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**THESIS**

**HEZBOLLAH: ARMED RESISTANCE TO POLITICAL  
PARTICIPATION**

by

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June 2014

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**HEZBOLLAH: ARMED RESISTANCE TO POLITICAL PARTICIPATION**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Social movement theories have evolved rapidly during the latter half of the twentieth century, and they offer an enhanced understanding of the organizational dynamics in Hezbollah. Armed resistance theories have also evolved, and shed some light on the decision making process of the organization. These theoretical frameworks coalesce to show that Hezbollah's resolute radical agenda was malleable as the situation changed. As the movement grew, it demonstrated the same concerns as all large groups. This thesis asks two important questions: why did Hezbollah moderate its political stance, and what lessons can we learn from this case study?

This thesis analyses Lebanon's Hezbollah from 1982 to 1992. The analysis centers on the evolution of the organization's political program, and outlines a distinct shift in organizational goals. This thesis argues that Hezbollah shifted from a movement that was determined to establish a radical Islamist centered government to one that works within the Lebanese system. The motives behind the shift in political ideologies are important, because they offer options to those who seek to moderate radical political forces.

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# I. INTRODUCTION

## A. RESEARCH QUESTION

The story of Hezbollah<sup>1</sup> is one of contradiction and controversy. Hezbollah is a militant organization, bent on the violent overthrow of the Lebanese government, and dedicated to the destruction of Israel.<sup>2</sup> Since 1982, Hezbollah has conducted an armed resistance against the status quo and has attempted to protect the 27 percent Shi'a minority through violent means. The goal of the organization is to establish an Islamic republic to fix the societal ills that have plagued Lebanon since its inception. The identity of Shi'a within Lebanese society and the character of the sectarian government has given rise to a multitude of violent actions with far reaching consequences. Hezbollah uses unconventional tactics and terror to challenge the government and foster strong ties with Iran.

Hezbollah began to explore new options in its resistance, and moved towards participation from within the established government after the 1989 Taif Agreement, which ended the Lebanese Civil War. After a protracted debate within the upper echelons of the group's leadership, Hezbollah decided to participate in parliamentary elections. After some notional success, the footprint of the group became much larger, as they attempted to coop support from the population. Schools, hospitals and community organizations started to become a means of influence within the larger Lebanese society. Throughout the latter half of the twentieth century, Hezbollah began to focus more effort on its electoral program, moving into provincial and municipal elections. The practice of armed resistance persisted, but from 1992 to 2009, the preponderance of violence was used against Israel to the south, not internal enemies. In recent years, internal violence has made a resurgence, but it is has not reduced the prominence of Hezbollah's electoral program.

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<sup>1</sup> There are other accepted ways to spell Hezbollah (Hizbullah, etc.), but this form is used for continuity's sake.

<sup>2</sup> Excerpts from the English translation of "An Open Letter: The Hizbullah Program" in Joseph Alagha, *Hizbullah's Documents: From the 1985 Open Letter to the 2009 Manifesto* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2011), 39.

This thesis will seek to explain the establishment of Hezbollah's electoral program, analyzing several potential variables to understand this new turn for the organization. The Shi'a identity mobilization in Lebanon offers an example of the creation of armed resistance groups. The history of Hezbollah as an organization is pertinent, as it shows the phases of development, and how the group has mobilized and evolved over the years. The dynamics of collective action, collective identity and social movement play a role in the study of Hezbollah's electoral program. This thesis will ask whether organizational dynamics within Hezbollah caused a shift towards political participation.

## **B. IMPORTANCE**

The West and Israel characterize Hezbollah as a terrorist organization. Years of terror tactics against targets within Lebanon have shaped the perception of the group and have affected foreign views of the country as a whole. Despite many years of conflict, Hezbollah continues to thrive. It appears to be engrained into the Lebanese social and political landscape. The study of Hezbollah is often centered on religious extremism, yet few policy makers focus on the group dynamics, and how armed resistance groups continue to operate in the face of military, economic and political pressure. Hezbollah has evolved, and will most likely continue to do so. An important question then becomes: how do external political actors encourage an evolution towards continued political participation and non-violence?

Hezbollah does not exist as a singularity. It combines the ideals of a multitude of different social actors. There are religious ideologues, political activists, armed Jihadi and various disaffected minorities. Hezbollah attempts to coopt various actors in order to bolster support for its Islamic version of governance. The diversity within the organization produces different programs in addition to violent struggle. In order to understand the actions of Hezbollah and to predict further policy formation, a comprehensive study is necessary to understand terrorist organization maturation. With a proper understanding of the history, organization, and group dynamics, external political actors could suppress violent means of resistance.

The decision to participate within the political process represented a dramatic shift in Hezbollah's ideology. An understanding of the shift towards an electoral process will provide a framework for future studies in the field of terror group maturation. Furthermore, a study into group dynamics will demonstrate how policy makers can change an organization from the outside, and take an inclusive stance towards an origination bent on the destruction of established governments. In this case, the desired end result is political competition, not armed conflict.

### **C. PROBLEMS AND HYPOTHESES**

The study of Hezbollah is often complicated by the rhetoric and the strong emotions that come with religious fights. In order to cut through the language of conflict, one must take a different approach when studying the political program. A journalistic approach is not sufficient to understand why Hezbollah has evolved over the years. The statements of the leadership, the Open Letter of 1985, and the results of debates simply serve as a history without analysis of the dynamics that are present. In many ways, the public statements of Hezbollah do not offer a better understanding of the organization. Rote recitation of group policy does not serve to analyze the underlying group dynamics present in the decision making process. This thesis sets out to address the question of why? Why do armed resistance groups decide to participate in politics?

Social movement and collective identity theories offer better explanation for the evolution and maturation of terrorist organizations. Much work has been dedicated to the ideological tenets of Hezbollah, and it is easy to paint a picture of an organization that is immovable in creed and staunchly dedicated to a unitary goal. Yet this has not been the case historically. Organizations, whether violent or not, have many dynamics at play, and make important decisions for complicated reasons. The value of a strong constituency cannot be overstated, and Hezbollah is not exceptional in this context. Organizational survival is contingent on pleasing the largest number of possible supporters. In this thesis I will argue that the decision to participate in the political process was not the result of heavy-handed western tactics to force a change. Rather, the politics within the organization in the context of opportunities and constraints in the domestic environment

caused a change in the ideological stance, and demonstrates a resistance group's desire to survive through any means. In short, I argue that Hezbollah's Islamist ideology is secondary to the survival of the movement as a whole.

#### **D. LITERATURE REVIEW**

The identity of the Shi'a in Lebanon has shaped the development of armed resistance and political organizations. Augustus Richard Norton and Joseph Alagha demonstrate the political and social basis for the armed resistance of the Lebanese Shi'a. According to both authors, Amal, another Shi'a militant organization and Hezbollah are the result of years of disenfranchisement within the Lebanese political spectrum.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, the corruption of the previous political bosses created an environment where more radical organizations could gather support. Norton and Alagha focus on the role of the Lebanese civil war in the development of militant Shi'ism, and outline the role that Israel, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and other organizations played during the twentieth century. These narratives offer an explanation for the rise in Hezbollah's popularity, and how the organization learned from the mistakes of the past.<sup>4</sup>

A comprehensive review of Hezbollah's history is needed to explain the political environment that influenced the creation of the organization and to explain its generally accepted interests. A historical narrative will also bring to light the thematic elements throughout decades of organizational development. Augustus Richard Norton, in his work, *Hezbollah: A Short History*,<sup>5</sup> succinctly brings many elements of the development of Hezbollah together. He demonstrates the value of the Shi'a identity in Lebanon, and how the manifestation of Hezbollah is the result of political and economic disenfranchisement. In *The Hizbullah Complex*, Amad Nizar Hamez furthers the argument that ideology has little to do with the success and flexibility seen throughout Hezbollah's history. Social theories offer a more comprehensive analysis. Hamez states

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<sup>3</sup> Augustus Richard Norton, *Hezbollah: A Short History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), Kindle edition.

<sup>4</sup> Norton, *Hezbollah: A Short History*; Joseph Alagha, *Shifts in Hizbollah's Ideology: Religious Ideology, Political Ideology, Political Program* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2004).

<sup>5</sup> Norton, *Hezbollah: A Short History*, loc 345.

that the study of Hezbollah should not be simply journalistic—it needs to be analytical, and to understand a group of ideologues, sometimes the religious identity needs to be sidelined. Scholars need to understand the group dynamics in play.<sup>6</sup> Joseph Alagha continues with the thematic elements that Norton describes. In *Shifts in Hezbollah's Ideology: Religious Identity, Political Ideology, and Political Program*,<sup>7</sup> Alagha further demonstrates the identity of the Lebanese Shi'a, and describes the multifaceted character of the organization. Alagha and Norton describe an organization that was formed around the disparate political economy of Lebanon's sectarian government. Furthermore, they accurately describe the evolutionary character of the organization and show that the interests within the leadership and consistency have shifted. Norton's other work, *Amal and the Shi'a Struggle for the Soul of Lebanon*,<sup>8</sup> shows the shift in Shi'a political identity during the early 1980s. He juxtaposes Hezbollah with Amal, the second leading Shi'a organization, and demonstrates the reasons for the rise of the former. Amal Saad-Ghorayeb explains the rise of Hezbollah in his article: "Factors Conducive to the Politicization of the Lebanese Shi'a and the Emergence of Hezbollah."<sup>9</sup> The historical contexts of these narratives are less mired in rote classical history—they attempt to create a understanding of Hezbollah through modern historical social analysis.

The dynamics of group association and collective action within Hezbollah are extremely complicated and fractured. In order to understand the policy of such an organization, considerable analysis is necessary. Social movement and armed resistance theory bring together various sociological schools to better understand why people organize collectively, who they choose as leaders, and how decisions are made for the body. For many theorists, the decision to participate within a social movement is made possible by a change in the political atmosphere. According to Sidney Tarrow, in *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics*, social actors who lack

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<sup>6</sup> Amad Nizar Hamzeh, *In The Path of Hizbullah* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2004), ix–x.

<sup>7</sup> Alagha, *Shifts in Hizbollah's Ideology*.

<sup>8</sup> Augustus Richard Norton, *Amal and the Shi'a Struggle for the Soul of Lebanon* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1987).

<sup>9</sup> Amal Saad-Ghorayeb, "Factors Conducive to the Politicization of the Lebanese Shi'a and the Emergence of Hezbollah," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 14, no. 3 (2003): 273–307.

resources will come together to accomplish a goal that cannot be done with the existing pool of resources. In an attempt to coopt more members, the group then broadens their goals, and strategically uses cultural, social and economic incentives. The resulting ties between these members become intrinsically engrained within the organization, and become a motivation for continued resistance against the status quo. This resistance does not necessarily imply armed conflict, but instead shows that those without the resources necessary to mount a complicated opposition will look to others for support.<sup>10</sup>

Tarrow further illustrates the importance of opportunity and constraint on growing social movements. Individuals will risk their rights and lives when the opportunities are present, and when constraints are mitigated. One of the most dangerous moments for a government is when they reform, since it opens opportunity for contentious political groups. Tarrow uses the former Soviet Union under Gorbachev as an example. The process of liberalization sparked a massive increase in political organizations, which eventually lead to the end of the established government. Tarrow describes the key dimensions for mobilization succinctly:

(1) The opening of access for participation for new actors; (2) the evidence of political realignment in the polity; (3) the appearance of influential elites; (4) emerging splits within the elite; and (5) a decline in the state's capacity or will to repress dissent.<sup>11</sup>

To Tarrow, it was not simple discontentment that caused widespread social movements. It was the strong interpersonal ties between the members of these groups that reinforced their efforts for reform. Contentious political organizations do not survive simply by attempting to buck the established government. Organizers within the movement work to exploit the mistakes of the establishment, create a collective identity, and mobilize support. Leaders must draw on a multitude of different social interactions in

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<sup>10</sup> Sidney Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 74.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 76.

order to capitalize on their strengths. The struggle of a contentious political organization must be based within the cultural, social and religious identity of the proposed constituency.<sup>12</sup>

Charles Kurzman's social movement theory emphasizes the importance of opportunity. Established organizations recruit and act only when it is economically and structurally feasible to participate. The established government must either no longer have the willingness or the capacity to quell rising opposition movements. Kurzman takes his analysis further and demonstrates that established organizations offer the best opportunity for success when the constraints are removed. Religious organizations are the model for his analysis, since they have the existing power structure, collective identity, places to meet and a semblance of ideological standardization. Existing organizations, even without a political motive offer the best opportunity for organizers to gather mass support. The success of a resistance movement is dependent on their ability to build upon existing political and cultural organizations.<sup>13</sup>

Francesca Polletta and James Jasper focus on collective identity within social movements. To Polletta and James, social movements are dependent on imagined and concrete communities. The perception of community must be present in order to bring different ideologies together, and the reasons for joining a collective are not the same for all members. For some, personal interest may overcome cultural or ideological imperatives. For others, it is the ideology of the group and surpasses the personal. It is the job of organizers to create an identity that overcomes all the boundaries present. For a social movement to work, a collective identity should be based on factors that cross cultural, social and economic motives.<sup>14</sup>

While social movement theory may explain the motives for collective action in general terms, a large amount of research has also been dedicated to the study of armed

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 73–75.

<sup>13</sup> Charles Kurzman, "Organizational Opportunity and Social Movement Mobilization: A Comparative Analysis of Four Religious Movements," *Mobilization: An International Journal* 3, no 1, (1998), 23–4.

<sup>14</sup> Francesca Polletta and James M. Jasper, "Collective Identity and Social Movements," *Annual Review of Sociology* 27 (2001): 283–305.

resistance groups. Terrorist group dynamics can be broken into two distinctive schools of thought: the older view, instrumental, and the newer approach, the organizational. The instrumental approach has been used by scholars and policy makers for years, but has since fallen out of favor in the academic world. Since the 1970s, the organizational approach has had the priority. Both approaches explain the dynamics of terrorist organizations with an emphasis on different characteristics.

William Bruce Cameron notes that the instrumental approach to the study of terrorist organizations is based upon the theories of human rationality. Instrumental scholars view all humans as rational actors, who use organizations as a means to further their own personal interests. All calculations are based on cost-benefit analysis of membership. Furthermore, these theories assume an insulated, unitary movement towards an ultimate goal. Personal ideology is overcome by the group as a whole, since it is the group that empowers its members.<sup>15</sup> People with low self-esteem or social standing will continually seek organizations that further their own standing.

The instrumental view also places a large importance on the leadership of a group. Charismatic leadership is the glue that holds a resistance group together. The members of the leadership then use symbols, emblems and legal frameworks to justify their position, which further cements group cohesion. William Bruce Cameron, in his landmark *Modern Social Movements* states the importance of a leaders justification: “Those in authority attempt to justify their rule over institutions by linking it, as if it were necessary consequence, with widely believed-in moral symbols, sacred emblems, [and] legal formulae.”<sup>16</sup>

Martha Crenshaw furthers the discussion of the instrumental approach by demonstrating the link between a group’s action and their ideology. One can assume a group’s intention from the policy and action, since the group operates as a unitary whole. The lack of dissent within the ranks of an organization is proof of the cohesion in

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<sup>15</sup> William Bruce Cameron, *Modern Social Movements* (New York: Random House, 1966), 1–10.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

ideology. Furthermore, this cohesion can temper the actions of a group, since they may lose possible support for engaging in activities that would alienate their members.<sup>17</sup>

The instrumental approach to the study of terrorist organizations was the predominant theory within the study of social movements until the 1970s. Groups were seen as homogenous, held together by a common goal, ideology and charismatic leader. Resistance is the goal of the organization, and participation within the electoral system represents a failure in the organization, as well as a de facto recognition of the legitimacy of the current government.<sup>18</sup>

The organizational approach began to take form in the 1970s, and attempted to fill the logical gaps in the instrumental view. According to the organizational view<sup>19</sup> revolutionary organizations are not simply a homogenous group. Members bring their own interest, ideology, and faith into the debate. Organizations and their leaders must offer a large and diverse set of services to the constituency in order to ensure cohesion. Jeffrey Pfeffer and Gerald Salanick, in *The External Control of Organizations A Resource Dependence Perspective*, argue that models of organizations rarely show that they operate as a unitary whole. An organization's behavior is dependent on the individual ideologies, and the interaction between actors determines policy.<sup>20</sup>

The organizational approach examines the internal dynamics of a resistance group, and attempts to understand the constantly evolving policy and stance of the leadership and constituency. Older organizations show the evolution that occurs when they fail to meet their stated objectives. Leaders that have an understanding of the internal politics of their organizations can more quickly adapt policy to suit a multitude of

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<sup>17</sup> Martha Crenshaw, "Theories of Terrorism," in *Inside Terrorist Organizations*, ed. David Rapoport (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 15.

<sup>18</sup> Cynthia L. Irvin, *Militant Nationalism: Between Movement and Party in Ireland and the Basque Country* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 6.

<sup>19</sup> Crenshaw, "Theories of Terrorism," 27.

<sup>20</sup> Jeffrey Pfeffer and Gerald Salanick, *The External Control of Organizations: A Resource Dependence Perspective* (New York: Harper and Row, 1978), 36.

different interests. Group policy is the result of a struggle within the group to find an ideological middle ground, which is used to ensure movement survival.<sup>21</sup>

The organizational approach offers more options to external policy makers. If the group is not seen as an ideologically homogenous, outside entities can weaken the position of the resistance group by offering different incentives. This approach assumes an inherent weakness within the cohesion of terrorist organizations.<sup>22</sup>

In 1992, after 18 years without elections, the Lebanese people returned to the polls. The 1989 Taif Agreement laid the groundwork for greater political participation across religious confessions. Hezbollah decided to participate in parliamentary elections and made a distinct move towards participation within the Lebanese system. Joseph Alagha, in *Shifts in Hezbollah's Ideology* outlines the development of Hezbollah's political program from 1985 to the present day. Alagha analyses the Open Letter of 1985, as well as the various speeches, statements and works of Hezbollah's leaders. He shows that the decision to participate in the 1992 parliamentary elections had an ideological basis that spanned the history of the organization, and that Islamist organizations view political change from the top as a religious duty.<sup>23</sup> Alagha uses primary sources to form his opinion of Hezbollah's political ideology and uses a very straightforward approach to explain the ideological tenets that lead to greater political participation. In his next chapter, he analyses the discourse between Hezbollah's leaders and what they used to justify their new ideological position. Alagha breaks down the debates in the period leading up to the 1992 election and states that there were four key issues on the table: (1) legitimacy of the current government; (2) abandonment of previous ideals; (3) the role of interests outside the norm; (4) the priorities of the party in the system. He then breaks down how all these problems were discussed, and how the leadership justified their actions.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Crenshaw, "Theories of Terrorism," 21–25.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>23</sup> Alagha, *Shifts in Hizbullah's Ideology*, 120–124.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

Ahmad Nizar Hamzeh, in *In the Path of Hizbullah*, states that Hezbollah's move towards political pragmatism is the result of a calculated cost-benefit analysis. He argues that pressure from the U.S. and Syria was the main factors that caused political participation. Hezbollah was working to resolve public relations problems and to attempt to legitimize its position in the Lebanese political system. Hamzeh views Hezbollah as a unitary, rational organization that makes decisions according to circumstances. Richard Norton in *Hezbollah: A Short History* takes an opposite approach, and shows the fractures between the upper leaders of the party. In this context, Norton offers a view of the group that is more open to analysis through application of social movement theory.

## **E. METHODS AND SOURCES**

The research for this thesis will entail a historical study of Hezbollah, from its roots to the present day. The Lebanese confessional government has fostered an environment of competition and civil war. The Shi'a identity in Lebanon forms the basis for an understanding of the organization. A specific emphasis on the political ideology of the Shi'a is necessary in order to more effectively analyze the group interactions that formed policy. The religious ideology cannot be ignored, but in this context is not as important to understanding policy changes. A plethora of historical narratives exist which explain the roots of Hezbollah and how religious, social and political identity have shaped the group.

A study into the theories of social movement, collective identity, and armed resistance are necessary to understand the dynamics behind Hezbollah's policy formation. Significant research has been dedicated to the public statements that formed an ideological basis for political participation, but the underlying dynamics between members of the group has not been significantly studied. This thesis will explore the theoretical studies that explain the evolution and maturation of all social movements, and how the leadership and constituency interact to create change.

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## **II. THE CONFESSIONAL GOVERNMENT AND THE RISE OF POLITICAL SHI'ISM**

### **A. THE NATIONAL PACT AND THE CONFESSIONAL SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT**

The story of modern day Lebanon begins with the Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916. This agreement set about the creation of a government that would relegate the Shi'a population in Lebanon to the lower end of the socio-economic spectrum. Great Britain and France used this agreement as a contingency for the predicted collapse of the Ottoman Empire. These two countries expected to come out of the war the victors, and needed an apparatus to distribute their claims throughout the Middle East. In this treaty, France was given the area of Greater Syria, which included the modern day countries of Syria, Lebanon, and parts of Jordan. The areas closest to the Mediterranean Sea would be under direct French control, with colonial administration running the daily operations and governance. In 1920, the French government used its mandate to establish Greater Lebanon, a wholly separate entity from Syrian territory. The establishment of this distinct colonial holding was for various socio-political goals. First, it was part of an effort to thwart the growing Arab independence movement that had its in Damascus. It was easier to control two distinct states with different religious interests. Second, this area held some of the most important farmland and resources in the Arab world, and held many of the important shipping ports on the Mediterranean. Third, in the French colonial mindset, the number of Maronite Christians in the area obligated the European power to protect and control the daily workings of the government. In 1926, the new Lebanese state created a constitution under French advisement and elected Charles Debbas, a Greek Orthodox as the first president of the colonial holding. One of the most important actions of the colonial government was to conduct a census in 1932, which would be used to administer the differing religious confessions. The results of this census would dictate the later system of government, and would create an environment that was advantageous to the Maronite Christians. This system would also ensure an environment that would be

disproportionately harmful to the Shi'a population.<sup>25</sup> Results of the census showed the Maronites with 30 percent of the population, with the Sunni Muslims with 20 percent and the Shi'a with 18 percent.<sup>26</sup>

After the formation of the new Greater Lebanon, the three main religious confessions were initially optimistic, since this new political entity afforded a large amount of control over domestic politics and protected sovereignty from external influence. Internally, the Shi'a initially supported the measures to create a separate Lebanon, since it separated their confessional from the Syrian political system and the Arab independence movement. This consolidated power for the Shi'a and afforded a greater amount of autonomy within a smaller nation. Joseph Alagha, a Lebanese social scientist states, "Under no other circumstance would the Shi'ite *zu'ama* (political bosses) aspire to play a prominent political role."<sup>27</sup> Contemporary western scholars and government figures also lauded the efforts of the French in setting up the confessional system of government. They saw it as a means of establishing a sovereign government with different religious traditions. The confessional government was the pertri dish where sovereignty, nationalism and religion would clash, and where theorists could test their models for governance. As Augustus Richard Norton noted the opinion of western scholars in his book on Amal: "It is our contention that the Lebanese approach, while not wholly adequate and not exportable in toto, has much to offer other states confronting serious problems of ethnic, religious and racial conflict."<sup>28</sup> The optimism that was initially expressed would be dashed through the formation of agreements that undermined the power of the Shi'a community.<sup>29</sup>

According to Norton, who studies the Lebanese Shi'a extensively, infighting between the various religious groups continued in Greater Lebanon, as each religion

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<sup>25</sup> Alagha, *Shifts in Hezbollah's Ideology*, 21–23; Norton, *Hezbollah: A Short History*, loc: 210.

<sup>26</sup> Rania Maktabi, "The Lebanese Census of 1923 Revisited. Who are the Lebanese?" *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 26, no. 2 (1999): 219.

<sup>27</sup> Alagha, *Shifts in Hezbollah's Ideology*, 21.

<sup>28</sup> Augustus Richard Norton, *Amal and the Shi'a: Stuggle for the Soul of Lebanon* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1988), 1.

<sup>29</sup> Alagha, *Shifts in Hezbollah's Ideology*, 23.

strived to maintain some semblance of political dominance. In addition, the demographics of Lebanon continued to change, which undermined the results of the 1932 census. This demographic shift would not be addressed or acknowledged by the elite until later in the twentieth century. The stresses of the Second World War strained France and its colonial holdings. As a result, an agreement had to be achieved between the constituent parties. The modern state of Lebanon declared its independence from the French in 1943, with the French army finally leaving in 1945. The defining political agreement in the Lebanese state system was the national pact, a verbal agreement between the three largest religious communities in Lebanon. The Maronite Christians, Sunni and Shi'a Muslims agreed to control the new modern state of Lebanon by confessional, with each religion given a proportional amount of power over the political spectrum. The Maronites inherited the highest position of authority, the presidency, Sunni Muslims were afforded the premiership, and the Shi'a were given the speakership of the parliament.<sup>30</sup>

The confessional system of government that emerged from the National Pact organized each religion into sectarian political communities, each with their own power to appoint representatives and bureaucrats into the national government. The highest national posts were awarded to the three largest confessions, the Maronites, Sunnis and Shi'a. The data used to organize these communities came out of the 1932 census, where the results are known to be inaccurate and dubious. The French, who had conducted the census, counted Maronites in the majority and vastly under counted the Sunni and Shi'a populations.<sup>31</sup> This was the last concerted effort by any entity to gain a handle on the demographics of Lebanon.<sup>32</sup> As a result, the confessional government underrepresented the Shi'a and they had very little influence over the political system. The political, economic and social disenfranchisement of the Shi'a in Lebanon created and

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<sup>30</sup> Norton, *Hezbollah: A Short History*, loc: 210.

<sup>31</sup> Alagha, *Shifts in Hezbollah's Ideology*, 23.

<sup>32</sup> Hamzeh, *In the Path of Hizbullah*, 12–13.

environment that was rich for the establishment of political and militant organizations. The evolution of the Shi'a social, economic, and political landscape will be detailed further in this chapter.

## **B. SHI'A SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS**

The disenfranchisement of the Shi'a in Lebanon can be traced back to Ottoman rule. From 1516 to 1922, the Shi'a population in the Levantine lost large amounts of land in the face of expanding Druze and Maronite populations. The economic viability of the population was consistently threatened without any recourse from protecting central government. When Shi'ism became the official state religion of the Safavid Empire, the Ottomans became increasingly suspicious of its Shi'a inhabitants. What followed were years of conflict between the empire, local inhabitants, and the Shi'a. The Ottomans tacitly supported the subjugation of the Shi'a over suspicions that they were loyal to a competing power.<sup>33</sup> The Shi'a were unable to form their own community under the millet system, and their religious leaders were conscripted into the army during times of war. The Sunni Ottomans saw a threat in their own borders and reacted accordingly; taking land, life and freedom from the Shi'a population in the Levantine.<sup>34</sup>

After the fall of the Ottoman Empire, the Shi'a community continued its history of marginalization in the politics of greater Lebanon. The French were determined to establish a separate entity from the Syrian territory in order to protect the Maronite Christian population. The problem with this task was that there was a large contingent of Shi'a Muslims in the south that was opposed to the idea of Maronite rule. This tension boiled over in 1919, when Shi'a and Maronite militias clashed in a series of small battles. The French used this as an opportunity to support their Maronite partners, and crush the fledgling Shi'a resistance movement. The short-lived resistance was eventually crushed, and the Shi'a were forced to take a backseat in the formation of the new Lebanese government in 1920. This action also cemented the identity of the Shi'a in the minds of

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 9–10.

<sup>34</sup> Norton, *Hezbollah: A Short History*, loc: 239.

the western observers who assisted in the creation of the confessional government.<sup>35</sup> From 1920, any political mobilization by the Shi'a was extremely difficult, and seen as a danger to the established leadership.

The 1932 census established the Shi'a community as the third largest in Lebanon. What this failed to account for was the growth of the community, and the lower standard of living within Shi'a territories. During the twentieth century, the Shi'a population growth has outpaced all other confessions. The average Shi'a family in the 1970s had seven children, where a Maronite family only had four.<sup>36</sup> The natural growth of the population had little to no effect on the relevance of the Shi'a in politics. As Augustus Richard Norton states, "By any of the standard measures of socioeconomic status, the Shiites were the most deprived community in Lebanon."<sup>37</sup> In 1971, the average income for a Lebanese family was 6,247 Lebanese pounds. The average Shi'a income was 4,532 L£. In terms of education, 50 percent of Shi'a had no formalized schooling, which was high considering the national average was only 20 percent.<sup>38</sup> In terms of development, Southern Lebanon had the fewest roads, sewage facilities, schools and hospitals. Only the larger population centers could be considered modern by any stretch of the imagination.<sup>39</sup>

According to Norton, few Shi'a owned land, with most opting for a system of sharecropping that paid a pittance. For those who owned land, they could not earn a living on the legal goods that they sold to the state, and as a result, many turned to illicit trafficking in goods such as poppies and hashish. To further exacerbate the problem with land and farming, the Palestinians in the south were a source for cheap and reliable labor. The wars in Israel and the Palestinian territory caused a massive migration into Southern Lebanon, with the PLO operating out of the area for several years. The Palestinians conducted operations from Lebanon since the 1950s, and as a result, Israel has had a military presence in Beirut and South Lebanon. Thousands of Lebanese Shi'a were

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., loc: 230.

<sup>38</sup> Norton, *Amal and the Shi'a*, 17.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 18.

displaced in the clashes between the Palestinians and the Israelis. Many displaced Lebanese citizens, mostly young men, were forced to leave the country in search of fortunes abroad in Africa, Gulf countries and the United States.<sup>40</sup>

### **C. THE ROLE OF THE ZU'AMA PRIOR TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF MODERN POLITICIZED SHI'ISM.**

During the first 30 years of Lebanese history, it would be difficult to identify a unitary Shi'a community.<sup>41</sup> The *zu'ama*, or traditional political patrons, dominated the Shi'a political landscape. Their power derived from the old Ottoman system of tax-farming, where local elites held the legal authority to levy taxes in their own area. In the post-World War I era, these local elites consolidated their power by differentiating between the Shi'a and external religious confessions. Furthermore, each elite had his own portfolio of interests that may or may not have been contiguous with the other *zu'ama*. The result of this was a highly fractured political framework within the Shi'a community. It was these old local forces that coopted the confessional government, and used the structure to further their own ambitions. Control was maintained through traditional patronage networks, which had been built over years of interaction. These bosses maintained a delicate network of alliances, which combined many different traditions within the Shi'a community. Indeed, it would be difficult to identify a unitary community until the late 1960s.<sup>42</sup>

As in the Ottoman system, the *zu'ama* enjoyed many of the material benefits of their position within society without affording their constituents any real services. Money, labor and votes continued to flow upward, with little in return to the local community. The services that were provided were not out of some sense of a legal right, but simply a return for tribute rendered. Corruption was the standard, not the exception. Bribes were the principal means of getting services from the state, and all services flowed through the local political boss. Where religious leaders were concerned, the Shi'a *ulema*

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<sup>40</sup> Norton, *Hezbollah: A Short History*, loc: 245.

<sup>41</sup> Augustus Richard Norton, "Changing Actors and Leadership among the Shiites of Lebanon," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 482 (1985): 111.

<sup>42</sup> Norton, "Changing Actors and Leadership," 111.

were beholden to the *zu'ama* for all money and material benefits. Very few religious leaders had a means to support themselves or their flock. As a result, there was not a tradition of political involvement from the clergy. The *ulema* were unable to challenge the authority of the political leadership, which was in stark contrast to the later movement in Iran.<sup>43</sup>

The *zu'ama* operated with impunity prior to the establishment of politicized shi'ism, and would stand as an example of the problems in the decadent past. The movements that came later in the twentieth century would point to the excess of the *zu'ama* as an example of what was wrong with the previous system.<sup>44</sup>

#### **D. THE ROOTS OF POLITICAL SHI'ISM**

By the 1960s, the political power of the *zu'ama* was waning for several reasons. The growing Lebanese state was increasingly adept at providing basic services to Christian and Sunni constituents. The Shi'a community observed this dynamic, and began to see the position of the *zu'ama* as increasingly irrelevant. People knew that there was a means to procure services without offering a tribute to a powerful family. Lebanon as whole was undergoing significant socioeconomic changes that brought to light the disparity between religious confessions. Shi'a were gradually getting their education, travelling abroad, and viewing the socioeconomic disparity. Furthermore, years of conflict brought no real change or reform from the traditional elites. The general population was looking for a new cadre of leaders to provide the protection that was needed in their communities.

Simple demographics spelled a need for change in the Shi'a community. Observers understood the true nature of the population, even though an official census had not been conducted since 1932. By 1960, the Shi'a constituted the second largest confessional group, but had not gained any real rights within the confessional government. In 1972, Shi'a represented the largest confession, with over 1 million. This population represented 30 percent of all religions and represented the plurality of all

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 112.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

Lebanese inhabitants.<sup>45</sup> These demographic changes would have widespread effects. The parliament prior to the civil war had 19 seats for Shi'a, and 30 for Maronite Christians.<sup>46</sup> These numbers were pinned to the 1932 figures and the National Pact of 1943. Had proportional change been made to the parliament, 10 more seats would be given to the Shi'a, with the Maronites losing the same amount. Furthermore, these demographic changes would challenge the Sunni majority in Muslim seats.<sup>47</sup>

Between 1943 and 1963, there was a 146 percent rise in urban population, with the Shi'a as the largest and fastest growing urban community.<sup>48</sup> Lack of opportunity in the south, as well as conflict with the Palestinians caused a mass exodus from the previous rural work that had defined Shi'a life. The urbanization of the Shi'a continued to rise even after this period. From 1960 to 1980, the percentage of total labor employed in the agricultural sector fell from 38 to 11 percent.<sup>49</sup> These displaced workers turned to the service industry in urban centers. Furthermore, those who maintained their land began to feel the crunch of ever-stagnant crop prices, and they turned to secondary sources of income as a supplement. External migration increased as noted before, with as much as 25 percent of the available Shi'a workforce leaving Lebanon. This force would become extremely important to the future development of Shi'a politics. The crucible of urban living, and the strong communal ties between Lebanese expatriates would provide the manpower necessary for large-scale political movement.

The confessional system of government made mobilization a simple task. The movement of the Shi'a into urban centers did not spell the end of the identity. The Shi'a internal émigrés did not successfully merge into their new society, but instead maintained their old communal ties in a new setting. Even if politically minded Shi'a wanted to participate in municipal governance, the confessional system made any work close to impossible. Instead, these Shi'a communities remained insular; they provided for each

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<sup>45</sup> Hamzeh, *In the Path of Hizbullah*, 13.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Norton, *Amal and the Shi'a*, 17.

<sup>48</sup> Hamzeh, *In the Path of Hezbollah*, 14.

<sup>49</sup> Norton, *Amal and the Shi'a*, 22.

other in the face of government unwillingness and ineptitude. This urban population, unable to integrate, also had greater access to media, education and literacy training programs. Gradually, they became more aware of the disparity between religions.

The *zu'ama* remained in the countryside, and continued to lose their grip on the political leanings of the community as a whole. The urban population began to organize itself around secular parties that ran candidates against the traditional leaders, who had proven themselves corrupt and unable to provide the necessary services. An increasing individualistic voice was apparent in the urban population, and they seemed to have little to no connection with tradition. As Norton states in his book on Shi'a politics, "Political institutions are conditioned by tradition and culture, but they do not persist only because they are traditional."<sup>50</sup> Over time, and with education, the Shi'a had broken the ties to the traditionally powerful families, and filled the vacuum with a multitude of political parties.<sup>51</sup>

#### **E. MUSA AL-SADR AND THE MOBILIZATION OF THE SHI'A**

The 1960s and 70s marked a change in the consciousness of the Lebanese Shi'a. Now free from the old political leadership, the newly urban and organized population was looking for a new leader that could fight for greater political rights. The environment was ripe for recruitment of the disaffected population that was economically and politically marginalized by their own government. Several political parties rose in power, but one is seen as the ideological ancestor to modern Shi'a political mobilization: Amal. Musa Al-Sadr, an Iranian national, would become one of the most important political figures in Lebanese history.

Musa Al-Sadr was born in 1928 in Qum, Iran. Al-Sadr was the son of a prominent cleric, and was educated in Najaf, Iraq. A significant part of his upbringing was concerned with Shi'a traditions, even though he had planned on a secular career early in life.<sup>52</sup> Al-Sadr moved to Lebanon in 1958, and began to organize a multitude of

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 33.

<sup>51</sup> Norton, *Amal and the Shi'a*, 36; Hamzeh, *In the Path of Hezbollah*, 16.

<sup>52</sup> Alagha, *Shifts in Hezbollah's Ideology*, 26.

community programs in Southern Lebanon. Throughout the next few years, he gained a significant following in the Shi'a community, marrying a Lebanese woman, and gaining citizenship. Many scholars have shown that his involvement in the community during this time was extremely important and influential. He did not necessarily create a political consciousness in the Shi'a community, but brought a new life to the idea that the community should mobilize together in order to made concrete gains. Al-Sadr inserted himself into the already existing familial, political and social clubs, and worked from within them to gain a larger constituency.<sup>53</sup>

Al-Sadr was one of the first community leaders to look above the fractured Shi'a community. He understood the power that could come from a united front. Even though al-Sadr was Iranian, he was quickly accepted into the political and religious framework of the country. He continued to speak with a Persian accent, but learned to use Arabic in motivating and captivating ways—using the shared religious beliefs to unite the Shi'a community. He also consolidated many traditions in order to create a new consciousness within the Lebanese Shi'a, and a new power base for political action. Augustus Norton explains al-Sadr's public statements succinctly: "Al-Sadr exhorted his followers 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."<sup>54</sup> The means to overcoming economic and political deprivation were not through the political parties, or the old *zu'ama*. Religious unity and solidarity would save the Shi'a from their plight.

Al-Sadr held several different ideologies, the characteristics of which many would not associate with political Shi'ism.<sup>55</sup> Al-Sadr understood the concerns of the Maronite population, and that for peace the Christians should hold the highest post in the confessional system. He was not a revolutionary.<sup>56</sup> He simply criticized the standing government for ignoring the south, and placing a disproportionate amount of money in Sunni and Christian neighborhoods. When it came to the Palestinians, al-Sadr had

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 26–28.

<sup>54</sup> Norton, *Amal and the Shi'a*, 41.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid, 42.

<sup>56</sup> Alagha, *Shifts in Hezbollah's Ideology*, 29.

sympathy for their plight, but more importantly, did not want the establishment of a new state in southern Lebanon. The PLO and al-Sadr were consistently at odds when it came to power broking in the south.<sup>57</sup>

In 1978, Musa al-Sadr flew to Libya for a series of celebrations for Muammar Gaddafi. Al-Sadr never returned from this trip. At the time of his disappearance in 1978, al-Sadr was not the most important, nor the most powerful leader in the Shi'a community. Many who fought in the civil war joined other Shi'a militias, opting to stay away from Amal, the militant wing of al-Sadr's movement. Al-Sadr succeeded with his words, community action, social programs, and his death. His efforts further weakened the position of the old political bosses and the secular political parties of the 1960s.<sup>58</sup> The legacy of al-Sadr's movement was in the means of mobilization. The social, political and religious programs would live on, and become the means for future organizations to coopt support from the Shi'a community. Furthermore, Amal, the militant wing of al-Sadr's organization, would live on and dominate the political landscape for years to come.<sup>59</sup>

## **F. THE RISE OF AMAL**

According to Alagha, Amal existed in relative obscurity during the first years of the Lebanese civil war. Many fighters chose their militias around community lines, and did not join ranks with the larger movement. Amal's membership situation changed around 1978 for several different reasons. First, the death of Musa al-Sadr caused an outrage in the Shi'a community, and worked as a recruitment call to his organization. Second, the Israeli invasion of 1978 forced many Shi'a into the large movement as a means of consolidating force in order to protect their land. Third, Iran began to see the value in supporting Shi'a political movements within Lebanon.<sup>60</sup> Amal and the Iranian Revolutionary government maintained close ties, trading clerics, students and money.

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<sup>57</sup> Norton, *Hezbollah: A Short History*, loc: 356.

<sup>58</sup> Alagha, *Shifts in Hezbollah's Ideology*, 27–30.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 30–31; Norton, *Hezbollah: A Short History*, loc: 369.

<sup>60</sup> Hamzeh, *In the Path of Hizbullah*, 19.

Furthermore, Iran had sent several radical actors in order to change the character of the organization from a protecting entity to a radical, revolutionary organization.<sup>61</sup>

Relations with the PLO in the south also contributed to the growing popularity of the Amal movement. Palestinian guerillas often used hard-handed attacks against Israeli targets from the southern cities and neighborhoods. This brought the Shi'a community into the crossfire between Israeli soldiers and PLO operatives. Public support for the PLO continued to fall as Israeli troops conducted several incursions into the south, displacing thousands of Shi'a. The Palestinians were increasingly seen as foreign occupiers, whose actions caused more trouble for the native population. Amal became the strongest and largest domestic force that stood opposed to the actions of the Palestinian fighters and Israeli occupation.<sup>62</sup> In later years, the complicated relationship with the PLO, Israel, and the local population would cause trouble for the effectiveness of the Amal movement, and these developments will be explained in Chapter III.

## **G. CONCLUSION**

The story of Lebanon began with hopeful optimism in the beginning of the twentieth century. The confessional government became the grand experiment to mix different religious communities together, and to share the power across confessions proportionally. The confessional government did not take into account the true size of the Shi'a population, and was not set up in a fashion that would change to accommodate demographic shifts. As a result, the confessional government ensured the political disenfranchisement of the Shi'a community. By the 1980s, the Shi'a community had moved from the third largest religious confessional to the largest, with no shift in internal representation. The Lebanese system of government supported the political disenfranchisement of the Shi'a population.

The socio-economic status of the Shi'a in Lebanon also contributed to the development of political and militant organizations. Southern Lebanon had the highest rates of poverty, unemployment and illiteracy in the nation. Development money from

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<sup>61</sup> Alagha, *Shifts in Hezbollah's Ideology*, 31.

<sup>62</sup> Norton, *Hezbollah: A Short History*, loc: 369; Norton, *Amal and the Shi'a*, 43–46.

the central government was not provided to these areas due to a lack of political power. Furthermore, the *zu'ama* ensured they received their tributes from the population, and distributed meager public services.

The 1960s marked an era of political change in the Shi'a community. Migration, unemployment, and other socio-economic factors led to a large increase in the Shi'a urban population. This new constituency became increasingly disconnected from their old political bosses, and the resulting political vacuum created an environment ripe for political parties. The nationalist, secular, and socialist parties were short lived, but demonstrated the value of political mobilization for the Shi'a as a community.

Musa al-Sadr mobilized the Shi'a community around religious terms. Community based faith programs were the means to mobilize support for a growing and powerful Shi'a political movement. Al-Sadr looked past the fractures that existed in the political landscape, and saw the value in bringing them together as a challenge to the status quo. Amal evolved from relative obscurity to one of the most powerful and important actors in Lebanese politics. As the civil war and Israeli occupation raged, Amal was the organization that worked to protect the Shi'a community and coalesce concerns.

The experience of the Shi'a in the latter half of the twentieth century set the stage for large political and militant organizations. By the 1980s, the Shi'a had grown in population size, had separated from their old political bosses, and organized as a distinct community with cohesive goals. This history set the stage for a new brand of ideology, which would be popularized by Hezbollah.

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### III. THE RISE OF HEZBOLLAH

The 1960s marked the beginning of political Shi'ism, and the rise in Shi'a social consciousness. As the decade wore on, and as conflicts continued throughout Lebanon, these movements became the tools for community survival, not a means to further the Shi'a cause from within the system. The Lebanese civil war created an adversarial environment that contributed to the militancy of political Shi'ism. Political actors understood that social programs and debate from within the Lebanese government did not stop violence or the growing body count. Military necessity dictated a change in the character of Shi'a political organizations, and weakened the traditional secular political parties. As a result, the most powerful organizations at the end of the 1970s were those who mobilized the most fighters against threats to the Shi'a community.<sup>63</sup>

Amal emerged as the most powerful force for mobilizing Shi'a activism in the 1970s. After reaching ascendancy, the organization found itself with a large set of competing ideologies. Amal was established as a sectarian movement but became increasingly adept at manipulating the system from inside the confessional government. The goal as outlined in their political program was to cause a downfall of the established government, but in action, the leaders of Amal were consistently attempting to create a better share for the Shi'a population within the existing government structure. Amal also was determined to keep Lebanon as a separate political entity within the greater Arab and Shi'a worlds. The leadership did not subscribe to the more radical idea of a larger Islamic republic that encompassed other territories. Smaller movements within the organization became increasingly separatist, and moved away from the domestic arena. The internal struggle that came from ideological and political differences within the organization would give rise to a new brand of political Shi'ism, one that was much more rooted in the radical overthrow of the status quo, and which identified itself as a religious movement over all other factors.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Alagha, *Shifts in Hizbollah's Ideology*, 30–31.

<sup>64</sup> Norton, *Amal and the Shi'a*, 73–75.

By the early 1980s, the relationship between Amal and the PLO had reached a boiling point. The constant fights between the organizations caused many Shi'a in southern Lebanon to question the direction of their political movements, and the motivations of the prominent leaders. The disappearance of Musa al-Sadr further exacerbated problems, since the next two prominent leaders, Husayn al-Husayni and Nabih Berri, were not powerful or charismatic enough to coopt the necessary ideological support. Iran attempted to fill this gap in ideological leadership, through providing continued support to Amal, and fostering closer ties between the Lebanese Shi'a and the Ayatollah. This support did not stem the tide of dissatisfaction within Amal, and the shift away from the organization's ideological stance.<sup>65</sup>

The rise in Hezbollah's popularity can be explained by several different trends in Shi'a politics during the 1980s. Amal had begun to weaken its position ideologically, and the infighting between the political idealists and religious fundamentalists caused a rift within the organization. The Israeli invasion and the constant clashes between Amal and the PLO created an environment where the Shi'a turned to Islamist parties for refuge and upward mobility. Israeli occupation sowed the seeds of discontent in the Shi'a community. Amal's corruption and cooperation with the confessional government demonstrated many of the previous trends seen with the *zu'ama*, and Amal's leaders were seen as capitulatory towards the forces that were working against the Shi'a community. The War of the Camps, which was a war between Amal, Hezbollah and the PLO in Palestinian refugee camps, furthered the rifts between Shi'a political actors, and Hezbollah came out of this era as the overall victor. The open letter of 1985 demonstrates the radical trends in political Shi'ism, and the overall discontent felt with Amal and other organizations. This document also outlines the radical ideology of Hezbollah from 1985 to 1992.

#### **A. THE BEGINNING OF THE IDEOLOGICAL RIFT**

Amal in the late 1970s remained a Shi'a political movement without an overtly radical religious character. Specifically, Amal did not espouse many of the radical

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<sup>65</sup> Alagha, *Shifts in Hezbollah's Ideology*, 33.

policies that worked for the Iranians, nor did they attempt to export their revolution to other parts of the Shi'a world. The leadership was interested in creating a more equitable share of power within Lebanon, and did not espouse the interests of extraneous outside powers. Nabih Berri, the leader of the movement, attempted to continue with the legacy of Musa al-Sadr, and maintained a semblance of cooperation with the established Lebanese government. The moderate leaders of Amal tried to change the system from within, and understood the danger of playing with the fears of the Sunni and Maronite communities.<sup>66</sup> As Norton states in his book on Amal, "Upon examination, it is clear that the political program—first enunciated in 1974—has been marked with a fair amount of clarity and a generous amount of pragmatism."<sup>67</sup> Furthermore, Amal publicly supported an independent Lebanon, even with the conflict that came with such a diverse mix of religious confessions. There was simply a struggle to create a better distribution of social services, and a more fluid means to create a better overall welfare within the Lebanese state. This view came out of an understanding that the status of the Shi'a would be greatly hurt by any break from the state, and that some modicum of benefit came from participation with the government.<sup>68</sup>

After the success of the Iranian revolution, Ayatollah Khomeini's government attempted to spread the revolution past its own borders to other Shi'a populations throughout the Middle East. The Iranian government established close ties with some of the most important leaders of Amal, and began to influence the ideological debate within the organization. Iranian political actors infiltrated Amal, and moved throughout the country spreading their more radical rhetoric as a counterweight to the more moderate, secular leaders. Within Amal, factions began to form after the success of the Iranians. The ideological question of the day was whether to emulate the Iranians, by espousing a more radical religious message and calling for the downfall of the government, or to continue with the more moderate, secular and cooperative framework. This would be the

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<sup>66</sup> Rami Siklawi, "The Dynamics of the Amal Movement in Lebanon 1975–90," *Arab Studies Quarterly* 34, no. 1(2008), 14.

<sup>67</sup> Norton, *Amal and the Shi'a*, 72.

<sup>68</sup> Norton, *Amal and the Shi'a*, 73.

beginning of a rift that would challenge the established Shi'a political organization, and give rise to more radical manifestations of political Shi'ism.<sup>69</sup>

## **B. CONFLICT BETWEEN AMAL AND PLO**

By the early 1980s, clashes between the PLO's Fatah and Amal became commonplace. The international environment affected the relationship between Amal and the various political actors, and created a new power struggle between power centers. One reason for the friction was Amal's cooperation with Iran, and the close ties that had been formed during the early 1980s. The PLO openly supported Iraq in the Iran-Iraq war, and this contributed to the strain in relations between the two organizations. Furthermore, Syria saw Amal as a positive force against the strength of the PLO on Lebanon, and supported the movement with money, fighters and ideological support. Some of the most successful fighters in Amal were sent to various training camps in Syria, and came back to the front wearing military uniforms and with standard military hardware. The heavy-handed tactics of the PLO began to wear on the weary local populations, and Amal stood as the largest organized force against Palestinian aggression.<sup>70</sup>

The fight between the PLO and Amal was not simply out of an ideological gap. Fatah continued to operate against Amal and other Shi'a organizations when it felt that its preponderance of power in the south was threatened. These villages not only saw the loss of life in their militant population, but many were bombarded by artillery attacks. Augustus Norton, in his book on the Shi'a populations in the south, noted that fighting raged throughout 1981 and 1982 between Amal and Fatah, with bombardment of several city centers. Fighting would continue without pause and with growing intensity, with many fearing a larger civil war in the south between the Palestinians and native Shi'a.<sup>71</sup> In the south, the political character was becoming increasingly nationalistic in the face of PLO aggression. On the eve of the Israeli invasion, the southern Lebanese seemed to come to a consensus that their interests were being influenced by too many outside

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<sup>69</sup> Norton, *Hezbollah: A Short History*, loc: 369.

<sup>70</sup> Siklawi, "Dynamics of Amal," 13.

<sup>71</sup> Norton, *Hezbollah: A Short History*, loc: 345.

powers. There was an overwhelming feeling that Lebanon was for the Lebanese, and that it was becoming increasingly difficult to control non-indigenous militants.<sup>72</sup>

### **C. ISRAELI INVASION OF 1982 AND THE IMPLICATIONS FOR POLITICAL AND MILITANT SHI'ISM**

In 1982, Israel invaded southern Lebanon in an effort to remove the PLO and other Palestinian militants. Many in the Shi'a community welcomed the initial Israeli invasion, since it would break the power of the Palestinian fighters in the region.<sup>73</sup> Alagha states that, "Ironically, the Lebanese sector that suffered most from the Palestinian military activity in south Lebanon against Israel until 1982 was the Shi'ite population; the misery generated by the Palestinian presence in the South was so great that when the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) invaded in June 1982 the troops were showered with handfuls of rice."<sup>74</sup> The hopes for a quick, surgical operation to remove the Palestinians were dashed, as the IDF continued to occupy southern Lebanon for several years. This occupation would set the stage for greater conflict within the Shi'a population, and the radicalization of organizational messages. Indeed, even many in Israel see the continued occupation of Southern Lebanon as a mistake that precipitated greater violence and fanaticism. Two former Israeli Prime Ministers, Ehud Barak and Yitzah Rabin both went on record to say that the protracted occupation of Lebanese lands was a mistake, and that prompt withdrawal after crushing the PLO would have been a better policy.<sup>75</sup>

Amal fighters may have openly fought against Israeli soldiers in the south after protracted occupation, but at the beginning of 1982, many members provided intelligence and support to the IDF in order to crush the *fida'iyyin*. Amal as an overall organization itself began to align against the Palestinians. Many in the Shi'a community saw this realignment as a tacit approval of the Israeli occupation in the South. The organization became more interested in protecting the native population than winning the ideological

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<sup>72</sup> Norton, *Amal and the Shi'a*, 84–85.

<sup>73</sup> Norton, *Hezbollah: A Short History*, loc: 369.

<sup>74</sup> Alagha, *Shifts in Hezbollah's Ideology*, 32.

<sup>75</sup> Norton, *Hezbollah: A Short History*, loc: 473.

war. Amal had become so opposed to the Palestinian presence that according to Norton, “Some leading figures even argued that they were in an objective alliance with Israel against Palestinian guerillas.”<sup>76</sup> Furthermore, in the midst of an ongoing civil war, the senior leadership worked with the Lebanese government in order to garner support for their militant actions against Palestinian fighters in the south. In 1982 Nabih Berri decided to cooperate with the Lebanese government, which was unforgivable to the more radical members of the Amal movement. Many deemed Berri’s actions as fundamentally un-Islamic, and chose to separate themselves from the movement entirely. Berri continues his ideological stance as the Speaker of Parliament and the current head of the modern Amal movement. Furthermore, to many Amal had grown too large and began to exhibit the same patron-client relationship that marked the Shi’a experience with the old political bosses. Berri’s cooperation with the status quo and the large amount of money flowing through the organization smacked of corruption to many Shi’a.<sup>77</sup>

In 1982, Amal’s internal debate came to a head during the Mustafa Shumran Congress. This was where the future character of the organization would be debated. On one side were the more moderate and secular leaders, personified by Nabih Berri. On the other side was Sayyid Hussein Musawi, who emerged as the leader of the faction of Amal that espoused the ideals of the Iranian revolution. In contrast to the moderates, this openly radical faction felt that success could only come with the establishment of an Islamic republic. They further felt that any capitulation to the established government was a failure, and contrary to Islamic teachings.<sup>78</sup> Iran openly supported the more radical Islamist groups, providing the people, training and funding necessary. It was their support of these openly religious factions that helped to create what would become Hezbollah. Others within the Amal felt that the confessional system was an important characteristic of the Lebanese government, and that their role was to develop a more equitable share of

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid., loc: 473.

<sup>77</sup> Alagha, *Shifts in Hezbollah’s Ideology*, 32; Norton, *Hezbollah: A Short History*, loc: 501.

<sup>78</sup> Hamzeh, *In the Path of Hizbullah*, 20–21.

Shi'a power from within the system. The rift between the Islamists and the secularists would precipitate a disintegration of the Amal leadership, and the creation of more radical organizations.<sup>79</sup>

#### **D. HEZBOLLAH ARRIVES AND THE ROLE OF IRAN AND SYRIA**

Hezbollah emerged as early as 1982 out of the turbulent Shi'a political landscape and the ideological rift between moderate and radical members of Amal. The ideological basis was set, but the emergence of Hezbollah as a coherent organization did not occur until 1985. The core of Hezbollah's initial leadership was young, dedicated and radical revolutionaries. Many had been involved in previous political organizations, and had separated from them due to what they felt was ideological weakness in moderation. Notable leaders such as Hasan Nasrallah, Sayyid Abbas al-Musawi and Shaikh Subhi al-Tufayli were all in their twenties and early thirties at the time of the Israeli invasion, and during the ideological rift in Amal. These young leaders used the weakness of previous movements as an example of corruption, and a catalyst to more radical action.

Norton explains the emergence of Hezbollah succinctly: "Iran and Syria share credit for sponsoring these young revolutionaries, although Iran certainly played the leading role."<sup>80</sup> Iran enthusiastically supported this new organization as the manifestation of its goal to export the Islamic revolution around the world. Since the late 1970s Iranian Revolutionary Guards were operating within southern Lebanon, working to radicalize the message of political Shi'ism. Furthermore, they worked to remove some of the factionalism within the radical Islamic political movements. Many different organizations emerged after the Israeli invasion, but they seemed to be concerned with their respective provinces. Iranian money and effort universalized the Islamic revolutionary message to the Shi'a population.<sup>81</sup>

Iranian immigrants have long been associated with the development of Lebanese political Shi'ism. Hezbollah represents one of their greatest successes. Musa al-Sadr, an

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<sup>79</sup> Siklawi, "Dynamics of Amal," 15; Norton, *Amal and the Shi'a*, 88–89.

<sup>80</sup> Norton, *Hezbollah: A Short History*, loc: 510.

<sup>81</sup> Siklawi, "Dynamics of Amal," 15; Alagha, *Shifts in Hezbollah's Ideology*, 33.

Iranian, is still seen as the ideological father of all Shi'a political movements, and his legacy continues to influence modern day discourse. Mustafa Shamron immigrated to Lebanon as early as 1951, and quickly established training camps for Shi'a militants. Amal and the Iraq's Islamic al-Dawa Resistance Party militants both trained at his facilities, which created greater connection between Iranian and Lebanese militants. Shamron continued his support in the Shi'a community, working with al-Sadr to establish Amal, and helping to forge the doctrinal tenets of what would become Hezbollah. These immigrants provided the full spectrum of support, including religious, financial, organizational and military aid.<sup>82</sup> If it were not for the support of Iran, Hezbollah would not exist as an organized entity today.

For its part, Syria provided support for far less ideological reasons. Syria understood the value of an alliance with Iran, and wanted to continue its protracted struggle against the United States and Israel. Support for Hezbollah was the means to maintain ties between Damascus and Tehran. The Syrian role has remained decidedly ambiguous, since they continue to actively support Amal as well.<sup>83</sup>

#### **E. WAR OF THE CAMPS AND BUILDING HEZBOLLAH'S LEGITIMACY WITHIN THE SHI'A COMMUNITY**

In 1985, the IDF began to withdraw troops from several different areas in Southern Lebanon. In the Nabatiyeh and Tyre districts, Amal used this power vacuum to seize control, set up checkpoints, and commence attacks against Palestinian targets in the various refugee camps around Beirut and in the south. In May 1985, the situation began to further deteriorate, when Amal and some elements of the Lebanese army began to shell refugee camps and continue protracted attacks against PLO militants. According to Rami Siklawi:

Statistical reports show that, 'in Shatila alone, it had been reported that 278 homes were destroyed partly or fully from the total of 406 homes

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<sup>82</sup> Alagha, *Shifts in Hezbollah's Ideology*, 33–35.

<sup>83</sup> Norton, *Hezbollah: A Short History*, loc: 510.

during that phase of the war of the camps; at Sabra, the number of the destroyed homes reached 95 percent from the total property that forms the Sabrah refugee camp.’<sup>84</sup>

A brief peace conference in late 1985 would temporarily stop the fighting, but a steady stream of support from Syria would precipitate further conflict. Fights continued through 1986 with greater amounts of ferocity. By April 1987, over 50,000 Palestinians had been displaced, and the large contingent of Palestinian militants had been removed from Lebanon. The official end to the conflict came in May 1987, but the War of the Camps would have a lasting effect on the character of Amal and political Shi’ism.

The War of the Camps further exacerbated the ideological rifts present in Amal. Ideological moderates within Amal saw the PLO as a threat to Lebanese sovereignty and to their greater goal of reform within the government. As such, they positioned themselves firmly against any conciliation towards external powers. The concerns of the local population fell on deaf ears, as Amal continued to lose credibility in the Shi’a community, as the streets of the south continued to suffer under sectarian conflict. The more radical members began to identify with the plight of the Palestinians and supported their cause against Israeli aggression. Their concerns were supported by a growing radical political environment, and greater support from Iran.

Hezbollah emerged as a powerful organization in the late 1980s because of their principled stance against the War of the Camps and an increased alliance with Iran. Palestinian resistance was never crushed in the south due to the concerted efforts of a growing number of radicals who were increasingly dissatisfied with the perceived ideological weakness of Amal. These disaffected Shi’a migrated towards Hezbollah with increasing frequency towards the end of the 1980s. Ayatollah Muhammad Hussein Fadallah echoed the concerns of the radical actors and openly supported Hezbollah’s resistance. The local population began to change in its stance and had its concerns justified by revered political and religious leaders. In both ideological and real terms,

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<sup>84</sup> Saklawi, “Dynamics of Amal,” 18.

Amal was losing the battle. According to many observers, by 1986 Hezbollah had reached parity with Amal, and by 1990, Hezbollah surpassed Amal in Beirut's suburban areas.<sup>85</sup>

#### **F. THE OPEN LETTER OF 1985 AND THE POLITICAL PROGRAM OF HEZBOLLAH PRIOR TO 1992**

Hezbollah's political ideology prior to 1992 illustrates the radicalization of Shi'a politics that occurred during the mid-1980s. "The Hizbollah Program, an open letter to all the Oppressed in Lebanon and the World," or as it is simply known, the Open Letter of 1985, officially established Hezbollah as a working political entity.<sup>86</sup> This document acted as the beginning manifesto for a movement that had its roots established as far back as 1982, and attempted to establish a concrete set of radical policies that would guide action in the future. The document spanned the gambit of all subjects, and called for economic, social, and political justice.<sup>87</sup> The overall goal of this proclamation was to establish a separate set of radical goals for governance, and to tie Hezbollah with a global struggle for justice. Furthermore, the Open Letter stated that the Iranian revolution should serve as an example to all downtrodden peoples; that anything can be accomplished through faithful application of Islam.<sup>88</sup>

From the outset, Hezbollah rejected all notions of cooperation with the established Lebanese government. To work with the established government was fundamentally un-Islamic, since the system did not afford proper justice to all constituents. Nabih Berri and the Amal leadership had come to accept some facets of the confessional system, and began to work from within the system. This was unacceptable to the new radical political actors. Amal was seen as similar to the old political bosses, corrupted by the system, and moving past the concerns of the Shi'a community.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Saklawi, "Dynamics of Amal," 21; Norton, *Hezbollah: A Short History*, loc: 1016.

<sup>86</sup> Hamzeh, *In the Path of Hizbullah*, 25.

<sup>87</sup> Alagha, *Shifts in Hezbollah's Ideology*, 116.

<sup>88</sup> Norton, *Hezbollah: A Short History*, loc: 1164.

<sup>89</sup> Alagha, *Shifts in Hezbollah's Ideology*, 117.

Hezbollah's radical Islamist ideology in the Open Letter stressed the idea that the world is set in two different camps: the oppressors and the oppressed. The Third World, which included all Islamic countries, found itself in a constant state of disruption and disrepair due to the machinations of a small group of elites. The Open Letter calls out to those who were abused in the world, the downtrodden masses who suffered under the yoke of imperialism in one form or another. The call in the Open Letter was not simply to Islamic people, they clearly stated that all peoples, regardless of religion, were welcome in the movement. Hezbollah supported their involvement of non-Muslims due to the seeming parity between Quranic verses and liberation theology.<sup>90</sup> Domestically, the oppressors in Lebanon were the Maronite Christians and their militant supporters. Internationally, the oppressors were all the developed countries of the world, including the U.S., Israel, and France.<sup>91</sup> Furthermore, if one is oppressed and has the capacity to resist, they are called to act. Those without the capacity to resist due to extenuating circumstances are to be spared the retribution of Hezbollah, but those with capacity who do not resist are equated with the oppressors.<sup>92</sup>

According to the Open Letter, the Islamic state is the only system of government that can offer the proper amount of justice, security and liberty. This is not to say that the Islamic state would be forced on all within Lebanon. Hezbollah believed that the people should be free to choose their own system of government through consensus and mutual agreement. Disbelievers are not compelled to believe in Islam, since their error is one of ignorance. With education, and experience, people would naturally move their preferences towards Islam as the guiding principal in governance.<sup>93</sup> The establishment of an Islamic state in Lebanon would be the choice of the people, and stood as distinctly different from the confessional system of government that was forced by colonial powers.

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 116.

<sup>91</sup> "An Open Letter: The Hizbullah Program" in Joseph Alagha, *Hizbullah's Documents: From the 1985 Open Letter to the 2009 Manifesto* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2011), 39.

<sup>92</sup> Alagha, *Shifts in Hezbollah's Ideology*, 117.

<sup>93</sup> "An Open Letter: The Hizbullah Program" in Joseph Alagha, *Hizbullah's Documents: From the 1985 Open Letter to the 2009 Manifesto* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2011), 39.

Maronite Christians are regarded as apostates and hypocrites in Hezbollah's ideology, since they ruled Lebanon as oppressors, and did not offer justice to smaller. Political Maronism was also set apart from other Christian sects, since the others did not have the lion's share of political power. It was Hezbollah's duty to replace the existing power structure from the top down, and through force of arms if necessary. Only then could the oppressed people of Lebanon have the mandate to choose their own government, which of course would be Islamic in nature. Christians, Jews and other confessions would not be forced to convert; they need Islam in order to find their way towards a more just path.<sup>94</sup>

Hezbollah's view on jihad reflects the ideological belief that mediation and cooperation are not the answer. The Open Letter clearly states that it is an obligation to all Muslims to fight political enemies, specifically political Maronites. The lesser jihad is the struggle against the enemies of Islam in Lebanon, and those who prevent the spread of an Islamic form of government. Nasrallah points to four specific purposes with the smaller jihad: (1) to defend the ideology and resources of Hezbollah (2) to strike at one of the oppressor's strategic centers (3) to disrupt political Maronism, and (4) to safeguard progress made by Hezbollah.<sup>95</sup> Hezbollah's ideology made violence a viable and visible tool for believers. Violence is the means to resist the oppression that was brought by outside entities, and how the movement would legitimize itself. Furthermore, violence and martyrdom were not only allowed, but condoned as a necessity in the face of occupying enemies.

## **G. CONCLUSION**

Political Shi'ism underwent a transformation during the 1970s and 80s. Amal emerged as a powerful political force, but was unable to quell the ideological rift that was forming in the Shi'a community. The success of the Iranian revolution demonstrated the value of radical ideology to many political actors. These actors also benefitted materially from the exportation of the Iranian revolutionary ideology, as a large influx of money,

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<sup>94</sup> Alagha, *Shifts in Hezbollah's Ideology*, 124–126.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, 136–139.

men and weaponry poured into the country. Amal's open hostility towards the PLO weakened their ideological stance. The Israeli invasion of 1982 only served to exacerbate the conflict, and Amal was forced to take an ideological stance; one that many Shi'a found reprehensible. Amal became associated with the greed, corruption and abuses of the old political bosses. Nabih Berri and the Amal leadership alienated many radical Shi'a by cooperating with the confessional government, and working with the IDF to break the PLO in the south.

Hezbollah emerged in the 1980s as the voice of radical Islamic politics. Cooperation with the confessional government was no longer an option; a better future could only come through the dissolution of the confessional government, and the establishment of an Islamic republic. Western styles of governance, no matter their manifestation, were inherently unjust and imperialist. The Open Letter and the public statements of Hezbollah's leadership until 1992 demonstrate a fundamental hostility towards the established system. The radical Islamist stance of Hezbollah in the mid to late 1980s demonstrated a fundamental unwillingness to participate in the political process. Furthermore, violence was openly condoned as a means to cause change, promote camaraderie, and enact retribution.

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#### **IV. SOCIAL MOVEMENT THEORY AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF HEZBOLLAH'S ELECTORAL PROGRAM**

Hezbollah's rise to power is a reflection of the radicalization in the Shi'a community during the late 1970s and early 1980s. The nationalist, secular political parties of the 1960s failed to understand the power that religion and community could play on the national stage, and the violence of the Civil War effectively killed any real chance of a secular party's success. During the Civil War, the Shi'a community began to look inward as a means to consolidate power and protect their interests. Musa Al-Sadr and Amal used religion as a rallying cry and successfully shaped the narrative as a struggle against those outside the community. Amal built a strong, secular centered organization, but cooperation with the confessional government marked the beginning of the end. The shift away from Amal's model demonstrated the Shi'a community's unwillingness to cooperate with the established system, and that working with the Maronite government represented a betrayal.

Throughout the 1980s, Hezbollah continued to build their legitimacy on the battlefield. They stood against the persecution of the Shi'a community from other religious militias. Israel was one of the most powerful forces whose actions ultimately legitimized Hezbollah as a fighting force in the south. The government was wholly unable to protect Lebanese territory, and Hezbollah was the only force that was capable of resisting the occupation of Lebanese lands. The radical, militant stance of the organization resonated deeply with the Shi'a population, as innumerable tragedies marked daily life in Southern Lebanon. Violence strengthened Hezbollah's stance against the status quo, since they were alone had the number of fighters necessary for effective resistance. From an ideological standpoint, the Open Letter of 1985 clearly demonstrated an unwillingness to compromise their ideology for a greater share of power within the Lebanese system. The only means to gain power was through resistance against the status quo, and the complete overhaul of the government structure. According to the prevailing ideology, cooperation was not the answer to the Shi'a community's ills. The corruption of the government, controlled by a select group of elite Sunnis and Maronites, made it

practically impossible to work from within the system before 1991. Hezbollah's role was to work from the outside, providing an Islamic alternative to what they saw was fundamentally unjust.

The Taif Agreement of 1989 was the first successful attempt to end the 16-year-old Civil War. The agreement changed the confessional system slightly. The Taif Agreement was the first acknowledgement of the demographic shifts that were occurring in Lebanon. In 1990, a new constitution was drafted. In it, the religious confessions would have a more equitable share of power within the central government. Specifically, the Maronite president was now politically accountable to the parliament, which enjoyed a large Sunni constituency.<sup>96</sup> The Taif Agreement also worked to end the violence that had plagued the country for years. Militias were disbanded; they had to turn their weapons in to the Lebanese military and shut down their training centers. These organizations had to either disband completely or become political parties, not combatants. There was, however, one exception to this rule. In return for participating in the peace process, Hezbollah was allowed to continue its activities against the Israelis in the south. Armed resistance to Israel could now be framed as a national resistance, and not the activities of a terrorist organization.<sup>97</sup>

In 1992, Hezbollah decided to offer candidates for Lebanon's parliamentary elections. This decision seemed to be inconsistent with the previous political ideology as laid out by the Open Letter of 1985 and the statements of the leadership. Parliamentary participation marked a complete revocation of the previous refusal to cooperate with the Lebanese government. Hezbollah's violent action and the principled stance against the government legitimized their early, more radical political program. The question then becomes: why did Hezbollah break with established policies and decide to run a political platform from within the confessional government?

This chapter will analyze Hezbollah's formation as a resistance group as background for the greater theoretical question. In order to gain a comprehensive

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 150.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

understanding behind the shift in political programs, several different social movement theoretical frameworks will be used. Social movement theories offer an explanation as to why people organize collectively, whom they choose as leaders, and how decisions are made for the body. Armed resistance organizations do not stand as unitary actors. They are a conglomerate of many different backgrounds, ideologies and interests. Hezbollah is no different. Policy is often the result of a debate between the members of the group, and the decisions made are a reflection of the group's struggle to maintain ideological relevancy, legitimacy and purity. Furthermore, armed resistance groups have their own special dynamics that drive the formation of policy. The theories behind armed resistance movements will offer a greater insight into the decision-making apparatus in Hezbollah.

#### **A. WHY COLLECTIVE ACTION?**

Early protest theories attempted to explain why people come together and act collectively. While these arguments seemed persuasive, they often fell short when tested against the facts. Prior to the 1970s, academics worked to describe contentious political movements as groups of irrational, poor, social outcasts. They could not conceive of a group of rational protestors who would sustain action against institutions.<sup>98</sup> This bias against protestors is evident in these writings, where theorists attempted pseudo-psychological diagnoses of people within protest movements. They assumed that emotional responses overrode logical concerns, and that grievances had an immediate causal link with protest.<sup>99</sup> Furthermore, these theories assumed that protests were naturally short lived, because the costs associated with collective action were too high to support sustainment.

Social movement theory emerged as a counter argument against protest theory. These new analytical models worked to remove bias from the existing scholarship and analyze the true motives behind collective action. When members join a movement, there are a multitude of different reasons for initial and continued participation. They are not

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<sup>98</sup> Jeff Goodwin, James M. Jasper, and Francesca Polletta, "Introduction: Why Emotions Matter" in *Rethinking Social Movements: Structure, Meaning, and Emotion*, ed. Jeff Goodwin and James M. Jasper, (Boulder, CO: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004), 2-4.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

the poor, uneducated, irrational actors that previous theories assumed. Recent scholarship demonstrates four important elements in social movement theory: (1) necessity, (2) political opportunities, (3) mobilizing structures, and (4) framing processes.<sup>100</sup>

This section of the chapter will explore these elements to explain Hezbollah's large public base of support, and why the organization continues to remain relevant to this day. Furthermore, these theories will shed light onto the organizational characteristics that led to a change in Hezbollah's radical Islamist stance.

### **1. Necessity**

One of the most simple but pervasive theories on social movement is that they stem out of necessity. When a group of people mobilizes, it is often due to a perceived threat or risk.<sup>101</sup> For Hezbollah, it is easy to see why a group of Shi'a would come together for collective protection. The Civil War wrought unspeakable havoc on the country, with armed militias fighting incessantly. Incursions by the Israelis encouraged a mass outbreak of violence in the south, with Shi'a communities caught in the crossfire. The War of the Camps (1985—1988) allowed Hezbollah to position itself as the only organization capable of protecting Shi'a interests. All other attempts to protect the Shi'a from external threat had failed, and Hezbollah was formed to allow for greater collective action. The failure of the Lebanese government to end the cycle of violence and poverty in the Shia community created a power vacuum.<sup>102</sup> Hezbollah formed in order to combat a real threat and prospered due to a legitimate ability to affect change.<sup>103</sup>

A collective is necessary to combine efforts and coopt interests. One of the more prominent theorists in this school is the sociologist and political scientist Sidney Tarrow, who argues that actors who lack resources will gather together in order to accomplish a goal that would be impossible to without collective action. According to this theory,

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<sup>100</sup> Doug McAdam, Sidney Tarrow, and Charles Tilly, *Dynamics of Contention* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

<sup>101</sup> Sidney Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

<sup>102</sup> Norton, *Hezbollah: A Short History*, loc: 1314.

<sup>103</sup> Tarrow, *Power in Movement*, 70.

single actors cannot fight the established system without the support of like-minded cohorts. As a group begins to grow the relationship between actors begins to formalize and allow for greater pooling of resources. If a group wants to become larger and more powerful, it will broaden its goals and allow for greater cultural, social and economic incentives. As time progresses, the ties between actors become more formal and engrained within the organization, which allows for a united, sustained resistance against the status quo.<sup>104</sup>

## **2. Opportunity**

Opportunity and constraint are also important factors to analyze when studying the formation of Hezbollah. Sidney Tarrow argues that opportunities are more important to the formation of a mass social movement. Constraints may cause some discontent, but do not provide the proper amount of incentive. For potential leaders, opportunities become a means to organize people around a cause for a sustained amount of time. Simple discontentment may cause brief violent action, but does not sustain a movement. Sustained opportunity is necessary to perpetuate a group's ability to grow and evolve. Tarrow succinctly illustrates his key dimensions in mobilization succinctly:

(1) The opening of access for participation for new actors; (2) the evidence of political realignment in the polity; (3) the appearance of influential elites; (4) emerging splits within the elite; and (5) a decline in the state's capacity or will to repress dissent.<sup>105</sup>

Other sociologists such as Tilly, Kurzman, and Martin continue the analysis of opportunity, and show that movement leaders are only successful when it is structurally and economically feasible. Resources are needed to create a successful movement, and outrage does not mobilize support by itself.<sup>106</sup> The state must not have the ability or the will to repress a movement. Also, organizers need to have the opportunity to pool a large amount of resources, whether they are economic, political or organizational.

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<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., 76.

<sup>106</sup> Martin, "Moral Outrage," 487.

While it may seem counter intuitive, repression can also create opportunity for a movement. Authoritarian regimes often respond to growing social movements with violence. This gives would-be leaders the opportunity to frame repression as an unjust action. From there, the movement can create a political and ideological adversary, which can be used to strengthen their stance.<sup>107</sup>

### **3. Mobilizing Structures**

Mobilizing structures are necessary for the successful organization of a movement. Established groups, like religious institutions, social clubs, and neighborhoods offer a power structure, collective identity and a meeting place. These existing organizations effectively homogenize identity, and offer a greater chance of continued success.<sup>108</sup> The key aspect of these established entities are the social networks that they create. They offer interaction between actors, services, and a sense of community. The mobilizing structures can be formal or informal, but must offer a forum for interaction.

### **4. Framing and Collective Identity**

While Tarrow, Kurzman, and others stress the presence of concrete opportunity as a means of organization, other social movement theorists have stressed the role of collective identity. According to these theorists, the perception of a community is necessary in order to consolidate interests and motivate action. It is not always a simple cost-benefit analysis that moves people to join a collective. People share bonds that are beyond political, economic and social considerations. Formal and informal networks of human relationships can motivate people to action. According to the sociologists Polletta

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<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> Charles Kurzman, "Organizational Opportunity and Social Movement Mobilization: A Comparative Analysis of Four Religious Movements," *Mobilization: An International Journal* 3, no. 1, (1998): 23–49.

and Jasper, “Activists are not the isolated, atomistic individuals sociologists once took them for in the past.”<sup>109</sup> They argue that loyalty to an imagined or concrete community is essential to motivate a normal person to action.<sup>110</sup>

Prospective leaders must either create an identity, or draw on an existing community in order to draw up support for a cause. Existing communities can be powerful motivators for action. Religion, class and social status can be strong sources of solidarity for new members. Leaders can call on these existing frameworks as a means to organize. This is not to say that identities have to be established beforehand. Leaders can help to frame the message of the organization in order to incorporate a greater number of followers. For example, there may be many white, middle-class males who agree on a certain issue, but those identities do not necessarily motivate them to action. The issue becomes the means to create a new perceived community, which helps to broaden the potential base of support. Issues such as poverty, taxation, lack of representation, and repression from the state bind people together, and need to be placed at the forefront by movement organizers. Furthermore, the leadership must reinforce this identity in order to sustain the feeling of community, and to mitigate any possible feelings of difference.<sup>111</sup>

The formation of group identity also comes into play when developing organizational tactics. Many resistance groups pride themselves on staying within the law, and others find their identity through armed resistance. Using violence can create a strong bond between like-minded members, and form an identity that appeals to outsiders. As a corollary, violence can damage the identity of an organization, and can keep prospective members from joining the ranks. With this in mind, organizers must be cognizant of both the message of their organization, and the actions they undertake from a cost-benefit perspective, and an identity perspective. This is not to say that repertoires

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<sup>109</sup> Francesca Polletta and James M. Jasper, “Collective Identity and Social Movements,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 27 (2001): 289.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, 287.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 290–292.

of resistance do not change. The tactics of an organization can evolve given the prevailing circumstances, but also need to align with the accepted collective identity.<sup>112</sup>

## **B. ARMED RESISTANCE ORGANIZATIONAL THEORY**

Social movement theory attempts to explain why people are attracted to Hezbollah, and why the organization was successful in garnering support from the general public in a general sense. These theories explain the beginnings of a social movement, but do not address how organizational policies change dramatically over a relatively short period of time, or how a movement can sustain itself through organizational change. A large amount of scholarship has been dedicated to the study of terrorist organizations—how they evolve, grow and mature. These theoretical trends will help to explain why Hezbollah changed its ideological stance in 1992.

### **1. Instrumental Approach**

Academics have long attempted to explain the dynamics of armed resistance groups, and how institutional policies are formed. The instrumental theoretical model of terrorist organizations was used as the primary lens of analysis for many years. Academics and politicians alike used this approach to create policy and understand the inner workings of armed resistance organizations. The institutional approach has since fallen out of favor in politics and academia, but it still offers a valuable mode of analysis.

The instrumental approach assumes that all movements, political or revolutionary, are purposeful and rational in their action. The emphasis on rationality is brought to all levels of the organization. All members of the collective apply a cost-benefit analysis to all decisions, either within or outside the closed system. This approach comes from the realist theory of international relations—that all humans are inherently rational creatures. The instrumental then assumes that members of an organization, when provided with the

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<sup>112</sup> Ibid., 295.

best information, will make predictable choices given the rewards and costs. In essence, members of an armed resistance group are there as long as they are rewarded in proportion to their individual suffering.<sup>113</sup>

While the instrumental approach stresses individual rationality, it also places a great emphasis on the existence of an insulated, unitary movement towards a universal goal. It severely discounts the individual intellectual process that comes with deciding to participate in or leave a movement. Actors have, through making a conscious decision to join a group, decided to forego certain ideological principals in order to strengthen their resolve against what they see is a threat. Cynthia Irvin explains the instrumental approach succinctly: “It may be more accurate to view them as an opportunistic collection of divergent interest groups, temporarily banded together to pursue goals that are developed through internal political discourse.”<sup>114</sup>

The instrumental view on the unitary nature of terrorist organizations is supported by the work by Cameron, in his work on social movements in 1966:

Those in authority attempt to justify their rule over institutions by linking it, as if it were a necessary consequence, with widely believed-in moral symbols, sacred emblems, [and] legal formulae. These central conceptions may refer to a god or gods, the aristocracy of talent or wealth, to the divine right of kings, or the allegedly extraordinary endowment of the ruler himself. Social scientists, following Weber, call such conceptions ‘legitimations,’ or sometimes ‘symbols of justification’...all these and others like them testify to the central place of master symbols in social analysis.<sup>115</sup>

Cameron assumes people are inherently different, and that they have differing interests, but a structural system holds the collective together. Whether this structure is based on a strong charismatic leader, symbols, emblems, or the law. Within this system, people do not have to agree on all issues, but they do have to agree that the symbolic

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<sup>113</sup> Irvin, *Militant Nationalism*, 13.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>115</sup> Cameron, *Modern Social Movements*.

nature of their movement is important. The symbol becomes the justification for continued participation. In this sense, the collective values of the organization become more important than the individual goals of members.

The presence of a charismatic leader is essential in the instrumental approach. The formation of policy is a top-down process, and is used to maintain some semblance of order. Top-down policy formation serves to influence all members and is a means to change people's minds. Martha Crenshaw argues that a group's actions are a direct reflection of the ideological beliefs of the leadership.<sup>116</sup> A terrorist organization operates as a unitary actor. The leadership uses members as a means to an end. The members of an organization represent a pool of potential violent actors who could elicit a change from the established system. There is a need for collective values, but the overall goal is to cause a change in the actor's environment, not coopt the entire polity. Leaders do not create policies to ensure membership, but in order to maintain the semblance of ideological purity.<sup>117</sup>

## **2. Organizational Approach**

The organizational approach was the result of sociologists who attempted to fill the logical gaps in the instrumental view. Few organizations are homogenous, unitary actors. Organizational theorists feel that too much emphasis has been placed on the formation of ideology, the role of leadership, and the importance of symbolism. Organizational analysis offers a different view of the world and of the people who mobilize against the status quo. Individual values can bring people together, not simple dogmatic allegiance to a leader, symbol or policy. Organizational theory offers a deeper understanding of the internal workings of an armed resistance group, and reveals the true intentions of actors, not simply the journalistic recitation of their propaganda.<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> Crenshaw, "Theories of Terrorism," 15.

<sup>117</sup> Gordon H. McCormick, "The Shining Path and Peruvian Terrorism." in *Inside Terrorist Organizations*, ed. David C. Rapoport (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 188.

<sup>118</sup> Irvin, *Militant Nationalism*, 13.

The organizational mode of analysis assumes activists are individualistic, and use their chosen organizations as a vehicle to propel individual needs and desires. Members bring their own interest, ideology and faith into the debate over policy. Organizations are not homogenous, and must offer a variety of different services to their new recruits. There is an overall dominant goal, but motivations are different for each individual member of the group. This view also highlights the subjectivity of rational action. Different cultures, religions and socio-economic groups may have divergent views on what constitutes rational action. What may be rational for some members of the collective may be completely unacceptable to others, and this internal debate is important in the policy making process.<sup>119</sup>

The organizational approach offers a different explanation for continued resistance. Members of the collective are not simply hired hands, and they do not work for benefits like employees in a factory. There is a socialization process that makes members feel like they are an inexorable a part of the collective, and they begin to align their interests to that of the organization. In a terrorist organization, people may join initially as a means to enact vengeance, but the leadership must construct an identity that covers a multitude of different beliefs in order to garner support from less violent prospective members.<sup>120</sup>

### **C. CONCLUSION**

Each one of these theories, whether they are about social movements or armed resistance groups, offers some insight into the internal workings of Hezbollah, and how the ideological change of 1992 is a logical consequence. The question then becomes which one of these models explains Hezbollah's decision-making process? The answer seems to be that a blend of all approaches presents the most comprehensive analysis, because none of these theories stand as a logical tautology.

Moral outrage was a large motivator for many Shi'a. Years of civil war between the different confessions left many without any opportunities for employment or basic

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<sup>119</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>120</sup> Crenshaw, "Theories of Terrorism," 21.

services. Hezbollah offered a means to enact retribution against those who were seen as responsible for the deprivation and violence. Years of economic disparity between the Shi'a and other major confessions also engrained a deep feeling of resentment within the community, and there was seemingly no other way to change the cycle of inaction on the political stage. The confessional government did not offer the opportunities necessary, and so many became disillusioned, angry and violent towards the establishment. Hezbollah's collective action also came out of a feeling of necessity. Militias were killing each other, setting up roadblocks, and harassing the Shi'a population. Many felt that Amal and other organizations were not doing enough to protect the local population, and as such, looked for a more effective means of protecting the neighborhood. Violence legitimized Hezbollah, and the continued conflict ensured a large pool of willing participants.

The opportunity to participate as a political actor during the Lebanese civil war was easy to accomplish, since the Lebanese government could not repress growing resistance movements. The civil war depended on the use of decentralized militias, and the government did not have the ability to monitor or control the growth of organizations within its own borders. The actions of the Amal leadership presented an opportunity for the formation of a new resistance group. Cooperation with the established confessional government and tacit support of the Israeli mission in Lebanon severely weakened the movement. This provided a context for more radical elements to espouse their beliefs and rely on the discontent of the Shi'a populations. The polity within the Shi'a community was beginning to realign with a more radical message, one that Amal could not claim to support. The creation of a radical wing in Amal and the appearance of influential elites, such as Abbas al-Musawi and Hassan Nasrallah, marked a shift in the ideology of Shi'a resistance.

The existence of a Shi'a middle class in the late 1970s also contributed to the growth of a new better-funded elite within the community. In lieu of opportunities at home, many Shi'a left Lebanon for better opportunity in Northern Africa and the Gulf states, which created a new pool of economic benefits to the community. These new elite also gained the support of Iran, which provided the training, money and people necessary

to establish a lasting social movement. Hezbollah's formation and popularity can be traced back to concrete opportunities. The radical leaders of the time framed these seemingly isolated cultural undercurrents in order to coopt the disillusioned within the Shi'a community.

The organizational tactics of Hezbollah helped to form their identity in Lebanon and throughout the world. Resistance against Israel, Amal and various other militias became the hallmark of Hezbollah's identity, even before the formation of a radical Islamist ideology. From 1982 to 1985, Hezbollah legitimized itself to the Shi'a as an effective armed resistance movement. The war of the camps further demonstrated the strength of this new identity, and the large amount of Shi'a who felt a part of this new radical community.

Hezbollah's early leadership sought to create an identity that was ideologically pure and separated from corruption. The unjust distribution of power within the Lebanese confessional government meant that the Shi'a could not exercise their fair share of governance. Political Maronites became the closest and most vivid characterization of the ideological "other." Maronites and their domestic allies were the oppressors—they sponsored the confessional government, encouraged cooperation with the west, and allowed the use of violence. The Civil War further exacerbated the grievances of the oppressed Shi'a and set the stage for the emergence of a new, radical politics. Hezbollah's Open Letter of 1985 set the organization not only for resistance, but also as the ideological opposite of Israel, the Lebanese government, and the West. They would not cooperate with these corrupting entities, since it was their influence that marginalized the Shi'a. Furthermore, Hezbollah set out to show itself different than Amal and the former political bosses, since they demonstrated a willingness to cooperate with the established government, coopted the support of Israel, and clashed with the PLO. <sup>121</sup>

Hezbollah's collective identity became a mix of protracted armed resistance and radical political ideology. The only way to overcome the sins and abuses of the past can

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<sup>121</sup> Alagha, *Shifts in Hezbollah's Ideology*, 115–117.

only come through resistance, and the establishment of an Islamic republic. When violence failed to create a new form of governance, a new identity was created to support the political programs.

The instrumental approach to terrorist organizations offers some value to the discussion of Hezbollah, but many of the theories that support this approach have fallen out of favor in the last 30 years. Academia has recognized the value of social movement theory as a sociological study, and the instrumental model is based on political science. Too much emphasis is placed on human rationality, and that there is an accepted group of rational actions which outside actors can use to leverage organizations. The assumption that the group acts as a unitary whole leaves little to no room for policy change. Terrorist groups use violence as a strategic choice, and the ends justify the means. Any change from the established model would represent a failure to achieve the ultimate goal. In short, the instrumental approach is not supported by recent scholarship, and does not explain ideological shifts within Hezbollah.<sup>122</sup>

The organizational perspective assumes that group decisions are the result of internal dynamics. Members of the collective participate in a debate where the ends and means are debated. Terrorist organizations are not unitary actors; empirical evidence has proven the existence of factionalism within the most successful of armed resistance organizations.<sup>123</sup> The debates between influential actors create a result that is more palatable to a larger constituency. Hezbollah changed its position in 1992 after years of protracted conflict and an unwillingness to participate in the political process. This speaks to the value of the organizational theory.<sup>124</sup>

Hezbollah is made up of a diverse group of political actors. The leadership created an identity that was based on violence and oppression in order to gain a strong base of militants, but later realized that continued participation in the collective was contingent on the delivery of services, and the flexibility in ideologies could be a strength if framed

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<sup>122</sup> Irvin, *Militant Nationalism*, 15; Crenshaw, "Theories of Terrorism," 27; Cameron, *Modern Social Movements*.

<sup>123</sup> Crenshaw, "Theories of Terrorism," 28.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

correctly. Armed resistance groups may form quickly in the face of necessity and opportunity, but after the initial rush, factions begin to appear. The leadership needed to create a new identity that would coalesce the different ideological stances within the organization. Furthermore, the Taif Agreement forced a marked change in the character of the militia in Lebanon. Hezbollah could no longer simply operate outside of the system. They needed to change strategies in order to effect change and win more support in the long term. The next chapter will analyze the debates over the political program that occurred prior to 1992 and will further argue that the organizational approach to terrorist organizations explains the maturation of Hezbollah.

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## V. THE CREATION OF HEZBOLLAH'S ELECTORAL PROGRAM

In the early 1990s, Hezbollah created a new set of political ideologies that starkly contrasted its originally stated goals. This juxtaposition seemed unthinkable due to the group's previous radical Islamist political program. The Open Letter of 1985 was the formalization of a group of Islamist ideologies that had been developing in the Shi'a community since the 1970s. This manifesto succinctly stated the goals of the organization, and demonstrated a radical resolve that had not been popular previously. To Hezbollah, the only way to change the existing system was to come at the problem in a different way. The western models for governance did not offer the proper amount of justice to all people within Lebanon. Islam was the only framework that could afford the maximum amount of justice on a national level. As such, all cooperation with the established government was frowned upon, and Hezbollah took an exclusionary stance against those who recognized the established authority.

Hezbollah felt that their call to action would not only change the minds of the Lebanese, but all people throughout the world. After the establishment of an Islamic republic in Lebanon, other governments and people would recognize the value of this form of governance, and naturally would choose this new system. Hezbollah's early political rhetoric called for a complete overhaul of the international system. This rhetoric reflected the radicalization of the Shi'a community and the size of the organization. Several studies in social movement theory have proven that smaller movements need to radicalize their message in order to prove their legitimacy and to recruit more members.<sup>125</sup> Hezbollah was now growing in popularity due to their ability to enact violence against threats to the Shi'a community, but this only guaranteed a steady flow of men to the cause. In order to create a larger, more diverse constituency, Hezbollah needed to adjust the radical message of the organization.

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<sup>125</sup> Charles Tilly and Sidney Tarrow, "Contentious Politics and Social Movements," in *Oxford Handbook of Comparative Politics*, ed. Charles Boix and Susan C. Stokes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 444.

The Taif Agreement, which was formalized in 1989, brought to an end the civil war that ravaged the country since 1975. This agreement also changed the proportion of seats in the government, and divided them equally among Christians and Muslims. Previously, Maronite Christians enjoyed a 6 to 5 ratio in all government seats. Now each confessional would enjoy 27 seats.<sup>126</sup> The seats would represent districts that included multiple religious confessions, which was an attempt to force cooperation between the different faiths. The hope was to create coalitions between different political parties, which would foster greater cooperation on the basis of politics, not religion. In order to foster peaceful debate, the agreement called for the abandonment of all militias, who were to turn in their arms and create political programs. Hezbollah was exempt from this requirement, but only because of their ability to fight the Israelis, not domestic enemies.<sup>127</sup>

The process of overhauling the political program did not come easily. Hezbollah's leadership and constituency debated the value of a cooperative political program and many seriously considered it to be a betrayal to the movement. To many in the leadership, the decision to participate in the parliamentary elections the same conciliatory stance that previous Shi'a organizations had taken. This chapter will analyze the radical early political ideology, and will show that it was exclusive in its rhetoric. This chapter will also analyze the debates between different leaders in Hezbollah in order to exhibit the role of group dynamics in armed resistance organizations. All will serve to demonstrate that the organizational approach to the study of terrorist organizations is the most reliable analytical model, and that modern social movement theory accurately predicts the moderation of Hezbollah.

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<sup>126</sup> Norton, *Hezbollah: A Short History*, loc: 1314.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

## A. **POLITICAL IDEOLOGY 1982 TO 1991: VIOLENCE AND RESISTANCE AGAINST THE STATUS QUO**

The introduction of Hezbollah's Open Letter demonstrates a level of political resolve that would not be easily overcome: "Whoever takes Allah, His Apostle and those who believe as friends [must know] that Allah's party [Hezbollah] is indeed the triumphant."<sup>128</sup> Hezbollah's political ideology from 1985 to 1992 reflects pessimism in the established confessional system, and an optimism that the Iran model can serve as inspiration for all Muslims in the world. At the outset of the movement, Hezbollah constructed a political identity deeply rooted in global resistance. The success of the Iranian revolution was the model for jihad on the world stage, and it was every Muslim's obligation to protect the faith. The political framework continues this trend. To Hezbollah, resistance against the Lebanese government was not an option for pious Muslims; it was an obligation.<sup>129</sup>

Hezbollah's radical, often revolutionary language is continued through the political stance against western influence. As the letter states, "Imam Khomeini has stressed time and again that America is behind all our catastrophes and it's the mother of all vice."<sup>130</sup> All of the sins of the confessional government could be traced back to the strong, arrogant influence of the United States, its NATO allies, and the Zionists. They felt that the American conception of the organization was overly myopic, that the US only recognized the violent actions of the organization. It is interesting to note that Hezbollah's perception of the United States is somewhat dichotomous. It understood that its violent actions forced the U.S.'s characterization, but also would not move from their organizational or political tactics. Hezbollah felt that the US was complicit in the creation of a violent movement, and it was willing to use any means to remove foreign influence from the Muslim world. As stated in the Open Letter, "All attempts made to drive us into marginal actions will fail, especially as our determination to fight the US is solid."<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> "An Open Letter: The Hizbollah Program" in Joseph Alagha, *Hizbollah's Documents: From the 1985 Open Letter to the 2009 Manifesto* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2011), 39.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*

Moderation and marginalization were seen as evils of the past—practices that the *zu'ama* and Amal participated in.

Hezbollah's original political ideology was not concerned with simple domestic politics. It felt that the Iranian experience served as a model to all Muslims and that the sins of the past could be overcome through the thoughtful application of Islamic governance. The main sources of political ideology in the Lebanese system came from Western conceptions, and therefore were a corrupting influence. To Hezbollah, the main sources of governance should be the Qur'an, the Sunna, and the guidance of the jurist. These sources of power offered the most equitable share of justice among all confessions. All peoples, if they were oppressed under the western system, could find refuge in the political program of the Hezbollah movement.<sup>132</sup>

While the US, NATO and Israel stood as worthy external opponents, Hezbollah found its domestic adversary in the Maronite Christians. As to their feelings on the confessional government, the Open Letter outright criticizes those who use the existing system as a means for political and social change. The following excerpt from the Open Letter demonstrates the deep distrust of the Maronites and their confessional government:

All such opposition, which operates within the framework of the conversation and safeguarding of the present constitution without demanding changes at the level of the very foundation of the regime, is hence, an opposition of pure formality, which cannot satisfy the interests of the oppressed masses...Moreover, we cannot be concerned by any proposition of political reform, which accepts the rotten [Lebanese political] system actually in effect. We could not care less about the creation of this or that government coalition or about the participation of this or that political personality in some ministerial post, which is but a part of this unjust regime.<sup>133</sup>

This short passage takes to task the political trends in the Lebanese system. Nabih Berri and the Amal leadership began to cooperate with the existing system, which was seen as a betrayal to the Shi'a cause. Amal began to operate in a larger political sense, coopting support from other parties, including Sunni and Maronite. To Hezbollah, this

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<sup>132</sup> Ibid., 41–42.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid., 46.

was simply lip service to the actual cause of political change. Maronites who promoted social change from within were also to be distrusted, since they had such a large proportion of power under the existing framework. Even if the existing system produced real political change, this would be inherently corrupt because the entire environment was wholly unjust. The only thing that could produce an acceptable atmosphere would be a top-down overhaul of the entire government.

Hezbollah was determined to establish an Islamic republic. This was the only way to overcome the corruption and remove the dependence on outside powers. The suffering of the Lebanese people could be overcome through just application of Islamic jurisprudence, and a complete rejection of western values. Important in the Open Letter is the justification of their resistance, and how they would impose Islamic rule in Lebanon. Throughout the letter, the organization states that it does not want to impose faith on anyone, just as they would not want any other confession forced on them. They reaffirm their stance that the *People of The Book* are accepted, just as they were during the Golden Age of Islam. To Hezbollah, Islamic governance does not mean a forced conversion, but a government that is guided by the ethical and moral principles of the faith. As a consequence of this change, all people of faith would understand the justice inherent in the Islamic model, and would continue to choose this as their form of governance.<sup>134</sup> Moreover, all outside forms of government external to Islam were rejected. Hezbollah's leaders felt that western style democracy and Communism were as corrupt as any influence.<sup>135</sup>

The language of the Open Letter perfectly illustrates the political climate that Hezbollah attempted to compete in from 1985 to 1991. This was an organization that legitimized itself through protracted violence and resistance against the status quo. As a result, they found their ideological base was vehemently opposed to the established government and the perceived corruptive influence of outside powers. In a wartime environment, it is easy to see why this type of ideology could sustain a social movement.

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<sup>134</sup> Ibid., 45.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid., 47.

Violence dictated the formation, consolidation and resistance of Hezbollah, and continued to influence the group ideology, and this was reinforced by intense hatred of Israel.

Hezbollah states in the Open Letter that it is their political goal to remove US, French and NATO influence from their government by any means necessary. These statements do imply the use of force, but at no point do they state a desire for the complete destruction of European and U.S. governments. This consideration is not extended to Israel. The 1982 invasion created an abject hatred for Israel and served as one of the greatest recruiting tools for the organization. Hezbollah calls for the complete dissolution of Israel with no chance of cooperation. As the Open Letter states, “We recognize no treaty with it [Israel], no ceasefire, and no peace agreements, whether separate or consolidated.”<sup>136</sup>

## **B. THE TAIF AGREEMENT**

In 1989, the Arab League became increasingly concerned with the ongoing conflict in Lebanon. As a result, the governments of Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Algeria, placed pressure on the Lebanese government to accept peace negotiations. MPs from Lebanon, who were elected prior to the civil war, were called to Taif, Saudi Arabia in order to hash out an agreement that would end the years of bloodshed. What resulted from these talks was the Document of National Reconciliation (Taif Agreement). This was the first official acknowledgment of the demographic shifts within Lebanon. It sought to rectify the incongruence between political power and population size. The three largest confessions, Maronties, Sunni and Shi’a, were to be given equal representation within the parliament. This would help to change the 6 to 5 advantage the Maronite community enjoyed within the government.<sup>137</sup>

Syria’s role in the development of the Taif Agreement cannot be understated. In 1987, Lebanese Prime Minister Selim al-Hoss requested Syrian support in Beirut in order to quell violent militias. The invitation to enter Lebanon was quickly taken advantage of

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<sup>136</sup> Ibid., 48.

<sup>137</sup> Harik, *Hezbollah: The Changing Face of Terrorism*, 45.

by the Assad regime, which wished to show a stronger hand in Lebanese politics. The Taif Agreement specifically outlined Syria as the protector of the new agreement, and that the Syrian people held a special interest in Lebanon. This sentiment was reinforced by the U.S., which wanted a quick resolution to the civil war. Syria was the only regional power that had the willingness and capacity to end the conflict, and they demonstrated their resolve with the introduction of over 40, 000 troops. Syria was now the guarantor of the Taif Agreement terms. <sup>138</sup>

Syria quickly made use of its troops by assisting the Lebanese military in the enforcement of the agreement terms. Domestic militias were ordered to cease hostilities, turn in their weapons and close their training centers. The militias that used violence as their means of negotiation were ordered to establish political programs and participate from within the system. While Syria helped to end other armed militias, they negotiated for the sustainability of Hezbollah, which would continue the resistance against the Israelis in the south. Syria could now focus on their control of the central government, since it would be Hezbollah's job to remove Israel from Lebanese territory. The terms between the Syrian and Lebanese government were formalized in 1991 with the signing of the Treaty of Brotherhood, Cooperation and Coordination, which set a legal basis for continued Syrian presence in domestic and international affairs.<sup>139</sup>

In 1991, Syria nominated 40 provisional seats to the parliament, which would oversee the daily workings of government prior to a national election. These pro-Syrian MPs then went about establishing a system of elections that would ensure Damascus's hold on the country for years to come. Additionally, the pro-Syrian government brokered a deal with Hezbollah. In return for participating in the political process, Hezbollah was allowed to continue its activities against the Israelis to the south and now under the political cover of the Lebanese and Syrian governments. Armed resistance to Israel could now be framed as a national resistance and not the activities of a terrorist organization.<sup>140</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> Ibid., 45.

<sup>139</sup> Norton, *Hezbollah: A Short History*, loc: 1327; Harik, *Hezbollah: The Changing Face of Terrorism*, 48.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid., 47.

### C. THE DEBATE OVER A POLITICAL PROGRAM

Civil peace sparked a vigorous debate over the future of Hezbollah. The Ta'if agreement in Lebanon called for the dissolution of all militias, but Hezbollah had a deep distrust of the central government. Hezbollah reacted by launching a public relations campaign, which attempted to legitimize violent action. This campaign was used to maintain the group's position within society now that fighting ceased between militias. Without their legitimacy through arms, it was decided that certain political action was necessary to ensure the survival of the movement.

In 1991, 12 members of Hezbollah's leadership gathered in order to debate the reasons for participation in the Lebanese political system. The membership of this council included the seven-member *Shura* council and five other leading cadres.<sup>141</sup> The head of the 12-member council, Hajj Muhamad Ra'd stated publicly that the decision to create a political program was a difficult one, but that the debate over the program was constructive. Ra'd stated that this committee was a necessity, since Hezbollah's vision for the future depended on cooperation with the established government. He worked frame a new vision for the future of the party, one that was much less in contention with the status quo. Ra'd felt that Hezbollah was essentially a Lebanese movement, and that nationalism was an important part of the political message. He felt that Hezbollah shared many of the same concerns as other political parties, and that some semblance of cooperation could be achieved, because each militia was still working towards confession goals, but within less violent political parties. Ra'd did feel that Hezbollah could participate without abandoning the organization's ideological purity—they simply would use the system to have a larger voice on the national stage. As Alagha states in his book on Hezbollah's political ideology, "Ra'd stressed that political life dictates practical interaction with other groups without delving into the ideological background of every party."<sup>142</sup>

Other influential members of the council, including Na'im Qassem, Nasrallah, and Subhi al-Tufayli worked to find ideological justification for participation in the

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<sup>141</sup> Norton, *A Brief History*, loc: 1310.

<sup>142</sup> Alagha, *Shifts in Hizbollah's Ideology*, 151.

electoral process. Most of the information pertaining to these debates comes directly from Na'im Qassem, who provided a detailed account of the discussions. Augustus Richard Norton and Joseph Alagha both use Qassem's accounts, and illustrate four key questions that had to be answered by the twelve members. Alagha summarizes their four key points succinctly: (1) legitimacy of the current government; (2) abandonment of previous ideals; (3) the role of interests outside the norm; (4) the priorities of the party in the system.<sup>143</sup>

Hezbollah's political ideology from 1985 to 1991 stressed the illegitimacy of the confessional government, and that resistance the only means to overcome the corruption of the past. To Hezbollah, the Lebanese government was the product of the machinations of the U.S. and Israel, and that it did not ensure a just distribution of power among confessions. The only means to overcome the sins of the past was through the establishment of an Islamic government. The question before the council then became: Would participation in the electoral process grant legitimacy to a corrupt, unjust system?

The council decided to defer the decision to their overarching ideological leader, Ali Khamenei of Iran. Khomeini eventually gave his blessing, that Hezbollah can participate in the Lebanese system, and that they were permitted to run a political wing. This removed the first barrier against political participation, since Hezbollah's leadership felt that it was their religious duty to follow the example of their Iranian ideological cohorts. While there were many reasons for Khomeini's decision, Norton and Alagha outline the political environment in the Lebanese electorate. Lebanese citizens outside of the organization had the suspicion that Hezbollah was not a national movement and that its guidance from Iran constituted a harmful foreign influence. Hezbollah and Khomeini had a mutual interest in outlining Hezbollah as a nationalist organization. With the development of a political program, Iran could reduce their financial and military support and Hezbollah could work to bolster their position as a legitimate political participant.<sup>144</sup>

The next subject before the council was the question of participation, and whether political involvement would strengthen the system that was already in place. There were

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<sup>143</sup> Alagha, *Shifts in Hizbollah's Ideology*, 152; Norton, *Hezbollah: A Short History*, loc: 1354.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid.

many in the leadership that felt that Hezbollah was abandoning its previous ideals, and that political participation would only serve to strengthen the confessional system that was inherently corrupt. The committee felt that the existing system would change the entire nature of the organization and would negate any real progress towards their goal of top-down political change.<sup>145</sup> The council worked around this debate by stating that Hezbollah's political participation in no way was an endorsement of the confessional government. Hezbollah could simply use the electoral system to express its radical stance on a larger stage and work with other parties to further their ideological stance. Additionally, many felt that participation would enable Hezbollah's elected officials to help bring about the end of the system, and to exploit legal loopholes.

Hezbollah's 12-member council used a pragmatic approach in order to determine their role in the political system. In the end, the pros outweighed any foreseeable cons. The organization could use the parliamentary system as a stage to espouse their resistance ideals, and could draft legislation that challenged the system. Hezbollah's parliamentarians could fight pending legislation from within the system, and could have prior knowledge of laws that would hurt their constituency. The political contacts gained would help build an even greater resistance against the established government, and would help to further the interests of the Shi'a population. Finally, participation forced the Lebanese government to recognize Hezbollah and its political platform. The resistance could continue under political contention, not with armed conflict.<sup>146</sup>

Hezbollah's leadership decided that ideological purity could be maintained within the Lebanese electoral system. The ideology of resistance would be the mainstay of the political platform, and elections would not change the overall character of the movement. Rather, many members felt that participation would only serve to strengthen their ideology, since they could coopt a greater number of members. If Hezbollah existed only outside of the political spectrum, it would have to create ties with other resistance organizations that may not represent the cannon of their resistance. The 12-member committee reported their findings to the Ayatollah, concurred. Hezbollah then stated its

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<sup>145</sup> Alagha, *Shifts in Hizbollah's Ideology*, 153.

<sup>146</sup> Norton, *Hezbollah: A Short History*, loc: 1369.

goals with the political declaration of 1992, which set the tone for its electoral program, and the growth of the organization throughout the end of the 1990s.<sup>147</sup>

#### **D. THE POLITICAL DECLARATION OF 1992**

In 1992, the Lebanese people returned to the polls for the first time in 20 years. A myriad of different political parties filled the vacuum and attempted to coopt as much support from the electorate as possible. Hezbollah debated their electoral program throughout 1991, and came to the decision to participate. The Political Declaration of 1992 officially started Hezbollah's political program and defined the new ideological stance. The document opens with a sense of the organization's obligation to protect the people of Lebanon from oppression, and that the path towards a political program was the inevitable consequence of protracted resistance.<sup>148</sup> The end of the introduction states, "We made up our mind, relying on God, and decided to participate in electoral politics on the basis of a comprehensive political program, in which our candidates are obliged to do their utmost best to put it [political program] into operation, asking our populace to support it and follow up on it."<sup>149</sup>

The Political Declaration of 1992 begins in a similar fashion to the Open Letter of 1985, but does not espouse religious ideals in the same fashion. The political ideology of Hezbollah prior to 1992 was marked by an idealism that was rooted in religious extremism. The Political Declaration shows pragmatism, separation from overtly religious language, and includes a greater nationalistic dialogue. This represented an attempt to open the resistance to all religious confessions, not just the Shi'a community. Central to this theme is the perception of oppression. All religions and people within the Lebanese system, if they were oppressed, could participate in this new ideology. Not coincidentally, it was assumed that Islam offered the greatest chance for justice. While religion is mentioned, there is no overt call for conversion of any Lebanese citizens, and

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<sup>147</sup> Alagha, *Shifts in Hizbollah's Ideology*, 154; Norton, *Hezbollah: A Short History*, loc: 1369.

<sup>148</sup> "Hizbullah's 1992 Parliamentary Elections Program" in Joseph Alagha, *Hizbullah's Documents: From the 1985 Open Letter to the 2009 Manifesto* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2011), 63.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*, 63.

extreme religious conservatism is not espoused. The party platform leading into the 1992 elections stressed a resistance against economic inequality, underdevelopment, and the corrupt political system.<sup>150</sup>

Hezbollah's political ideology also stressed its position on security for the nation as a whole. The Lebanese government allowed Hezbollah to retain much of its military power as a balance against the Israelis in the south. The position of the organization underwent a shift in priorities for the use of force. Hezbollah did not just provide security for its own neighborhoods—it stressed its continued resistance on a national level. Hezbollah's violence was for all Lebanese, not just for Shi'a. Security became an essential part of the political program, and to further this position, Hezbollah used its military arm, the Islamic Resistance as an effective tool. From 1990 to 1995, the Islamic Resistance carried out over a thousand militant operations against the IDF and similar targets. This was a tenfold increase over the previous five years.<sup>151</sup> Israel and the Western establishment were seen as corrupting influences, and Hezbollah successfully used their strong military position as proof of potential political efficacy.<sup>152</sup>

## **E. CONCLUSION**

At first glance, the decision to participate in parliamentary elections seems to fly in the face of Hezbollah's previous political ideology. The instrumental analysis of terrorist organizations espouses the unitary nature of terrorist organizations, and they difficulty inherit in ideological shifts. This perspective ignores the group dynamics within an organization, and the debates that occur when organizational tactics are discussed. Older social movement and contentious politics theories cannot explain Hezbollah's shift away from outright resistance against the Lebanese government. These perspectives assume an organization cannot exist if their ideological goals are not met.<sup>153</sup> Hezbollah

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<sup>150</sup> Norton, *Hezbollah: A Short History*, loc: 1383.

<sup>151</sup> Hamzeh, *In the Path of Hizbullah*, 89.

<sup>152</sup> Alagha, *Hizbullah's Documents*, 65.

<sup>153</sup> Crenshaw, "Theories of Terrorism," 27.

grew in popularity following the moderation of its political stance, which contradicts the instrumental view of terrorist organizations and the relative deprivation social movement theories.

Hezbollah's decision to participate in parliamentary elections represents pragmatism in the consciousness of social movements and terrorist organizations. Fractures between the leadership demonstrated the group dynamics that create policy. This reflects the organizational analysis of armed resistance organizations. There was no single leader that created policy, and no dogmatic reliance on a strong central character. It was the collective that came together in order to create a more inclusive ideology, one that would incorporate a greater number of adherents. Some in the leadership, including al-Tufayli rejected the electoral process, but others saw greater benefit in cooperation and muted the voices of the minority.<sup>154</sup>

The role of opportunity is evident. The end of the Civil War created an environment where Hezbollah could affect real change from within the system and bolster the position of the organization. The Lebanese government afforded the opportunity to retain arms against the Israelis, and create a new means of coordinating support. The structural opportunities existed for a modification of group ideology. When 10 members of the council voted to enter parliamentary elections, they made the decision with the understanding that greater opportunity existed, and that their actions were now sanctioned by the state. In short, Hezbollah's greatest opportunity came from the Lebanese government and the stipulations within the Taif Accord. Resistance parties can only participate within the existing political framework when the existing political actors legitimize them.<sup>155</sup>

Party legitimization took place at all levels of the political organization, from the elites to the grassroots. Hezbollah successfully used mass media as a means to support the political party, and managed expectations from within the institutional rules. It was the elites who realized that votes mean power, and they expressed the advantages of

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<sup>154</sup> Norton, *Hezbollah: A Short History*, loc: 1369.

<sup>155</sup> Giovanni Sartori, *Parties and Party Systems: A Framework for Analysis* (Cambridge University Press, 1976), 144–145.

participation to their radical constituency and Iran. This speaks of a leadership and constituency that is not an ideological unitary whole. The debate among the twelve-member council represented a diverse set of values. It was the job of the leadership to then frame the message in a way that was as palatable to the largest population. While Hezbollah may have lost many radicals, the decision to participate in parliamentary elections created larger base of support. Hezbollah's parliamentary seats continued to grow from eight in 1992 to 12 in 2014.<sup>156</sup>

Cynthia Irvine's work on Basque separatists in Spain and the Irish Republican Army (IRA) demonstrates many of the same trends as this study. She argues that when opportunity is opened in the political arena, terrorist organizations are more likely to moderate their stance. Actions by the security forces in each of these countries simply added fuel to the militant fire. When these governments allowed opened the political process, their use of violence was completely delegitimized, and so they had to readjust. Group survival was more important than the achievement of each organization's originally state goals.<sup>157</sup>

I argue Hezbollah changed its political stance to ensure movement survival, which is comparable to the decisions made by other armed resistance organizations, and that this argument is strengthened by the preceding chapters on social movement theory. Hezbollah is comprised of a diverse set of individual actors, who bring their own desires to the table. The leadership may have looked to Iran for approval, but they still understood the value of the local constituency. The political declaration of 1992, along with the later grassroots campaign worked to generate an even greater, moderate constituency over various confessions.

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<sup>156</sup> Norton, *Hezbollah: A Short History*, loc: 1369.

<sup>157</sup> Irvin, *Militant Nationalism*, 206–211.

## VI. CONCLUDING REMARKS

This study analyzed the creation and evolution of Hezbollah's electoral program from 1982 to 1992. Hezbollah was created out of a crucible of violence, political instability, and foreign occupation. The Shi'a in Lebanon were consistently disenfranchised by their political system, and this thesis argues that the creation of a radical movement was a natural consequence of the radicalization of an entire community. The language of Hezbollah in the early 1980s reflected the environment of the time, and was a means to bring more actors into the fold. This argues against the often-misguided perception that armed resistance organizations are monolithic, dogmatic groups of ideologues. Foreign policy towards Hezbollah has often ignored the complicated, fractured nature of the group—that the members of resistance groups often have a myriad of differing interests. Terrorism, violence and radical political ideologies are all tactics, and to simply recite group statements and actions does little for true understanding. Those who seek to study violent organizations must find the root cause for group formation, no matter how repellent they view the organizations actions. Fear, anger and hatred of armed resistance groups often causes external actors to miss the nuance.

Islamist parties are continually portrayed as groups of ideological zealots who are incapable of changing their stance. Hezbollah has not been immune from this characterization on the world stage. This representation has created an adversarial environment where many governments view their Islamist parties as an existential threat. As a result, repression has been the de facto tool of the state. Countless governments have used repression as their only option; imprisoning, killing and beating the members of these parties. While these tactics may have short-term success, they only serve to further radicalize resistance movements. Repression tactics have helped to create a more radical constituency and a spiraling cycle of violence that only seems to end with regime change or stalemate. Western leaders and the established governments of the Middle East have often ignored the complicated, fractured nature of Islamist parties, and that moderation

can occur through political participation. Political participation creates an environment that is advantageous to the emergence of moderates, and Hezbollah is a perfect example of this dynamic.<sup>158</sup>

Political parties can only participate in the system when legitimized by a standing political authority.<sup>159</sup> The Taif agreement of 1989 ended the 16-year civil war, and made the standing militias turn in their weapons, and create political parties. Furthermore, this agreement offered a greater proportion of seats to previously under represented religious confessions. The Maronite Christians no longer enjoyed the majority of seats within the Lebanese system. This agreement not only opened up political opportunity, but also legitimized Hezbollah's use of violence. If Hezbollah participated in the political process, they would be allowed to continue their resistance against Israel in the south. This freed up resources that were being used internally, and allowed the more militant members of the organization to exercise their desire to fight. No longer were these energies to be used against domestic threats. Hezbollah was, in essence, rebranded as a nationalist resistance movement with certain Islamist principals.

Inclusion theories show that political opportunity causes overall moderation of group activity.<sup>160</sup> This is even more prevalent in democratic societies, since violence against the system becomes delegitimized. People do not see violence as a rational reaction to problems, because there is a peaceful outlet for political grievances. Radical members, those who want to use violence, leave the organization because they feel that their beliefs have been betrayed. It was political inclusion that completely undercut the legitimacy of Hezbollah's previous radical message. The simple act of opening elections and seats to parliament caused a complete ideological shift in the organization within a year. The Lebanese government successfully influenced the debate from within the organization. No longer could Hezbollah call for the complete disillusionment of the government, since they were participating from within the system.

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<sup>158</sup> Jillian Schwedler, *Faith in Moderation: Islamist Parties in Jordan and Yemen* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 212.

<sup>159</sup> Sartori, *Parties and Party Systems*, 144–145.

<sup>160</sup> Schwedler, *Faith in Moderation*, 213.

Ted Robert Gurr, a social scientist, examined terrorist organizations within democracies, and showed that these organizations have an expected shelf life.<sup>161</sup> This piece dealt mainly with domestic organizations in the United States, but the lessons learned can also be applied to Hezbollah. Lebanon may not be the ideal model of democracy, but the Taif agreement of 1989 created greater opportunity to previously disenfranchised confessions. This made the democratic process the legitimate means to create change within the government, and delegitimized violence within the national borders. Hezbollah reacted in a similar fashion to the domestic terrorist organizations that were examined by Gurr. These organizations recognized the shrinking radical constituency and shifted ideologies, or ceased to replicate newer members. I argue that these inclusion theories help explain the moderation of Hezbollah's rhetoric and tactics, and the creation of an environment that was advantageous to the creation of a political program.

Hezbollah's decision to participate in elections demonstrates a level of sophistication, pragmatism and self-awareness that older analytical models do not explain. These older theories ignore the underlying dynamics that cause people to support these violent organizations. Earlier social movement theories tend to underestimate the rationality and intelligence of the members of resistance organizations, and place too much emphasis on the role of charismatic leadership. These models also assumed that actors in resistance organizations are slaves to their emotions, and that the leader of a movement takes advantage of these emotions for their own social and political goals.<sup>162</sup> The institutional model also assumes that armed resistance organizations are wholly dependent on violence for their continued existence, and that any change to the

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<sup>161</sup> Ted Robert Gurr, "Terrorism in Democracies: When It Occurs, Why It Fails," in *The New Global Terrorism: Characteristics, Causes, Controls*, ed. Charles W. Kegley Jr. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2003), 214–215.

<sup>162</sup> Jeff Goodwin and James M. Jasper, "Emotions and Social Movements," in *Handbook of the Sociology of Emotions*, ed. Jan E. Stets and Jonathan H. Turner (New York: Springer, 2006), 613–614.

organizational tactics would spell the end of the movement as a whole.<sup>163</sup> When applied to Hezbollah, this approach simply does not fit. When domestic violence ceased to be a viable tactic, the group shifted policies.

The organizational approach to the study of armed resistance organizations offers the best explanation behind the ideological shift in Hezbollah's political program. This approach assumes that terrorism and violence were simply part of the repertoire of Hezbollah, and these tactics do not necessarily define the organization.<sup>164</sup> The debate within Hezbollah's leadership demonstrates their willingness to change organizational tactics in the face of new challenges. The decision to participate in elections did not spell the end of Hezbollah as an entity, because they were not simply defined by their previous radical political ideology. There was a multitude of different voices within the organization that fought over the ends desired and means employed. The decision to participate in parliamentary elections was not the result of a protracted external campaign against the organization. Israel, the other militias, and the west did not force a political change with violence. Hezbollah sought to maintain a strong constituency. The end of the civil war created an identity crisis for the organization as a whole. The disbandment of militias and the formation of political parties delegitimized the use of violence within Lebanon itself. As a result, Hezbollah's leadership had to readjust tactics as a means of coopting a greater number of moderate constituents.

As stated in the previous chapters, Hezbollah does not exist in singularity. The group consists of a large amount of constituents with different individual goals and, as such, it follows the same trends as other social movements. In the 1980s, the creation of a radical Islamist ideology was the result of the size of the organization, the environment, and the failures of previous efforts. Organizations that do not possess a large number of followers often use violent tactics as a means to legitimize their organization, and Hezbollah's previous radical ideology reflected this dynamic.<sup>165</sup> Violence and radical

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<sup>163</sup> Crenshaw, "Theories of Terrorism," 14–15.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

<sup>165</sup> Tilly and Tarrow, "Contentious Politics and Social Movements," 444.

language were the means to legitimize the organization in the short term. I argue that Hezbollah's radical Islamist ideology was less important to the leadership than overall party survival.

This study most importantly demonstrates the options available to external policy makers. When violent organizations are not taken at face value—when their true goals are exposed—then it becomes easier to create policy that deals with the underlying issues. For years the Shi'a community was underrepresented, underdeveloped, and marginalized in Lebanon. Hezbollah sought to gain a larger share of political power in Lebanon in order to create a more equitable share of government power and resources. The civil war forced Hezbollah to enter a political arena that threatened the very existence of not only the party, but the community itself. When the political climate adjusted, Hezbollah still sought to increase the Shi'a community's share of political power, but could do so from within the bounds of parliamentary elections. A more pragmatic external approach would be to simply understand the underlying grievances at stake, and target those concerns. More often than not, external actors simply view radical ideology at face value, and then use tactics that harm their overall goals. In short, when external actors make violence the only means to create political change, they contribute to the perpetuation of the radicalization they seek to eliminate.

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