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***Security Governance Strategies: Comparing
Rebel Groups in Lebanon and Syria***

**A Thesis Submitted by
*Nourhan Samir Ibrahim***

**to the
The Political Science Department, the American University in
Cairo
Graduate Program
Master of Arts in Political Science**

Fall 2022

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Chapter One: Introduction

Introduction:

Contrary to the expectation of the Weberian model of the state, the state is not the only provider of security and governance. This is prominent in states that are categorized as weak or failed states especially those that witnessed a civil conflict. The dynamics of internal conflicts and the power-relation among the involved actors influence the post conflict peace-building process. The rebel groups are among these influential actors. To avoid confusion between rebel groups and other militant non-state actors, the rebel group is an organized armed group that rises against incumbent government, other rebel groups or/and external invasion. Its activities usually have a political motivation such as fighting for political autonomy or asking for more rights for a specific underrepresented ethnicity or minority group (Jo 2015, p. 36-37).

Although violence and battles are the main focus of civil conflicts, rebels who control territories construct a form of governance to manage their relations with the resident civilian population. The behaviour of rebels while interacting with the population under their control ranges between violence and neglect to cohabitation and cooperation. Much depends on the strategies of rebels. However, a significant number of rebel groups provide the population under their jurisdiction with some sort of governance that varies from providing basic goods and services to establishing state-like institutions with bureaucracies,

taxation system, schools, health system and even representative councils (Arjona, Kasfir, and Mampilly 2015, p. 1-2).

In the middle of a protracted civil war, the conflict dynamics are usually ambiguous, and rebel groups who seek survival have to interact with the population under their control to ensure their support. They usually engage in governance when they aim at gaining the support of the population under their jurisdiction and mobilizing them against the incumbent government or other rebel groups. Delivering governance is a complex interactive process that requires bargaining and interdependence with different actors including international ones. That is because the power structure is changeable so sustainability requires continuous process of negotiations with civilian constituencies, other rebel groups or in some cases with the incumbent government. This means that there is no fixed strategy that rebels can apply to gain this support or what can be called relative legitimacy since they are not an internationally recognized sovereign authority. Rebels develop various approaches and types of institutions over time and space based on the dynamics of war and their goal as well. In case a rebel group succeeded in delivering a more consistent governance than the incumbent government, this would help in promoting the power of the rebel group and weakening the popularity of the incumbent government. Nevertheless, while governance can help rebels in achieving their interests, if they fail in governance, that will harm their insurgent cause. In addition, the incumbent government or other rebels may use their

weakness in governance to defeat them (Berti 2020, p. 2-3; Arjona, Kasfir, and Mampilly 2015, p. 1-4).

However, some rebel groups manage to sustain their governance such as Hezbollah and others cannot such as ISIS. Therefore, the main research question that this thesis explores is: What are the factors that contribute to the sustainability of rebel governance? This study will explore not only the sustainability until the end of the civil war but also how this rebel group can sustain its existence after the end of the war to get integrated in the post-war political order. The study will examine the importance of gaining legitimacy for governance sustainability, and explore the different strategies that rebels apply to gain legitimacy from the population under their control. Additionally, it will discuss how constructing institutions is substantial to sustain governance, besides analysing the different types of institutions that rebels construct based on the criteria of Mampilly and Stewart (2021) that will be discussed in later chapter.

In order to answer these questions, the study will first discuss relevant theories that tackled rebel governance, how rebels gain legitimacy and the importance of institutionalization in sustainability. Then, it will examine Hezbollah in Lebanon and the Democratic Union Party (PYD) in Syria in separate chapters. The study will then compare the two cases to determine the factors that led to the sustainability of Hezbollah in Lebanon and the possibility of the PYD to sustain its governance and to get integrated in the post-war political order.

The study will use qualitative research to explore the different case studies and use a comparative approach to compare the two cases. The study builds on a rich literature that discussed the rebels who govern, which is the focus of this study.

1- Literature Review:

This review tackles the previous literature on rebel governance from different perspectives. Exploring their strategies, their institutional framework, and the sharing of governance between state and non-state actors. Afterwards, the contribution of the study will be presented.

A. The Governance Strategies of Rebels

This section includes studies that discuss the different governance strategies used by rebels in the territories under their control. These strategies can be affected as Arjona, Kasfir and Mampilly (2015) claim by natural resources, ideologies, the responses of the population under their control and pre-existing social order. It also depends on the time-frame, whether these actors have long-term or short-term goals/objectives. Arjona (2016) studied the case of Colombia and argues that rebels conduct different governance strategies across time and territories that they dominate depending on the pre-existing local governance system of the area. She proposed a typology of social order in times of conflicts as rebels with long-term strategies are under ‘order’ typology, which refers to the adaption of civilian population with rebels. However, rebels with short-term strategies could be categorized under ‘disorder typology’ because the

population under their control do not accept their rule that is against the pre-existing local system.

Besides, the type of rebels whether separatists or non-separatists is thought to influence their desire to govern. Stewart (2017) conducted a quantitative analysis using large N to study rebels from 1945 to 2003 and concluded that secessionist rebels are more likely to provide goods and services inclusively than non-secessionist rebels. That is because they want to gain more supporters domestically and internationally for independence. However, she mentioned that Hezbollah does not follow this pattern. Nevertheless, Florea (2020) argues that separatists might not provide governance if they loot mineral resources and they are more likely to govern if they receive external military support, have access to relatively immobile assets, adopt a Marxist ideology, control the territory for a long time or in presence of peacekeepers.

The conflict dynamics can also influence the strategies of rebels. Berti (2020) studied the governance approaches of Jabhat al-Nusra in the Idlib and Aleppo provinces between 2012 and 2017. She argued that both local and broader conflict dynamics affect the governance arrangements in terms of alliances with other armed groups or civilian agents of the population under their control. She concluded that the actions of rebels evolved from cooperation at the beginning of the Syrian Civil War to a competitive relationship over resources and ideological differences because of these dynamics.

In addition, the ceasefire period as well has an effect on the rebel governance strategies. Sosnowski (2018) argues that ceasefire is a complex process that

does not only imply a temporarily halt to military clashes but also a chance or a political tool that both rebels and incumbent government use to enhance their governance in the territories under their jurisdiction. She examined this assumption on the ceasefire that took place in Syria in 2016 especially in Daraa. She concluded that distribution of humanitarian aid on the population fosters the legitimacy of the governing actors and the activities that are conducted during the ceasefire would change the dynamics of conflicts and power afterwards.

Rebels adopt these strategies essentially to gain legitimacy. Cunningham and Loyle (2020) argue that rebels can gain legitimacy if the people under their jurisdiction believe that their governance is more effective than the incumbent state. This could be through establishing judicial system and paying reparation for the population under their jurisdiction who were affected from civil wars. They can also publicize the support of their population to gain international recognition. Similarly, Malejacq (2017) argues that rebels do not only construct legitimacy through providing goods and services to the people under their jurisdiction but also through using diplomatic tools to publicise their cause externally with international actors. An example of this is the Afghan warlord Ahmad Shah Massoud, who was able to negotiate with the United State and reached the European and American media to defend his cause.

Additionally, Terpstra (2020) argues that Taliban used different strategies to gain legitimacy throughout its history of governance. He claims that there are mainly two strategies. First, the pragmatic strategy through which Taliban

provide the people with goods, services and most importantly relative secured environment -rule of law. Second, the moral strategy through which they publicise that they are the protectors of Islam and/or nation against the foreign invaders. Additionally, the author concluded that external intervention harm the pragmatic strategy, because rebels would spend their resources in clashes and might not be able to provide the people with goods and services. However, the foreign intervention would fuel the moral strategy, because the people would be encouraged to support and join the group against the intervention to defend their national or ideological cause.

Nevertheless, Revkin (2021) argues based on studying ISIS, the population under the control of a rebel group is more likely to accept and stay under its rule because of 'competitive governance', which means that rebels provide them with services that are more effective and fairer than the incumbent state. She claims that this assumption is more valid than other explanations such as economic resources, ideology, familial ties, information or threat perception.

On the other hand, it is controversial whether rebels can gain legitimacy through violence and forcing people under their control to obey them or not. Revkin and Ahram (2020) argue that in some cases rebels construct a social contract with the population under their jurisdiction to gain legitimacy. They examined the case of ISIS in order to test whether they gain legitimacy through consent or coercion. They concluded that ISIS claimed that it gained legitimacy through public consent, however, the responses of the population who lived under its rule proved that they consented out of fear not loyalty. Therefore, its social

contract is similar to the social contract of authoritative regimes that is based on subordination and use of force. However, Terpstra and Frerks (2017) argue that rebels cannot depend on coercion only to get the consent of the people because coercion is not a sustainable tool of governance. Therefore, rebels who seek sustainability rely on a mixture of coercion and persuasion, which can be ideological or materialist – providing goods and services-.

B. The Institutional Organization of Rebels:

This section presents the studies that tackle the importance of institutionalization in rebel governance. Arjona (2016), Cunningham and Loyle (2020) and Mampilly and Stewart (2021) argue that in civil wars, some rebels conduct non-militant actions such as providing social services to the people under their jurisdiction and the construction of local political institutions that run the territory under their control. The state-like institutionalized governance aims at maintaining their rule over the population and create a channel of communication with them. However, they differ in the design and the level of institutionalization ranging from local representative councils to autocratic rebel leadership. These studies assume that these institutions range from martial law to inclusion of the population under their rule, and that one rebel group might acquire different types across territories and over time. They studied how different types were formed by Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), Islamic State (IS), Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) Gerakan Aceh Merdeka (GAM), Khmer Rouge (KR), African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape

Verde (PAIGC). However, they did not explain why rebels choose certain type over another and which type is more sustainable.

Cunningham, Huang and Sawyer (2021) found a correlation between the institutional capacity of rebels and their participation in elections. They argue that rebels participate in elections during wartime in order to gain or/and maintain both domestic and international recognition. However, fundamentally, they need to have organizational institutions to be able to prepare themselves for elections, but such elections might be a financial burden on the rebels and risky in case they lost the elections. The paper examined its assumption with a large N analysis of rebels who conducted elections from 1950 until 2006. The study concluded that rebels with organized institution who have a wide range of supporters, have strong relations with external actors and seek to consolidate their legitimacy are the ones who hold elections. However, Cunningham and Loyle (2020) claim that participating in elections that are prepared by the incumbent state might reduce their legitimacy.

Some studies found a relationship between complex institutional dynamics on the one hand and governance and legitimacy maintenance on the other. Baylouny (2014) examined the armed non-state actors or what she called armed political parties (APPs) in Lebanon during the civil war. She claims that the APPs -with their different ideologies- have complex institutional dynamics and hierarchies that were able to provide alternative governance to the weak government. Additionally, some of them were able to sustain their governance such as Hezbollah. She concluded that because of their organized institutions,

they were able to gain legitimacy from the citizens under their jurisdiction. Similarly, DeVore and Stähli (2015) and DeVore, Stähli and Franke (2019) argue that the complex organizational networks of Hezbollah that was developed since 1982 and its ability to innovate governance techniques are the reason behind its sustainability and that the Iranian sponsorship of Hezbollah was only an assistant factor to its prolonged existence.

C. Governance Sharing between State and Non-State Actors:

This section tackles studies that present the relation between state and non-state actors and how the cooperation between them would foster governance delivery to the people and vice versa. One of the prominent case studies concerning state and non-state actors' cooperation in governance is the de-facto state of Somaliland. Moe and Simojoki (2013) and Garcia (2017) Gandrup and Titeca (2019) argue that Somaliland conducted a successful and unique hybrid political system that consists of traditional systems of clans and a state-like system, which is against the ethnocentric biased strategies that the international community attempts to apply in Somalia. When the international community was trying to create a Weberian model of state -monopoly of power in hands of the state- in Somalia, Somaliland depended on state and non-state local actors. They were able to provide services during the civil war, whereas other areas of Somalia suffered from famine and lack of goods and services. This can be considered as a post-colonial perspective in governance in failed states. In addition, Musaa and Horst (2019) argue that the local businessmen in Somaliland contribute to the economic development sector as well as

preventing and resolving conflicts in alliance with the de facto government. On the other hand, Renders and Terlinden (2010) claimed that although the hybrid system was able to contain conflicts and deliver services to the people, it is not sustainable. That is because of the ambition of new politicians who are trying to marginalize the role of clan elders. That could renew the conflict again in Somaliland at any point of time.

Some studies argue that Lebanon at some stage had a unique hybrid system of cooperation. Hazbun (2016) and Geha (2019) argue that Hezbollah could be analysed from different perspective other than a violent non-state actor because it is not challenging the national security of Lebanon. On the contrary, it is part of a 'hybrid sovereignty' dynamic, and it operates alongside with the plural security governance system. They also claim that despite that this system is run by competing domestic actors, it is effective to an extent in facing some geopolitical threats such as ISIS even more than other authoritarian regimes in the region because of the bargaining and negotiations mechanisms that they adopt.

Other studies highlight the risk of not integrating non-state actors in governance post-war period. Brown, Trinkunas and Hamid (2017) examined the role of armed non-state actors in governance during civil conflicts and how the neglect of some of them in the post-war peace process threatens the stability of the state. They argue that rebels establish governance after consolidating their control over certain territory, and they often tend to create links with the local communities and elders to gain their support. The paper discussed the cases of

Afghanistan and Colombia. They claim that the Taliban group in Afghanistan provided governance to the people under its jurisdiction in a more efficient way than the incumbent government and as a result, they accept its presence in some areas than the government. However, when the government encountered the Taliban instead of negotiating with them, Taliban used violence even without considering civilian population. The Colombian case has the same pattern as well. They concluded that the government elites ought to share governance with non-armed non-state actors in order not to give the chance for armed groups to rise and fill the gap in their governance. Klick (2016) as well shows how the development of local governance varies across Guatemala based on the degree of cooperation between state and non-state actors. He argues that local governance in Guatemala was more efficient when the state actors cooperate with traditional leaders and non-state actors to help them in mobilizing the people and overseeing the distribution of resources. However, in areas where the state and non-state actors are in clash, the local development is hindered. The lack of cooperation could be a result of rivalry during civil wars. Deasy (2013) explained the obstacles that face local councils in Syria and how that hindered their governance in areas where Assad had no authority over. These range from the brutal confrontations with Assad's army or with other militias to the lack of resources. She concluded that the complex environment in Syria is not allowing the non-state actors to learn how to self-govern. Martínez and Eng (2018) also claim that the systematic bombarding of Assad's army on the rebels' regions aims at destroying any chance of sustaining rebel or local governance

in order to prove that they cannot protect the population under their control and lose their legitimacy that was driven from the acceptance of this population. However, Assad's strategy could lead to two possibilities whether the civilians delegitimize the rebels that are supposedly protecting them, so they will be weakened or mobilize against Assad's army and join the rebel groups.

D. The Contribution of the Study:

The previous studies have a number of important questions that remain unanswered. Despite presenting the different legitimacy-gaining strategies and the types of institutions that the rebels adopt, they did not evaluate which set of strategies is more important to sustain rebel governance and whether the type of the institutions contributes to the sustainability of rebel governance or not. This study will fill the gap by examining in depth Hezbollah's governance activities in Lebanon and how it sustained its rule even after the end of the war. The study will focus as well on an under-research case, which is the Democratic Union Party in Syria, and it will attempt to analyse its governance capacities. Afterwards, a comparative study will be conducted to conclude a set of strategies that might lead to rebel governance sustainability.

2- Methodological Approaches:

This study uses a case study research design, which according to George (1979) is useful in examining the validity of theoretical questions empirically (George as cited in Levy 2008, p. 2). Levy (2008) categorizes the theory-guided case studies as idiographic case studies that seek to explain or describe a specific

case study. This type of study does not aim at generalization but rather focuses on a case within time and space limits to conclude whether the theory is applicable in reality or not (Levy 2008, p. 3-4). Levy argues that “the more case interpretations are guided by theory, the more explicit their underlying analytic assumptions, normative biases, and causal propositions; the fewer their logical contradictions; and the easier they are to empirically validate or invalidate” (Levy 2008, p. 5).

The study is a qualitative study. It will analyse the following sources:

- 1- Secondary literature: academic studies related to rebel governance theories and studies that focus on Hezbollah and the Democratic Union Party.
- 2- Primary sources: Gather data through newspaper reports and the official websites of the rebels. Additionally, speeches of the leaders especially Nasrallah since he became a Secretary-General until 2022, and speeches of prominent leaders in the PYD such as Saleh Muslim and others until 2022 as well.

The study will examine each rebel group separately based on the theoretical framework. Afterwards, it will use comparative approach to compare Hezbollah in Lebanon and the Democratic Union Party in Syria.

The case of Hezbollah in Lebanon is an important unique case of a rebel group that sustained its institutional organization even after the end of the war and constructed an official political party that has seats in the Lebanese Parliament. Additionally, it is not disarmed until now. Therefore, it is a model of a militant

non-state actor which sustained its governance and violence activities even after the peace process.

The purpose of selecting the Democratic Union Party in Syria is exploring an understudied case in rebel governance because the Syrian Civil War is still ongoing and recent to an extent. Additionally, it is considered a unique case because it is surrounded with variety of militant non-state actors which emerged since the civil war with different motivations.

Selecting both case studies will hold some variables constant because both of them witnessed civil conflict, and they both have ideological motivation. Additionally, the sustainability strategies and factors of Hezbollah will clarify the potentiality of the Democratic Union Party to sustain its control like Hezbollah.

Chapter Two: Theoretical Framework

Introduction

The prevalence of civil wars especially after the Cold War led to the rise of rebels who control parts of national states in the absence or weakness of the central government, which became unable to impose the rule of law and monopolize the use of force. Therefore, scholars who are interested in studying civil wars started to give more attention to how these rebels function after controlling a territory. Additionally, they question whether these groups aim to govern or their ambitions are more short-term (Arjona, Kasfir and Mampilly 2015, p. 1-4). The study will draw on the work of Kasfir (2015) and his definition of rebel governance, which will be discussed in this chapter.

Rebel groups that strive to sustain its governance have to design strategies in accordance with their priorities and ultimate objective. These strategies may be changeable over time and space to correspond with the dynamics of the conflict. In order to consolidate governance, first, rebels need to gain legitimacy from the people that they govern because it is the fundamental base of sustainability. Second, similar to states, rebels need to construct institutions in order to manage and embed governance, and it is built to serve the grand agenda of the group (Arjona, Kasfir and Mampilly 2015, p. 1-4).

This chapter will tackle a number of theories, definitions and criteria that will be used to answer the research question “What are the factors that contribute to the sustainability of rebel governance?”. The chapter will be divided into three

main parts. First, defining what is rebel governance and what are the criteria that rebel groups need to fulfil to pursue governance. Second, discussing the dilemma of legitimacy and the different strategies that they use to gain legitimacy. Third, examining the importance of the rebel institutions in sustaining governance as well as the types and dimensions of rebel institutions that were developed by Mampilly and Stewart (2021) that will be applied on the case studies to test whether these dimensions contribute to governance sustainability or not.

This chapter will attempt to hypothesize based on the theories and definitions how a rebel group can sustain its governance for longer periods.

1- Defining Rebel Governance:

As previously mentioned, there are several types of armed non-state actors. However, this study focuses only on rebel groups who are armed non-state actors who mobilize against the central government, other rebel group or/and external actors. Some rebel groups are merely driven by greed, which are not the focus of this study. This study focuses on the rebel groups who have grievance motivation and seek to change the relationship between the state and society specifically those groups who represent an underrepresented group (Jo 2015, p. 36-37; Sobek and Payne 2010, p. 214).

Since not all rebels seek governance, rebel governance needs to be identified. According to Kasfir (2015), a broad definition of rebel governance would be “the organization of civilians within rebel-held territory for a public purpose”

(Kasfir 2015, P.24). There are three main conditions that rebels have to fulfil in order to govern. First, they need to control a territory within the state where the rebellion takes place, but the territory size may change over time based on the dynamics of the internal conflict. Second, civilian population must exist in this territory, and in case they occupied an unpopulated territory, it would not be considered as rebel governance. Third, they have to use violence whether against the incumbent government, other rebel groups or/and the civilian population in order to maintain or/and expand the territory under their control (Kasfir 2015, P.25).

Primarily, rebels construct a form of government that helps them to achieve their interests. Therefore, in order to maintain their control, they provide goods and services -infrastructure, health and education-, besides creating institutions to stabilize order inside their jurisdiction to persuade the population that they can be an alternative for the incumbent government. In some cases, they induce the population under their control to participate with them in governance or maintain the pre-existing local system. However, they also control the civilian production of wealth, collect taxes from the population and even force the civilian population to work in illegal trafficking (Kasfir 2015, P.21-27).

Rebel governance can be perceived as series of organization arrangements that is driven from the daily interactions between rebels and the population under their rule, which may vary from coercion to persuasion in order to gain legitimacy from the population. These interactions between both sides shape the governance structure and its prospects to be sustained. However, governing

does not necessary mean that rebels gained legitimacy but legitimacy is necessary to sustain their governance (Kasfir as cited in Terpstra and Frerks 2017, p. 284).

The following section will question the legitimacy of rebel groups, how legitimacy is an essential condition for sustaining governance, and the strategies that they use to reach their goal.

2- The Dilemma of Legitimacy:

Gaining Legitimacy is a process or a bundle of interactive actions that aims at convincing the people that such actor is the rightful ruler that they need to trust and obey. Legitimacy depends on the belief of the people in the material and moral validity of the ruling organization and its activities. It is a social relation that embodies tangible social interactions, facilitates social control, and represents a mutual relationship where the ruler and the ruled affect each other. However, the predominant studies on legitimacy are associated with the state, and studying the concept in relation to non-state actors is relatively limited (Duyvesteyn 2017, p. 670-678; Schlichte and Schneckener 2015, p. 413).

With the rise of non-state actors' governance, the idea of questioning the ruler rightfulness became more of a traditional approach. Substantially, legitimacy is perceived as the psychological acquisition of authority, social order and institutions to the extent of convincing the people under their jurisdiction that their rule is proper and just. It is not a mere believe that this group gains legitimacy but it is about how its practices are convincible enough to be

perceived as a legitimate ruler. Rebels as non-state political actors were able in a considerable number of cases to provide alternative governance in the absence of the formal internationally recognized state institutions. However, these rebel groups have to fulfil the three fundamental elements that Nelson Kasfir identified to be considered as governors, which are territory, civilian residence, and the use of violence. Although the legitimacy of the internationally recognized state is different than illegal rebel groups, rebels may gain changeable degrees of legitimacy among defined local constituencies and may gain international support (Duyvesteyn 2017, p. 671-673; Kasfir 2015, P. 28; Terpstra and Frerks 2017, p. 285).

According to Klaus Schlichte and Ulrich Schneckener (2015), rebels -similar to state actors- have to give justification for their actions to gain material and ideological support because legitimacy is the foundational step upon which governance is built, and without being legitimate, the group is less likely to sustain its governance. Rebels who sustain their existence for a prolonged period in civil wars often have gained a solid form of legitimacy inside the territories under their jurisdiction. The internal stability allowed them to concentrate on maintaining and investing more in enhancing their organisational structure and military capacity. However, it should be noted that gaining legitimacy is not a guarantee that the group will be sustainable but without it the rebel quest is expected to fail (Schlichte and Schneckener 2015, p. 409-410).

H1: a rebel group that could not gain minimal legitimacy is less likely to sustain its governance.

Rebels who seek to consolidate their governance would create a set of strategies to gain legitimacy, which is changeable based on the time and space. However, substantially, the rebel group needs to have negotiation skills to adapt with social, political, and territorial changes that take place during the civil war (Duyvesteyn 2017, p. 680).

H2: a rebel group that cannot negotiate with its allies and enemies is less likely to sustain its governance.

The following sections will tackle the major strategies that rebels conduct to gain and maintain their legitimacy. First, discussing how to create a narrative, second, the economic strategies, third, the violence dilemma, and forth how they manage their international relations.

A. Creating A Narrative:

The state-building process requires creating a narrative that bonds the people together and grants the ruler the legitimacy to develop the state. This narrative could be driven from pre-existing social norms upon which legitimacy would be built. Similarly, the rebels as political actors need to create the narrative that justifies their possession of power, their actions and agendas. That is because they are like other political actors as they need the moral and material support to shift from having fragile power to a more prolonged rule (Duyvesteyn 2017, p. 671; Schlichte and Schneckener 2015, p. 410).

Rebels could claim that they are representatives of political or socio-economic grievances in the country based on an ethnic group, a religious sect, a social class, or claiming that their cause is driven from popular culture and traditions to gain legitimacy. The rebel group could also create a narrative of ‘us’ versus ‘other’ relationship by presenting the other side -whether the incumbent government, other rebel groups or even external actors- as brutal enemies that need to be encountered (Terpstra and Frerks 2017, p. 285).

H3: a rebel group that has an identity similar to the population under its jurisdiction is more likely to gain more legitimacy.

Another narrative could be creating the myth of heroism and martyrdom that some rebels use to express their readiness to scarify their lives to defend their cause so they appear as the defenders of the people (Terpstra and Frerks 2017, p. 285).

H4: rebel groups that are showing themselves as the defenders of the nation are more likely to gain more legitimacy.

A solid narrative needs a charismatic leader who has the ability to mobilize and recruit people for the interest of the group by using rhetorical speeches and has the ability to alter political strategies and practices in accordance with the conflict dynamics to consolidate its rule. This leader might as well create a legacy that would be followed by his successors (Terpstra and Frerks 2017, p. 285; Schlichte and Schneckener 2015, p. 418).

H5: A rebel group that has a charismatic leader is more likely to sustain its governance.

In order to consolidate this narrative, a social contract that consists of values, norms and regulations needs to be established by the actor who seeks governance, which is an instrument to consolidate legitimacy. However, this actor needs to gain credibility first to be able to establish a legitimate rule (Duyvesteyn 2017, p. 679). This social contract needs to be accepted by the masses, and according to Gramsci, the modern states consolidate their hegemony not only through coercion but also through manipulation of masses. In other words, the political elites create cultural hegemony to dominate the people by persuading them with the ideology of the ruling class to get their consent (Gramsci as cited in Mampilly 2015, p. 78). This means that if an actor seeks governance and legitimacy, coercion is not enough and gaining consent through symbolic actions is necessary. These symbols could be nationalist or ideological sentiments, which will promote their narrative. Since rebel groups are socially constructed organizations that have a general agenda that aims at gathering individuals into a collective coalition, they can use the same strategies of the state to gain relative legitimacy. Some rebels use social, political and aesthetic symbols in order to claim being sovereign and legitimate through mimicking the practices and symbols of modern states such as creating anthems, slogans, official flag, parades, printing currency and using the different media channels to promulgate these symbols. These symbols should help in stimulating the emotional response of the audiences towards the organization

(Mampilly 2015, p. 77-80; Podder 2014, p. 222). In other words, “Legitimacy arises not merely from coincident preferences between a ruler and the ruled, but as a result of the symbolic processes a regime deploys to give a meaning to these preferences” (Mampilly 2015, p. 80).

The symbolic process creates a communication bridge between the rebels and the population under their jurisdiction, which fosters the relation and the bond between them. This will allow the rebel group to reduce the reliance on force to assure compliance, which will increase the voluntary recruitment because the people have a sense of belonging to the rebel group. In addition, the rebel group will ensure the loyalty of the population under its jurisdiction. The difference between the compliance that is a result of coercion and the one of creating common identity ground is that the latter is driven from preference, which is more rooted in the society. Both coercion and symbolic actions will consolidate the social order created by the rebel group. However, rebels need to be cautious if their audience have different identities, which means that they need to create different symbolic actions that unite all these audiences under their rule (Mampilly 2015, p. 76-81). However, according to Suchman (1995), a political actor that is seeking legitimacy needs at first to consolidate its narrative among the pre-existing primary audience, then it would search for audiences that might accept the current practices, afterwards, it can develop new practices to attract more audiences (Suchman 1995, p. 587).

H6: a rebel group that is able to create a solid narrative supported with symbolic actions is more likely to gain legitimacy and sustain its governance.

However, the symbolic actions are not by itself sufficient to gain legitimacy as they need to be combined with material actions as well, which will be discussed in the following section.

B. Economic Strategies:

The economic incentives are among the substantive factors that need to be examined while studying civil wars and rebel governance. Some scholars like Collier and Hoeffler (2004) argue that rebels are more likely to rise in countries that depend on exporting raw materials and suffer from high unemployment rates, illiteracy, and economic, ethnic and religious inequalities. They argue that rebels are only driven by greed of exploiting the resources of the country and seize the grievances of a specific group to provoke a war (Collier and Hoeffler 2004, p. 587-589). However, Regan and Norton (2005) argue that some rebels do not only aim at exploiting resources especially in countries that are not rich in resources that could be looted but they may rise to represent an ethnic or religious group that is underrepresented and deprived from gaining equal rights. In later stages, they would need to extract resources for their governance purposes (Regan and Norton 2005, p. 319).

It should be noted as well that not all rebels pursue governance, Arjona (2016) argues that rebels who have long-term strategies are more likely to impose order and establish governance to gain the people's support. However, those who have short-term strategies and aim only at looting the natural resources are less

likely to provide services to the people under their jurisdiction (Arjona 2016, p. 3). The latter type is not of the concern of this study.

Governance is primarily about delivering goods, service and security, which is the base of a legitimate political order. This mission is more challenging for a rebel group than a state because it has limited capacity and funds, in a state of war, and is illegitimate by international law (Duyvesteyn 2017, p. 679). Rebels with governance intentions usually start providing goods and services after consolidating their control over a territory that contains civilian population. The basic goods and services include security, food, water, medical care, and infrastructure -which is important due to the destructive nature of wars- (Schlichte and Schneckener 2015, p. 418) This strategy according to Terpstra (2020) is called ‘pragmatic strategy’ (Terpstra 2020, p. 1145). Rebels are more likely to gain popular legitimacy if they provide services in a more persistent way than the incumbent government, which is called ‘competitive governance’ (Revkin 2021, p. 47). In other words, if the incumbent government attacks the civilian population or neglects them, they are more likely to support the rebel group that supplies them with services and protects them. However, in case the rebels stop delivering services, their popularity is more likely to decrease (Podder 2014, p. 219-221).

H7: rebel groups who are willing to provide the people under their jurisdiction with consistent goods and services are more likely to gain legitimacy.

Rebels who govern usually construct a parallel economic sector to be able to finance their agenda including delivering services and security. One of the profitable sources of funding is extractable natural resources such as oil, gas and diamonds. Rebels trade illegally in such resources if they have access to them. Some rebel groups engage in drug and human trafficking as a source of finance especially in countries that lack natural resources. They also depend on internal extraction of funds such as taxes, which is considered as a way to show their sovereignty and ability to collect taxes from the people under their jurisdiction. In some cases, rebels seize the humanitarian aid that is sent by international NGOs. In addition, some rebel groups are financially supported from external sources whether from a foreign sponsor country or from groups in other countries that share similar identity such as diasporas. This external support is an important factor of sustainability as well because it guarantees the flow of financial assistance that is substantial for recruiting, enhancing the military capacity and providing services (Cosmo, Fassin and Pinaud 2021, p. 64; Bojicic-Dzelilovic and Turkmani 2018, p. 54-56).

H8: Rebels who receive consistent external financial assistance are more likely to sustain their governance.

Domestically, rebels depend and interact with population under their rule for sources extraction and this relation might be by force, persuasion, or a mix between the two approaches, which will be discussed in detail in the next section.

C. Violence Reconsidered:

Political actors who use violence extensively find it usually difficult to gain legitimacy because it is always questionable; violence against whom and how it is justified. Rebels might need to use violence to establish the social order which is a substantial base in the process of legitimacy, and the population's acceptance and participation in this order are confirming this legitimacy. However, violence can legitimize or delegitimize them, therefore, rebels need to be cautious with using violence against the population under their jurisdiction. That is because the excessive and unjustified use of violence would delegitimize their existence as the people would feel unsafe and threatened. They have to give justification for the use of violence, which often is justified by a narrative that they are protecting the community to survive and calling those who are oppressed as traitors. This narrative needs to be solid enough and backed by charismatic political elites who can convince the people with ideas and symbols, otherwise, their legitimacy will decline and might fade. Legitimacy will also be affected if the use of violence continued for long periods and was indiscriminate (Schlichte and Schneckener 2015, p. 410-416; Duyvesteyn 2017, p. 679).

Wood (2010) argues that if a rebel group enjoys wide support from the population under its jurisdiction, it is less likely to use excessive violence against it. In addition, some rebel groups use indiscriminate violence due to their weak institutional capacity regarding service provision and security, besides their inability to persuade the population with their agenda. Instead of

using a mix between violence and persuasion to manipulate the masses, they use only violence (Wood 2010, p. 602). The relation between the civilian population and rebels is not a one-way relationship where such population depends on rebels. However, the rebels need the population under their control as well because they are a source of production and potential recruits as well (Terpstra and Frerks 2017, p. 283). According to Suchman (1995), people tend to supply resources to the organization that is desirable and proper in the sense of providing services, consistent with the embedded social system and not using extensive violence (Suchman 1995, p. 574). Most importantly a ruler without followers might not be able to reach the planned goals (Terpstra and Frerks 2017, p. 283).

Revkin and Ahram (2020) argue that rebels can construct a social contract similar to the one of the authoritative regimes, which is built upon subjection and coercion (Revkin and Ahram 2020, p. 1-2). However, rebels are different than a state because the rebels by law are illegitimate and need to seek legitimacy to consolidate its rule. Therefore, if they aim to stabilize their governance on the long-term, they need to use a strategy that combines both coercion and persuasion and even authoritative states apply that (Terpstra and Frerks 2017, p. 280). In addition, governments that only rely on coercion use more resources in surveillance to monitor their population in order to keep punishing any violator of their rules. On the other hand, governments that rely on a mix between coercion and persuasion invest less in such surveillance

system and invest more on other strategies to protect itself from internal and external threats as well (Levi, Sacks and Tyler 2009, p. 355).

H9: Rebels who use a mix of coercion and persuasion are more likely to sustain their governance.

The indiscriminate excessive use of violence will lead to compliance out of fear but not sustainable legitimacy that is based on loyalty and the belief that this ruling organization has the right to rule. If the constituents obey the ruling organization out of fear, they will not support it in case there is a danger that threatens its rule, and they might support other groups to get rid of such violent ruler. In addition, the extreme use of violence contributes to the movement of civilian population out of territory of the violent actor (Revkin 2021, p. 48-49). Moreover, if the rebel group recruits the civilian residents forcibly, they will be less loyal than those who would be recruited voluntarily because they do not believe in the cause that they fight for (Wood 2010, p. 603).

H10: Rebels who use excessive unjustified violence against the population under their control are less likely to sustain their governance.

Some rebel groups would take a corrective path to prevent being delegitimized after using violence by setting trials to selective leaders who used excessive violence against the population under their rule, executing new rules that respect human rights and limit the use of violence, and some of them declare their respect to international humanitarian laws and regulations such as the Geneva Conventions. This would help in consolidating the local legitimacy and attracting more international support (Schlichte and Schneckener 2015, p. 416).

D. International Relations:

Rebel groups who seek governance need to define the targeted audiences, whether they are only targeting the local audiences or international ones as well. According to Schlichte and Schneckener (2015), rebel groups need both national and international audiences in a consistent way if they want to consolidate their governance (Schlichte and Schneckener 2015, p. 410). They need to use symbolic actions like speeches and publicise their respect to international humanitarian law, which will help them to receive funds as well as a degree of political recognition that is driven from the communication process with international actors without questioning their legal status. Some rebel groups as well might formulate their foreign policy agenda while addressing the international community and might conduct diplomatic talks with international actors. These actions would foster their cause because they normatively are perceived as the opposite of the state, unofficial and illegitimate, and by being recognized internationally, that will empower them to participate in the negotiations in post-war settlement (Mampilly 2015, p. 86; Schlichte and Schneckener 2015, p. 420; Malejacq 2017, p. 870).

H11: the rebel group that has better relations with foreign states, international aid organisation, translational NGOs, and international media is more likely to sustain its governance.

On the other hand, some of the rebel groups publicise their enmity to the Western great powers as a strategy to gain more internal support. This strategy is called ‘moral strategy’ according to Terpstra (2020). Rebels use their enmity

to Western great powers to advertise that they defend the nation or specific identity inside the nation. It is stimulated during foreign interventions because the people perceive such group as the defender of the nation especially if this foreign power is interfering militarily (Terpstra 2020, p. 1145).

H12: Rebels who create a common foreign enemy are more likely to gain internal legitimacy.

To sum up this section, the rebel group that seeks legitimacy needs to create a set of strategies that is compatible with the war dynamics in its country in order to sustain its governance. To implement and embed such activities, it needs to construct institutions that might mimic the state institutions to be able to compete with the state and embed its hegemony.

3- Rebel Institutions:

In order for a rebel group to conduct governance, it has to establish institutions to manage its relation with the civilian population under its jurisdiction. According to Podder (2014), rebel governance could be defined as “a series of institutions established by an insurgent organisation to manage relations within civilians living in the territory under its control that set-in place a system of taxation and a series of rules (formal/informal) for governing civilian life.” (Podder 2014, p.219).

The role of institutions is very important in sustaining the rebel governance because they resemble the organizational capacity of the rebel group and its ability to distribute the public goods as well as being representable

internationally to defend its cause (Mampilly and Stewart 2021, p. 18). The organizational capacity is an important factor to sustain the rebel governance because it does not only help the rebel group to interact with the population under its rule but to be more advanced in its military capacity in order to be able to defend the territory under its control (Kasfir 2015, P. 28).

These institutions are established to maintain the social order created by the rebel group and to implement its grand agenda. Although they are considered as informal institutions since they operate against the incumbent internationally recognized government, they might mimic the state institutions such as creating national governments and local governments (Albert 2022, p. 2-3). They also could initiate formal procedures such as local elections and election inside the rebel administration hierarchy (Schlichte and Schneckener 2015, p. 418).

Rebels construct different types of institutions, service institutions such as health, education housing, and infrastructure, administrative ones, and institutions to enforce law such as the police and the judicial institutions (Albert 2022, p. 3-4). Such institutions help as well in sustaining governance because they organize the daily interactions with the citizens who grant the rebels legitimacy, which in turn sustain governance.

H13: The more the rebel institutions mimic the state institutions, the more the rebel group sustains its governance.

On the other hand, Mampilly and Stewart (2021) argue that there are different typologies to rebel institutions, which vary according to four dimensions; the power sharing, integration, innovation and inclusiveness. By power sharing,

they mean whether rebels prefer to apply absolute martial law or share some power with the population under their control. However, the integration dimension indicates the level of power sharing between rebels and population under their control in administering the rebel territory. The highest level of integration is the collaboration between rebels and population under their rule whether through the pre-existing traditional councils or forming councils of representatives of the civilian population who can govern alongside rebels. On the other side, the minimum level of integration is limiting the population's participation to certain administrative matters without engaging them in security and substantive matters (Mampilly and Stewart 2021, p. 19).

For the innovation dimension, it refers to whether rebels will maintain the status quo of the pre-existing institutions after integrating the population under their control in governance or whether they will modify the inherited institutions to cope with the rebel political arrangement and strategies. Nevertheless, the extreme level of innovation would be the establishment of new institutions that serve their strategies (Mampilly and Stewart 2021, p. 19).

Regarding the inclusiveness dimension, it is about the extent to which the rebel institutions are constructed to facilitate civil participation such as allowing the population under their control to participate in the decision making or holding elections on the local level as well as including civilian population from different ethnicities, religions and genders in the institutions. The highly inclusive model would include different demographic groups in decision making, but the less inclusive model limits the representation to economic or

political elites or over-represent a demographic group over the others (Mampilly and Stewart 2021, p. 19).

Mampilly and Stewart (2021) did not argue which type in each dimension is more sustainable than the other. However, the study will attempt to determine the types of institutions that each case study establish and conclude which type is more sustainable. Additionally, it will examine whether these dimensions matter by their own or there are set of actions and practices that determine the survival of the rebel group.

All of the hypotheses of this study are summarized in the following table.

Table 1: Rebel Governance Sustainability Hypotheses:

<p>1- Rebel Legitimacy:</p> <p><i>H1: a rebel group that could not gain minimal legitimacy is less likely to sustain its governance.</i></p> <p><i>H2: a rebel group that cannot negotiate with its allies and enemies is less likely to sustain its governance.</i></p>	<p>2- Rebel Institutions:</p> <p><i>H13: The more the rebel institutions mimic the state institutions, the more the rebel group sustains its governance.</i></p>
<p>A. Creating A Narrative:</p> <p><i>H3: a rebel group that has an identity similar to the civilians under its</i></p>	

<p><i>jurisdiction is more likely to gain more legitimacy.</i></p> <p><i>H4: rebel groups that are showing themselves as the defenders of the nation are more likely to gain more legitimacy.</i></p> <p><i>H5: A rebel group that has a charismatic leader is more likely to sustain its governance.</i></p> <p><i>H6: a rebel group that is able to create a solid narrative supported with symbolic actions is more likely to gain legitimacy and sustain its governance.</i></p>	
<p>B. Economic Strategies:</p> <p><i>H7: rebel groups who are willing to provide the people under their jurisdiction with consistent goods and services are more likely to gain legitimacy.</i></p>	

<p><i>H8: Rebels who receive consistent external financial assistance are more likely to sustain their governance.</i></p>	
<p>C. Violence Reconsidered:</p> <p><i>H9: Rebels who use a mix of coercion and persuasion are more likely to sustain their governance.</i></p> <p><i>H10: Rebels who use excessive unjustified violence against civilians are less likely to sustain their governance.</i></p>	
<p>D. International Relations:</p> <p><i>H11: the rebel group that has better relations with foreign states, international aid organisation, translational NGOs, and international media is more likely to sustain its governance.</i></p> <p><i>H12: Rebels who create a common foreign enemy are more likely to gain internal legitimacy.</i></p>	

Conclusion:

Since the studies on rebel governance are relatively limited, this chapter attempted to highlight the most relevant definitions, theories and criteria that could be used in discussing the rebel governance in the selected case studies. Case studies will be selected based on the three criteria of Kasfir (2015) that were discussed above, which are territory, civilian population and the use of violence, besides, the group has to exist long enough to be studied as well.

In order for a rebel group to sustain governance, it has to gain a degree of legitimacy from the population under its jurisdiction. Since legitimacy is not static, rebel groups who seek governance need to diversify their sources of legitimacy and to be flexible to adjust them depending on the nature of the surrounding environment. In some cases, legitimacy would be temporarily driven by an immediate threat such as a foreign occupation or violence from the incumbent government or other rebel groups. The civilian population in such cases gives legitimacy to the group that is willing to defend them. However, this legitimacy would be destructed if the threat faded and the rebel group failed to generate different sources of legitimacy that would persuade the population under its control to continue legitimizing them as a ruler. In addition, if a rebel group only use coercion and violence to consolidate its rule, its existence will not last for longer because consent is required to ensure the loyalty of the people. Loyalty and legitimacy are important for sustainable governance because any strategies implemented by rebel groups need to be recognized by

the targeted audience, otherwise, they will not be able to gain any degree of legitimacy and their governance will fall after a short period of time.

It should be noted as well that while symbolic actions are substantial for consolidating legitimacy, it is more important in the formation stage to prioritize material actions because goods and services are more important to the people in war time. In later stages, the symbolic actions will be necessary to bond with the civilian population to guarantee their support and maintain being legitimate. Rebel groups that seek sustainability need also to construct institutions that could serve its grand agenda and consolidate its identity and rules. Some rebel groups mimic the state institutions to show their ability to challenge the incumbent government.

This study will attempt to examine the degree of sustainability of two case studies Hezbollah of Lebanon and the Democratic Union Party of Syria based on the above-mentioned hypotheses that are driven from the mentioned theories and definitions. Each case study will be examined by providing a brief history of its emergence and how the factors around its establishment affected its attempts to consolidate governance. Then, the legitimacy-gaining strategies that were used by the case as well as its organizational capacity will be discussed. Finally, the study will attempt to compare the two case studies in terms of sustainability prospects for each case.

Chapter Three: Hezbollah Governance in Lebanon

Introduction

The prolonged Lebanese Civil War caused the emergence of a considerable number of rebel groups. Some of them were able to provide services to the people under their jurisdiction, and others were not competent enough to maintain governance. Influential rebel groups that had control over strategic territories, a considerable number of civilian population, and provided public service were able to ensure their position in the post-conflict process. Hezbollah was among these groups which were able to prove their leverage (Baylouny 2014, p. 329-353; Harik 1994, p. 1-54).

During the Lebanese Civil War, Hezbollah was considered as a rebel group that is consistent with the definition of rebel groups that this study adopts. It is an armed non-state actor who is representing the Shiite community, which was a deprived sect. Hezbollah fought different rebel groups during the civil war even against another Shiite group, which is Amal, and it resisted the Israeli forces as well. It aimed at changing the social order to have a share in the Lebanese political order. Due to its continuous resistance to Israel, it might be considered as a rebel group even after the end of the war especially during the July War in 2006, while it also might be considered as a political party with a military wing. Therefore, this study will fundamentally verify the hypotheses during the Lebanese Civil War and illustrate how Hezbollah changed some of its strategies to sustain its existence even after the end of the war.

It also provides governance in accordance with the definition of Kasfir (2015). This definition states that a group needs to control a territory that contains civilian population and has to be violent whether against other rebel groups, the incumbent state, or/and the population under its control. For Hezbollah, it controlled various territories mainly major parts of Bekaa and the South and Al-Dahyia in Beirut which contain civilian population, and it fought other rebel groups and the Israeli forces that invaded Lebanon multiple times (Kaskir 2015, p. 25).

Although state sponsorship is a contributor to the development of rebel capacities, the management of recourses and innovation of new strategies depend on the organizational capacity of the rebel group and its decision-making process. In the case of Hezbollah, Iran mainly and Syria -before its civil war- contributed to its establishment and sustainability with financial aid, training and weaponry. However, Hezbollah's organizational capacity was a result of the internal development of tactics and strategies by the party's cadres who gained their experience from the dynamics of the Lebanese Civil War and had more experience in war dynamics than the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps. From its establishment phase, the founders of Hezbollah wanted to embed the Shiite Jihadist identity in the group, and they wanted to establish a group that mainly aims at representing the oppressed Shiite sect in Lebanon and to resist the Israeli invasion as well. Embedding the identity and satisfying the people under their control can be considered as the key factor behind their success. Consequently, while state sponsorship might be helpful for the rebel

group to sustain its existence, it is not enough by itself to ensure longevity (DeVore and Stähli 2015, p. 331-357).

Therefore, this chapter will discuss the internal and external factors that led to sustainability of Hezbollah. First, the chapter will discuss the formation of Hezbollah as well as the roots and the dynamics of its evolution. Second, it will discuss the organizational structure and the hierarchal order, besides specifying its institutional type in accordance with Mampilly and Stewart (2021) categorization. Third, it will examine the different strategies that Hezbollah conducted to gain legitimacy starting from narrative creation to the economic strategies to questioning the use of violence to the participation in the post-war political life. Fourth, it will explain the influence of the external support of Iran especially and Syria as well in the sustainability of Hezbollah. The chapter will conclude the main factors that lead to the sustainability of Hezbollah even after the end of the war while reflecting on the hypotheses mentioned in the theoretical framework.

1- The Formation of Hezbollah:

Hezbollah is considered as an outcome of the evolution of progressive political mobilization of the Shiites during the sectarian conflict. It was established predominately by those who separated from Amal movement, as well as other Shiite groups who emerged to resist Israel. Therefore, it is important to highlight the emergence of Shiite mobilization during the Lebanese Civil War to

understand the roots of Hezbollah (DeVore, Stähli and Franke 2019, p. 371-400).

Before the civil war, the Shiite community was marginalized, and Shiites could not develop confessional political parties like other sects. As a result, the community was vulnerable because such parties were the foundation of the recognizable militias that initiated the sectarian clashes. Due to that, they had to ally with the more organized militias that had political wings during the 1950s such as the Lebanese Communist Party and the Syrian Social Nationalist Party. Afterwards, in late 1960s, a considerable number of Shiites joined the militias of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), because they had dominance over a large part of Southern Lebanon, which is considered as the heartland of the Shiites (DeVore and Stähli 2015, p. 331-357).

The Shiite mobilization was fostered thanks to Imam Musa Al-Sadr who was an Iranian-born clergy. He is the founder of the first politico-military Shiite movement in Lebanon, which is the 'Movement of the Deprived' because the Shiite community was disadvantaged and poor before the war. In mid 1970s, he established an organised militia 'Amal', and sought the help of the PLO to train Amal due to its military experience. However, it should be noted that coalitions in the Lebanese Civil War were not permanent. Those Amal militias who fought alongside the PLO militias against the Maronites fought the PLO for dominance over the South. Additionally, those who belonged to Amal dissented and fought against it at later stages (DeVore, Stähli and Franke 2019, p. 371-400).

This dissidence took place because Nabih Berri, the successor of Imam Musa Al-Sadr joined the 'Committee of National Salvation' to negotiate with Israel. Therefore, a number of Amal members who were led by Hussein al-Musawi decided to form 'Islamic Amal', which evolved later into Hezbollah. This group substantially aimed at resisting the Israeli invasion to Lebanon and refused any negotiations with Israel. Afterwards, a group of pro-Iranian Lebanese clerics asked Iran for assistance to build a resistance movement against the Israeli invasion. This movement included dissidents from Amal, Palestinian fighters and fighters from small Islamist resistance movements. Iran accepted to assist this group and coordinated with Syria to train and finance this nascent organization in 1982. In July 1982, Iran sent its Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) to Bekaa Valley to train the fighters and spread news that Iran became a key player in the Lebanese arena. Although the organization was under construction, it attracted a large number of former Palestinian and Amal fighters due to the consistent large salaries that Iran offered. Additionally, some fighters were sent to Iran and Iraq to continue their training or religious education there and to ensure their loyalty to Iran (DeVore, Stähli and Franke 2019, p. 371-400).

This Shiite movement started waging attacks against the Israeli forces in Lebanon, and its militias proved their advancement in combat unlike other resistance groups that existed at that time. In later stages in the civil war, Hezbollah did not only fight Israel but also other rebel groups in Lebanon to gain more territories and impose its leverage. As mentioned before, the enemies

and allies in the Lebanese Civil War were not constant, therefore, it is difficult to specify the exact enemies or allies of Hezbollah during that period. Due to the outstanding skills of Hezbollah in battlefield and organization in the early stages of its formation, Iran provided it with full support both material and technical until becoming the instrument to exert its influence in Lebanon, and the relation between them will be tackled in details in later section (DeVore and Stähli 2015, p. 331-357).

Additionally, the experience of the early founders of Hezbollah -such as al-Musawi, al-Khalil, and Mughniyah- contributed to its military advancement. That is because some of them were high rank officers in Amal and others were trained by the PLO. Therefore, Hezbollah benefited from their combat tactics and adjusted them to be suitable to combats against Israel and against other militias. The military advancement secured and sustained its services network during the Lebanese Civil War and until now (DeVore and Stähli 2015, p. 331-357).

It is not clear when Hezbollah was formed precisely, as the institutional organization was under construction between 1982 to 1985 when it published an open letter to announce its formation (Baylouny 2014, p. 329-353). The evolution of constructing the organizational structure of the group will be discussed in the next section.

2- The Organizational Structure:

Rebel governance requires institutions to serve the grand agenda and to manage the daily activities as well. According to Podder (2014), the governance itself is the set of institutions that the rebels establish to organize the life of the civilian population in the territory under control (Podder 2014, p.219). These institutions reflect the organizational capacity of the rebel group and its ability to sustain governance through maintaining the social order that serves its grand agenda (Kasfir 2015, p. 28). Therefore, in order to examine the governance capacity of Hezbollah, this section will discuss its main institutions and examine the type of its institutions in accordance with the dimensions that Mampilly and Stewart (2021) discussed, which are; power-sharing, integration, innovation and inclusiveness.

From the initial stage, the founding clerics of Hezbollah embedded resistance and jihad as the fundamental ideology of the group, upon which institutions were built and rooted these values in the minds of its members. Therefore, the members of the party consider the survival of these institutions as the survival of their ideology. All the institutions are built to serve the grand strategy of Hezbollah to embed the resistance ideology throughout the Shiite community and to attract other sects to support them as well to serve the Iranian foreign policy eventually. The Grand clerics portrayed resistance as a humanitarian and religious moral duty and a code of conduct that Shiites need to follow, besides

convincing them that jihad is not only through military actions but through maintaining the well-being of the society (Harb and Leenders 2005, p. 173-197). In 1982, the 'Shura Council' was established as the governing body of Hezbollah to primarily manage the battlefield. The founding clerics pledged jihad against Israel and acknowledged the political authority of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the Supreme Leader of Iran, which is called in Iran 'Wilayat al-faqih' that means the rule of the supreme jurist. In other words, the group adhered to obey and follow the Iranian Supreme leader, who by this adherence has the upper hand over the group (Daher 2019, p. 145).

The structure of the Shura Council evolved over time into a complex structure to correspond to the expansion of Hezbollah. The head of the Council is the Secretary-General, who supposedly has equal vote to the other members of the Council. Sometimes, the exact number and names of the Council are not announced to avoid being targeted. It consists of five main sub-councils, which are the executive, political, jihad, judicial and parliamentary councils. The decision-making inside the Council is by majority voting, which is considered as a democratic decision-making process. An example of a decisive decision was the vote on participating in the 1992 elections. The Council had to form a 12-member committee to vote, and 10 out of 12 members voted for participation (Baylouny 2014, p. 329-353; DeVore, Stähli and Franke 2019, p. 371-400; Harik 2004, p. 54; Ishfaq 2019, p. 1-4; Robinson 2021, para. 3).

The Shura Council was able to develop tactics and strategies during and after the war to ensure the sustainability of Hezbollah, which will be discussed in the

legitimacy-building section. The Council delegated some power to field commanders and directors of the Social Services Central Units. These Units were established during the civil war and are located in each region that Hezbollah controls, and they are categorised mainly into, those providing economic and social services such as water and electricity to the population under its rule, and those deliver services to the military wing of the group. These institutions possessed a considerable degree of autonomy in decision-making but within the broader political and ideological agenda of Hezbollah, which is set by the Council (Harb and Leenders 2005, p. 173-197).

To foster cohesion and limit corruption, all the institutions and commanders are accountable to the Council. For higher supervision and coordination and to continue its Jihad quest against Israel after the end of the civil war, the Shura Council established the Jihad Council to provide tactical guidance to the field commanders that is headed by the Secretary-General. However, it is thought that it is currently headed by another leader but that is not announced because of the fear of being targeted. Generally, there is no available data on the exact hierarchy and institutions of the military wing of Hezbollah for confidentiality. The decentralized mode of governance contributed to the improvement of the tactics and the strategies of Hezbollah because each region had its specialties and conditions. Therefore, the region leaders had to develop their tactics to cope with the changing nature of the civil war and report back this experience to the Shura Council to develop it more and share it with other regions even before

the establishment of the Jihad Council during the civil war (Baylouny 2014, p. 329-353; DeVore, Stähli and Franke 2019, p. 371-400).

The organization's high commander is the Secretary-General, who has to be a cleric. He should be elected every three years by the Shura Council for two terms only. However, in 1998, the regulation was changed to unlimited terms (Daher 2019, p. 130).

Hezbollah's service institutions operate autonomously, but they coordinate with each other to provide a holistic service network to deliver services in a more efficient way than the incumbent central government. They also have a hierarchy that is strictly respected, and in order to ensure that the directors of these institutions have enough experience, they are rotated among different institutions regularly to have knowledge about the whole service chain that Hezbollah has. Having such knowledge would help them in developing the party's capacity and strategies (Harb and Leenders 2005, p. 173-197).

The organizational structure was reconstructed in 1991, which is almost after the end of the Lebanese Civil War. This was initiated by Secretary-General Abbas al-Musawi, and after his assassination, his successor 'Hassan Nasrallah' followed his steps. Nasrallah justified the reconstruction as important to keep the organization updated and to utilize the experience of the veterans in developing tactics and strategies. He emphasised that this would strengthen the bond between 'the brothers' the members of the party. In battlefield, this reconstruction benefited Hezbollah, and its skills were evolving significantly against Israel (DeVore, Stähli and Franke 2019, p. 371-400).

Hezbollah evolved to include more specialized institutions after the civil war. The Executive Consultative Council is the second authority after the Shura Council. It consists of the heads of the regions' leaders and the leaders of the Central Units that are responsible of services provision. The Politburo, which is an advisory council that communicates and coordinates the relations with other actors whether political or independent/civilian actors. Additionally, it prepares reports upon the request of the Shura Council. The Information Department is responsible for the multimedia outlets of the party. The Parliamentary Action Council consists of the former and current MPs that were/are on Hezbollah's list in the parliamentary elections even if they are not members in the party. This council is responsible for arranging and discussing the agenda of Hezbollah's MPs (Harik 2004, p. 54; Daher 2019, p. 130- 131).

One of the councils that evolved after the civil war is the Judicial Council. During the Lebanese Civil War, it was one of the most prominent institutions, and it was established in each region once Hezbollah consolidated its control. It consists of courts and councils headed by a judge who is a cleric in most cases, besides some party members. These councils claimed to rule according to Sharia 'Islamic Law'. According to Ahmad Nizar Hamzeh who had conducted field research in Lebanon, these courts sentenced hundreds of people to imprisonment and death. He also mentioned that when the Lebanese state courts were reconstructed after the end of the civil war, Hezbollah coordinated with them and handed them a number of cases. After the end of the war, the Judicial Council acted as a religious council, which the members of Hezbollah and its

followers seek to rule over conflicted matters using Sharia (Harik 2004, p. 54; Daher 2019, p. 130- 131; Hamzeh as cited in Cobban 2005, para. 7).

The party has been organizing a General Congress every three years to evaluate the work of the Central Units and the other councils and conduct elections to choose the members of the Shura Council. However, the last congress was held in 2009, and no justification was announced, but it is claimed that the Syrian Civil War might be one of the reasons (Daher 2019, p. 132).

After exploring the institutions of Hezbollah, the four dimensions of rebel institutions of Mampilly and Stewart (2021) can be examined. First, power-sharing, which tests whether the group is applying martial law or share a sort of power with the civilian population. During the civil war, there was no sign that Hezbollah shared any power with the population under its control, which means that it was more likely a martial law that was maintained as mentioned before by Hezbollah's militias.

Second, integration, the highest level of integration according to Mampilly and Stewart (2021) is creating parallel civilian councils that function alongside the rebel's or collaborating with traditional councils if existed. However, for Hezbollah, during the civil war, it did not collaborate with traditional notables who existed in some areas and did not create institutions that were run by civilians who are not members of Hezbollah. It is important to note that Hezbollah has political and military wings and some of its members are not militias but cannot be categorized as civilians because civilians according to this categorization are those who are not members in the rebel group. However,

Hezbollah only recruited civilian population in administrative matters inside its institutions, which is away from security and existential matters. This is considered as the minimum level of integration that is used to ensure loyalty.

Third, innovation, which tests whether the rebel group maintained the pre-existing institutions or established new ones. For Hezbollah, it had to establish a new set of institutions to serve its grand agenda, which is considered as the extreme level of innovation.

Fourth, inclusiveness, which examines the extent to which the rebel group includes civilian population from different ethnicities, religions and genders to participate in the institutions and in decisions making. Some rebel groups involve civilians from the population their control in the decision-making, however, Hezbollah limits decision-making to the long-standing leaders inside the party. It is considered as the less inclusive model as it limits the participation in decision-making to the men Shiite members, and women are only employed in the unofficial institutions that is affiliated with Hezbollah. The public interference only occurred through individuals who have contacts inside the party. Additionally, it ignored the traditional notables who were prominent in the area that it seized. However, it created units of communication to deal with the population under its control to ensure that they would not uprising against them as part of its manipulation or persuasion strategy, which will be discussed later in this chapter (Baylouny 2014, p. 329-353).

To sum up this section, Hezbollah constructed complex state-like institutions; military, service, political, administrative, and law enforcement institutions. It

functioned as a state during the war, and even in the post-war period, it reconstructed its organizational structure to fit in the post-war system. It verifies the hypothesis that the more the rebel institutions mimic the state institution, the more the rebel sustain their governance. Additionally, Hezbollah built its institutions without depending on any pre-existing institutions, it did not share the authority in its jurisdiction with civilian population during the civil war, and decision making is limited to the men Shiite members of the party. However, it created persuasion tactics to manipulate the masses under its jurisdiction. Additionally, it had to collaborate with other parties in local elections after the war but this is out of the categorisation of Mampilly and Stewart (2021). This means that it is not necessary to involve the population under its jurisdiction directly in the decision-making to gain its support and sustain governance, and there are other strategies that rebels implement to gain legitimacy, which will be discussed in the next section.

3- Legitimacy-Building:

A rebel group that seeks governance consolidation and expansion needs to adopt a number of strategies to gain popular legitimacy. However, each rebel group adopts different strategies than the other, and even the same group may change its strategies over time and place (Podder 2014, p. 219-221). According to Arjona (2016), a rebel group would maintain governance and order if it had a long-term strategy (Arjona 2016, p. 3), and since Hezbollah was initially built to resist Israel and to be the tool of Iran in Lebanon, it planned its strategies

accordingly to gain legitimacy from the people to embed its roots. It developed its strategies since its formation and sustained many of them until the present time to foster the popular legitimacy that it gained over the years, which will be examined in this section.

A. Creating A Narrative:

Similar to the state-building process, rebels who seek to possess power and sustain their existence need to create a solid narrative that creates a connection between them and the population under their rule, and reflects their agenda. An identity-based narrative of being a representative of an underrepresented social, ethnic or religious group is one of the strategies that rebel groups use to attract popular support and legitimacy. Hezbollah created a solid narrative of being the representative of the socio-economic deprived Shiite community as well as a resistance group against the enemy of the nation 'Israel'. This helped Hezbollah to gain support especially because the other Shiite militias did not provide the Shiites with proper services, which will be discussed in details in later section (Harb and Leenders 2005, p. 173).

Additionally, it categorized its followers as "us" and those who are outside the community as "the other" or "the enemy" (foreign invaders and other rival militias) to consolidate the sense of belonging to the group. Hezbollah also propagated itself as the defender of the nation, which allowed it to gain legitimacy not only from its fellow Shiites but also other Lebanese who refused the existence of the Israeli forces. States usually use such method to gather their people around the same identity (Terpstra and Frerks 2017, p. 285).

In order to consolidate this narrative, a charismatic leader is needed to rally the people around the group. Hezbollah's current Secretary-General Hassan Nasrallah is known for his charisma and rhetorical speeches. He usually uses his words carefully to remind the audience that Hezbollah is the resistance group that expelled the Israeli armed forces from the country, and it is still resisting Israel. Additionally, adding words related to supporting the Palestinian freedom quest (Cobban 2005, para. 2- 6).

Nasrallah is known for his flexibility while addressing different issues. When he addresses the Shiite, he frames jihad in a religious context and that Israel has to be expelled from the Muslim lands, besides reminding the masses of liberating Jerusalem. In his speech in "Ashura"¹ in August 2021, he targeted Shiites and reminded them of the heroism and sacrifices of Al-Abbas who was one of the leaders in the army of Al-Hussein, and that he has to be their role model in jihad against the enemies of Lebanon and Islam (Almanar 2021, para. 1).

However, when he speaks in the electoral conferences, he addresses both Muslims and Christians and emphasizes on Lebanon as a united nation with common challenges and enemies. For example, in his speech for Bekaa constituencies before 2022 Parliamentary elections, he reminded them that Hezbollah defended them from the Israeli attacks while others were allying with

¹ It is a festive day for Muslims but Shiites grieve on this day for the death of Al-Hussein, the grandson of Prophet Mohamed (BBC 2011, para. 1).

Israel. He asked them “You, people of the Bekaa Muslims and Christians, are you with those who defend you or with those who conspire against you?” (Almanar 2022, para.1). He stressed that Hezbollah was fighting terrorism as well and defended both Christians and Muslims in Bekaa while Christian political leaders who are against resistance did not think of the Christians and their security. He said “Are you with the gun that defended the Bekaa or with the one who provided the gun to the terrorist groups to attack your homes?” (Almanar 2022, para.1).

Another dimension is the Arab nationalistic perspective, which defends the Arab nation against the imperial ambitions. In his speech in May 2021 in the International Day of Jerusalem, he mentioned “the future of the region is shaped by the axis of resistance” (Almanar 2021, para.1) to remind the Arab that freeing Palestine is important for the regional security.

Nevertheless, his international speeches focus on delegitimizing the Israeli occupation of Arab lands and that the jihad/resistance against it is an internationally recognised right since Israel is violating the UNSC resolutions (Harik 2004, p. 71-72). He mentioned in his speech in May 2020 “Israel is illegal and occupier, and there is no legality of its survival” (Almanar 2020, para.1).

His influence is quite remarkable to the extent that he was ranked among the 100 most influential people in the world by the American magazine ‘Time’ in 2011. For some Lebanese especially the Shiite ones, he is a symbol for resistance. Additionally, his loyalty and adherence to Iran contributed to

sustaining his position as the Secretary-General until now. He was an active member in Hezbollah since the foundation stage, and he was sent to Iran to continue his education, and some speculations claimed that he was prepared to be the Secretary-General. Therefore, after the assassination of Abbas Al-Musawi, he was elected the Secretary-General despite being 32 years old, which is relatively young for this position. His strategies in the military field against Israel and on the political arena contributed to his reputation and popularity as well (Daher 2019, p. 151-170).

A solid narrative as well needs to be supported by ideological symbolic actions because hegemony cannot only be gained through coercion. That is because persuasion and manipulation are highly important to maintain the people's support (Mampilly 2015, p. 78). Of the aesthetic symbols is creating channels of communication and rituals. Hezbollah organized festivals, parades and commemorations like 'Ashura' to consolidate the community solidarity in the territories under their control (Harb and Leenders 2005, p. 173-197; Baylouny 2010, p. 136-149). Hezbollah also established two radio stations during the Lebanese Civil War 'the Voice of the Dispossessed' in the Bekaa and 'the Voice of Faith' in Beirut. These radio stations were stopped and 'Al-Nur' station was established. Additionally, a television channel 'al-Manar' was established to target the international audience as well as the Lebanese. A newspaper 'Al-Ahd' was issued and later changed its name to 'al-Intiquad' or 'the Critique' referring to being an opposition to the government. In 1990s, the Media Unit was created to manage the media and communication of the party (Baylouny 2014, p. 329-

353; Daher 2019, p. 134-135). Hezbollah leaders claim that these channels do not target the followers of Hezbollah or even Shiites only, but it also targets all the Lebanese, and they always emphasise that it is the organization's duty to help all marginalized people whatever their sect or religion. These rhetoric slogans are part of the propaganda that Hezbollah uses to gain the support from the people to promote their agenda during the civil war and until now (Harik 1994, p. 1-54).

One of the rhetoric words that Hezbollah uses frequently to mobilize Shiites is 'the disempowered'. The victimization notions aimed at showing that the Shiite was disempowered before Hezbollah, and thanks to it, the Shiite enjoy justice, solidarity and pride. The rhetoric speeches of Hezbollah's leaders also extended to justifying their allegiance to the Iranian Imam who helped in creating wide coherent Shiite community 'collective identity' and efficient governance capacities because the Iranian Imam protects and maintains the Islamic system that ensures justice and prosperity (Harb and Leenders 2005, p. 173-197).

One of the symbolic actions also is publicising the idea of heroism and martyrdom by spreading the photos of martyrs, religious leaders and Palestinian symbols in the street to deepen the notions of resistance, jihad and sacrifice among the people and to show them that Hezbollah members are ready to sacrifice their lives for the nation not only during the civil war but also until now (Terpstra and Frerks 2017, p. 285; Harb and Leenders 2005, p. 173-197). Through these symbols, Hezbollah managed to gain legitimacy from the majority of the Shiite community and some non-Shiites as well, especially,

because it showed the people how much the party is committed to serving them and adhering to the ideology that it is spreading (Harb and Leenders 2005, p. 197).

However, according to Baylouny (2010), the identity legitimacy is not enough on its own as it has to be accompanied with providing services and well-constructed institutions (Baylouny 2010, p. 136-149). Therefore, Hezbollah diversified its strategies to gain legitimacy through different sources, which will be discussed in the next section.

B. Economic Strategies:

Delivering services to population under the control of the rebels is a substantial element of governance as any rebel group that has long-term goals is more likely to provide services and to act as a parallel government especially in the absence of central government provision. When a rebel group provides services on a more regular basis than the incumbent government that is called ‘competitive governance’, and the probability of accepting and legitimizing this group is higher (Revkin 2021, p. 47).

When Hezbollah was formed, the Shiite community was underprivileged and did not have enough access to services. Therefore, Hezbollah realized that in order to gain the support of a considerable number of Shiite, it had to construct a services network to serve the population under its jurisdiction after consolidating its control over territories (Baylouny 2014, p. 329-353).

After consolidating its control over some territories, Hezbollah built its own governance model, which it claimed that it is based on the Islamic Sharia. As a

response to the inability of the incumbent governments to provide services, it established a wide social services network with specialized administrative institutions for governance in Al-Dahyia (suburb in Beirut) and the areas that it controls in Bekaa and South Lebanon. These institutions are established and monitored by the Social Services Central Units, and as mentioned before, they are located in each region that Hezbollah controls to provide services to both the population under its jurisdiction and to the military wing of Hezbollah during the civil war and until now (Harb and Leenders 2005, p. 173-197).

Of the category related to civilians matters, the Association of Islamic Religious Education, which was established during the civil war to help the needy students and equip the schools that were located under Hezbollah's control. It also established the Educational Association of Hezbollah (EAH), which was also created during the civil war to maintain the bond with the students who were supported by Hezbollah by providing them with additional religious education that embeds the Shiite Jihadist ideology of Hezbollah. Later after the end of the war, the Educational Institute was established to supervise the schools and educational services that Hezbollah offers and ensures that these services embed their Shiite resistance ideology in the younger generation. Some other services that aimed at spreading the ideology of Hezbollah among Shiites are mosques, theological schools where Khomeini ideology is taught as well as a library that was established in Hawza al-Ami in Baalbek (Harik 1994, p. 1-54).

Additionally, during the Lebanese Civil War, the Good Loan institution was established, which is an institution that provides micro-credits with low interest

rate for Hezbollah followers to help them to start their projects. These loans ensure the loyalty and attachment of its followers to the party (Harb and Leenders 2005, p. 173-197).

Furthermore, there are four institutions that operate autonomously from the Social Services Central Units despite being directed by Hezbollah cadres, which have been functioning from the civil war until now; ‘the Help’ that provides services to poor people, ‘the Islamic Society for Health’ that runs Hezbollah hospitals and medical services, the Consultative Centre for Studies and Documentation (CCSD) which is a research centre that issues reports related to development. Additionally, the Reconstruction Campaign (RC) ‘Jihad al-Bina’, which reconstructed homes, roads, schools, and hospitals that were destroyed during the Lebanese Civil War and the wars with Israel mainly in the Shiite areas under the control of Hezbollah. It is registered in Lebanon as a charitable organization, and it is mimicking an Iranian organization that was created during the Iranian revolution. It did not only respond to the war destruction but also damages from floods like what happened in 1992 in Bekaa Valley. Additionally, it is responsible of collecting rubbish from Al-Dahiyah since 1988 and fixing any damage in the water and sewage system as well as providing electricity and water to marginalized areas even after the central government started providing services to people in Hezbollah’s territories. In some cases, the central government asks for the help of Hezbollah especially in water services (Baylouny 2014, p. 329-353; Harik 1994, p. 1-54; Harb and Leenders 2005, p. 173-197).

One of the medical projects that needs to be highlighted is Al-Rasul Al-Aa'zam Hospital in Beirut that was established during the civil war, and is considered as one of the most well-equipped hospitals in Lebanon. Substantially, it was established in order to treat Hezbollah injured fighters so that the party would be self-sufficient and able to provide the best care to its followers. Until now, this hospital is operating and serving citizens regardless of their sect (Harik 1994, p. 1-54).

Of the institutions related to the military wing, the Association of the Wounded, and the Association of the Martyr, which were established during the civil war and are registered as NGOs. The Association of the Martyr takes care of the families of the martyrs and missing fighters by providing educational and health aid as well as other free services in order to make sure that these families stay under the umbrella of Hezbollah and remain loyal to it (Harb and Leenders 2005, p. 173-197). These institutions do not only aim at helping people, but it is a dual strategy to symbolize also those who sacrifice their lives as mentioned before in the chapter. It is evident as well that the service institutions are linked to the military wing because Hezbollah's militias are responsible of ensuring the implementation of the projects conducted by the service institutions, in other words, Hezbollah's political and military wings work hand in hand to ensure the sustainability of its grand policies. This welfare system has two aims as well, first, to show their followers that the party is willing to take care of them in case they were injured as there are well-equipped hospitals that are prepared to treat them and their families and in case they died, the party would look after their

families. This system provides special aid for the education and the health care of the martyrs' families. Secondly, Hezbollah did not only ensure the loyalty of their existing soldiers but also encourage their kin to follow their path and join the party. That also contributed to fostering professionalism and self-sacrifice (DeVore and Stähli 2015, p. 331-357; Harik 1994, p. 1-54).

In order to finance all these projects, Hezbollah received financial assistance from Iran, which will be discussed in later section, additionally, it was able to generate funds from other sources during the civil war and until now. Since Hezbollah cannot be considered as a looting rebel group, it depends on other sources for funding. Besides Iran, Hezbollah generated funds through illegal drug trafficking of drugs and kidnapping as well. It depended as well on the labour remittances from its followers who are working abroad and also issued unique type of taxes based on their interpretation of Islam called 'the khums', which was applied on all its populace. Additionally, it controlled some ports and checkpoints (Baylouny 2014, p. 329-353).

One of the main sources of funding that Hezbollah relied on was kidnapping. However, kidnapping was a tool for Hezbollah to exert pressure and denounce the Western intervention in Lebanon. The leaders of Hezbollah thought that kidnapping would be an effective way to show the Western military forces that it had tactical strategies. As a result, many European and American personnel and civilians left Lebanon because of the fear of abduction, and this limited the ability of their countries to influence certain events inside Lebanon during the civil war. In addition, Hezbollah alongside with its ally Iran used these hostages

to force the United States and European countries to liberate imprisoned terrorists, paying ransoms, deport Iranian oppositions that are refugees in the United States and Europe, and secretly selling Iranian weaponry. For example, in 1987, the United States prohibited American citizens from travelling to Lebanon, and the most prominent case took place when Regan Administration secretly agreed on a weapon bargain with Iran. It is obvious that Iran was benefiting more than Hezbollah from these abductions, but Hezbollah developed tactics and strategies to conduct them, which benefited its organizational development and proved its leverage in Lebanon, which also contributed to its sustainability (DeVore and Stähli 2015, p. 331-357).

Even after the war, Hezbollah continues its governance activities, especially water and electricity services. Additionally, it offered a free transportation system that linked Baalbek to outlying towns besides opening restaurant, clinics, supermarkets and pharmacies that provide free services for poor people. The continuation of providing services even after the war was a strategy to keep Shiites in their areas loyal to Hezbollah and to encourage other Shiites to join the party, and through this, the party can continue its resistance against Israel as well as maintaining its leverage over these areas (Harik 1994, p. 1-54).

This continuation is a result of the weakness of the state institutions to function and provide the people all over Lebanon with basic services. However, substantially, it reflects that the government is not intending to encounter Hezbollah because of Hezbollah's great influence on the Shiites in Hezbollah's regions of influence and the inability of the government to deliver services

instead of Hezbollah. According to Harik (2004), Hezbollah leaders are aware that people would revolt against the government if Hezbollah was hindered from delivering services to people, therefore, from their perspective they are helping the government and preventing social disorder (Baylouny 2014, p. 329-353; Harb and Leenders 2005, p. 173-197; Harik 2004, p. 85).

Hezbollah justifies the provision of its service system that it is an Islamic duty to serve mankind whether those who receive the services are Muslims or not. However, the untold reality is that the party aims at emphasising its hegemony by providing services that the state is unable to provide (Harik 1994, p. 1-54). Some field researchers like Harik and Hamzeh reported that Hezbollah's services were provided to all the people under its jurisdiction even if they were not Shiite, and that some Christians preferred to send their children to schools which were established and run by Hezbollah particularly in South Lebanon because it was providing the highest quality of education available (Hamzeh as cited in Cobban 2005, para. 7; Harik 2004, p. 73). This is called a pragmatic strategy that aims at delivering services to people regardless of their sect as well as imposing the rule of law, which helped in fostering relation with non-Shiite and Hezbollah's legitimacy as well (Terpstra 2020, p.1145).

To sum up, according to Cunningham and Loyle (2020), rebels gain legitimacy if the rebel group provides services to people who were neglected by the incumbent government and providing them in a more sustainable way (Cunningham and Loyle 2020, p. 8). Therefore, since the provision of all these services was unfamiliar for the Shiite community as they were marginalized by

pre-war governments, and other Shiite militias did not provide them with such welfare service network, the Shiite civilian population who were under the jurisdiction of Hezbollah dealt with it as the legitimate ruler (Kingston and Zahar 2004, p. 81-98). In the next section, the relation with the population under its control will be examined by questioning Hezbollah's use of violence.

C. Violence Reconsidered:

Political actors who seek to establish a social order needs to use violence to consolidate their rule. However, it is always questionable; violence against whom and why. Therefore, these actors need to justify their use of violence, avoid extensive and indiscriminate use of violence, and rely on both coercion and persuasion with materialistic and ideological tools to sustain their existence (Terpstra and Frerks 2017, p.279).

For Hezbollah, there is contradictory information about its relations with the population under its control especially those who are from different sects and religions as some reports gave positive feedbacks and others not because it is difficult to study public opinion systematically in an academic way during war or instability. However, in this section, both the positive and negative reviews will be discussed.

During the early phases of the Lebanese Civil War, Beirut was divided into two camps and many Christians had to leave Al-Dahyia and thousands of refuge Shiites settled there, which later became the headquarter of Hezbollah in Beirut. Therefore, there was a limited number of Christians under the jurisdiction of

Hezbollah, and it is difficult to track how Hezbollah dealt with those minority (Fawaz 2007, p. 22-23).

Regarding Sunnis, there are not enough data if there were any clashes between Hezbollah and the Sunni population during the civil war, so it is difficult to evaluate their relationship.

Hezbollah mixed between coercion strategies and persuasion ones in order to maintain its relations with the population under its jurisdiction. Therefore, in order to limit the clashes between the fighters and the civilian population, Hezbollah provided its fighters with higher payments compared to other rebel groups in Lebanon, so the fighters were less prone to attack the civilian population for money. Additionally, during the civil war, units were established to monitor the actions of the fighters to make sure that the general rules are obeyed. In case clashes took place between its militias and other communal leaders, Hezbollah leaders would interfere to settle them to maintain social order. Furthermore, Hezbollah established a judicial system during the civil war to maintain the social order inside the territories under its jurisdiction. Through this system, it tried criminals, mediated between parties in clash, and in some cases, it paid reconciliation to prevent further escalation. Hezbollah used force to restore order in case peaceful mediation failed. The justification of the use of force is that it is important to maintain the internal security of its territories to focus its power on resisting the Israeli aggression and the other clashes with rival militias. The known violent actions of Hezbollah were against rival rebel

groups during the civil war and Israel until the present time (Baylouny 2010, p. 136-149; Baylouny 2014, p. 329-353).

In turn, this gave Hezbollah legitimacy of use of force because it is fighting the foreign invader, and it always uses the ideological cause and being the protector of Islam and Lebanon to publicise itself and justify its aggressive actions. This strategy is called the moral strategy, which is fostered by external intervention because the people are more likely to support a group that is defending the country from foreign invasion (Terpstra 2020, p.1145).

This moral strategy did not only affect Shiite, according to Helena Cobban (2005), during the Israeli invasion in 1980s, some middle-class Christian women donated their jewellery to the emergency donation boxes of Hezbollah. It is believed that such act was conducted because some non-Shiite Lebanese perceived Hezbollah as a patriot resistance group, so that is why these people accepted and supported Hezbollah. Additionally, Hezbollah earned more trust because of its progress against the Israeli attacks (Cobban 2005, para. 3).

However, it should be noted that not all civilian residents in Al-Dahyia welcomed Hezbollah. According to Mona Harb, a considerable number of the opponents left Al-Dahyia to other areas. The others who stayed tried not to clash with Hezbollah's forces and even those who attempted to show their opposition were in a peaceful way. Until now, Al-Dahyia is considered as Hezbollah's territory (Harb 2007, para. 2-4).

Of the persuasion strategies as well is the less formal channels that was used to embed Hezbollah's Shiite ideology through women and local clerics who

spread their ideology among kinships and families. These informal networks communicated with the population under its control to gather opinions about Hezbollah's administration and then report back to the Shura Council. Hezbollah's leaders claim that this method is called participatory methodology which involves the people in the decision-making process to maximise the efficiency of its institutions. In reality, these networks were used to manipulate the masses that their voices are heard (Harb and Leenders 2005, p. 173-197). Coming to the end of the Lebanese Civil War, Hezbollah continued its persuasion strategy and realized that it has to attract more non-Shiite to support them to be able to enter the political life after the war. Therefore, it reconstructed its institutions and changed its political dialogue to appear more inclusive (Cobban 2005, para. 2). This will be discussed in details in the next section.

D. Participation in the Post-Conflict Political Life:

The Lebanese political leaders have created and maintained clientelist networks through which their constituencies highly depend on them as they supply them with services persistently instead of the incapable official state institutions. Through this network, they gained legitimacy from the people that they serve. This patron-client relationship is not an invention of war, but it has existed even before the Lebanese Civil War. After the war, some of these political leaders controlled state institutions, which they use to serve their own interests. Additionally, in order to maintain their legitimate existence and foster their sectarian position, they participate in elections to make sure that they have a say in the government (Geha 2019, p. 125-140).

Therefore, in order for Hezbollah to engage in the political life after war, it realised that it had to reconstruct its political wing to participate in the Parliamentary Elections in 1992 to be part of the decision-making on district level as well as the state level through its representatives in the parliament. Most importantly, it had to give up its Islamic Fundamentalist beliefs and only be framed as a national resistance group that defends the homeland against the enemy 'Israel'. The former Secretary-General Abbas Musawi initiated this reformation plan; however, he was assassinated by Israel, and Nasrallah followed his path. (Harik 1994, p. 1-54; Cobban 2005, para. 2).

However, the decision to participate in the 1992 elections was a result of a clash inside the Shura Council on whether to participate or not. The side that rejected the participation justified that the participation would undermine the resistance revolutionary thoughts that Hezbollah was built upon. However, the pro-election side argued that the party has to cope with the changing Lebanese political life, and this participation would allow the party to influence from within the system. The council finally decided to participate (Harb and Leenders 2005, p. 173-197). In order to attract civilians both Shiites and non-Shiites to vote for them, the Politburo became responsible for creating dialogues with the non-Shiite Lebanese, and Hezbollah high clerics always try to convince non-Shiites through speeches and talks on the party's television and radio channels and publicising that a dialogue with Christians should be conducted without enforcing its belief on them. The party also organised 'get to know us' meetings in which non-Shiite youth were invited to boost the relationship between the

party and the Lebanese youth. In addition, the collaboration of Hezbollah with Christian parties in some elections motivates some Christians to vote for Hezbollah in municipalities where both sects exist and support its resistance actions (Harik 2004, p. 73-75).

Additionally, when Hezbollah got integrated in the post-war political life in the first elections in 1992, some secular Shiites were selected to be members of the Shura Council to give an impression to the Lebanese that the party was reconstructed and has a political wing that would be part of the democratic political life (Cobban 2005, para. 2).

Before 1992 parliamentary election, Judith Harik conducted a survey on 1,427 individuals in Lebanon on whether or not they are willing to vote for a resistance group in the elections, and the results revealed that 62 percent would do. This survey included both Christians and Muslims 'Shiites and Sunnis', which means that by that time, Hezbollah earned respect and credibility from the people as a national resistance group which can be part of the state decision-making dynamics not only war (Harik 2004, p. 50).

As a result of its legitimacy-gaining strategies from its establishment and the continuation after the end of the war, it won 8 seats out of 128 in that round, making it the largest single party bloc of this parliament. It gained its legitimacy as a mainstream party that had a national resistance wing. Since then, Hezbollah has been participating in all the elections on the municipal and parliamentary level and gaining significant numbers of seats. Because of its number of seats in the parliament, it has the right to participate in the government and to confirm

the government formation, which means that it is involved directly in the decision-making of the Lebanese state. Hezbollah is considered as a unique case where a rebel group that is not demilitarized is a part of an internationally recognized central government (Harb and Leenders 2005, p. 173-197).

In 1998 municipal elections, Hezbollah did not hesitate to ally with other sects, which it fought before. According to Cobban (2005), who conducted interviews with Hezbollah leaders, they claimed that the top priority of Hezbollah is to provide good governance to all Lebanese even if it has to form alliances with former enemies. The justification for that is that religiously the collective good of people is a priority (Cobban 2005, para. 2). However, it is substantial to note that forming such alliances is part of the political Lebanese dynamics, and it is not limited to Hezbollah. Additionally, it added figures who had been working in its services sector on its list to be familiar to the people. It also had to ally not only with political parties that were former enemies but also with some well-known families that have influence on the municipal level and added their prominent figures to its list to secure more votes from the people that are loyal to these families (Harik 2004, p. 76- 103; Cobban 2005, para. 2).

Besides elections, Hezbollah has an extensive influence over Al-Dahyah's Shiites to the extent that it mobilised them for protests and strikes against the government. It also formed groups such as 'the Dahiyah Activists and Residents Committee' to exert pressure on the government to take actions that serve the interest of Hezbollah such as using only Muslim engineers to reconstruct the area since the majority of the residents are Muslims. By such acts, the party

wanted to show its leverage and how it can affect the decision making (Harik 1994, p. 1-54). Furthermore, Hezbollah has different units that are established to mobilize different categories of the society such as the Women's Committees Unit and Mobilization Unit for Education, these units organize conferences and demonstrations in some cases to oppose the government policies when they contradict with Hezbollah's agenda (Daher 2019, p. 132-134).

Although Hezbollah preserved almost same seats in the parliament every year, a poll was conducted by Pew Research Centre in 2010. It stated that 40% of Lebanese had a favourable view of Hezbollah, however, this support is particularly from the Shiite Lebanese as 94% of Shiite supported it, while only 12% of Sunnis and 20% of Christians supported it (Pew Research Centre 2010, para. 1-2). This percentage was almost stable until 2014, as 41% of Lebanese supported the existence of Hezbollah including 86% of Shiite, while 12% of Sunnis and 31% of Christians favoured its existence (Pew Research Centre 2014, para. 6). According to these percentages, the Shiite percentage declined while Christians increased. It was claimed that the decline of the Shiite support was due to the participation of Hezbollah in the Syrian Civil War in 2013, which might affect Hezbollah's concentration on the domestic Lebanese interest (Robinson 2021, para. 6). Nevertheless, it should be noted that these surveys are not accurate to a considerable extent because the critical sectarian environment in Lebanon hinders conducting academic surveys.

In the 2018 election, Hezbollah did not lose any of its seats from its previous elections, which means that it sustained its Shiite support. That is because they

believe the claim of Hezbollah that the intervention in Syria was pre-emptive to protect Lebanon from the radical Islamists, and that Hezbollah intervened to protect the Shiite Legacy and the Holy places that were attacked in Syrian (BBC, 2018, para. 1; Tokmajyan 2014, p. 108). On the other hand, Hezbollah was backed by the Maronite Party ‘the Free Patriotic Movement’ when it intervened in the Syrian Civil War, and a considerable number of Christians supported Hezbollah as well especially because Hezbollah was encountering the extremists in Lebanon and defending the nation from their perspective (Kverme 2013, para. 1).

It was argued that the popularity of Hezbollah among the Shiite was slightly affected due to the corruption proliferated in Lebanon especially when it reached those who have ties and affiliation with Hezbollah and inside the party as well, besides, the inability of the cabinet members who have affiliation to Hezbollah to improve the government service sector and other economic sectors. (Lob 2014, p.1-7; Dingel 2013, p. 70-76). In 2020, a survey was published by the Washington Institute showed that there is a slight decline in the Shiite support to Hezbollah from 83% in 2017 to 66% of very positive views in 2020 with the rise of anti-corruption demonstrations in Lebanon as well as the explosion of Beirut port with accusations levelled against Hezbollah of storing explosive material in the civilian port (Pollock 2020, para. 3). Again, it is important to note that such polls cannot be analysed in an academic way since they do not share how they collect data and other information about the age, the region and other criteria upon which the sample was selected, and all of these

are important factors for analysis. Therefore, it might be considered as a Western political biased perspective. Additionally, it should be noted that Hezbollah still has a wide Shiite support, and a considerable number of its followers can hardly change their affiliation as they highly depend on Hezbollah on daily basis.

The 2022 elections can be considered as an evidence to the consolidation of Hezbollah wide support among Shiites as it won 15 seats in the Parliament, and alongside its Shiite ally Amal, they won the majority, despite the hopes that this can change after the demonstrations in October 2019 (Annahar 2022, para. 20). This means that Hezbollah until now has a considerable influence on the state decision-making and no government is formed unless it verifies its members because it has a considerable number of seats in the parliament. There are several reasons behind winning these seats, substantially, Hezbollah has been framed as a national resistance group against the enemy 'Israel', and it still provides services persistently to the people under its jurisdiction (Harik 2004, p. 51).

Through all the above-mentioned factors and strategies, Hezbollah managed to gain legitimacy through which it sustained its existence until the present time. However, besides well-constructed institutions and legitimacy-building strategies, there is also the external support that Hezbollah receives in a consistent basis that was a substantial factor as well in prolonging and rooting its leverage in Lebanon. That will be discussed in the next section.

4- External Support:

According to Daniel Byman and Bruce Hoffman, state sponsorship provides various forms of assistance to the rebel group such as; financial and material aid, organizational support, refuge, and political support. For Hezbollah, its relationship with Iran is ideological in essence, because the founding clerics of Hezbollah are students of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini even before he became the Supreme Leader of Iran. As mentioned previously, they acknowledged his political authority while founding the organization (DeVore and Stähli 2015, p. 331-357).

Additionally, Iran supports Hezbollah financially, and this consistent financial support is an important factor of sustainability for Hezbollah especially because of the lack of natural resources that can be looted in Lebanon. In addition, taxing the population under its jurisdiction would not be enough for the developmental, service and military projects that Hezbollah initiates. Furthermore, in order for a rebel group to sustain its militant actions, it needs loyal personnel, and they will not remain loyal unless they believe in the cause of the group and receive regular salaries as well. Hezbollah would not be able to pay these regular salaries unless Iran gives it financial assistance especially at the foundation stage. Additionally, this helps in recruiting more people, because during the time of war some people ‘breadwinners’ would be attracted to work for rebel groups to gain money due to the deteriorated economic system and the lack of job opportunities. This financial assistance helped Hezbollah in establishing its

wide welfare network, which is beneficial not only for its followers but also for the population under its jurisdiction who may not be Shiites. Until the end of the war, Iran granted Hezbollah around \$100 million annually (DeVore and Stähli 2015, p. 331-357; Baylouny 2014, p. 329-353).

Iran did not only provide Hezbollah with money as it also secures a safe haven for Hezbollah not only in Iran but also in Syria by negotiating with Hafez Al-Assad, the former President of Syria to allow them to stay in Syria which is nearer to Lebanon (DeVore and Stähli 2015, p. 331-357).

Additionally, in order to pave the way for Hezbollah and to prove its leverage on the Lebanese soil, in 1982, charitable organizations were established by Iranians such as Imam Khomeini Assistance Committee, which provided educational assistance and financial loans in Beirut (Harik 1994, p. 1-54). At the early foundation stage, Iran sent experts from the IRGC to train Hezbollah's soldiers. However, their strategies were incompatible with the arena of the Lebanese Civil War, and after a period of time, the cadres of Hezbollah replaced them. In the military sphere, the militias of Hezbollah are considered to be more competent than the IRGC, and they do not only conduct training in Lebanon but also in Iran (DeVore and Stähli 2015, p. 331-357).

From the Iranian side, the formation of Hezbollah was a foreign policy tool as it uses the militias of Hezbollah to fight Israel indirectly in a 'proxy war', and this gave the chance for Iran to have influence and active say in the Middle East war and peace dynamics. From an ideological perspective, the empowerment of Shiite in Lebanon served the geopolitical ambitions of Iran (Harik 2004, p. 40).

The relationship between Iran and Hezbollah is considered to be a long-term stable relation unlike the relation between Hezbollah and its second state sponsor Syria. Their relation was not always harmonious. Although both of them allied on the same cause to fight against Israel, Hafeez Al-Assad regarded Hezbollah as a rebel group which is hard to control and its leverage in Lebanon could be an obstacle on his attempts to extend his hands over the country. However, only with the persuasion of Iran, he allowed Iran to transport its material assistance to Hezbollah through Syria in exchange with free oil bargain. Nevertheless, Iran mediation did not prevent the constant clashes between the militias of Hezbollah and the Syrian army between 1987-1990. Additionally, one of the issues between Hezbollah and Syria was due to the kidnappings that Hezbollah conducted in the influence area of Syria where it deployed its forces because Syria was blamed by the Western powers that it was unable to maintain security in these areas. Later, when Hezbollah proved its efficiency in fighting Israel, Syria noticed that it could use it as a tool to exert its strategy in Lebanon (Harik 2004, p. 37; DeVore and Stähli 2015, p. 331-357).

The relation between Hezbollah and Syria became more stable after signing the National Reconciliation Accord, which is known as “Taif Accord”. This post-war accord consolidated and legalised the Syrian existence in Lebanon as it granted Syria the authority to disarm all the Lebanese militias and be responsible of the Lebanese security until the reconstruction of the Lebanese national army within a two-year timetable. Al-Assad seized this Accord to tight

his grip over Lebanon and empower Hezbollah to ensure that it will continue its resistance against Israel even if the Syrian army withdrew from the Lebanese territory (Harik 2004, p. 45-46).

After the withdrawal of the Syrian Army from Lebanon, Bashar Al-Assad depended on Hezbollah to be his hands in Lebanon. However, the Syrian support to Hezbollah was reversed when the Syrian Civil War erupted and Al-Assad regime sought the support of Hezbollah against its opponents (Robinson 2021, para. 6).

To sum up this section, Hezbollah's external support especially from Iran is one of the key factors that contribute to the sustainability of the party not only until the end of the civil war but also until now. Their relation is based on sharing the same ideology of being Shiite and resisting Israel and that is why they are still connected to each other.

Conclusion:

Hezbollah is a unique case study which verifies the hypotheses of sustainability set out in the theoretical framework. First, the founders and leaders of Hezbollah established a well institutionalised organizational structure that embeds the grand ideology of Hezbollah in the minds of its followers to ensure their loyalty. Additionally, it has checks and balances system to monitor how these institutions function to limit corruption. It has specialized institution for different services, political matters and military aspects and a well-constructed hierarchy that has to be followed. Its state-like institutions verify H13 'the more

the rebel institutions mimic the state institutions, the more the rebel group sustains its governance’.

Second, Hezbollah was able from the initial phase until the present time to build and maintain its legitimacy especially among the Shiite constituencies and verifies H1 ‘a rebel group that could not gain minimal legitimacy is less likely to sustain its governance’. It created a narrative of being the representative of the deprived Shiite in Lebanon verifying H3 ‘a rebel group that has an identity similar to the population under its jurisdiction is more likely to gain more legitimacy’. With fighting the Israeli forces in Lebanon, it verifies both H4 ‘rebel groups that are showing themselves as the defenders of the nation are more likely to gain more legitimacy’ and H12 ‘rebels who create a common foreign enemy are more likely to gain internal legitimacy’, especially that it gained support even from non-Shiite Lebanese due to that. To propagate and consolidate these narratives, Hezbollah is currently led by Hassan Nasrallah who is considered as an influential and charismatic leader, which verifies as well H5 ‘rebel group that has a charismatic leader is more likely to sustain its governance’. Hezbollah also created a number of symbolic actions such as parades, religious festivals, television and radio channels, speeches, and spreading photos of martyrs, religious leaders and Palestinian symbols, which all verify H6 ‘a rebel group that is able to create a solid narrative supported with symbolic actions is more likely to gain legitimacy and sustain its governance’. However, the narrative by itself is not sufficient to sustain governance because the people substantially care about having their daily needs in a consistent way.

Hezbollah managed to deliver services; educational, health, food, water, financial assistance, and above all defended the people under its jurisdiction from both other rival militias and the Israeli forces. This service provision is still continuing until the present time despite the existence of a central government, however, many of these governments were not able to provide services to all areas in Lebanon in a consistent way comparable to Hezbollah. Therefore, this proves H7 'rebel groups who are willing to provide the people under their jurisdiction with consistent goods and services are more likely to gain legitimacy'. It is substantial to note that Hezbollah's financial capacity is dependent on the support of Iran, which sponsors Hezbollah financially and technically as well due to their ideological ties, which confirms H8 'rebels who receive consistent external financial assistance are more likely to sustain their governance'.

Hezbollah's violence actions against the population under its rule are difficult to track due to the limited and contradictory data especially that collecting data during a civil war is challenging. However, based on the available data Hezbollah did not conduct extensive violence against the population under its control, and it used a number of strategies to persuade them that it is the legitimate ruler as mentioned before in the chapter, which proves H9 'rebels who use a mix of coercion and persuasion are more likely to sustain their governance'.

Hezbollah even survived after the end of the civil war due to its flexibility to change its slogans and speeches to be more inclusive and not limited to the

Shiites by portraying itself as a resistance group that is defending the nation against the common enemy Israel. Additionally, it announced that it does not target any different ideology inside Lebanon and the importance of living in harmony for the sake of the nation. It even allied in many elections with different parties that were former enemies during the war and this proves H2 'a rebel group that cannot negotiate with its allies and enemies is less likely to sustain its governance'.

Hezbollah is considered as one of the unique rebel groups that not only survived until the end of the war but also participated in the post-war political life and preserving a large number of seats in every parliament since the end of the war and exists in the government while still being the only militarized party in Lebanon. It is not predicted that Hezbollah will be weakened or undermined in the near future because of the strategies and factors that were mentioned in this chapter and importantly the Shiite support that it preserves until now.

Chapter Four: The Governance of the Democratic Union Party in Syria

Introduction:

With the outbreak of the Syrian Civil War, the central government lost its control over several parts of the country, besides losing its capacity to govern them. These parts were governed by non-state actors who were not internationally recognized as the legal sovereign authority (Ali 2015, p. 2). Several non-state actors arose throughout the war, nevertheless, this study will only focus on the Democratic Union Party (PYD), which can be considered as an ethnically-driven rebel group that is consistent with the definition of the rebel group that this study adopts. It was able to sustain its rule for a considerable amount of time, deliver governance in the middle of the war, communicate with international actors, and create state-like institutions. The PYD fulfilled the main three elements of rebel governance that Kasfir (2015) identified, which are the territory as it has under its control the 'Rojava' region that contains civilian population, besides using violence against any group that tried to attack its territory. On the other hand, the PYD governance performance will be examined in this study due to the reported violations against the population under its jurisdiction as well as the deterioration of governance provision in the regions under its control.

In order to examine the governance performance of the PYD, there are several dynamics that need to be considered. The identity factor is essential since the PYD is a Kurdish political movement. However, it should be noted that the

Syrian Kurds had always been less active than the Kurds in other states, and have been influenced by other Kurdish political movements especially the Kurdistan Worker's Party (PKK) in Turkey. Even after the establishment of the Democratic Union Party (PYD) in 2003, their political activities were kept to the minimal and their leader and militias were in other countries to avoid any clash with the Syrian regime. Nevertheless, with the outbreak of the Syrian Civil War, the PYD seized the moment to consolidate its position in the political life of the country (International Crisis Group 2014, p. 1).

Another factor is the alliance and affiliations with other Kurdish movements inside and outside Syria. The PYD did not want to share its power with other Kurdish political groups in Syria as it sought to monopolize the authority over the regions that were later called 'Rojava'. It was reported that the PYD has been suppressing the Kurdish political groups, which oppose its governance. Additionally, it has a questionable relationship with the PKK that is designated as a terrorist group by the United States, Turkey and other states. Although the PYD denies being sponsored by the PKK, which is considered as the founder of the PYD and its main supporter (Kajjo 2020, p. 2).

Furthermore, the dynamics of the Syrian Civil War need to be considered to determine the PYD position in such a complex environment. Therefore, first, the study will start by discussing a brief history about the outbreak of the Syrian Civil War, the Syrian Kurds, and how the PYD emerged. Second, the study will examine the organizational structure of the PYD, besides specifying its institutional type in accordance with Mampilly and Stewart (2021)

categorization. Third, it will examine the different strategies that PYD conducted to gain legitimacy starting from creating a narrative to the economic strategies to questioning the use of violence. Fourth, it will question the influence of the external support from different actors such as the PKK and the United States at some point. Finally, the study will question whether the PYD will sustain its existence after the reconciliation with the Syrian regime or its activities will deteriorate.

1- Historical Background:

This section will discuss the emergence and evolution of the Syrian Civil War and highlight how the rebel groups started to emerge. Then, it will introduce a brief history about the Kurds in Syria and how they were marginalized for many years. Afterwards, it will examine the establishment and development of the PYD.

A. From Peaceful Protests to Civil War:

In early 2011, with the outbreak of demonstrations in a number of Arab countries, mass civilian protests arose in Syria demanding socio-political reforms and the overthrow of the coercive authoritarian regime of Bashar Al-Assad. However, the peaceful protests did not last because of the brutal reaction of Al-Assad regime that included arbitrary detention and target killing. This led to the rise of armed opposition groups, which started with the formation of the Free Syrian Army, and later other groups with different ideologies were formed. Due to the opposition's fragmentation, lack of coordination, and even militant

clashes against each other, the conflict prolonged and Al-Assad remained. By mid 2012, the scale of the conflict has expanded to a civil war (Berti 2020, p. 4; Aljundi et al. 2014, p. 13; Abboud 2016, p. 58-61).

The civil war and state failure in Syria were simultaneous or what Hinnebusch (2018) called “double state failure”, which means that the state failed on the material level and lost its monopoly over the use of force and its sovereignty over all or parts of its territory. However, on the ideational level, the state no longer has a solid narrative, and each sect established rival narrative against the other. With the outbreak of the war, local-based armed groups were formed based on identity, and civilians began to depend on and trust the groups that share similar identity with them. Additionally, sectarian demonizing arose and different sects became unable to coexist together safely, especially with the spread of hatred by the identity-based military groups against each other (Hinnebusch 2018, p. 397).

With the upsurge of violence and armed rebels, the ability of the Syrian government to deliver services and security to areas that were not under its control declined severely, and this gap was not filled by alternative coherent non-state institutions immediately. Governance instead was delivered on the local level whether by local councils who have affiliation to rebel groups to fund them, help in law enforcement, and provide security, or in other cases, the rebels governed by themselves with their own institutions (Aljundi et al. 2014, p. 16-22; Abboud 2016, p. 68; Hinnebusch 2018, p. 397).

The unstable environment led to the rise and fall of a considerable number of rebel groups in Syria. However, the state institutions did not vanish in war but their power was limited to the areas under the control of the regime, and a number of state institutions operated in rebel-held territories to issue personal status documents like marriage and death certificates. In some cases, the state negotiated with rebels on the national scarce resources and delivered electricity or water to areas under the control of rebels as well. This could be considered as a tactic to show to civilian population that the state is still able to deliver services to them to regain their support. The state even deprived a number of areas that were loyal to rebels from accessing services and humanitarian assistance and rewarded those who showed resistance against rebels (Berti 2020, p. 5-6; Abboud 2016, p. 72).

Few of these rebel administrations and local councils survived due to a number of reasons. In some cases, they suffered from the lack of coordination and fragmentation among the identity-based groups, which weakened them. In addition, the decline of the national production and the dependence on external flow of resources such as humanitarian aid and sponsor funding weakened a number of rebel groups. That is because some sponsors limited the flow of funds because they lost interest in the war in Syria. However, some rebel groups especially the jihadist ones such as ISIS were able to seize control over natural resources such as oil, which secured them a more sustainable source of funding. Additionally, and substantially, the Russian interference to support the Syrian regime eliminated a considerable number of them and regained the territories

under their control for the regime. In other words, the conflict dynamics were influenced not only by internal factors but also by external ones because of the excessive foreign interference in Syria from a number of countries that support different players. Syria became a proxy war arena in which some countries admit their existence on ground and others not. Some support the Syrian regime such as Russia and Iran, and on the other side, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Qatar supported different rival rebel groups, which complicated the situation more. This rivalry caused more fragmentation in governance and the failure to sustain governance (Berti 2020, p. 5-7; Hinnebusch 2018, p. 398). Despite the spread of chaos and fragmentation in Syria, the PYD was to a considerable extent able to provide quasi-governance in its territories for a considerable amount of time (Hinnebusch 2018, p. 403). In order to understand the environment in which the PYD emerged, a brief history of the Kurds in Syria will be highlighted in the next section.

B. The Marginalization of the Syrian Kurds:

Syria is known for its heterogenous demography with different ethnicities, religions and sects. The majority of the population is Arab Muslim Sunni with a considerable number of minority groups such as Allawites, Kurds, Druze, Christians and others. However, the political power lies in the hands of the Allawite minority as the president is from Al-Assad family and the security apparatus is controlled by Allawites as well, while selecting some elites from the other sects to work in the government. Hafez Al-Assad regime was known for his suppressive brutal actions against the opposition, which included the

massacre of Hama. Bashar Al-Assad followed his father's steps and used the same oppressive tools, which were evident since the beginning of the uprising in 2011 (International Crisis Group 2011, p. 1-10).

Regarding the Kurds who are the focus of this study, they are considered as the largest minority with around 10% of the population. They mainly reside in northern Syria along the borders with Turkey and Iraq, specifically in Ain al-Arab, northeast in the Jazira region, and northwest in Afrin region, besides Aleppo and Damascus where a considerable number of them live there. It should be noted that there are other ethnicities who live in the Kurdish-majority regions such as Syriacs, Armenians, Arabs and Turkmen (Human Rights Watch 2014, para. 4).

The Syrian Kurds have been suffering from persecution for decades even before Al-Assad family as the Syrian authorities banned the use of the Kurdish language, feasts and publications. Additionally, by 1962, hundreds of thousands of Kurds were denationalised and displaced from their land to resettle Syrian Arabs instead of them in the lands between the Kurds in Syria and Turkey in order to limit cooperation among the Kurds in other countries. The relation between the Syrian regime and the Syrian Kurds had been fluctuating over the years based on the regime's interests. At the beginning of President Hafez Al-Assad's reign, he created connections with a number of their religious figures and allowed them to form community-based organisations. Nevertheless, he ignored the stateless Kurds who were denationalised in 1960s and denied their legal rights and continued to expel Kurds from their lands and re-settle Arabs

in theirs. Additionally, any attempts to gain more rights were suppressed by the regime, besides arbitrary detention of Kurdish activists and imposing restrictions on property ownership. He even created a state of fear for Kurds who tried to practice their language or read a Kurdish book because the police detained whoever did that (International Crisis Group 2011, p. 20-22; Human Rights Watch 2014, para. 4; Netjes and Veen 2021, p. 12; Lee 2017, p. 230). However, with the outbreak of the uprising, the regime tried to settle down its relations with the Syrian Kurds to ensure that they would not organise a secessionist movement, while the government was encountering the protests that later turned into militant clash. Bashar Al-Assad started giving promises to grant the stateless Kurds the Syrian citizenship to ensure that they would not join the demonstrations. However, the Kurdish youth wanted to join the revolution with other Syrian protestors but the PYD prevented them. Once the official security forces withdrew in 2012 from the Kurdish-majority regions to join the fight against the opposition militias, they were substituted with the forces of the PYD. It was the most organized Kurdish party in Syria to rule since the other Kurdish parties lack the capacities and resources, and that will be discussed in the following sections (Allsopp 2017, p. 296; International Crisis Group 2011, p. 20-22; Human Rights Watch 2014, para. 4).

C. The Kurdish Governance: The Democratic Union Party

The Democratic Union Party (PYD) is one of the prominent Kurdish political parties in Syria. It might be considered as the Syrian division of the Turkish Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), which established the PYD in 2003 through

the Ocalanist Union of Communities in Kurdistan (KCK) -a decision-making body led by PKK- to mobilize the Syrian Kurds for its interests. At the beginning, it had a limited number of supporters, and it trained its fighters outside Syria in order to avoid the clash with the regime (International Crisis Group 2014, p. 1; Diwan 2012, para. 1; Ozcelik 2019, p. 5).

The outbreak of the Syrian revolution was a chance for the Syrian Kurds to revive their ambition to establish their own autonomous state or at least a federal region. The exiled leader of the PYD Salih Muslim had returned to Syria at that time, with rising suspicions about a deal between the regime and the PYD to avoid militant clashes in the North. This became evident with the withdrawal of the regime troops from Kurdish-dominated regions in mid 2012, and the quick control of the PYD militias of these areas with limited to no confrontation with the state forces. Additionally, the regime benefited from the PYD's existence to encounter the Arab rebels and jihadist militias in the regions under its control. It was even reported that the regime supplied the People's Defense Units (YPG) with heavy weaponry during its clashes with ISIS (International Crisis Group 2014, p. 4-8)

The PYD seized the moment to develop its governance project 'Rojava' in 2013 by establishing parallel interconnected political, administrative and military institutions in main Kurdish populated areas. To consolidate and secure its territories, it created the YPG as the military arm of the organization, which unified the militant Kurds in Syria and trained new recruits. As a manifestation of leverage, the PYD declared the Democratic Federation of Northern Syria in

March 2016 in Jazira that is located in Hassakeh governorate, and both Kobane ‘Ayn Al-Arab’ and Afrin that are located in Aleppo. Each region ‘canton’ established local councils similar to the state ones and a police force ‘Asayesh’. Additionally, it introduced a Social Contract or a constitution that will be discussed in later sections (Abboud 2016, p. 71; Ozcelik 2019, p. 2-6; Human Rights Watch 2014, para. 4; Lee 2017, p. 227).

The PYD was able to deliver governance in the middle of the chaotic Syrian Civil War, which might be considered sustainable in comparison to other rebel groups that attempted to provide governance during the same period. That is one of the reasons why its administration should be examined in this study. Additionally, the PYD attempted to gain legitimacy and build comprehensive institutions while other rebel groups could not, and its organizational structure will be discussed in details in the following sections (Hinnebusch 2018, p. 402).

2- The Organizational Structure:

The organizational structure of governance in Rojava can be considered as complicated and sometimes confusing. However, this section will attempt to tackle the hierarchy both in governance and inside the PYD as well. Then, it will discuss the dimensions of the institutions according to the Mampilly and Stewart (2021) categorization, which are; power-sharing, integration, innovation and inclusiveness.

The Democratic Society Movement which is also known as ‘Tevgera Civaka Demokratik’ (TEV-DEM) is the highest institution in the hierarchy of

governance. It is the umbrella organization under which comes the PYD and other organizations but it is primarily dominated by the PYD. In July 2012, the TEV-DEM tried to collaborate with the Kurdish National Council (KNC) to unite Syrian Kurds but this unity did not last for long due to the PYD's monopolization of power and the use of violence against the opposition. The TEV-DEM established the YPG and the Asayish to maintain security in the regions under the PYD control, which are called 'Rojava'. In 2014, it established the Democratic Autonomous Administration (DAA) under which executive, legislative and judicial councils were created in each canton, besides the establishment of municipalities as a local system. It also established commune, which is responsible of distributing humanitarian aid and goods among the cantons (Aldarwish 2016, p. 16-17).

In 2014, in the midst of the Syrian Civil War, the PYD announced the Charter of Social Contract through which it rules the territories under its control but without announcing its separation from the Syrian state. On the contrary, the Charter admits that the autonomous regions are part of Syria geographically, and that the administration in these regions is a model for democratic autonomy, which will be part of decentralization and federalism in Syria after the end of the war. The PYD had three regions or cantons under its control, which are Al-Jazira, Kobanai 'Ain Al-Arab', and Afrin. They have executive, legislative and judicial councils, and the authority is allocated among them (The Charter of Social Contract as cited in Human Rights Watch 2014, para. 13).

Regarding the judicial system, the PYD established 'People's Courts' in each canton, which consists of two levels, the basic and appeals. The PYD claims that the courts are fully independent and transparent, besides including different ethnicities in the system. However, a number of violations were reported by Human Rights Watch that the judges are biased and issue arbitrary sentences to get rid of the opposition groups. Additionally, the source of law enforcement is vague as it is not clear if they are sentencing in accordance with the Syrian laws or new criminal laws are issued (Human Rights Watch 2014, para. 4-6).

On the party level, the PYD has similar characteristics to the Marxist insurgent parties especially in the strict organizational hierarchy with a leading politburo. Additionally, due to the ties between the PYD and the PKK, the PYD had a handbook of organizing a rebel-held territory so it was ready to substitute the regime once it withdrew (Ozcelik 2019, p. 6).

The highest legislative authority in the party is the General Conference, which is held every two years, and it makes decisions through a simple majority voting of the participants. Those participants are elected prior to the conference from the different institutions and bodies of the party. Additionally, there is 'Expanding Meeting' that could be held in between the General Conference sessions for urgent matters by the order of the 'General Council' of the party and with the attendance of the General Council members and delegates from the different administrative bodies of the party. The 'General Council' is the highest political and intellectual authority of the party whose members are elected in the General Conference, and it forms the lower councils of the party. The PYD

has dual checks and balances system where the General Council is accountable to the 'Central Authority' and vice versa. The Central Authority is the executive body of the party that implements the decisions of the General Council. Both councils are responsible of setting the ideological, political and diplomatic agenda of the party. The party has more specialised offices, which are Organisation Office, Women's Office, Youth Office, Public Relations Office, Information Office, and Finance Office. On the local level, there are three hierarchal institutions which are the Regional Administration, the Area Administration, and the Local Administration. (PYD 2015, para. 4-5).

The PYD has three security institutions, the People's Protection Units (YPG), the Women's Protection Units (YPJ), and internal security forces 'police' (Asayesh). (PYD 2015, para. 3). The YPG is responsible of maintaining the integrity of the territories under the control of the PYD and defending the external security of these territories. Therefore, it had to engage with several armed militias such as ISIS, Jabhat al-Nusra and other jihadist groups that were threatening the security of the cantons. Supposedly, all Syrians above the age of 18 from different ethnicities and religions have the right to join the YPG. However, such standards are questionable. The Asayesh forces function in a similar way to police or the interior ministry, as they run the checkpoints across the cantons, arrest criminals and suspects, and manage prisons. According to the Charter, they are responsible of maintaining public order and social harmony (The Charter of the Social Contract as cited in Human Rights Watch 2014, para. 13). The Women's Protection Units (YPJ) recruit women only, despite being

under the command of the YPG. Its duties are not clear but the PYD claims that the YPJ is responsible of protecting the women of Rojava and a reflection to the gender equality and inclusiveness (Ali 2015, p. 5).

Supposedly, these institutions should reflect the rebel's ability to manage the daily life of the civilian population, while distributing the goods and services among the people, besides protecting them (Podder 2014, p. 219; Mampilly and Stewart 2021, p. 18). However, a number of sectors deteriorated during the PYD governance because its institutions only focused on the security provision and embedding the PYD Kurdish ideology while neglecting the health care and agriculture for example. Furthermore, the Commune institution, which is responsible of distributing aid among the civilian population of the cantons was accused of corruption and monopolization over collecting aid in the cantons. Not only the Commune but also the rest of the institutions were accused of being biased to the PYD members and undemocratic.

After reviewing the organization and hierarchy of the PYD institutions, it can be analysed through Mampilly and Stewart (2021) framework. There are four dimensions that determine the type of the rebel institutions, which are power sharing, integration, innovation and inclusiveness (Mampilly and Stewart 2021, p. 19). The PYD institutions can be considered as manipulative institutions so regarding power sharing, it claims that it shares power with the population under its control. However, in reality, it applies martial law through which it prosecutes any opposition, and it has three armed institutions that oversee the actions of civilian population. The same for the integration and innovation

dimensions, the PYD usually dissolves any pre-existing local council and construct a new one like what happened in Tel Abyad, and only integrate the civilian residents who are loyal to the PYD. Additionally, it created all its institutions, which is considered as the highest level of innovation. However, regarding inclusiveness, it is dialectic because the PYD includes women which is evident in the establishment of the YPJ and the former Co-chair of the PYD was a woman as well. Furthermore, it included and allied with a number of Arab tribes and other ethnicities are included in governance. However, it only allies with those who are loyal to the PYD and are obligated with their rules, and it does not include any opposition party in governance such as the parties that have affiliation to Barzani in Iraq. It also held elections but it was reported that these elections were not transparent. Therefore, it is confusing whether to regard them as inclusive or not but it can be considered as fake inclusion.

To sum up this section, the PYD established specialized complex institutions that is similar to state institutions, however, how these institutions function for the well-being of the people under its jurisdiction is questionable. Additionally, determining whether these institutions are inclusive or integrative is challenging since it only includes civilian residents from different ethnicities and genders who are loyal only to it. However, it does not include and prosecute any opposition group and that affect its legitimacy, which will be discussed in the next section.

3- Legitimacy-Building:

Legitimacy is considered as the fundamental stage for rebels who seek to sustain their governance. Without gaining any level of legitimacy, the rebel group is less likely to maintain its governance. However, a solid form of legitimacy is a necessary for a more prolonged existence (Schlichte and Schneckener 2015, p. 409-410). For the PYD, legitimacy is dialectic since it is applying a number of strategies to gain legitimacy including narrative creation, economic strategies. Nevertheless, the quality of services that it provides, its use of violence against the population under its control, and the fake inclusive governance model are all debatable matters. Therefore, these strategies and claims will be discussed in this section.

A. Creating A Narrative:

Since the PYD is an ethnic-based party, it created a narrative that it is the defender of the Syrian Kurds who have been oppressed for decades and that its goal is to represent the Kurds' political and socio-economic grievances. This strategy is among the main strategies that Terpstra and Frerks (2017) mentioned, which is used as a foundation to gain the people's support.

The following step should be the manipulation of the people to ensure their prolonged support. According to Mampilly (2015) rebels similar to the states use their elites to create cultural hegemony in order to manipulate the masses and gain their support through ideological sentiments (Mampilly 2015, p. 78). The PYD applied this method as its elites always emphasise in their speeches

on the Kurdish identity to persuade the Kurds that the PYD's ultimate aim is to foster its identity and protect the Kurds in Syria. An example of these speeches is the one of the Co-chair Saleh Muslim in the 7th congress of the PYD in 2017 in which he stated "our struggle is to build a democratic system. The identity in Democratic Union Party (PYD) is a Kurdish identity in Syria. The essence of our efforts is to strengthen this identity. In our struggle, we've had many martyrs. Our slogan is 'Resistance is life', we will continue our struggle to the end with this slogan" (Muslim as cited in Lege 2017, para. 1-2).

In this speech, Muslim was sending a number of messages both to the Kurds and the Syrian regime as well, as he stressed on the promotion of the Kurdish identity, however, in the context of the Syrian state to assert that the PYD's project is not a separatist one to ensure that the PYD will be integrated in the post-war reconciliation. In addition, the PYD uses the photos of martyrs to remind the people that its militia has been scarifying their lives to protect them, and it recruits the family of the martyrs in the YPG as well as appointing them to work in the communal organizations to ensure their loyalty (Dinc 2020, p. 57; Terpstra and Frerks 2017, p. 285).

It is argued that the rebel group needs to target different national audiences to broaden its support sphere (Schlichte and Schneckener 2015, p. 410). Since the Kurdish population in Syria is not concentrated in specific region, and there are other ethnicities that reside in Kurds-majority areas, it was difficult to construct a legitimate governance in the areas that the PYD controlled only based on ethnicity as it had to mobilize other non-Kurdish groups in these regions. The

PYD created the narrative of democracy and inclusiveness to attract more supporters and claimed that it established a democratic governance that respects the freedom of expression, equal participation regardless of the gender, ethnicity or sect and announced its rejection of violence against civilians. Additionally, the PYD leaders always emphasise as well on the inclusion in their speeches and interviews. For example, Akram Hesso who is the Prime Minister of Jazira canton stressed in his interview with Al-Monitor that “all the people of Rojava, including Arabs and Assyrians, are represented by the joint democratic autonomous administration under Kurdish leadership” (Hesso as cited in Hamed 2016, p. 5).

To attract a wider range of supporters, it allowed certain Arab tribes and minorities to participate in their local councils, for example it allied with the Shammar tribe in Jazira canton, and it is considered as one of the founders of the DAA as well (Aldarwish 2016, p. 20; Ozcelik 2019, p. 2-9).

The PYD installed different types of governance strategies across the regions under its control, thus, in regions where Kurdish are the majority with minimal regime presence such as Afrin, the PYD emphasised more on the Kurdish identity in the organizational structure and daily practices. It encourages the use of Kurdish language, embeds their ideology in the school curriculum and allows women to participate in governance. However, in areas where Kurds do not constitute a majority such as Menbij and Euphrates Valley, the PYD applied different governance strategies by including different ethnicities in the governance institutions as a base for trust building. Additionally, the areas that

suffered from ISIS attacks were more supportive and welcoming to the PYD because of the stability and protection that it offered besides fighting a common enemy (Ozcelik 2019, p. 9).

The aesthetic symbols are also among the substantial strategies through which rebel groups seek legitimization (Mampilly 2015, p. 77-80; Podder 2014, p. 222). The PYD highlighted in the Charter of Social Contract that the autonomous regions have a flag and an anthem, which are considered as aesthetic symbols to gain legitimacy (The Charter of Social Contract as cited in Human Rights Watch 2014, para. 13). Additionally, the photos of the Kurdish leaders such as Ocalan, and Kurdish flags and the historically known national colours (yellow, green and red) are prevalent in the three cantons. Although these symbols might enhance the legitimacy of the PYD from the Kurds but it would be perceived as a threat to its slogans of inclusiveness that are mentioned in the Rojava constitution (Ali 2015, p. 6; Dinc 2020, p. 56).

To ensure broader support network, the PYD used traditional and social media platforms to publicise itself not only locally but also globally. It advertised its public services provision with claims of good governance, promoting women rights and pluralism, and promoting its Kurdish cause. The PYD managed to receive international aid from different countries and institutions due to its ability to promote itself (Burchfield 2017, para. 6). It publicises itself as the protector and defender not only for the Kurds but for other sects and races that live under its jurisdiction because of its military skills that were manifested against ISIS and other jihadist groups (Hinnebusch 2018, p. 402). This strategy

is called a moral strategy through which a rebel group highlights a unified cause to rally the people around it (Terpstra 2020, p. 1145).

However, the narrative creation is not sufficient by itself to consolidate legitimacy as it is important to deliver services since governance is foremost about service provision. The next section will discuss the economic services that the PYD provides to the people under its control.

B. Economic Strategies:

The fundamental step for any rebel group that seeks to govern is to deliver basic goods and services as well as stability and order to the people under its jurisdiction or what Terpstra (2020) called pragmatic strategy, and the PYD managed to provide the people with basic needs to a considerable extent, which will be examined (Terpstra 2020, p. 1145; Ozcelik 2019, p. 2).

Since the regime forces withdrew from the region that became under the control of the PYD, the PYD provided what Revkin (2021) called “competitive governance” through delivering these services and creating a parallel national economy. Therefore, it was able to gain popular support because the Syrian state was not able to provide such basic needs to the people (Revkin 2021, p. 47).

The PYD established the Democratic Autonomous Administration (DAA), which includes the local councils and assemblies that are under its jurisdiction.

The DAA is responsible of providing public services such as water, electricity, healthcare and education, besides running reconstruction projects in areas where ISIS was evacuated. This institution was financed substantially by the revenues from the extraction of oil and gas, international aid, besides collecting

taxes from the people under its jurisdiction. Although some of the regions that are under the control of the PYD are agricultural regions, it was challenging during the war to import or export, therefore, agriculture was not a major source of funding to the PYD. However, a considerable amount of the oil revenues is spent on the YPG to enhance its military capacity, therefore, the delivery of goods and services substantially depends on taxes and international aid. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the international aid stopped in 2014 and returned with the engagement of the YPG in the fight against ISIS (Schmidinger 2018, p. 120; Aldarwish 2016, p. 16-19; Burchfield 2017, para. 5).

The Commune, which is a sub-institution of the DAA is responsible of distributing humanitarian aid among the cantons and suppling the people with goods that are not available in the market due to the war. However, it was claimed that the PYD forced the different donors and NGOs to channel their support through the Commune to monopolize over the delivery of goods and services in the cantons, and to show the people that the PYD is the sole provider of governance in the cantons (Aldarwish 2016, p. 17-18).

For the sake of providing education as a service besides using it as a symbolic tool to influence the people, and in order to revive the Kurdish sentiment, the PYD established the Education Commission, which installed new curriculum in Kurdish, Syriac and Arabic. Additionally, the DAA established Kurdish-language schools in the regions under its jurisdiction. The Kurds have been prevented from learning in schools with their own language, and this was an opportunity for them to root the Kurdish culture in the minds of their children.

It was reported as well that it sponsored a number of universities. Furthermore, it hired thousands of workers in the educational sector ranging from teachers to other administrative employees (Kajjo 2020, p. 6-7; Leezenberg 2016, p. 282). It should be noted that a number of administrative government institutions in the Kurdish areas coexisted with the new institutions that the PYD constructed. Additionally, the Syrian regime continued paying the salaries of the employees of the state institutions and some regime intelligence institutions remained in some of the regions to ensure that it still has leverage even if it lost the sovereign control, and that it would retain its sovereignty when it retains its power. Additionally, it was reported that the PYD sent oil to the regime (Richani 2016, p. 52; Kajjo 2020, p. 12; Leezenberg 2016, p. 282; Hinnebusch 2018, p. 399). The PYD provided the minimum basic services to the people under its jurisdiction because of its minimal experience in service administration and its focus on funding its military arm the YPG. Therefore, a number of sectors deteriorated during its governance especially the health care and electricity. Its governance provision was challenged by a number of obstacles. Externally, the Turkish enmity to the organization due to its affiliation with the PKK, and it launched operations against the PYD to control the borders between Syria and Turkey to hinder any communication between the PKK and the PYD. It did not only depend on its troops to fight the Syrian Defense Forces (SDF) -that includes the YPG- but depends on the Syrian National Army militias as well. This hindered the flow of assistance from the PKK to the PYD. In addition, the clash between the PYD and the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) in Iraq

also affected the flow of goods and services from the borders with Iraq (Aldarwish 2016, p. 20). On the other hand, its security provision was more sustainable than its provision of other services (Netjes and Veen 2021, p. 52-54).

One of the substantial factors that measures the capacity of a rebel group is its military capacity, which is manifested in its ability to protect the territories and the population under its jurisdiction (Kasfir 2015, p. 32). Regarding the security provision, the YPG, the military wing of the PYD showed its ability not only to protect 'Rojava' but also to encounter jihadist groups especially ISIS and Jabhat Al-Nusra -Jabhat Fatah al-Sham- in neighbouring regions inside Syria. In addition to being backed by the United States in these battles, the YPG proved its military skills. The YPG's military advancement is due to the PKK assistance, which deployed its militias early in the Syrian Civil War to support the PYD to form the YPG. The PKK are experienced and organized militias and its assistance boosted the YPG position in Syria. In later stages, the YPG imposed mandatory conscription on the Kurds under its jurisdiction to limit the PKK influence because of its fear to be associated with an organization that is designated as a terrorist organization by a number of countries (Kajjo 2020, p. 4; Ali 2015, p. 6). Due to its efforts in encountering ISIS, the PYD gained support and legitimacy especially after defeating ISIS and other militias. This strategy according to Terpstra (2020) is called 'moral strategy', which rebels gain legitimacy when they mobilize against common enemy to defend their territories (Terpstra 2020, p. 1145).

Nevertheless, the PYD lost some of its territories to the Turkish-backed militias, and it became unable to provide consistent services to the people under its control, which harmed its legitimacy. In addition, the PYD has been accused of using excessive indiscriminate violence against civilian population under its control and that also affected its legitimacy, which will be discussed in the next section.

C. Violence Reconsidered:

Unlike the rhetoric of the PYD that it adopts a democratic and inclusiveness governance, its military arm 'the YPG' is accused of using violence against the population under its control inside its territories especially the Arab minorities, Assyrian, Turcoman and Kurdish political opposition groups and individuals. These violent actions are documented by Human Rights Watch and other organizations. Human Rights Watch reported arbitrary detention and torture of opposition from other Kurdish political movements such as the Kurdistan Democratic Party of Syria (KDPS), the Azadi Party, and the Yekiti Party as well as other oppositions from different ethnicities. However, the PYD declined these accusations and announced that it only arrested people for their criminal acts like illegal trafficking or using violence against the population under its control. It even held court hearings for those detained, and some of them complained about being tortured to confess committing violence and terroristic acts. The PYD constitution neglects substantial human rights standards such as banning arbitrary detention and the right to have a lawyer in trials. Additionally, despite claiming that it adopts democracy and freedom of expression, the PYD

police ‘Asayesh’ suppresses any demonstrations against the PYD (Human Rights Watch 2014, para. 1-11; Ali 2015, p. 7).

In some cases, these persecuted are forced to depart from the PYD territories. Even the Kurdish civilian residents who oppose any PYD decision are subjected to violence and coercive surveillance. Additionally, the YPG is accused of forcibly recruiting both Arab and Kurdish youth after issuing a mandatory law by the PYD in 2014. It has been accused of forcing children both boys and girls under the age of 18 to join the YPG forces. This led to the flee of hundreds of thousands of Kurds to Iraq and Turkey (Human Rights Watch 2014, para. 10; Ozcelik 2019, p. 2-10).

When the PYD was encountered by organized opposition, it violated the democratic commitments that it adhered to. It established local militias for deep surveillance against those who support other Kurdish political parties such as the Kurdish National Council (KNC) and the Barzani-supported Syria Kurdistan Democratic Party (PDK-S). Additionally, it issued a law in 2014 that prohibits any activities that oppose or question the establishment of the Rojava’s system of governance besides forbidding the existence of any rival party unless it is registered in the canton administration (Ozcelik 2019, p. 10).

The PYD applied a selective reward/violence towards minorities, which differs across time and space based on its interests. Therefore, despite claiming that all minorities have equal rights as the Kurds, the PYD established shadow oversight over the minorities to oversee their actions and financial transactions. Additionally, some of them were forced to join the YPG forces and pay extra

taxes such as the Assyrians. Others did not benefit from long-term inclusion such as the Christians who were supporting the PYD when it freed them from ISIS, however, the PYD closed a number of schools that were run by the community to ensure the installation of the Kurdish identity instead (Ozcelik 2019, p. 10-11).

In an attempt to mix between coercion and persuasion to manipulate the population under its control and consolidate its governance, the PYD renamed Tel Abyad into a Kurdish name, however, it did not hand the town to its local residents but instead formed a local council with a majority of Arabs that it selected to ensure their loyalty to the PYD and arrested those who did not pledge allegiance to the PYD. It only freed them under the condition of pledging loyalty to the PYD, and in some cases, it accused those opponents of being loyal to ISIS (Ozcelik 2019, p. 11-12). This strategy is usually used by rebel groups to justify their violence by creating the narrative that they are protecting the community for the sake of survival by calling their opposition as traitors (Schlichte and Schneckener 2015, p. 410).

The PYD also held a number of elections on the canton level, however, they were boycotted by the opposition groups because of the lack of transparency and credibility of the PYD and considered it a tool to legitimize the coercive governance of the PYD. An example of the elections is the one that was held in 2017 through its Higher Commission of Elections. Unsurprisingly, the Democratic Nation Solidarity List, which is led by the PYD won the elections in the three cantons with 94% in Jazria, 89% in Euphrates and 90% in Afrin.

However, the Syrian regime did not recognize these elections (Schmidinger 2018, p. 133; Ozcelik 2019, p. 12).

These violations raise questions around its claims about democracy, power-sharing and inclusiveness. The justifications of the PYD around such violations are not enough to convince the people that violence is used to consolidate stability because it is used on a wide-scale and not only against specific ethnicity or group but against any individual or group that oppose its governance. This extreme violence led to the flee of thousands out of the PYD territory and decrease the level of legitimacy of the PYD because the people are obeying them out of fear not because of believing that it is the legitimate ruler. With less loyal population, it is challenging to sustain governance especially with the intention of the regime to retain its control over the PYD territories. This concern is raised especially with the resurgent of ISIS again in Syria, and that it might use the lack of loyalty among non-Kurds to fight back the PYD (International Crisis Group 2022, p. 29-31).

4- Questioning External Support:

A rebel group needs external support for financial matters and also to consolidate its cause internationally (Schlichte and Schneckener 2015, p. 410).

However, the external support to the PYD is sometimes not confirmed and inconsistent, which will be elaborated in this section.

A. Relations with Kurdish Political Movements:

Since Kurds are a diaspora, some of the Kurdish organizations collaborate with each other with the ultimate ambition to create a single nation-state. The PYD was initially established with the help of the Turkish Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) as mentioned before in the chapter. The PKK provided the PYD not only with administrative assistance but also with military one that included experts for training, and high ranked combatants to fight with the YPG (Ozcelik 2019, p. 2-7). Despite the strong ties and influence between the PYD and the PKK, the PYD always attempts to show that it is independent from the PKK. However, its claims are not convincing since they both belong to the same umbrella organization of the KCK, and all the Kurdish organizations that are affiliated to the KCK have the same ideological program. Additionally, it was reported that the PKK militias were present with the YPG not only to train them but fought with them against the jihadist militias (Kaya and Lowe 2017, p. 279; International Crisis Group 2014, p. 5-7).

However, the PYD was trying to conceal such affiliation to ensure that it has more chances to get integrated in the post-war reconciliation, and it manifested this independence during its operations with the United States against ISIS. The international campaign against ISIS was considered as a turning point for the PYD and its relations with the international community, which accepted to collaborate with it only for this purpose. The PYD realized that it needed to avoid being associated with an organization that is designated as a terrorist organization in order not to be deprived from gaining international support. One

of the senior members in the TEV-DEM announced that the PYD alienates itself from any struggles outside the Syrian territory, and it would not involve itself in a clash not its. Nevertheless, the PYD officials always highlight that the PYD follows the doctrine of Ocalan, the Turkish Kurd rebel, who is the founder of the PKK, but they claimed that the PYD is applying the teachings of Ocalan in a different way than the PKK (Allsopp 2017, p. 301; Khalil 2017 para. 8; Ozcelik 2019, p. 8).

On the other hand, the PYD has profound issues with the other Kurdish organizations inside Syria and outside as well especially with the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) of Masoud Barzani in Iraq which is a major party in the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) and the Kurdish parties that have affiliation with Barzani in Syria. The inability to collaborate together led to tension between both sides as the KRG in 2013 prevented the flow of food and gas to the Syrian side, which is under the control of the PYD. The people under the jurisdiction of the PYD became upset of the lack of goods and services and fled to the Iraqi side, which harmed its governance and legitimacy. From the PYD side, it detained a number of those who are affiliated with the KDP and fabricated a criminal record against them, which also affected its credibility (Ali 2015, p. 6; International Crisis Group 2014, p. 10-11).

B. Relations with International Actors:

The PYD does not have a direct support from a foreign country to sustain its governance in Syria. The PYD sought to get closer ties to multiple international actors such as the United States and Russia to gain international legitimization,

which will help them in consolidating its position in the post-war negotiations even if its relationship with the population under its rule was not well-constructed. Nelson Kasfir argues that rebels may succeed in their cause even with mistreating the population under their control because of other factors such as the foreign support (Kasfir as cited in Ozcelik 2019, p. 13).

At the beginning of the war, the PYD was neglected by the international actors, however, the United States and other actors started collaborating with it to fight ISIS, which helped it to temporarily consolidate its legitimacy (Netjes and Veen 2021, p. 7). It was thought for a period of time that the PYD consolidated its leverage over major parts of northern and eastern Syria due to the support and intervention of the US troops in Syria in 2014 that targeted ISIS militias in alliance with the YPG. Additionally, the military advancement of the YPG against ISIS granted the PYD a degree of international support from the United States mainly, in addition to Russia, France and Germany, which supported it to acquire further achievements against ISIS and supplied it with heavy machinery, despite the Turkish opposition to its empowerment. That is because Turkey considers the PYD as a mirror to the PKK and its progress will empower the PKK in Turkey. The YPG was included in a more inclusive organization, which is the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) that includes fighters from different sects to encounter ISIS under the leadership of the YPG especially with the Turkish discontent and losing interest in getting involved in the Syrian complex political arena (Burchfield 2017, para. 2; Ozcelik 2019, p. 2-12; Kajjo 2020, p. 14).

However, the American support did not last for long after getting rid of ISIS because it substantially supported the PYD -as being part of the Syrian Democratic Council (SDC)- to fight ISIS in Syria because of the growing danger of its militias worldwide. Since the United States did not want to employ a large number of its troops, it needed to collaborate with other militias on the Syrian ground, which have experience in fighting such as the YPG. Additionally, the United States sought to counter and balance the Iranian influence in Syria by supporting the SDF as it supported the SDF financially and tactically to achieve its interests at that point but did not provide any assistance in governance or development, which was an indication of its short-term alliance with the SDC and the PYD. With the decline of the threat of ISIS, the United States started losing interest in supporting the SDC and the PYD especially with the Turkish discontent. Additionally, if the United States continued supporting the PYD, that would be considered as an admittance to the PKK as well because of their alliance. The US administration at that time preferred to withdraw from the Syrian conflict not only withdrawing its troops but also reducing its support to the PYD gradually because it had other priorities in its foreign policy agenda and did not want to engage itself in such obscure conflict (Gunter 2015, p. 109; Balanche 2018, p. 1-11).

Regarding Russia, it implied in a number of occasions that it welcomes the inclusion of the Kurds in the post-war agreement settlement. However, it should be noted that Russia was trying to attract the Kurds to its side to minimize the US influence inside Syria. It even held a number of talks that included the SDF

to reach an agreement with the regime but they all ended with no results (Burchfield 2017, para. 2; Ozcelik 2019, p. 2-12; Kajjo 2020, p. 14).

On the other hand, Turkey has an enmity with the PYD and designated the PYD as a terrorist group because of its ties with the PKK. It believed that if the PYD became powerful in Syria that will strengthen the PKK. Therefore, it provided assistance to several militias that have enmity with the Kurds such as the Free Syrian Army (Gunter 2015, p. 106; Burchfield 2017, para. 1). Besides the attacks of the militias that are sponsored by Turkey, the PYD dominance was threatened directly by Turkey with Operation Euphrates Shield in 2016, Operation Olive Branch in 2018, and Operation Peace Spring 2019, which forced the YPG and the PYD to withdraw from Afrin and other key territories to the Turkish-backed militias. Turkey also displaced Kurds from the territorial area and substituted them with Arabs to change the demography of this area. This withdrawal harmed not only the military strength of the YPG but also the negotiation position of the PYD in the post-war stages with the regime, besides showing the inability of the PYD to sustain governance without foreign support. This highlighted the reality of the PYD governance that was not a product of rebel victory against the regime or gaining major legitimacy from the population under its control but was a mere seizing of the regime weakness and lack of interest to engage in a clash with the Kurds because of having other major battles, besides the initial foreign support especially from the United States (Kajjo 2020, p. 11; Ozcelik 2019, p. 13-14).

5- Questioning Participation in the Post-Conflict Political Life:

After examining the relation of the PYD with both the population under its control and international actors, this raises the question around the relation with the regime as well since the nature of its relation with the regime is complex since the regime still has some of its administrative institutions inside Rojava and pays the salaries of the employees, besides reporting that the PYD sent oil and gas to the regime. Although the PYD has advantage over other rebel groups that the regime was fighting since it was not exposed to the regime systematic bombarding, the PYD had several militant clashes with the regime (Martínez and Eng 2018, p. 246; Leezenberg 2016, p. 681; International Crisis Group 2014, p. 16). However, despite the recent clashes between the regime military forces and the YPG, it was reported that there is coordination between both after the Turkish threats to launch new operation in Syria (Al-Kanj 2022, para. 1). Therefore, it is unclear whether this will foster the relation between both of them, or the regime will seize the moment to get rid of the PYD's dominance. Therefore, it is also questionable whether the regime is going to include the PYD in the future post-war reconstruction or it is only waiting for the right moment to get rid of it, and the latter point is more realistic especially that the regime is known for its un-inclusive type of system (International Crisis Group 2014, p. 16). It should be noted also that the PYD did not ask for independence or separation from the Syrian state, and it only demanded a federal model similar to Iraq. However, these ambitions are questionable especially with the

regime's refusal of such proposal and emphasising that it will regain the territories under the control of the PYD and the SDF (Kajjo 2020, p. 12; Ozcelik 2019, p. 14-15).

Conclusion:

The Kurdish Democratic Union was able to seize number of opportunities during the Syrian Civil War, however, it failed to sustain its grip over the others. It succeeded to gain dominance over the majority-Kurdish regions once the regime forces withdrew from them. It portrayed its governance project as an inclusive model that include all genders, races and religions. However, this model was just for propaganda and in reality, it prosecuted any opposition, and the governance was limited to its patronage. Additionally, it lost some of its major territories to the Turkish-sponsored rebels lately.

Therefore, it is debatable whether the PYD will be able to sustain its governance and be included in the post-war reconciliation or it will be dissolved by the Syrian regime. For a rebel group to sustain its governance, it needs a wide popular support and legitimacy besides being backed from a foreign power. Therefore, a substantial question needs to be asked, Did the PYD gain popular legitimacy?

The answer depends on determining whether its strategies attracted the population under its rule to support and legitimize it or not. First, the narrative creation strategy; the PYD shares similar identity with a majority of the population under its jurisdiction, which confirms H3: a rebel group that has an

identity similar to the population under its jurisdiction is more likely to gain more legitimacy. It also was one of the major militias that fought ISIS and it gained much of the support because of protecting and freeing the people from ISIS, which proves H4: rebel groups that are showing themselves as the defenders of the nation are more likely to gain more legitimacy. However, it lost this privilege once ISIS was conquered.

The PYD leaders and cadres are known for their rhetorical speeches, which verifies H5: A rebel group that has a charismatic leader is more likely to sustain its governance. It uses a number of symbolic actions to consolidate its narrative as well, however, the non-Kurds felt that these symbols are not inclusive, and the symbols need to be consistent with the narrative of being democratic and inclusive not only consolidating the Kurdish quest. This means that it did not fulfil H6: a rebel group that is able to create a solid narrative supported with symbolic actions is more likely to gain legitimacy and sustain its governance, which raise doubts about their credibility.

Second, the economic strategies; according to the hypothesis H7, rebel groups who are willing to provide the people under their jurisdiction with consistent goods and services are more likely to gain legitimacy. The PYD barely provides the population under its rule with basic goods and services because it focuses primarily on funding the YPG, therefore, the allocations for providing governance are not enough. There are number of reasons behind the inability of the PYD to provide consistent goods and services to the people. First, its inability of sustaining alliances with other Kurds inside Syria and Iraq, which

hindered the flow of goods and services from Iraq, and according to H2: a rebel group that cannot negotiate with its allies and enemies is less likely to sustain its governance. Additionally, it does not have a consistent external sponsor that can provide it with financial assistance because Turkey hindered the flow of support from the PKK, besides, the American and Western support declined severely after conquering ISIS, and so it did not fulfil H8: rebels who receive consistent external financial assistance are more likely to sustain their governance. Furthermore, it should be noted as well that in the middle of the Syrian Civil War service provision was very challenging throughout the country.

Third, questioning the use of violence; based on H10, rebels who use excessive unjustified violence against the population under their control are less likely to sustain their governance. The PYD is accused of using extensive indiscriminate violence against the population under its jurisdiction. It could not provide a convincing narrative for such violence because it does not only target specific ethnicity or religion, however, it is targeting any individual or a group that opposes its governance. The use of violence harm the legitimacy of the rebel group because the people will be feeling unsafe inside its territory, and this in turn will decrease their loyalty to the rebel group. Additionally, its persuasive strategies are proved to be fabricated, and on the contrary, they confirm that the PYD is suppressing the people and only including those who abide by its rules. Regarding its organizational structure, despite that the PYD constructed a specialized institutions with local and regional governments, these institutions

did not function as a state and they were only for propaganda to gain internal and external support. Therefore, it did not fulfil H13: The more the rebel institutions mimic the state institutions, the more the rebel group sustains its governance.

The PYD gained legitimacy at some point from different sources, however, it could not sustain this legitimacy. It is not clear whether Bashar Al-Assad regime will allow the PYD to be integrated in the state system with its declining legitimacy or the national army will retain all the territories under the PYD control and suspend their activities. What could be presumed is that it will not be integrated as Hezbollah with its controlling power over the Lebanese political life, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter Five: Comparing Hezbollah Governance Sustainability and the Kurdish Democratic Union Party Governance

Introduction:

The main aim of this research is to explore the factors that impact the sustainability of rebel governance. Therefore, after examining the governance of Hezbollah in Lebanon and the Democratic Union Party (PYD) governance in Syria using the hypotheses developed in the theoretical framework, the rebels' sustainability factors can be drawn by comparing the two case studies. The chapter will assess how Hezbollah exists until now and the possibility of the PYD to participate in the post-conflict political life in Syria.

First of all, it should be considered that both groups share similar background of marginalization and being identity-based groups. This led them to using a number of similar strategies to gain legitimacy, which will be discussed in details in the chapter. However, the dynamics surrounding both of them were different, and the selection of their strategies was not the same. It is evident after discussing both cases that Hezbollah has more potentiality to sustain its governance even after the end of the war compared to the PYD, which is still unclear whether it will be included in the post-war order or not. That is because the PYD is not delivering goods and services consistently to the people under its control, not flexible to change its strategies and to create alliances, and importantly, it cannot be expected if Bashar Al-A Assad will accept to share the power with another party.

This chapter will discuss why Hezbollah can be considered as more sustainable than the PYD and what are the factors that contribute to this sustainability. Therefore, first, the chapter will compare the organizational structure of both cases, and examine whether the differences between the institutional organization can contribute to sustainability or not. Second, it will compare the different legitimacy-gaining strategies that both conducted, and how being flexible in modifying the strategies is important to sustain legitimacy. Third, it will examine whether constructing sustainable relation with external sponsors contribute to sustainability or not. Finally, it will conclude the set of strategies that contribute to sustainable rebel governance and integration after war.

1- The Organizational Structure:

The rebels' ability to construct a well-organized institutional structure is a foundational stage to implement their strategies to gain legitimacy and sustain governance. As mentioned before, these institutions are built to serve the grand agenda of the rebel group (Podder 2014, p. 219).

Both Hezbollah and the PYD constructed specialized institutions for administration and delivering services, and both as well have political and military wings, which have hierarchy and organized structure that are built to serve their ideology. However, as it is evident in the cases' chapters, Hezbollah gives more attention to its service institutions than the PYD as it constructed a holistic network to deliver services for its constituencies. Even after the end of the war and the existence of a central government, Hezbollah is still providing

services to its influence zones in Lebanon. This is one of the main reasons why Hezbollah maintains wide popular support and legitimacy mainly among Shiites. On the other hand, the PYD prioritizes the organizational structure of its party and the YPG, and this is evident in funding these institutions more than the service institutions. Nevertheless, it focuses on the service institutions that are responsible for manipulating the masses such as the educational sector to embed its ideology in the younger generation. Despite constructing parallel governmental institutions, these institutions are not functioning like state institutions in terms of providing the people with consistent goods and services. Moving from constructing a solid chain of institutions to the participation of civilian population in the rebels' institutions. Hezbollah did not allow the civilian population to participate in decision-making during the war, and it only allowed those who are members in the party to have active role. Additionally, the membership in such institutions was exclusive to Shiite Men, and elections were only conducted on the party level in the General Congress. Civilian population was only employees in Hezbollah's institutions, which was a source of income to the population under the jurisdiction of Hezbollah. On the other hand, the PYD claims that it adopts inclusive and democratic values and initiated formal procedures such as elections for local and regional councils to gain more legitimacy. However, it was reported that these elections were manipulated for the sake of the PYD candidates, and that these elections were only conducted to manipulate the masses and to gain international support. Even the local councils that the PYD claimed that they are inclusive, it just allowed

its non-Kurd allies to participate in these institutions and eliminated any opposition group, which is a fake inclusion. This means that both groups are not inclusive and the populations under their jurisdiction do not have an active role in decision-making, which means that the participation of civilian population is not a decisive criterion in this research.

For Mampilly and Stewart (2021), the capacity of the rebel's institutions is resembled in its ability to both distribute public goods as well as being able militarily to defend its people (Mampilly and Stewart 2021, p. 18). However, the PYD lacks these criteria as it cannot sustain delivering consistent services to the people and it lost some of its territories to the Turkish sponsored rebels, which means that its institutions are more fragile than the institutions of Hezbollah which is capable of fulfilling the two criteria. The reasons behind this fragility will be discussed in the following sections.

2- Legitimacy-Building:

As mentioned in the previous chapters, gaining legitimacy is a process that is based on the interaction between the legitimacy-seeker actor and the targeted audience or the ruled. To gain the trust and acceptance from the people, cumulative actions should be conducted. However, the ruling actor should be flexible to adjust such actions through time and space, otherwise, it might lose its legitimacy (Duyvesteyn 2017, p. 670-678; Schlichte and Schneckener 2015, p. 413).

The main difference between Hezbollah's strategies to gain legitimacy and the PYD's is that Hezbollah was and still flexible in adjusting such strategies to sustain its legitimacy and prolong its existence, which will be discussed in details in the following sections.

A. Creating A Narrative:

Since both Hezbollah and the PYD are identity-based groups, they used similar narrative creation strategies. They both created the narrative of being the representative of an under-represented socio-economic deprived group in their communities who aims at liberating its followers from the oppression that they suffered from, which is a fundamental strategy according to Terpstra and Frenks (2017). However, they had to deal with the other ethnicities, sects and religions that exist in their influence zones. Therefore, Hezbollah after the end of the war started to publicize being open to engage in a community dialogue and allied with different parties and tribes from different sects in the post-war elections. On the other hand, the PYD publicized being inclusive and democratic and engaged Arabs and other ethnicities in its governance institutions. However, it was reported that such inclusion was fake and that the PYD only included non-Kurds who pledged allegiance to it, and if they rejected any of the rules of the party, they would be eliminated from the governing councils. Hezbollah was more flexible than the PYD and changed its strategy through allying with different sects and religions to survive after war.

Nevertheless, it should be noted that during the Lebanese Civil War the majority of the population under the jurisdiction of Hezbollah was Shiites, which helped

it to construct an identity-based system of governance, and later after the war and after having a wide-popular base, it started targeting other audience. On the contrary, the PYD has different identities under its jurisdiction which is challenging for a rebel group during a war to choose whether to spread and root its identity or include others.

Both groups as well used the otherization strategy that Terpstra and Frerks (2017) discussed as well, by creating a common enemy that needs to be encountered to protect the nation. For Hezbollah, it was created initially to resist the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, and since the threat of Israel exists until now, this strategy is still valid for sustaining its legitimacy. For the PYD, the common enemy was mainly ISIS, and it gained wide popularity from different ethnicities because of being considered as the savior of the nation from terrorists, but when ISIS receded for a time, this strategy declined as well especially with the use of extensive violence against its population. However, with the current recurrence of ISIS again in Syria, it is questionable if the PYD will encounter it again to foster its legitimacy which is already declining, or it does not have enough power to defeat ISIS again.

To consolidate these narratives a charismatic leader is needed according to Terpstra and Frerks (2017) and Schlichte and Schneckener (2015) to mobilize the people around the group. For Hezbollah, one of its charismatic leaders is Hassan Nasrallah, who is the current Secretary-General of Hezbollah, and he is known of his rhetoric speeches as mentioned in Hezbollah's chapter. He is very influential, and for the majority of the Shiites, he is considered as their leader.

For the PYD, there are a number of influential leaders such as Saleh Muslim, the former co-chair of the party, and many of the leaders emphasize on the teachings of Ocalan, the Turkish Kurdish leader, whose rules are the foundation of constructing the PYD. However, it is questionable whether these leaders are as influential as Nasrallah.

In addition, in order to promote the narrative, aesthetic symbols are required to embed the narrative in the daily life of the population under their jurisdiction. Both Hezbollah and the PYD created slogans, photos of martyrdom, parades, and special festivals that reflect their identity. This strategy was successful for Hezbollah to gain wide popular support from Shiites; however, it harmed the PYD to an extent because it has under its jurisdiction different identities who felt that they are alienated. That is because they felt that they are living in a Kurdish territory rather than an inclusive Syrian territory.

To sum up this section, Hezbollah successfully constructed its own narrative and adjusted it with time to gain wider support in the post-war period. However, the PYD is struggling between consolidating the Kurdish identity and satisfying the other ethnicities, which is a challenge to sustain its legitimacy. Additionally, the narrative by itself is not enough to consolidate governance as it is only the foundational stage upon which legitimacy is built.

B. Economic Strategies:

According to Duyvesteyn (2017), a legitimate governance is based upon providing consistent goods, services and security, therefore, rebels who seek to sustain legitimacy have to deliver goods and services to their constituents

especially if the incumbent government is not functional. That is called pragmatic strategy according to Terpstra (2020). Hezbollah was able to apply this pragmatic strategy and created a complex network of services across the regions under its control. It created specialized institutions to provide education, health care, and infrastructure institutions, which is still functional until now even after the end of the war and the existence of a central government. However, due to economic issues in Lebanon, the central government is usually unable to provide governance to some regions, and it seeks the help of Hezbollah to deliver services in many cases. Hezbollah service institutions did not only aim at satisfying the people's needs but it had a developmental side, for example it established the Good Loan institution to lend people money to construct their own projects for the sake of developing the regions. This sustainability in delivering governance is one of the key factors why Hezbollah still exists until now because a huge number of the Lebanese depend on it on a daily basis.

On the other hand, the PYD established some service institutions, however, it was not always functioning, and it could not deliver governance consistently for a number of reasons. First, the PYD gave more attention to funding its military wing the YPG, and did not invest enough in the service sector to satisfy the people's needs. Second, it could not sustain alliance with different Kurdish political movements especially those who share the same ideology as the KDP, Barzani party in Iraq, therefore, in many occasions, the KDP prevented the flow of goods and services from the Kurdish Iraqi side. Third, due to its ties with the

PKK, the Turkish troops and its rebel allies in Syria hindered the flow of assistance from the PKK, which decreased the funds required to provide services to the people.

To sum up this section, there are two points that should be considered. First, the people give more legitimacy to those who provide them with consistent goods and services and that it is why Hezbollah gained a high level of legitimacy while the legitimacy of the PYD is decreasing. Second, a key reason behind Hezbollah's consistent service provision is the regular funds that it receives from Iran, while the PYD is not receiving such stable funds, which in turn affects its ability to deliver services.

C. Violence Reconsidered:

Among the three important criteria that a rebel group needs to fulfill to govern is the use of violence. However, the question that needs to be asked is; violence against whom? Rebels use violence against the incumbent government, other rebels, external forces, or/and civilian population (Kasfir 2015, p. 25). Since this paper is examining popular legitimacy, the focus will be around the violence against the civilian population. Violence might be necessary at the early stages while imposing the rebel's social order and stabilizing security inside the territory under their control, and this use of violence has to be accompanied with a solid narrative to justify such violence. Nevertheless, if the rebel group continued to use unjustified violence especially if it is excessive and indiscriminate against civilian population, that would harm its legitimacy (Schlichte and Schneckener 2015, p. 410-416; Duyvesteyn 2017, p. 679).

Based on the abovementioned theories, the paper analyzed the use of violence of Hezbollah and the PYD. For Hezbollah, there was no available data on excessive indiscriminate use of violence against the population under its control during the civil war, and it is not evident whether there was hidden excessive violence, or the level of violence used was acceptable. Another justification would be that most of the population under Hezbollah's control was Shiites who considered Hezbollah as their savior and protector. Therefore, there is a high possibility that there was not a wide-scale of opposition against Hezbollah's governance inside its territories and that is why Hezbollah did not have to use extensive violence against the population under its control.

On the other side, it was reported that the PYD used extensive indiscriminate violence against the population under its rule, and even its justification of the use of violence was not convincing because it was not only targeting specific group but it was targeting any individual or group that is opposing how it is governing the territories under its control. This led to the decline of the PYD's legitimacy especially among the majority of the non-Kurds population, and this lack of loyalty might harm the existence of the PYD because the discontented population would help any other party that would help them to get rid of the oppressive rule of the PYD.

However, it should be considered while comparing these two cases that the PYD has under its control various ethnicities, religions and tribes who object the governing of Kurds, while Hezbollah mainly had under its jurisdiction Shiites. Additionally, the PYD failed to unify the political Kurdish party in Syria,

therefore, it always feels that it is under threat and might be overthrown even by Kurds. Therefore, it might be using violence to keep these territories under its control. Thus, while Hezbollah was fighting the militant Shiite rebels on dominance such as Amal, the PYD is fighting the non-militant Kurdish opposition. That is maybe why there is a great focus on the PYD's use of violence against the population under its rule because its existence is not only threatened by militants but also civilian population. Nevertheless, due to Hezbollah's mix between coercion and persuasion, it sustained its existence even after the end of the war and became part of the Lebanese government. However, with the PYD's extensive use of violence and inability to manipulate the masses, it might not be able to survive and become part of the post-conflict political life because many parties will seize the lack of loyalty among its population to overthrow its governance.

3- International Relations:

The external support to a rebel group that seeks governance is essential to ensure sustainability, however, this support has to be consistent because if this support declined, the rebel's ability to deliver governance and to negotiate later in the post-war reconciliation will be harmed. This is evident in comparing Hezbollah and the PYD as for Hezbollah, it has been supported financially and technically from Iran since the foundational stage, which is a key factor of its sustainability. Due to the consistent Iranian support to Hezbollah, it was able to recruit more people for its military wing, train its militias and arm them, hire civilian

population in its administrative institutions, construct a network of service institutions all over its territories, and even paying reparations to those who were wounded in its militias and to the families of the martyrs. Although Hezbollah has other sources of funding, without the Iranian financial support, it could not build such well-constructed system of governance. On the other hand, Hezbollah has tense relations with the western actors, however, its leaders always portray the West as an enemy to the nation and that their interference in the Lebanese political life is harming it. Therefore, Hezbollah only depends on the support of Iran and Shiites individuals.

On the other side, the PYD did not obtain such regular support. That is because the PKK, which is considered as the founder and main supporter of the PYD - despite its denial- cannot finance the PYD similar to Iran. The PKK is already restrained and struggling in Turkey, does not have enough funding, and is hindered from sending assistance to the PYD because of the Turkish troops and its Syrian allies that controlled the territorial lands between Syria and Turkey. Additionally, the PYD does not have stable relations with other Kurdish political parties in Iraq, which hindered the flow of food and services to the PYD's territory several times. Regarding the western support, the United States supported the PYD -or more specifically the SDF which the PYD is part of- during the war against ISIS and its support was for arming its militias not for reconstructing the service sector. It is also unclear if the United States will increase again its support to the PYD after the resurgence of ISIS in Syria.

To sum up this section, the external sponsoring of a rebel group is a key factor for its sustainability, and without a regular external support, the rebel group will struggle to survive.

Conclusion:

After comparing the two governance strategies of Hezbollah and the PYD, it is evident how Hezbollah was successful in sustaining governance from its establishment until the end of the Lebanese Civil War and even became an active actor in the Lebanese post-conflict political life to the extent of being part of the government. On the other side, the PYD is struggling to sustain its governance and it is unclear whether it will be able to be part of the post-war political life in Syria or not.

To conclude this chapter, there are a number of key factors that contributed to the sustainability of Hezbollah that the PYD lacks in spite of sharing similar features. First, most of the population under Hezbollah's control was Shiites, which helped Hezbollah in constructing a narrative consistent with its constituencies to enhance the bond between them and using less violence because it was the people's protector and savior. Second, Hezbollah focused on both constructing service and security institutions in order to ensure consistent service provision to the people and protect them from the Israeli invasion and the attacks of other rebel groups as well. It even created a system where the wounded of its militias are rewarded for their sacrifices, and the families of the martyrs are receiving reparations. Therefore, this encouraged more people to be

recruited in Hezbollah's militias. Third, Hezbollah receives regular funding from Iran, which helped it from the construction phase until now, and despite having other sources of funding, Iran is still the main stable source that contributed to the sustainability of delivering services to the people under Hezbollah's control. Fourth, Hezbollah was and still flexible in adjusting its strategies and creating alliances even with the enemies of the past. All these factors contributed to the sustainability of Hezbollah, nevertheless, with the PYD's inflexibility of creating alliances, inconsistent delivery of food and services, the excessive indiscriminate violence, and the lack of regular external sponsor, it is questionable whether it will be as sustainable as Hezbollah or not.

Concluding Remarks

This study aimed at exploring the different factors that contribute to the sustainability of rebel governance during civil wars, and how this sustainability might lead to inclusion in the post-war political life. In order to examine these factors, the paper had to start by discussing the previous literature and the relevant theories and concepts that tackle rebel governance. Using these theories, a number of hypotheses were deduced to test them on the two selected case studies; Hezbollah and the Democratic Union Party (PYD). Examining the sustainability of the two case studies required exploring the historical background of each group and how they were formed, the organizational structure of the rebel institutions, the legitimacy-gaining strategies that the rebels implement, and the external support to the group. All these elements contribute to the rebel's capacity to sustain its governance with different degrees depending on the dynamics that surround the rebel group during and after the war.

This study focused on studying both Hezbollah and the PYD since both shared similar characteristics because they are identity-based groups that suffered from underrepresentation and oppression, and as a result, they both used some legitimacy-gaining strategies as each other. However, in order to conclude why some rebel groups would be more sustainable than the other, the study compared between Hezbollah that is considered as a rebel group that survived the civil war and became part of the Lebanese government, and the PYD that is

still struggling over dominance in Syria, and it is unclear whether it will be part of the post-war order or not.

All the hypotheses deduced from the theories proved to contribute to the sustainability of the rebel governance but with varying importance. Among the highly important factors is gaining minimal legitimacy because the lack of popular support will create fragile governance that is more likely to be overthrown, and the more the level of legitimacy, the more a rebel group can sustain governance. This justifies why Hezbollah exists until now and why the PYD did not fall completely because it still has a level of legitimacy from its followers especially the Kurds. Additionally, constructing a narrative consistent with the identity of the population is essential step, however, if the population does not share similar identity, this will lead to polarization and might lead to instability, which is the case with the PYD. Furthermore, it is highly important to deliver basic goods and services in a consistent way to its constituencies because governance is mainly about service provision, otherwise, the rebel group will not gain competitive governance over the incumbent government and other rebel groups and will less likely sustain its legitimacy. To sustain service and security provision, the rebels need a consistent external sponsor as a source of funding like the case of Hezbollah and Iran, while the PYD does not have a regular sponsor, thus, it struggles to provide its people with consistent goods and services. Among the highly important factors as well is the mix between coercion and persuasion while limiting the use of indiscriminate use of force to sustain the bond between the rebel group and its population, which is among

the factors that helped Hezbollah to sustain its governance. Additionally, having the capacity to negotiate and create alliances is essential because flexibility will help the rebel group to alter strategies to adapt with the changing dynamics of the war, which is the reason behind Hezbollah's engagement in the post-war political life.

On the other hand, there are some factors that are secondary and need to be accompanied with the previously mentioned factors as complementary factors such as; the symbolic actions including flags, festivals, the photos of martyrs, and the charismatic leader. Additionally, the specialized institutions lose their importance if they are not serving the interests of the people and deliver them goods and services.

This study faced some limitations especially while examining the legitimacy of the rebel groups, for example, it was challenging to conduct interviews and surveys considering that the PYD influence zones are still in a state of war. Additionally, the lack of data regarding how Hezbollah treated the non-Shiite civilian population who was under its control during the war was also a limitation. Future studies should attempt to conduct interviews at least with some political experts as well as conducting a large N study to reach more predominant factors.

To sum up the findings of this study, a rebel group that seeks to sustain its governance needs to consolidate its legitimacy among the population under its jurisdiction especially through providing goods, service and security in a consistent way. These findings are adding to the theories, which stated some

factors without pointing out the fundamental factors that contribute to sustainability. The selection of Hezbollah helped in concluding these findings because it is a unique case that did not only survive a civil war but it continued until now and comparing it to the PYD with the uncertainties about its sustainability might help in testing the fundamental factors on other similar cases to predict the possibility of sustainability.

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