activity (Attn: Operations Officer)
   Camp Pendleton, California