New imaginings: Hizballah, Iran, and the dynamics of articulation

Hebah Farrag

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“New Imaginings: Hizballah, Iran, and the Dynamics of Articulation,” a masters thesis for the American University in Cairo by Hebah H. Farrag, under the supervision of Dr. Saad Eddin Ibrahim, Dr. Martina Rieker, and Dr. Pandeli Glavanis addresses the rise in the politics of identification in Islamism today. The resistance narrative in the Middle East has undergone radical changes in the last two decades; transforming, adapting, and metamorphosing in response to local, regional and global conditions. Corresponding with these rapid changes, the politics of identification has taken center stage. The recent alliance between Iran and Venezuela, corresponding with a shift in Venezuela’s policy towards Israel and enhanced through its ideological and financial support of Hizballah, has excited Middle Eastern populations, frightened Arab leaders, and left many an academic wondering where exactly the resistance narrative is heading. This combined with a flurry of perceived sectarian divisions and internal domestic struggles has left many questing: What is behind these recent connections and how have these changes impacted our understanding of Islamism, anti-imperialism, third worldism, and resistance?

The actors and issues that are the main focus of this work are, first, Hizballah and its attempt to forge new understandings of resistance, identity, and Islam within and without a nation-state context, and secondly, Iran and its current re-definition of conceptions such as development and sovereignty in response to conditions of ‘geopolitical exclusion.’ An original and integral element in this study is the inclusion of comparative regional experiences, drawing mainly from Latin America, specifically Venezuela, in order to show not only the extent of south-south relations being formed today and on what basis, but also the variance within these assorted discourses even within self-defined anti-imperialistic alliances. Methodologically, this work uses theories such as articulation and tools such as the ‘border guard’ and ‘mythomotuer’ in order to garner a deeper understanding of if and how Islamist movements such as Hizballah, and nations such as Iran, remain ideologically consistent by transforming and adapting to political, social, and culturally trends. By complicating an often used and interrelated example, such as the relationship between Hizballah and Iran, this work delves into the question of identity formation and defines what it means to use modern means to search for a post-modern identity.
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AFTERWORD

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INTRODUCTION
The Stage

In the last five years we have seen an explosion of interest in the region known as the Middle East. The region has not only become the center of the world's attention regarding the threat of terrorism and the need for democratization it has also become the new focus of foreign intervention; militarily, economically, socially, culturally, and politically. From the Sudan to Afghanistan, the global spotlight has been narrowing in on the endemic need for control and stability in the region; a control that has been sought through not only political and militaristic means, but through trade, aid, and Qualified Industrial Zones.

The costs of such intervention and attention have been acutely felt on the whole of the world stage in ways particular to our moment in time. The nature of international governance has been questioned to its core and what was fundamental to our system of nation-states has now begun to be debated, questioned, and challenged. Questions such as the place of international law, the sanctity of the Geneva Conventions, the centrality of torture to security, the extent of sovereignty, the meaning of self-determination, the rights of non-state actors, all once primary and essential elements to an order revered and protected to an almost divine extent by hegemonic nations or international cooperations no longer have simple answers that can be defended. The region and its populations have become hopeless and uncertain with very few options for advance and not many alternatives for a way out, but with the unique opportunity to stand at the center of a global dialogue on the future of international governance and its limits, the new ‘playground’ of the imagination.

Latin America serves as an important comparison to the Middle East, one that has been often overlooked in the scholarship especially regarding anti-imperialist organizing. Not only do many examples in these two regions share a similar pattern of economic development (structural adjustment, state-led economic and social engineering, etc.) and a long history of foreign intervention and entanglement, the methods and ideologies with which these various countries in these two regions where
penetrated are also very similar. Adam Isacson, of the Center for International Policy in Washington D.C., states rhetorically, "Latin Americanists know all about unilateral interventions, pre-emption, 'regime change,' botched counter-insurgency efforts, torture allegations, nation-building schemes, proxy wars, empty rhetoric about democracy and charges of imperial behavior. It's been going on for a century or more."¹ Its no wonder that a survey conducted by the Gallup International Association at the end of 2003, as part of the Voice of the People annual survey, to measure people's opinion regarding the effect of US foreign policy across countries and around the world, found respondents in South America and the Middle East sharing the most critical views of U.S. foreign policy.²

Economically, politically, militarily, ideologically; these two regions, broadly, have much in common in terms of their development, and have cooperated politically and economically in the past (think Nasser and Castro). In recent times we see Latin American and Middle Eastern players being connected in distinct ways; Hugo Chavez of Venezuela leading the way in the creation of new alliances. Beyond their similarities and differences, the two regions and their various actors have often been construed in similar ways in the minds of US foreign policy makers, and additionally, a comparison of these two regions responses to comparable actions, and on what basis they are now forming alliances, may enhance our understanding of imperialism and the impetus of anti-imperialistic action.

What are these players seeking to influence and how is it important to current conceptions of global order? How and on what basis are these alliances being formed? How is identity and resistance being formulated to unite these various actors? The answers to the above questions may help to re-draw understandings of current resistance movements while furthering existing literature on the Middle East and its place within an ongoing struggle.

Methods and Sources
Since the close of the most recent Arab-Israeli conflict, dubbed the July War in Lebanon and the Second Lebanon War in Israel, we have seen an explosion of interest in Hizballah, Iran, their connections, and the role of Shia Islam in an evolving Middle East. The place of religion in the region has become further complicated by the recent talk of a forthcoming 'Muslim Civil War.' Islam is being dissected further and further into its component parts as the role of religion continues to be analyzed through its divisive and destructive power. Much of the scholarship, not only focusing on Iran and Hizballah, but on the region in general focuses centrally on the place of religion, either in relation to violence and militancy or apologetically, to explain, clarify and/or de-mystify the 'realities' of Islam in reference to political usages. Political Islam has become the new buzz word, along side ever growing debates on the existence of a so-called "arc of extremism," to use Mr. Blair's terminology.

Author and Professor Vali Nasr has ridden this wave of popularity and has gained a level of fame after publishing his work The Shia Revival: How Conflicts within Islam Will Shape the Future, detailing how a liberated and empowered Iraqi Shiite majority has helped to launch a broad Shia revival, upsetting the sectarian balance not only in Iraq but in the Middle East. What much of this work, alongside the plethora of media focusing on sectarian divide and the sensational, continues to overlook is the voice of the popular; songs have been written about Hassan Nasrallah and his 'victory,' opinion polls have cited him as the most popular Arab leader in the region, ordinary citizens sit glued to Arab satellite TV networks to follow events not only in Lebanon, but Iran, Iraq, Gaza, and so on. What the popular sees is the blood of Arabs (not Shi'as) being spilt, with only a few actors 'fighting back.' In the eyes of many, or so this work will set out to investigate, actors such as Nasrallah and Ahmadinejad have become models of heroic resistance. Using the tools, definition, and 'stage' layout to be described, this work intends to use religion, along side class, ethnicity, age, and citizenship as a method of analysis.

In order to do this I will rely on the theoretic frame to be outlined below, using the work of Gramsci, Stuart Hall, and Anthias and Yuval-Davis to guide the research, while focusing my study on the analysis of primary text in the form of speeches, interview, and press release from major leaders. I also had the opportunity to obtain first-hand interview from members and leaders in Hizballah as well as other political leaders and civil society actors in Lebanon through the contacts of my advisor Dr Saad Eddin Ibrahim and a political delegation to Lebanon planned through the Ibn Khaldun Center for Development from Jan 8 – 20th, 2007. In addition, the unconventional use of the internet as a source of informal assessment of sentiment and narrative will be integral to my study. Today the use of the web, through blogs, formal government websites, and informal comment boards, allows for an added level of depth in analysis when imagination, post-modern organization, and public opinion is of central concern. Blogs about Hizballah circulating in Spanish and recruiting from a specific Latin American target, websites run by the Iranian Government publicizing President Ahmedinejad’s every word and comment, individual sentiment through comment boards, debates raging online; all these serve as sources effective in uncovering the effectiveness and pervasiveness of imaginings, while also exemplifying the new ways in which groups organize, propagandize, and articulate in contemporary anti-imperialistic organizing. Such sources, combined with other primary texts and our theoretic frame should supply an ample frame for analysis and generalization.

What has been written about Iran and Hizballah thus far in scholarship has focused either on their connection, the extent of that connection militarily, religiously, financially, and the political influence each party has had on the other, centering the focus on Shi’ite Islam and revolutionary Shi’ism as the link that binds the two together. A major feature of the writing on both Iran and Hizballah is of course political Islam and the increasing violence and militancy within this emerging ideology as well as the increasingly important role of non-state actors in international politics. This work will not focus on the connection between the two actors or the political action and militarism of the two players but rather on the contemporary articulations and imaginings being put forth by Iran and Hizballah separately, the

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4 Chehabi, 2006.
significance of what seems like new understandings of concepts such as development and resistance, and
the role and position of such articulations within a framework of growing south-south connection. This
will not be a work focusing on the American or anti-American framework and in such will be original in
its attempt to clarify and connect countries of the South and their experience. With my knowledge of
Arabic and Spanish and the availability of translated Farsi sources, I will make use of mainly media
sources cross cut with existing theory on relevant conceptions such as development, sovereignty, and
identification in order to discern the body of these articulations and their significance within on going
debates.

**Literature Review**

At the close of WWII the world saw the formation of an international consensus built upon the
devastation of an old order. Laws were codified, international standards agreed upon, enforcement
mechanisms put in place and with them, imaginings became a reality. The nation-state was the only actor
on the world stage and through bodies like the UN, International Criminal Court, IMF and World Bank
and treaties such as the Geneva Convention, Vienna Convention, and UN Charter a system was molded,
an image created, and a vision accepted. This ideal may never have been a reality, a case closed never to
be questioned, but it was believed in. So much so that much of the debate for the last four decades has
centered around how to make it a reality rather than how to transform it into something whole-heartedly
new.

The Cold War, a war more devastating than both World Wars combined, firmly and finally made
this order a reality - a neo-liberal development towards a democratic peace and a stable and harmonious
union through economic connection and liberal ideals of freedom enforced through military presence,
physical force, and economic dependence. In each locality this new order reared its head with always a
new face making the naming of the order near impossible. National discourses seek to play with the
imagination and create a common imagining of the world. This search for identity is an essential and
integral characteristic of the politics of identification. The United States, alongside many other actors, has
set forth on the world stage with a mission to create an image of the world; to the United States, that image is one of a world under threat. Other actors have responded to this image with their own vision, and it is not the U.S. articulation that I hope to speak to, but the various and varied counter articulations only recently becoming clear. With that being said, in order to understand our current political moment, we must look back in time to the inception of the era; looking, if only briefly, at scholarship on the role of the US in international politics from World War II up until our Post-Cold War era.

The American Century: the making of an imagining

The twentieth century, a century of bloodshed and violence, has also been proclaimed the 'American Century'. Since the end of World War II, the United States has been almost unanimously proclaimed the world’s superpower. During this period of American hegemony the world has experienced a gradual worsening of global conditions, or at least this is what the anti-imperialists claim. The ratio of per capita income between the top fifth and the bottom fifth of the world’s population has moved from 30 to 1 in 1960, to 45 to 1 in 1980, to 60 to 1 in the 1990’s\(^5\). This century has seen the gap between the rich and the poor widen continuously. A recent United Nations Development Report documented that 358 global billionaires have the wealth equaled to half to world’s population and that the assets of the three richest people in the world exceed the combined GDP of the 48 least developed countries\(^6\). This report went on to conclude that it would cost $13 billion to provide basic health and nutrition to all people in the world and $6 billion to provide basic education to every human being yet Americans continue to spend $17 billion a year on pet food\(^7\). This century has seen the world’s 100 top economies become corporations. It has seen women become seventy percent of the world’s poor. It has seen 65 to 70 percent of the World Bank’s projects fail in the poorest countries.

There were many names for the United States since the end of World War II - reluctant superpower, "watchman on the wall," policeman of the world, hegemon, haven of democracy and

\(^5\) Cumings, *Op. Cit* at 294  
\(^6\) *Ibid.*  
\(^7\) *Ibid.* at 295
freedom. All of these names imply one common theme; that United States has been and continues to be the dominant power in world. Today, we see an emergence of actors that repeatedly refer to the United States explicitly as an 'Empire' or 'Imperialist' power. We have seen in our post-9/11 academic scholarship a burgeoning of texts analyzing the role of the US as an empire, hegemon, and/or imperial power, especially in reference to its policy concerning the Middle East. And moreover, we are once again hearing the United States, its leaders and policy makers, refer to the US as the 'savior' of international stability, and promoter of peace, security, and democracy. The discourses on US imperialism and the role of the United States in the international arena very much frames the global debate and captures the imagination of the masses alike. It is for these reasons that a discussion of the scholarship on US imperialism remains relevant to our discussion of emerging narratives in the Middle East and solidifying south-south relationships.

Scholars agree on the premise, either implied or explicit, “that in the postwar era the extent of American power and the nature of its behavior warrants comparison with the undoubted empires of the past.” There is no doubt amongst them that American foreign policy has had a huge influence on the twentieth century world, and that the United States is clearly the strongest power, or combination of powers, in the world since the end of the Cold War. But it is only these two points that generate consensus among scholars as a whole.

While many camps argue over the intentions lying behind US maneuvering, they both agree in a common imagining; the US as powerful, aggressive, and interest-led. Scholars writing in what has been called the 'imperial school' paint the picture of the reluctant imperial nation working diligently to bring democracy and prosperity to these 'failed states,' while maintaining an active military solely to protect itself from the ruthless outside world. They view the U.S.’s position as inevitable, necessary, and unfortunate due to the backwardness of the world surrounding it. Those writing out of what has been called the ‘imperialist school’ agree that the US is a nation on the hunt for empire, relying on economic

8 Allain, 2003; Khalidi, 2004
9 Slater, Op. Cit. at 67
motivations to explain the thrust behind expansion. They paint a world threatened by the ever-growing
desires of an insatiable nation, where any place, any leader, any economy is at risk of take over.
Imperialists create an image of a world under threat, of an empire on the loose, and a world at risk of
take-over. Whether imperial or imperialistic, the United States, in its pursuit of prosperity, security, and
democracy, has created an image of herself that dominates, almost colonizes, the worlds imagination. All
scholars continually point to her as the reference point, and all her various national discourses continue to
inspire counter-imaginings in various attempts to define the age we live in. This hegemonic national
imagining, made ever more explicit in the Bush Epoch, is the frame to which the world adjusts. And
increasingly since the invasion of Afghanistan and the occupation of Iraq, the US national articulation has
remained at the foreground of Middle Eastern articulations of the future. It is this world view that remains
the foil to which actors speak and for that reason alone is relevant to our study.

What’s in a Name? Post-Cold War What?

How shall we denote this developing, but not yet complete, ‘new world order’? Shall we name it the post-
industrialist, postmodern, post-nationalist, post-neocolonial, post-structural, porous-bordered, cannibalistic,
resource-devouring, garbage-spewing, plague-ridden, hyper-capitalist, post-materialist, hyper-polluted,
universalized (Catholic-like), monocultural, ultra-technologized, telecommunication-and-computer nerved,
significations age? For as this period becomes more and more the era of abstraction: the production, selling,
consumption, and trading of things gives way, more and more, to the production, selling, consumption and
trading of signs of things. The signs and the speculation in signs proliferate out of the proportion to the
things of the material world. Dialectical materialism has been replaced by the dialectical immaterialism.

...10

The so-called ‘American Century,’ our contemporary moment, has thus far been quite hard to
name. Some call it the post-cold war era, others the era of globalization, still others postmodern; as
Yurick has so poignantly pointed out, “one always looks for some symbolic point where one can say ‘that
ended and this began’, even though there are no beginning and no endings…” for us, and writers such as
Yurick and Burbach, our climacteric is the end of the Cold War, when the curtain fell on the profitable,

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Manichaean theatre of illusions dubbed the Cold War.\textsuperscript{11} Much of the twentieth century is dominated by the clash between the ideologies of capitalism and socialism; two metanarratives with their roots in the Enlightenment.\textsuperscript{12} This conflict not only served to divide the world, but more accurately, to fragment it into pieces, areas, segments, sometimes nations, either with, against, or in the middle of an increasingly non-aligned world.

Ironically though, in the midst of polarization, the Cold War also seemed to clarify the path towards modernity, regardless of which side you were on. As Blum argues, the common thread tying together the diverse targets for American intervention during the Cold War, and Soviet for that matter, was any policy of \text quoted \textit{\text} \text"self-determination\textit{\text}" expressed in one form or another. The desire to pursue a path of development independent from US/Soviet foreign policy objectives, the ambition to be free of economic or political subservience to the US/Soviet Union, the refusal to minimize relations with the opposing bloc or to welcome a military installation from a foreign power, the attempt to alter or replace a government which held to neither of these aspirations, all these desires led to intervention.\textsuperscript{13} Any policy of independence, neutrality, or non-alignment immediately placed leaders on the top ten most watched list; Arbenz of Guatemala, Mossadegh of Iran, Sukarno of Indonesia, Nkrumah of Ghana, Sihanouk of Cambodia are all examples, with many more remaining, of how self-determination could lead to direct and powerful intervention during the Cold War.\textsuperscript{14}

Beyond instilling in the global climate a fear of independent behavior, the Cold War, rather than simply divide, also solidified a singular path towards national development. As Yurick puts it, "the war had ironically not only united the world in a grand purpose but seemed also to have sped up the grand movement of the world towards modernization, rationalization and human secularism…at least the ‘western’ version of that movement".\textsuperscript{15} With the end of this elongated war for the hearts and minds of the international community, we have seen the inception of the postmodern and the solidification of the

\textsuperscript{11} Ibid; 204
\textsuperscript{12} Burbach, \textit{Op. Cit.} at 3
\textsuperscript{13} Blum, \textit{Op. Cit.} at 15
\textsuperscript{14} Ibid
\textsuperscript{15} Yurich, \textit{Op. Cit.} at 204
modern, and with them the birth of a plethora of debates and discourses that are raging into today and remain relevant to the discussion at hand.

**Methodology and Definitions**

*The Modern in Postmodern*

In our contemporary moment, it is no longer safe to stick to one generalized mode of analysis. Actors today operate on various levels, incorporating a collection of tools and languages ranging from nationalist to nativist to postmodern for a wide variety of reasons, from political to economic to social/cultural and back again. As Burbach points out, "the real world, given all its fragmentation and incoherence, is resisting the capitalist global order in many different ways and continually searching for alternatives." A sustained and continual opposition to the hegemony of the new global order seems to emerge from rebellious factions that appear anywhere and everywhere, whether a 'failed' state, a non-state actor, a militant movement, or as the now famous 'battle of Seattle' demonstrated, from disgruntled individuals from all parts of the globe. Opposition today is postmodern in the sense that it has no clear rationale or logic to its activities, crossing boundaries and borders uniting people in common cause. As Yurick poignantly articulates, "Virulent nationalism have been wakened from their long, enchanted slumber giving rise to an orgy of multi-cultural, ethno-entropic, postcolonial politics of ‘identity’. But what does ‘identity’ in this context mean? Certainly not the ideology of possessive individualism of the world market; ‘identity’ as regards nationalism, culture, ethnicism, racism, means identification-with, which entails a submersion of one’s psychological self in some greater, mass ‘self’.”

Identity politics, a term most often referring to the movements which have developed since the 1960s around issues of identity, in particular gender, race, sexuality and disability, has emerged once again as a key intellectual concept and mobilizational tactic central to the understanding of social movements. But the notion of identity politics is not without its controversies. Scholars such as Arthur

Schlesinger Jr., Eric Hobsbawm, and more recently gay and lesbian rights activists have criticized the tactic and concept pointing to the often essentialist overtones of such arguments and the disadvantage basing one’s political stance on the perception of being outside of society places on the possibility of ending marginalization.\textsuperscript{19} Shared identity based on fixed biological and/or cultural traits, and political movements based in such organizational principle have been seen as diverting energy and attention from fundamental issues, such as class conflict, while bolstering false notions of nationalism and self-determination.\textsuperscript{20} Moreover, the notion of identity politics, in many ways clouds the reality that all politics is ultimately about identification.\textsuperscript{21}

Essentially, politics is identification in the sense that what politics attempts to do is to try and make people connect with collectives or projects. As my advisor Dr. Pandeli Glavanis made clear, “from mundane administrative policies to statements of grand politics, the process of identification is central to politics.” But rather than center on fixed notions of identity, politics as identification occurs not only through ‘self-identification as’, but ‘with’, through negotiation, and ultimately involves being ‘identified as’. Identification is not the act of identifying, or identifying with, but can also include the state of being identified. In the "identity politics" of the 1980s and 1990s, a person's politics were based solidly in what one identified \textit{as}: straight woman, gay man, Asian American, and so on.\textsuperscript{22} Who one identified \textit{with}, it was presumed, was - or should be - identical to what one identified \textit{as}.\textsuperscript{23} This kind of identity politics, which was very productive in effecting important social change, has now reached an impasse. Groups of people identifying differently cannot seem to find common ground on which to work together collectively, leaving the political left divided and unable to collect into a mass force.\textsuperscript{24} Many have felt the need for a

\textsuperscript{21} Thank you to Dr. Pandeli Glavanis for making this point clear.
\textsuperscript{22} Thompson, Deborah. (2004) “Calling all Fag Hags: from Identity Politics to Identification Politics,” \textit{Social Semiotics}, Vol. 14, No. 01, April: 37 - 48
\textsuperscript{23} \textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{24} \textit{Ibid.}
new kind of identity politics that moves beyond this impasse, the politics of identification, or identification politics, has been one answer.

While groups organize identity in a postmodern sense, many are still attached to modern conceptions, such as the nation and organize through modern means such as political parties or through state power mechanisms, awakening, in the words of Yurick, nationalisms that are meant to be long gone. What my search entails, in part, is finding the modern in the postmodern and discovering the new ways in which the politics of the nation have been transformed into the politics of identification.25

Modernity, a conception based in Enlightenment thought, is meant to free people from the constraints of place, ethnic ties, cultural restraints, and religious fervor replacing them with the idea of citizenship, nationhood, and freedom. The dream of the modern era is the so-called 'end of history'; that primordial boundaries be washed away and replaced with the free movement of thoughts, goods, and ideally, people. Culture, religion, ethnicity are all despised by the modern citizen as modernity is meant to liberate the citizen through institutions, education, lifestyle, housing so that place essentially becomes everywhere. While the modern age is meant to wipe the slate clean, so to speak, it has, in reality, fortified boundary through the awakening of nationalism. In response to this failure of the modern age to rid the world of boundary, we have seen an explosion of scholarly work devoted not only to the study of the nation, and what makes the nation, but also to the unmaking of modernity, what has come to be called 'postmodern'.

While the globalization epoch should have slowly withered away the importance of national boundary, what we have seen is the rise of nationalisms and an explosive interest in what 'makes' the nation. As Kennedy & Suny discuss, modern scholarship views the nation rather than the product of national identity: nationalist discourses include demands or practices for separate political representation or territory. National identities involve the postulate of a necessary political or territorial separation, and thus are tied to specific political parties of the ethnic group. Often the autonomy desired involves further political projects, which in the modern era have been linked to modernization and industrialization and therefore a break with the traditional structures of the group. However, nationalist projects often articulate the interests of oppressed classes against colonialism and imperialism and it is therefore difficult to see them as emanating from an ethnic essence. The conditions for the development of nationalist ideologies and national liberation struggle have to be sought in the interplay of factors the group faces, in relation to ethnicity and class.9 Anthias, F. Yuval-Davis, N. (1992). Racialized Boundaries: Race, Gender, Colour, and Class and the Anti-Racist Struggle. London: Routledge: 10

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25 "Nationalism, national identity: nationalist discourses include demands or practices for separate political representation or territory. National identities involve the postulate of a necessary political or territorial separation, and thus are tied to specific political parties of the ethnic group. Often the autonomy desired involves further political projects, which in the modern era have been linked to modernization and industrialization and therefore a break with the traditional structures of the group. However, nationalist projects often articulate the interests of oppressed classes against colonialism and imperialism and it is therefore difficult to see them as emanating from an ethnic essence. The conditions for the development of nationalist ideologies and national liberation struggle have to be sought in the interplay of factors the group faces, in relation to ethnicity and class." Anthias, F. Yuval-Davis, N. (1992). Racialized Boundaries: Race, Gender, Colour, and Class and the Anti-Racist Struggle. London: Routledge: 10
perennial cultural and social forces, or the inevitable result of capitalist relations of production, or even simply as an expression of an innate ethnic or linguistic essence, the modern nation has been re-conceptualized as a community imagined by its members and leaders to require their primary allegiance – within a larger discourse in which nations, built on the people and a notion of popular sovereignty, provide the justification of claims to national rights, statehood, and territory. The fundamental problem with scholarship based in the modern perspective however is to produce the people, or make the people produce itself continually as national community, or to produce the effect of unity by virtue of which the people will appear as a people and as the basis and origin of political power. Postmodern scholarship, based largely in the cultural realm and linked to the rise of the information and media ages, the constant sense of change and impermanence, and in its extreme form, the breakdown of the barriers between reality, fiction, appearance, and imagination, interprets this age as one of malaise and uncertainty, a period in which the values of rationality and positivism that date from the Enlightenment are challenged as relativistic.

In the study of resistance movement, nationalist visions, and liberation struggles it is integral to involve a postmodern understanding of narrative, truth, language, identity, power, and culture, but it is also of importance to maintain a hint of universal understanding as to preserve meaning in a global context. In the study of Hizballah and Iran within a global template, this is will be the theoretical stance. While some authors maintain human rights as their objective universal in which subjectivities come to play very little, in the context of the Middle East, it is faith that will play that role. Whether it is the United States, Iran, Israel, or Nicaragua; religion has come back on the world stage with a ferocity, and

27 Ibid.
28 Burbach, Op. Cit. at 69
faith has come to be new break in the modern typography. God seems to be coming back to question the scientific, technological, and secular basis underlying the current system. Religion is not disappearing in our modern world, and postmodern analysis should include reference to the simultaneously universal and subjective nature of faith, cosmology, and spirituality in international politics and national imaginings today.

Articulation and Imagination

Articulation, as a methodology, carries with it a double meaning. In its dictionary sense, articulation is the act of vocal expression, utterance or enunciation. It is the manner in which speech is produced. Articulation is also the process or method by which things are joined together and a manner of joining separable parts. In sociological works, articulation has become famous through the use of the tool by authors such as Antonio Gramsci, Stuart Hall, and Richard Middleton. In theory, cultural forms and practices (Gramsci's *superstructure* and Richard Middleton's *instance* or *level of practice*) have relative autonomy; socio-economic structures of power do not determine them, but rather they relate to them. According to Middleton, the theory of articulation recognizes the complexity of cultural fields. The relationship between so-called primordial culture on the one hand and factors such as class position on the other is always problematic and the object of ideological struggle as cultural relationships and cultural change are not predetermined but the result of negotiation, imposition, resistance, and transformation. In the words of Stuart Hall, "there are no wholly separate 'cultures'...attached, in a relation of historical fixity, to specific 'whole' classes". These articulating principles operate, according to Hall, by combining existing elements into new patterns, or by attaching new connotations to them, for example, the assimilation of countercultural 1960s rock into a tradition of bourgeois bohemianism and the combination

30 "In the third world religion has been incorporating in national codes and used as a comfort and a base for mass mobilizations. Utilized for national projects as an indigenous ideology with which to confront racism, colonialism, and imperialism" Anthias & Yuval-Davis, 1992: 36
31 http://www.answers.com/topic/articulation
of elements of African-American and white working-class music with elements of art music that created
countercultural 1960s rock.33

Articulation, in its essence requires certain amounts of imagination and invention, as does the
creation of national identity or counter-identities, and the formation of resistance narratives. The domain
of imagination and invention will largely be the focus of this work and as such requires a little definition.
In terms of text book definitions, to imagine is "to form a mental image of (something not present)" and to
invent is "to think up or imagine," "to create or produce something for the first time." According to Motyl,
regardless of what these terms denote, inventing and imaging clearly connote a bringing into being of
something previously absent.34 The imaginer works by juxtaposing or combining elements in novel ways
that produce qualitatively new or otherwise nonexistent, things or situations. Motyl argues that both
invention and imagination presuppose preexisting building blocks on the one hand and their combination
and subsequent transformation by inventors and imaginers into novel end-products on the other. We
cannot invent or imagine ex nihilo. That is creation. Nor do we invent or imagine already existing things.
That is remembrance. Nor, finally, can invention or imagination occur without conscious inventors or
imaginers. In sum, Motyl argues that imagination and invention have three defining characteristics:
building blocks, conscious human agency, and novelty.35

Imagination has become almost emblematic of the debate on national identity and national
narrative. It has become almost intrinsically linked to discussions of the postcolonial era, often referenced
in terms of 'decolonizing' the imagination.36 As Parekh and Pieterse make clear, the question of
imagination is a question fundamentally linked to ideas of domination and power, language and nativism.
According to these authors, imagination is the selecting out and rearrangement of 'facts' in order to
provide coherence, framework, and seeming unity between ideas and action, or more precisely to provide

33 http://www.answers.com/topic/articulation
34 Motyl, A.J. (1999) "Inventing Invention: the Limits of National Identity Formation," in Kennedy, M.D. Suny,
R.G. (eds.) Intellectuals and the Articulation of the Nation, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 58
35 Ibid. at 59
London: Zed Books Ltd.
a basis for the direction of social relationships and the social creation of categories. When discussing imagination and invention in the context of group formation, identification, or national/resistance narrative, it is imperative to keep in mind Motyl's defining characteristics and the pre-existence of social structure, as imagination as a tool cannot imply any sense of complete invention and relies on the building blocks of the environment at hand.

**Border Guards and the Mythomoteur**

In their work, Anthias and Yuval-Davis have set forth a number of analytical tools I intend to employ in understanding the comparative place of self-proclaiming resistance narrative in a global context. Anthias and Yuval-Davis argue that on the plane of national movements, or liberation movements, a mythical unity is created and this imagined community which divides the world between 'us' and 'them' is maintained and ideological reproduced by a whole system of what Armstrong (1982) calls, symbolic 'border guards': these border guards can identify people as members or non-members of a specific collectivity. These 'border guards' are closely linked to specific cultural codes of style of dress, and behavior as well as more elaborate customs, modes of production, and of course, language and are used as shared cultural resources. This role together with a shared collective positioning vis-à-vis other collectivities, can lend such border guards to prove the membership of the collectivity not only with Andersonian 'imagined communities' but communicative communities as well. Anthias and Yuval-Davis argue that these guards are cultural resources employed in the struggles for hegemony which takes place, at any specific moment, not only between collectivities but also within them, citing that different, sometimes conflicting, cultural border guards can be used simultaneously by different members of the collectivity. One example given is the use of different *suras* from the Quran to argue for and against abortions in Egypt, with the Quran serving as the cultural border guard.

These authors argue further that although at certain historical moments there may be one hegemonic construction of the collectivity's culture and history, its dynamic, evolving, historical nature continuously re-invents, reconstructs, reproduces, and develops the cultural inventory of various collectivities. In extreme cases, they point out, these processes involve not only the redefinition of boundaries but also the complete dissolution or transformation of the collectivities and its positioning of difference vis-à-vis other collectivities citing two such examples, the 'absorption' of East Germany into the 'new Germany', and the evolving category of African American. Other more pertinent examples to this work is the evolving identity of 'Lebanese' vis-à-vis an increasingly 'otherized; Syria post-Cedar Revolution.

Anthias and Yuval-Davis continue on introducing the conception of the 'mythomoteur'. The ability to communicate more easily among members of the same collectivity, derives not only from a common sharing of cultural forms, Motyl's 'building blocks' and Parekh and Pietrese's preceding social structure. On a deeper level, Anthias and Yuval-Davis continue, communication and understanding persists due to the fact that national cultures can supply the answers to some basic human questions regarding one's position in the world: the meaning of history, what proper behavior is and so on. This is done through the absorption on conscious and unconscious levels of what Smith (1986) calls, 'the mythomoteur': that is the constitutive myth of the ethnic polity which describes how and why the collectivity was created, why it is unique, and what its mission is. Although this constitutive myth would have different versions among different classes and segments within the collectivity, it would be continuously narrated and serves a valid purpose in the direction of this paper. Who and what are the border guards in the latest Hizballah movement? What is the mythomoteur of the Hizballah movement, or in Iranian nationalism? What connects today’s neo-leftist movements emerging in Latin American to the Islamist movements of today such as Hizballah?

As Anthias and Yuval-Davis make clear, the questions dealt with by the mythomoteur parallel very closely the general questions about the meaning of life and beyond, which are most often answered by religious systems. As we have discussed earlier, nationalism was meant to replace religion and as such it

40 Ibid. at 34
is not surprising that modernist theorists of nationalism anticipated such a development. Religion was to wither away in an increasingly secularized world (Anderson 1983). The reality of course is different. Religion in the form of liberation theology, religious fundamentalism, and even in national discourse, continues to rise all over the world.41 Religious ethics continue to underlie the moral order of nationalist social codes; this together with the failures of the modernists enlightenment project has raised many fears of further secularization.42 The crisis of secularism and modernity has hit, and past, and now there are new crises facing the marginalized of the world-system. How does Islamism deal with these questions? Chapter one will place Islamism within this accommodated framework and attempt to quickly place our debate within the literature concerning Political Islam and third worldism.

41 Ibid.
42 Ibid. at 36
CHAPTER ONE
DECIPHERING THE PALIMPSEST:
Islamism in the Twenty-First century

Religion. Modernity. Secularism. Post-modernity. These words stand in unclear opposition in today’s world, being as they are, negotiated and re-negotiated in real time. Questions as to the place of religion in an increasingly secularizing world dominate the research scene and often these unclear oppositions are being confronted through the lens of Islam; are human rights and Islam compatible, can democracy flourish in the Middle East, where do religious symbols and affiliations fit in notions of a secular world, what role to Islamists play in domestic politics, where does universalism end and begin? These are just some of the prevailing questions in the debate involving notions of religion and secularism, post-modernity, modernity and tradition, all revolving around the confrontation of Islam with the so-called West. These ‘civilization’ debates, made prominent by the work of Samuel Huntington and the well-spring of debate it unleashed both on the popular and academic front, center on the compatibility of modern institutions of power, control, and governance with various forms of excluded cultural, political, social, and economic life, marginalized from the prevailing discourse by a variety of factors. Notions of identity, inclusion and exclusion, and collective identity thus become central to how we understand conflict in the Post-Cold War world. The analysis of Hizballah and the Islamic Republic of Iran will be no different.

Islamism in Review
Islam is one of the fastest growing religions worldwide and beyond spirituality has come to be the defining factor marking opposition to the prevailing world order in our Post-Cold War reality. With that in mind, we must begin with a discussion and introduction of prevailing research in the study of political Islam and Islamism. Through this discussion I intend to piece together the theoretical frame that will be used to trace, analyze, and interpret the developments of Islamic movements throughout this work.
As Azza Karam and Ziauddin Sardar have poignantly discussed, Islam is a complex, ambiguous term, conventionally used to describe religion, history, culture, civilization and worldview of Muslims but also has been impregnated with stereotypes and post-modern notions of identity and boundaries. The diversity of Muslim peoples, cultures, and interpretations, with their baggage of colonial history and post-colonial present, has transformed Islam into a powerful global force, one which both authors agree is transforming the international present so much so it warrants a book series which they jointly edit titled *Critical Studies in Islam*.

Over the years, many have tried to represent Islamism and the numerous terms used to describe the movements are evidence of the phenomenon’s’ intriguing complexity. Political Islam is not a uniform monolithic phenomenon, as Ayoob has argued, the political manifestation of Islam, like the practice of Islam itself, is to a great extent context-specific and is the result of the interpenetration of religious precepts and local culture, including political culture. The movement, Islamism, has been defined for practical and analytical purposes as, “a form of instrumentalization of Islam by individuals, groups and organizations that pursue political objectives. It provides political responses to today’s societal challenges by imaging a future, the foundations of which rest on re-appropriated, reinvented concepts borrowed from the Islamic tradition.” But it has also been infused by various meanings and taken on many manifestations. Due to the intricacy of this religious movement, the literature on the subject has been subject to great controversy and debate. Here I will only go briefly into an account of general trends in the field relevant to our study.

Prevailing accounts of Islamism have been inclined towards overarching generalizations about the nature and dynamics of Islamist movements leaning towards a few general trends. One such trend is the tendency to reify both Islam as a religion and Islamism as a political project by overlooking variations over time in religious perceptions, practice and institutions among divergent segments of the population.

44 Ayoob, *Op. Cit.* at 953
within a given society and between different Muslim countries. A dynamic and changing view of the movements is often overshadowed by a static vision in which Islamist movements are presented as highly homogenous and coherent social units which are to be identified by the discourse of their ideologues. There is little interest in this body of scholarship in dissecting the movements to uncover their constituent layers and orientations. This methodology lends itself to monolithic and totalizing narratives as they ignore and even suppress other narratives.

The second school of interpretation presents Islamism as a manifestation of, and reaction to, post-modernity. In this framework the movements represent a quest for difference, cultural autonomy, alternative polity and morality versus the universalizing secular modern. To Foucault and many others, the Iranian revolution was the ‘first post-modern revolution of our time’, signaling, for Giddens ‘the crisis of modernity’ or the ‘exclusion of the excluders’ as Castells formulated it. To Esposito, the Iranian revolution signaled a ‘quest for identity, authenticity, and community, and a desire to establish meaning and order in both personal life and society’. While many represent Islamist movements such as the Iranian revolution as post-modern manifestations, others point to how Islamism in this approach manifests a search for certainty in a ‘uncertain world,’ while attempting to, in many ways, restore to the post-modern world meaning, morality and order which is perceived to be lost.

This ‘crisis of secularism,’ or ‘reaction to the universalizing secular modern,’ most often presents or describes as a persistent battle against the state. Scholars such as Ayoob and Harik have argued for the

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46 One example of such scholarship is found when Anthony Parsons distinguishes the Islamic revolution from other revolutions by claiming that the ‘bulk of the Shi’i population of Iran knew what they did not want (the continuation of Pahlavi rule) and what they did want (a government controlled by religious leadership, the historical guardians of the Islamic tradition’). Parsons, Anthony. (1988) “The Iranian Revolution”, Middle East Review, Spring, pp 3 – 9 found in: Bayat, Asef. (2005) “Islamism and Social Movement Theory,” Third World Quarterly, Vol. 26, No. 06


52 Bayat, Op. Cit. at 894
appeal of Islam through the lens of this crisis of modernity. Such authors maintain that Islam has been met with such great resonance within widely divergent Muslim societies due to the failure of secular, nationalist projects in the immediate post-colonial years to provide, dignity, freedom, power or wealth to most Muslims around the world. Secular governments throughout the region have generally failed to deliver on the promises of social justice and political modernization throughout the development of the Modern Middle Eastern state and have compounded this failure with deliberate attempts to quell popular Islamist movements since their inception.

The states role in the development, appeal, and popularity of Islamist movements is an important factor to consider when thinking about conceptions such as the ‘crisis of Modernity’ or ‘Secularism’. As Ayoob as argued, the nature of a state’s regime acts as an independent variable in determining the degree of popularity political Islam is able to garner. In Syria, in the 1970s, the secularization of the political system provoked violent response from the local branch of the Muslim Brotherhood. This confrontation occurred after period of political upheaval both domestically and regionally for Syria. The formation of the secular Ba’ath party came at a time when Gamal Abdul Nasser was leading a pan-Arab movement unifying countries across cultural rather than religious lines with the central purpose of countering Israel and the United States and to put an end to western domination. Syria had also domestically suffered from a series of coup d’etats, an enormous defeat in 1948, and an abortive effort to from a union with Egypt in 1962. Assad took power after a second crushing defeat in 1967 after which the Muslim brotherhood decided to attempt to destabilize his government through assassinations, attacks, and other violent means. Assad responded with an Iron Fist through legal action at first, dealing the final blow in the three week battle of Hamah in 1982.

53 Ayoob, *Op. Cit* at 958
54 Harik, *Op. Cit.* at 20
razed the area and rapidly repaved it. Political Islam was thus wiped from history in Syria and for obvious reasons has remained low profile ever since.\(^{60}\)

Iran went similar crisis of secularism in terms of the importance and violent outcome of the movement but in this case the fundamentalist triumphed and the Shah’s secular regime was replaced with an Islamic republic.\(^{61}\) Egypt in the 1970s went through its own version of events as Arab socialism failed to deliver on its oath of economic development and social injustice and secularism only fanned the flames of discontent. The assassination of Sadat after his controversial and historic peace deal with long time enemy Israel in 1977 is only the most prominent example of this resurgence and its relations to state policy.

Today, it is important to keep in mind, we see many manifestations that this trend is changing and more often than not Islamism is not articulated as trying to replace secular regimes, but rather, Islamist parties have often been willing to work with, adapt, change, and accommodate with secular and corrupt regimes, waving the banner of democratization and good governance higher than many regional governments. The recent sweep of Islamist wins at the ballot box throughout the region is indicative of this changing trend.

Authors, such as Dowell & Burgat among others, depict this modern/post-modern dynamic on an international level differently, describing Islamist movements in the Middle East and North Africa as the third (after political and economic) wave of anti-colonial struggles involving discursive struggles against Western modernity including struggles for cultural identity and independence focusing less on notions of secularism than on geopolitical imbalances of power.\(^{62}\) Bayat argues for the plausibility of such representations given the global conditions in which most of these movements emerged and the discourses of such Islamist leaders as Abul-ala Mawdudi, Ayatollah Khomeini, Ali Shariati, Musa Sadr,

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\(^{60}\) *Ibid.*

\(^{61}\) Harik, *Op. Cit.* at 15

and Sayed Qutb. Mawdudi’s concept of Jahiliya, a society characterized by the worship of man by man and the sovereignty of man over man, had been taken up by Sayyed Qutb in Egypt, Abdul Salaam Yassin in Morocco and Ali Shariati in Iran, among others, in order to lash out at Western liberalism, secular nationalism and imperialism, which include in Yassin’s view, the tarnish of the Enlightenment, reform, nationalism and rationality.

Moreover, the international power structure, especially policies maintained by the major powers and, in the post-Cold War world, the United States unrivalled power and the policies that flow from it have left an ‘indelible mark on the psyche of Muslims,’ a fact which Islamist movements ‘exploit’ according to Ayoob. This, a result of colonial processes and the post-colonial period of consolidation and economic gains has left the impression of a international system heavily tilted against Muslim countries. The major powers are seen as keeping Muslim societies where they are today, characterized as maintaining deliberately anti-Muslim policies with Palestine becoming the Muslim grievance par excellence. Many scholars point to key historic moments that have left lasting imprints on the collective ‘Muslim’ memory ranging from the overthrow of PM Mossadegh in 1953, the British-French-Israeli invasion of Egypt in 1956, the U.S.’ role in the Iraq-Iran War, the ‘West’s’ partnership with Israel, and the support extended by western powers to hated authoritarian regimes in the Muslim world today.

Shi’a Islam: Methodological Problems

There is one final trend I would like to discuss before moving on. Much of the literature on political Islam suffers from a ‘Sunni-centered’ orientation, focusing narrowly on Sunni interpretations of Islam to the deficient of other orientations, such as Shi’ism. One example is Ayoob’s work. While insightful and useful, Ayoob generalizes tendency’s of Islamist movements at one point arguing that, “the re-appropriation of the past, the invention of tradition, in terms of a romanticized notion of a largely

64 Ayoob, *Op. Cit.* at 958
mythical golden age, lies at the heart of (Islamist) instrumentalization; it is the invention of tradition that provides the tools for de-historicizing Islam, separating it from the various context in terms of time and space.” While this may be true for many Sunni orientated movements, for Shi’a based organizations this generality does not hold. To use the example of Hizbullah, with the exception of the brief period of the rule of Imam ‘Ali and even briefer duration of Imam Hassan’s caliphate, the Party of God does not consider any other Shi’ite government, whether dynasty or empire, as worthy of emulation.68

What is more, the Party does not regard any period in Shi’ite history as a ‘Golden Age’ to which it aspires to return. As Saad-Ghorayeb describes, this is the principle difference between the Sunni and Shi’ite exemplary Islamic state in political Islam; while Sunnis seek to recreate the Golden age comprising of the righteously guiding caliphs, the Shi’ites do not strive to return to ‘the historical period of the Prophet or the periods that followed.’69 The Shi’a conceptualization of the Islamic state has no historical precedent in their Islamic jurisprudence but rather, can be best described as an Utopia which has yet to be fulfilled based on Shi’i belief in the *Mahdi* or ‘Hidden Imam’ – who is believed to be in occultation *ghayba* since 874 CE and whose eventual return and reappearance will lead to justice and just rule on earth.70 It is at this point, in the future, that the Islamic state can be established.71

Another argument oft repeated in Sunni-centered texts is the idea that “Islamists favorite target of attack are the traditional interpreters of Islam, the *Ulema* and scholars trained in Islamic theology.”72 Many Sunni oriented groups have focused on traditional sources of interpretation as the problem in the modern practice of Islam, portraying the *Ulema* as having succumbed to western powers and being obsessed with personal glory and political power.73 “It is no coincidence that very few of the leading Islamist figures are drawn from the ranks of the *Ulama,*” Ayoob contends, arguing further than most Islamist leaders began their careers in modern professions, such as secular education, journalism, and

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69 Ibid.
70 Ibid.
71 This concept of passive expectancy has been slightly modified through Ayatollah Khomeini’s political philosophy which allows for a more active role during the occultation of the Hidden Imam.
72 Ayoob, *Op. Cit.* at 952
73 Ibid.
engineering.74 Shi’a Islam in its political manifestation, again, does not fit into this mold. Shi’i revolutionary tendencies stem from ‘new’ interpretations coming from the highest authority in their religious tradition. Political Islam from Shi’i sources, unlike Sunni movements, greatly involves the activism, control, and participation of clerics and traditional interpreters of religion. The leadership of Hizballah, all clerics, combine their esoteric and spiritual qualities with modern professions and political careers; leaders are at once doctors, engineers, spiritual guides, fathers, and politicians, combing the traditional, modern and postmodern all in one.

Iran is also, ‘the exception to this rule in Muslim world’ according to Ayoob, in the sense that the Islamist movement was led by radical elements from the clergy rather than lay intellectuals and activist.75 While movements inspired by lay intellectuals, such as the late Ali Shariati, contributed to the revolutionary process, they were quickly sidelines by the better-organized Ulama who had greater financial resources and grassroots support among the bazaris, the traditional merchant class, and among the masses of the underprivileged in Urban Iran.76 The central position of the Shi’a ulama, as the vanguard of revolutionary struggle and social change, has been attributed to the institutions perceived independence from political rulers and tyrants and a closeness to the oppressed Shi’a masses.77 One example is the Lebanese Shi’a ulama, under guidance from Ayatollah Khomeini, rejection of the Western model of secularism as well as sectarianism, especially within the context of Lebanon’s political system, taking a queue from an established religious authority.78

Towards a Methodology

A continuing and connected criticism of the study of the narratives of Islamism is its exclusion from conventional social science perspectives. Many scholars of Islamism have either treated the phenomenon

74 Ibid.
75 Ayoob, Op. Cit. at 957 footnote 1
76 Ibid.
78 Ibid.
simply in terms of religious revivalism, an expression of primordial loyalties, or as ‘something peculiar’ and unique which cannot be analyzed through conventional social science perspectives. In fact, until recently, Islamism had been excluded from the mode of inquiry developed by social movement theorists in the West. Now with its recent inclusion in the study of social movements, research in Islamism has expanded both in depth and quantity but it has not necessary improved.

The use of articulation as a methodology, incorporating Gramsci’s notion of hegemony, is instrumental in avoiding structuralist and class-based pitfalls when researching social movements with anti-systemic leanings, while providing the subaltern with agency, voice, and a method to interact with the hegemonic system surrounding them. Stuart Hall's theory of articulation conceptualizes the conjunctures at which people knit together disparate and apparently contradictory practices, beliefs, and discourses in order to give their world some semblance of meaning and coherence; in other words, articulation theory, describes how people make a unity which is neither necessary nor previously determined.

By using Gramsci's theory of hegemony and Ernesto Laclau's argument regarding class or social location, articulation theory, Hall argues has, "enabled us to think how an ideology empowers people, enabling them to make some sense or intelligibility of their historical situation, without reducing those forms of intelligibility to their socio-economic or class location or social position". As Laclau and

81 Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe (1986) argue that the concept of hegemony was originally tied to “an essentialist logic” in which only one authentic historical subject, “the working class,” was able to develop truly counter-hegemonic policies and practices. In their view, such a logic, rather than advancing the project of social change and social justice, covered over and obstructed multiple forms of struggle developed by several groups and social movements (e.g., those developed by indigenous peoples, ethnic groups, women, ecologists, human rights activists), which could not be reduced to or categorized according to the exclusive basis of the class position of their members. However, instead of throwing the baby out with the bathwater, Laclau and Mouffe propose to free the concept of hegemony of any kind of essentialism and reappropriate the potentially emancipatory characteristics of the concept in Fischman, Gustavo E. McLaren, Peter. (2005) “Rethinking Critical Pedagogy and the Gramscian Freirean Legacies,” Cultural Studies - Critical Methodologies, Vol. 05. No. 04, pp 425-447.
Mouffe maintain, “hegemony entails a de-totalizing logic of articulation and contingency that refuses the conception of the a priori unity or the progressive character of the working class or any other subject position. Rather, cultural and political identities are never given in advance, but must be constituted or articulated, from diverse elements.”

The same can be said of religiously-bound identities as Hizballah’s transformation, described in chapter six, makes clear.

Hall’s use of the term articulation, as argued by Fischman & McLaren presents a theoretic means by which the double emphasis of Gramsci - that is, the emphasis on culture and structure and on ideology and material social relations - may be joined. What this double movement through the concept of articulation has achieved is the ability to conceptualize class and cultural struggles as interwoven and richly articulated. Thus, when one examines ideologies such as Islamism one must not look for smooth lines of articulation or a set of seamless canonical ideas, but rather, a regime of culture existing as a palimpsest of emergent and residual discourses, re-written continuously, one layer over the other. The point for Hall is that one can connect cultural practices to social formation - only not in advance. Articulation is always a matter of struggle in a war of positions where nothing is certain ahead of time but rather a matter of practice; no outcome can be guaranteed, as it is in orthodox Marxism, by the laws of history but must be determined concretely at specific conjunctures of history. Trimbur argues that by refusing the ‘scientistic metanarrative of orthodox Marxism’ and denying the necessary correspondence between practice and class location, Hall poses instead the quite practical yet crucial analytical question: "under what circumstances can a connection be forged or made" among particular ideologies, political subjects, cultural practices, and social movements and institutions?

It is precisely this question that is relevant to the study of Islamism as an articulated force. The workings of articulation, as Hall describe them, names those historical moments at which certain ideas are uttered and combined (sometimes by severing ideological elements from their conventional uses and

84 Ibid.
86 Ibid.
recombining them with other elements) into material forces capable of binding subjects together in social identities and movements. Hall holds on to the Marxist project of theorizing a complex unity of the social formation, but rather than relating base to superstructure instead he proposes a fractured or articulated totality in which people make their own history, only under conditions not of their making.88

The question thus becomes how leaders/populaces articulate the narratives of their lives and experience and in turn, relate this narrative and link it other discourses, practices, subjectivities, and institutions. Islamism is not simply dictated by primordial cultural ties, nor pre-determined by socio-economic conditions. It is neither an expression of repressive state control nor the sole domain of charismatic leaders through the cult of personality. Islamism is an articulated social movement evolving in struggle over time through periods of specificity adjusting and incorporating different and often contrasting elements into larger religious identities. Historical moments are important, as are changing visions of political and ideological identification. In Lebanon, the incessant renegotiation of the constitutive myth – the national identity – has opened a vast space for the articulation of meaning and identity as hegemony is disputed by the popular and the powerful at once. For Islamic movements, this makes Lebanon the ideal ground to explore the shifts in articulated meaning over time as the hegemonic constitutive myth changes the historic moment.

If, as shown above, the Islamist movements are internally fluid, fragmented, and differentiated, then what binds these fragments together? After all, unity of purpose and action is a hallmark, indeed a defining feature of a social movement.89 And, as argued by Bayat, ‘shared’ interests and values, along side social class, are invariably proposed to account for the elements which bring actors together for a united purpose.90 In what way, then, is commonality assured, consensus built and solidarity achieved among differentiated actors? Consensus may be achieved not simply by actors’ ‘real’ understanding of their shared interests, but also by imagining commonality with others, in the Andersonian sense of the

87 Trimbur, Op. Cit.
88 Ibid.
90 Ibid.
word but also, as coined by Bayat, through ‘imagined solidarities.’ In reality, individuals often carry various fields of interests in various domains of life - at the individual, family or national levels, in economic, political, intellectual or moral terrains. Groups’ interests may converge in some domains but diverge and contradict in others. Experiences in the evolution of the Islamic Republic of Iran and in the development of Hizballah’s social movement and organization exemplify in many ways the fluidity, fragmentation, and contradiction involved in coalition building and identity formation not only in Islamist movements but in social movements in general.

Participants in a social movement often espouse not totally shared, but ‘partially shared’ interests; unlike the 19th century working class movements which enjoyed, according to Laclau and Mouffe, the ‘synchronous unity of subject positions’ (that is, convergence of total interests due to class affiliation), participants in the contemporary social movements come from diverse backgrounds and experiences, and do not in that sense form a coherent unit. Yet certain fields of their interests and values may converge over a particular issue or grievance, border guards as I will come to call them. And it is these ‘partially shared’ interests or values, identified and negotiated as border guards that ensure collectivity.

Identifying the experiences, ethics, morality, issues, symbols that bond and bind disparate communities and actors in common cause is no simple concern, seeing that Islam in and of itself cannot be seen as the single unifying factor. Border guards combined with the conception of the 'mythomoteur' as described by Anthias and Yuval-Davis are the key methodological tools to identifying unifying factors within articulated social movements. As previously discussed these border guards can identify people as members or non-members of a specific collectivity through various modes of production, together with a shared positioning vis-à-vis other collectivities and are cultural resources employed in the struggles for hegemony which takes place, at any specific moment, not only between collectivities but also within

91 Ibid.
them. These ‘cultural dimensions of social movements’ may indicate spontaneous gravitation towards shared action or it may signify a “conscious strategic efforts by groups of people to fashion shared understandings of the world and of themselves that legitimate and motivate collective action,” either way border guards are negotiated and change alongside the mythomoteur and the actors involved.\textsuperscript{94}

Border guards may point to deliberate measures by movement leaders to fashion consensus by utilizing existing resources, techniques, means of communication and networking.\textsuperscript{95} Thus, Islamist leaders in the Middle East frame their movements in mainly religious terms utilizing Islamic codes and concepts as well as resources, such as concepts of martyrdom, the sovereignty of God, haram/halal (religiously forbidden or allowed), or the use of mosques, ceremonies, or zakat committees for mobilization purposes.\textsuperscript{96} In Iran leaders of the Reform Movement used the language of democracy, accountability, transparency and tolerance to demarcate their followers from other previous movements.\textsuperscript{97} The emphasis remains on the use of religious or democratic symbols and resources for the cause of mobilization and coalition creation, as well as towards some political goal or end.

Anthias and Yuval-Davis argue that although at certain historical moments there may be one hegemonic construction of the collectivity's culture and history, its dynamic, evolving, historical nature continuously re-invents, reconstructs, reproduces, and develops the cultural inventory of various collectivities. In extreme cases, they point out, these processes involve not only the redefinition of boundaries but also the complete dissolution or transformation of the collectivities and its positioning of difference vis-à-vis other collectivities. There are many examples of Islamist movements comprised of


\textsuperscript{94} McAdam, D. McCarthy, J. Zald, M. (1996)(eds) Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp 6

\textsuperscript{95} An example is Hizb al-Amal in Egypt, which slandered the allegedly immoral novel, A Banquet for Seaweeds, by the Syrian author, Haydar Haydar, to instigate religious outrage among ordinary Muslims. The conservative Islamists in Iran also apply similar methods of characterizing the discourse and behavior of their adversaries as un-Islamic. For instance, in their struggle against the reform government of President Khatami, they have ruled that dialogue with the USA as haram, or religiously forbidden. Hizballah’s reaction to Rafik Hariri’s citing of resistance activities as ‘instigation’ during the Paris I conference is another example of the creation of border guards not only for mobilizational purposes but as political demarcation lines.


\textsuperscript{97} Bayat, Op. Cit. at 902

\textsuperscript{98} Ibid.
diverse actors yet unifying through particular interests and common vision. Egyptian Islamism of the 
1950s and 1970s exhibited such a convergence, based upon ‘partially shared’ interests and values on the 
part of its diverse constituencies, including the modern middle classes, some businessmen, the farmers of 
Upper Egypt, students, youth and women, who all seemed to be interested in some kind of change and 
were willing to negotiate periphery issues in exchange for an opportunity to change.98 The border guard 
here being the will to change.

The same was true of the Hizballah movement in Lebanon before the Israeli withdrawal from 
southern Lebanon and again recently in the post-July war scenario. Some Christians and Sunni Muslims, 
in addition to Shi’ites, supported (financially and otherwise) Hizballah’s resistance efforts in the south 
against the Israeli occupation, but refused to support the movement’s Islamization programme.99 Today a 
coalition of forces are lining up again to protect the border guard that is the resistance, unifying under a 
generalized yet articulated image of Lebanese identity. Sharing partial interests also characterized Iran’s 
Reform Movement of the late 1990s which consisted of a broad coalition of some eighteen political 
groupings, professional associations, student organizations, women’s groups and intellectual figures with 
diverse ideological and religious tendencies ranging from socially conservative clerics, to moderates, 
liberals and secularists.100 All these actors seemed to agree on the movement’s general ideals, becoming 
the border guards of the movement; an emphasis on democracy, the rule of law, civil society and 
tolerance.101 Islamism cannot simply be ascribed to phenomenon’s based on social class, economic 
disadvantage, religious revivalism, or a history of colonial struggle. As we have discussed it is an 
articulated movement, and part of that creation and negotiation occurs through the propagation of a 
‘mythomoteur’.

Anthias and Yuval-Davis introduce the conception of the 'mythomoteur' arguing that the ability to 
communicate more easily among members of the same collectivity derives not only from a common

98 Bayat, Op. Cit. at 902
99 Ibid.
100 Ibid.
101 Ibid.
sharing of cultural forms. On a deeper level, the authors continue, communication and understanding persists due to the fact that national cultures and social movements can supply the answers to some basic human questions regarding one's position in the world: the meaning of history, what proper behavior is and so on. This is done through the absorption on conscious and unconscious levels of what Smith (1986) calls, 'the mythomoteur': that is the constitutive myth of the ethnic polity which describes how and why the collectivity was created, why it is unique, and what its mission is. Although this constitutive myth would have different versions among different classes and segments within the collectivity, it would be continuously narrated and negotiated through time.

Just as in the case of the nation which is imagined differently by ‘its fragments’, social movements’ actors also imagine common aims and objectives not in the same fashion, but differentially. One of Anderson's greatest critics, Partha Chatterjee, has argued against Anderson's modular nationalism, and the same holds true for Islamist social movements. Just as Arab modernity and nationalism cannot be seen as simply a western invention or imitated form, social movements are imagined differently by their various participants, each one negotiating with the ‘mythomoteur’ to find their own meaning within the border guards. As Chatterjee has said in response to Anderson's work on nationalism:

If nationalisms in the rest of the world have to choose their imagined community from certain "modular" forms already made available to them by Europe and the Americas, what do they have left to imagine? History, it would seem, has decreed that we in the postcolonial world shall only be perpetual consumers of modernity. Europe and the Americas, the only true subjects of history, have thought out on our behalf not only the script of colonial enlightenment and exploitation, but also that of our anti-colonial resistance and postcolonial misery. Even our imaginations must remain forever colonized.

Authors such as Albert Hourani seem to make the same claim that Chatterjee so passionately argues against, that the modernity of the Middle East is not simply an imitation and further that anti-colonial agitation cannot simply be considered a clone of earlier forms or a reaction to a stable, homogenous unilateral process of development. Diverse participants tend to converge on generalities, but are left to imagine the specifics. Such imagining by the different fragments is by no means carried out in

102 Anthias & Yuval-Davis, Op. Cit. at 34
homogeneous fashion. Fragmented actors therefore render imagined solidarity, the social movement, a negotiated entity or ‘contested imagining,’ similar to the notion of the mythomoteur. As described previously, the mythomoteur can have different symbolic weight during various periods of time, and noting such shifts alongside the border guards that indicate them may assist in describing what it is that binds Islamist movements together.

Who and what are the border guards in the latest Hizballah movement? What is the mythomoteur of the Hizballah movement or in Iranian nationalism and how has it transformed over time adapting to historical periods? What connects today’s neo-leftist movements emerging in Latin America to the Islamist movements of today such as Hizballah and the Islamic Republic of Iran? It is these such questions that may be answered through the search for a mythomoteur and identification of border guards which may assist in answering questions concerning the unity and functionalism of Islamist movements.

Given the fragmented nature of contemporary social movements, including Islamism, a plausible narrative would take account of the heterogeneous layers of perceptions, discourses and practices within a given movement. A totalizing discourse suppresses the variations in people’s perceptions about change, diversity is screened, conflicts belittled, and instead a grand united language is emphasized. This account will not. It will include all the contradictions, abstractions, shifts and changes as suppression of difference by the dominant voice of the leadership, scholarship - or opposition for that matter - usually works against the concern of the ordinary, the powerless, the poor, minorities, women and other subaltern elements. So while relying on charismatic leadership is hard to avoid, writing in the subaltern, while difficult, may begin by including the contradictions.

\[105\text{ Ibid.}\]
\[106\text{ Bayat, Op. Cit at 905}\]
CHAPTER TWO
LEBANON AND IRAN CONNECTED

Events of the last two decades have compelled the media to reduce the Iranian-Lebanese connection to the support afforded by some centers of power within the Islamic Republic of Iran to the Lebanese militant group Hizballah.\(^{107}\) While the Hizballah connection indeed constitutes a qualitative leap in the history of Lebanese-Iranian relations, as it represents the successful transplant in a Lebanese native form of Iranian-conceived institutions and provided the means of influencing the evolution of both Lebanese internal politics and the Middle East, the Party of God represents not only the potential of exporting the Islamic Revolution but the limitations as well, proving the difficulties of steering exportation along preconceived lines.\(^{108}\) While the unique nature of the Hizballah experiment in Iranian-Lebanese relations has to be recognized, it must be viewed against the background of previous contacts between Iran, as a society and a state, and the lands that constitute Lebanon today. The relationship between the Lebanese State and the Iranian state, the Shi’a of Lebanon and the Shi’a of Iranian, and the connections between institutions of learning in the two respective states cannot be boiled down to one movement and in fact, is a spectacular representation of an articulated relationship manifesting in various forms in different times.

Defining Iran and Lebanon

To begin our discussion of this complex, layered, and changing relationship we must begin again with definition and a delineation of our time period. When discussing ‘ancient’ connections, definition of states and their territories becomes precious in that states of shift, not only in terms of territory but in terms of memory. Chehabi & Mneimneh argue that while there does exist a Persian presence in the land that has today become known as Lebanon during antiquity – they leave little trace in the Lebanese popular memory and where they are recalled, such as encounters with Sassanian rulers in the Levant or during the


time of the Phoenicians, they belong to the realm of ‘recovered’ history rather than ‘remembered’ history (as defined by Bernard Lewis 1975). These authors argue that too many discontinuities separate such ancient ties from the historical memory of today’s Lebanese for them to be relevant while they do leave traces in contemporary cultural practice. For this reason I have taken as our starting point in the discussion of historical ties between Iran and Lebanon, the migration of Shi’i scholars from Jabal ‘Amil to Iran under the Safavid auspices in the sixteenth century as this is the earliest Iranian-‘Lebanese’ link to have had ramifications that are tangible in current historical memory. Moreover, it was around AD 1500 that both countries took shape in their present form more or less. This initial contact through the emigration of the scholars of Jabal ‘Amil was only the beginning of centuries of cooperation, exchange, negotiation, and contact between not only the two States but the populations as well.

With an established state tradition stretching for centuries, and building upon an imperial tradition that pre-dates Islam, Iran has provided a considerable portion of the political and cultural legacy of the Islamic civilization, and entered the modern Middle East as a major regional power. When considering the roots of the Modern Republic of Iran, Shah Isma’il’s coronation in 1501 stands out as an important break point. Shah Isma’il began a state-building process that resulted in a political/geographic entity of which the Islamic Republic of Iran is the latest avatar converting the originally Sunni population, to an esoteric and messianic form of Shi’ism espoused by the Safavid order and popular at the time among the Turkoman tribes of Anatolia. The Safavid dynasty gained power through the help of these tribes, the Qizilbash, and it was at this point that then Shah Isma’il established the more orthodox Ithna-‘ashari (twleve) Shi’ism as the official religion of the new state, in many ways beginning the trajectory of Modern state of Iran. Soon the influence of the Qizilbash declined due to a variety of reasons and since the state was still mostly Sunni, the Safavids called on Arab ulema from Jabal ‘Amil, Mesopotamia, and

109 Chehabi & Mneimneh, Op. Cit. at 3
111 Chehabi & Mneimneh, Op. Cit. at 3
112 Chehabi & Mneimneh, Op. Cit. at 46
113 Chehabi & Mneimneh, Op. Cit. at 3
114 Ibid.
Bahrain to help create a clerical infrastructure, leading to the earliest instance of a ‘remembered’
historical connection between ‘Iran’ and ‘Lebanon’.\textsuperscript{115} It should be noted that Iranian historiography tends
to be dominated by cultural determinists and nationalist scholars who consider legalitic Shi’ism
‘endemically’ alien to Iranian intellectual and cultural landscape, and denounce Arab ‘Amili hegemony
over religious life and the imposition of clerical discipline.\textsuperscript{116} Others, such as Abisaab argue that ‘Amili
émigré scholars took on a new life in Iran not due to a ‘Syrian’ or ‘Arab’ reality or cultural traits but the
realities and needs of the Safavid state, social demand of the society, and the professional ambitions of the
clerics themselves.

Defining Lebanon and the roots of the modern state is a much more complicated problem. Five
centuries ago there was no territorial jurisdiction called Lebanon. Scholarship on Lebanon, both local and
international, has striven with uneven success, to establish a uniqueness and continuity in Lebanese
history often reducing and marginalizing the histories of the adjacent areas which today are crucial
components of Lebanon, including Jabal ‘Amil, the core area of Shi’i presence.\textsuperscript{117} That being true, it is
however conservative and productive to place the origins of the modern Lebanon, as a polity and society,
in the closing era of Mamluk rule and the beginnings of Ottoman rule – conveniently, roughly the same
period as Safavid rule.\textsuperscript{118} In fact the debate about Lebanon’s beginnings is still unresolved, some argue for
a maximalist interpretation proclaiming a moral continuity stretching from a presumed Phoenician golden
age through successive ‘occupations’ to the phoenix-like resurrection of greater Lebanon. Others prefer a
minimalist approach, portraying the creation of a modern nation-state of Lebanon as a mere artifact of
French colonialism. Either way, the interpretation of Lebanon’s historic inception has been largely
understood by most in the field as politically motivated myth histories. This does not aid in the fact that
Lebanese historiography remains today an unformed body of inconsistent materials.

\textsuperscript{115} Chehabi & Mneimneh, \textit{Op. Cit.} at 4
\textsuperscript{116} Chehabi & Mneimneh, \textit{Op. Cit.} at 7-8
\textsuperscript{117} Chehabi & Mneimneh, \textit{Op. Cit.} at 46
\textsuperscript{118} \textit{Ibid.}
Chehabi & Mneimneh point to a few main problems concerning the historiography of Lebanon. One such problem is the lack of consensus about any useful periodization that would chronicle the rise of antecedents to modern Lebanese society. Another is the reality of center-periphery bias in historical writings concerning Lebanon, in which Mount Lebanon (with or without Beirut) is favored while the other regions that were indeed made peripheral in 1920 through their annexation to the petit Liban are not included as equal partners in the standard historical narratives. The history of the Lebanese Shi’i community is recently being rehabilitated after years of being written as though subsidiary to or derivative of the main currents that merge into ‘Lebanese’ historical narrative; a narrative, as described by Chehabi & Mneimneh, that effectively elevates the Maronite community, or alternatively the Sunni communities, to the status or sole or main agents in Lebanese history. This rehabilitation should be regarded as expressions of a claim to historical agency by a community denied any central role in national history. And finally, there is the problem of introducing a Lebanese regional context through a projection of nation-state relations into the past. Considering the above, it is useful to note that any choice of formative period for Lebanon’s modern history is a compromise and that any reference to Lebanon should be understood as a reference to the regions that became Lebanon in 1920.

That being said, the Druze emirate of Mount Lebanon under Ottoman rule and its relative power and influence, constitutes a point of departure for modern Lebanon, a choice bolstered by the fact that the main episode of contact between Iran and Jabal ‘Amil belongs to this era. Today Jabal ‘Amil or ‘Amila is located in Southern Lebanon, but from the medieval to the early modern period it comprised the region of southern Mount Lebanon and upper Galilee in Palestine. It is significant to note than in the fifteenth century, the application of the term ‘Amili was extended to all Twelver Shi’is residing in the Syrian

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120 Ibid.

121 Ibid.


regions of Tripoli, Kisrawan and Baalbek and not only Jabal ‘Amil proper. Over the centuries, Jabal Amel has produced a long line of heroes and scholars, who traveled wide and far to preach Islamic doctrines, such as Shahid al-Awwal, Shahid al-Thani, Sheikh Hurr al-Amili, Sheikh Muhsin al-Amin, the renowned scientist Hassan Kamel al-Sabbah, the late Sheikh Ragheb Harb, the late Sayyed ‘Abbas al-Musawi, the late Sheikh Muhammad Mughniyeh, Imam Musa al-Sadr, the late Sheikh Muhammad Mahdi Shamseddine, Sheikh Abdel Amir Qabalan, Nabih Berri, and respected Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah. Furthermore, Shi'a scholars from Jabal ‘Amil have always had a strong intellectual presence in the religious universities of Iraq and many other places in the Islamic world, where many seek the guidance of Jabal Amel's Ayatollah Mohammed Hussein Fadlallah.

The Ties that Bind

The relationship between the entities of Iran and Lebanon span across a few centuries and involve not merely religious contact through the medium of Shi’a Islam and the centers of religious learning that serve to connect a transnational network of clerics, but also involves a history of immigration and cultural exchange, mutual intellectual and ideological inspiration, and of course in the recent past, political ties.

The importance of clerical migrations from Jabal ‘Amil to Iran was first stressed by Albert Hourani in 1986, and while many authors have subsequently debated the importance of this work, scholarship in recent years has reasserted its importance. Under Mamluk and later Ottoman rule, the flourishing of a native scholastic tradition in the Levant for those identified as Shi’ite (including ‘Amilis, Druze, Alawis, and Ismailis) was difficult but not impossible, and while the authorities made no systematic attempt to eradicate Shi’ism (a discussion of the history of persecution of Shi’a populations under the Ottomans will following subsequent chapters), the precarious environment in which ‘Amili scholars struggled and survived made the Safavid invitation attractive. Hamzeh describes, that after the Safavid established

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124 Ibid.
126 Chehabi & Mneimneh, Op. Cit. at 6-7
Shi’ism as the official religion of Iran in the early sixteenth century, the Ottomans became suspicious of the loyalties of the Shi’ite community within the Ottoman empire, when Jabal Amil’s Shi’ite ‘ulama were invited to visit Iran, those suspicions grew.\(^{127}\) And as those two relations prospered, the Ottoman-Shi’ite relationship deteriorated. The Safavids’ political vision and requirements for a newly emerging Shi’i society extended possibility to the ‘Amilis of migration from Ottoman Syria to Iran and their succession to the first offices of \textit{Shaykh al-Islam} under the Safavids; in total, about 156 high-ranking clerics from Jabal ‘Amil were living in Iran at close of Safavid Era.\(^{128}\)

The process of conversion for the newly Shi’a Safavid empire, is best understood within the larger political framework of Ottoman-Safavid relations as an attempt to demarcate Safavid territory against Ottoman encroachments and to insulate its inhabitants from Sunni teachings.\(^{129}\) While Iranian historiography regards this ‘intrusion’ as an example of Arab hegemony over religious life in Iran, much of the new scholarship on the Lebanese side, attempting to claim historical agency for the Shi’a community, have boasted of the ‘export’ of a high tradition of Twelver Shi’ism to Iran, which they allege had none.\(^{130}\) Men like Ali ibn Abd al-Ali al-Karaki (died 940/1533) who was the first major scholar to emigrate to Safavid Iran from Jabal ‘Amil via Iraq, known as the ‘inventor of the Shi’i religion,’ prove the importance of the connection between ‘Amili scholars and Iranian Shi’ism, and beyond the controversies this historic link has impacted both nation’s trajectories significantly.\(^{131}\)

Emigration did not only go one way. The next incident of Lebanese and Iranian connection occurred in 1534 when Suleyman the Magnificent captured northwestern Iran.\(^{132}\) The Ottoman ruler settled natives of the Tabriz in Iran on the northern reaches of Mount Lebanon. These settlers are the ancestors of the

\(^{128}\) Chehabi & Mneimneh, \textit{Op. Cit.} at 6-7
\(^{129}\) Abisaab, \textit{Op.Cit.} at 74
\(^{131}\) Chehabi & Mneimneh, \textit{Op. Cit.} at 8 footnote 19
\(^{132}\) Chehabi & Mneimneh, \textit{Op. Cit.} at 8
Shi’i Hemadeh clan of Jubayl (Byblos) today. This was not the only incidence of Iranian immigration to Lebanon. In the late nineteenth century, a number of Iranian merchant families came to Lebanon to settle and were soon assimilated in the local populations. Again family names survive as lasting legacies and surnames like Ajami and Irani are evidence of these travelers’ journeys. The introduction of Muharram mourning rituals to Lebanese Shi’a are another form of cultural transference due to these meetings. These rituals commemorating the martyrdom of the third Shi’i Imam, Hussein ibn Ali, at Karbala in the year AD 680, include self-flagellation and a form of passion play. When these rituals were condemned as contrary to the spirit of Islam a few years later by a prominent scholar, a number of Lebanese Shi’a rose to their defense, setting of a polemic that, according to Chehabi & Mneimneh, lasted for years (11).

In 18th and 19th centuries, political upheavals took a toll on both Iran and Jabal ‘Amil. The demise of the Safavid empire in 1722 led to period of instability in Iran until the Qajar dynasty took power in 1796. Jabal ‘Amil was devastated in this same period by the Ottoman governor of Akka (Acre), Ahmad Pasha, called the butcher for his brutal suppression of a rebellion in 1783. Some clerics left for Iran during this repression and were received well by the new Qajar dynasty according to Chehabi & Mneimneh, but a new era for Iran had begun, one where relations between Shi’a groups were mediated by the ‘Atabat, or holy shrine cities such as Najaf and Qom.

The nineteenth century witnessed a period of economic reinvigoration in the eastern Mediterranean brought about by Ottoman Tanzimat reforms, improved trading arrangements and the introduction of capitulations with Europe. These changes influenced the relationship between Qajar Iran and Ottoman Lebanon. The Qajar dynasty (1796 – 1925) afforded Iran the stability to open to the outside world and in

133 Ibid.
134 Chehabi & Mneimneh, Op. Cit. at 11
135 Ibid.
136 Chehabi & Mneimneh, Op. Cit at 8
137 Ibid.
138 Tanzimat reforms aimed to encourage Ottomanism among the secessionist subject nations and stop the rise of nationalist movements within the Ottoman Empire, but failed to succeed despite trying to integrate non-Muslims and non-Turks more thoroughly into the Ottoman society with new laws and regulations.
139 Chehabi & Mneimneh, Op. Cit at 9
time contact between Iran and Lebanon became easier. During the Hamidian Era (1876 – 1908), known for its secularizing and modernizing tendency, relations between the last two sovereign Muslim states were so courteous that after 1880 Iranian consuls were routinely listed first on the consular lists of annual Ottoman salnames, or official yearbooks.

The relationship between Lebanon and Pahlavi Iran was one of friendly cooperation as, by a convenient coincidence of history, the trajectories of the modern Lebanese and Iranian states happen to mirror one another. Not only was the constitution of Lebanon as a separate territorial jurisdiction (1920) followed closely behind by the rise to power of the founder of the Pahlavi dynasty, who in 1921 staged a coup d’etat and in 1926 crowned himself Shah; on the flip side of the same toke, the onset of the civil war in Lebanon preceded the demise of the Pahlavi regime by only three years, making it seem as though these two nations were locked in some kind mutual flight.

Regional interest in domestic Iranian politics grew with the ‘globalized’ intellectual environment of the Arab east of the late nineteenth century. During this period Pan-Islamic ideas advocated by Jamaleddin Al-Afghani and Muhammad Abduh combined with a growing sense of Arab renaissance (Nahda), promoted, what Chehabi & Mneimneh have described as, ‘an amalgamation of authenticity and modernity’ and interest in the Iranian experiment with constitutionalism. This period also saw the introduction of a movement to reduce sectarian tensions between the two branches of Islam. This movement was called al-Taqrib Bayna al-Madhahib, one such manifestation in response to this

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140 The Ottoman government began to publish salnames in the 1860s containing the population numbers of its provinces. These yearbooks are often used by scholars as they are considered the most accurate census material out there for the period.
141 Chehabi & Mneimneh, Op. Cit, at 9
142 Chehabi & Mneimneh, Op. Cit. at 23
143 Chehabi & Mneimneh, Op. Cit, at 10
144 Khomeini also strove to ignore religious difference between Sunnis and the Shiites, as well as national divisions, and aspired to create a unified revolutionary Islamic power that “would include a billion Muslims.” Shay, Shaul. (2005) The Axis of Evil: Iran, Hizballah, and the Palestinian Terror. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers,
145 A late manifestation of this movement was the renowned Egyptian Sheikh Mahmud Shaltut (1989 – 1963) who studies and taught at al-Azhar University in Cairo and later became Grand Sheikh of al-Azhar in 1958. Shaltut emphasized societal unity and faith, social justice, and independence as key manifestations of Islamic principles. Shaltut's arguably most influential contributions dealt with the agreement among legal schools (al-taqrib bayna al-madhahib). During his tenure at al-Azhar, Shaltut issued a groundbreaking legal ruling (fatwa) declaring the gate of ijtihad (independent reasoning) open. Therefore, jurists could legitimately draw from any of the Sunni or Shi’ite
movement was an effort by religious scholars to present Shi’ism as consistent with common Islamic norms. In the spirit of the era, celebrated ‘Amili scholar Muhsin al-Amin engaged in an effort to question the Muharram commemoration practices in Jabal ‘Amil as innovations and in this way find common ground with Sunni theologians by casting a doubtful light on some of the more controversial Shi’i practices, but sparked controversy internally. It is interesting how ‘transplanted’ rituals can become ‘authentic’ and even sanctified in such a short time, but such is the nature of the Lebanese – Iranian dynamic.

Iran has often learned from the example of Lebanese Shi’a although today contemporary knowledge tells us that this relationship only works in vice versa. In truth, both the Lebanese and Iranian Shi’a can in many ways be seen as a vanguard in the evolution of Shi’a thought and practice. Jamal Al-e Ahmad, the famed Iranian writer and essayist, known most prominently for his struggle against what he called gharbzadegi or ‘Westoxification’, was inspired by this work of Muhsin al-Amin when first published in 1943, “in fact, admiration for Lebanese educational establishments had a long history in Iran.” The importance of Beirut as an educational center in the Middle East is a well-known fact but is clearly evidenced by the experiences of Iranians in the universities of Lebanon. Going to study in Beirut for a young Iranian was a way to get a modern Western education without leaving the Muslim world and as such the importance of Lebanon’s educational establishment for the formation of Iran’s secular intellectual and political elite cannot be over estimated. Chehabi & Mneimneh point out that while it is of course dangerous to read too much into one minor novel, it may be worth while to take notice of the

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146 Chehabi & Mneimneh, Op. Cit. at 10
147 Chehabi & Mneimneh, Op. Cit. at 12
149 In the early sixteen century, European Christian missionaries encouraged by tolerant policies of Amir Fakhrreddim II (1590-1635) began to establish schools in Lebanon. The movement grew after 1840. The Syrian Protestant College (renamed the AUB in 1920) was established in 1866, and a Jesuit College founded in 1843 became the French-Language school Université Saint-Joseph in 1875. Both attracted large numbers of Iranians. Chehabi & Mneimneh, Op. Cit. at 13
150 Chehabi & Mneimneh, Op. Cit. at 14
fact that the first utopia ever published in Iran, a novel titled *the Assembly of the Lunatics* (1920s), places the capital of a politically unified ideal world lying in 2000 years in the future in mount Lebanon.\footnote{Chehabi & Mneimneh, *Op. Cit.* at 15}

In politics, most famously, the Shah’s longest serving prime minister (1965-77), Amir Abbas Hoveyda and his brother Fereydoun, who was the Iranian ambassador the UN, both attended the Lycee Francais in Beirut - the former recalled that in one of Lebanon’s cabinets, ‘of twelve ministers, seven had been his classmates.’\footnote{Ibid.} In the early 1960s Iranians constituted the largest group of non-Arabs at AUB and many Iranian graduates of Lebanese schools subsequently rendered valuable services to the development of education in Iran.\footnote{Mirza Hassan Tabrizi Roshdiyeh founded the first modern elementary school in Tabriz, followed by one in Tehran in 1898, became model for Iran’s incipient public education system. The man known as the ‘father of Iranian physics’ Mahmud Hesabi, grew up in Lebanon, attended the SPC, took a leading role in founding Teheran’s teachers training college ad Iran’s first university, the university of Teheran and was minister of education in one of Mosaddeq’s cabinets. Chehabi & Mneimneh, *Op. Cit.* at 17} Beirut in the early to mid-twentieth century was to an open door for educational possibility with in the Middle East that many Iranians took advantage of, and while sojourning in the Arab Paris took back with them a great admiration for the cosmopolitan nature of the capital and culture of the new Lebanese nation.\footnote{Chehabi & Mneimneh, 2006.}

Diplomatic relations between independent Lebanon and Iran were established in the 1950s, although an Iranian consulate in Beirut was established before Lebanese independence. Politically, there was a certain affinity between the Shah, who opposed radical Arab nationalism, especially Egypt’s Nasserite form, and the Maronite establishment, which imagined itself as oriented more towards Europe.\footnote{Chehabi & Mneimneh, *Op. Cit.* at 25} In the aftermath of the overthrow in 1952 of the Shah’s former brother-in-law, King Farouk of Egypt, and his own seizure of power in 1953, the Shah made it a policy to attempt at countering revolutionary Arab nationalism by establishing closer contacts with pro-Western Arab states such as Lebanon.\footnote{Ibid.} During this period, and as an extension of this policy, the Shah embarked on some controversial moves in the region that were to have a lasting effect on the image of Iran including the signing of the Baghdad pact (1955) and the endorsement by the Shah of the actions of President Camille Chamoun during the 1958 Lebanese
Crisis in asking for US marine intervention. And while the Pahlavi dynasty is not know for its religiosity and is often seen as secular, it is important to note that even during this time there was no separation between church and state and while domestically the rulers did not take their obligation to promote religion seriously, in their foreign relations, the dynasty did indeed take note and represent as a Shi‘i state to maintain certain interest for Shi‘a outside Iran.\footnote{Chehabi & Mneimneh, \textit{Op. Cit.} at 26} In Lebanon, this status afforded the Shah privileged contact with Shi‘a notables which acted as an inside tract into the political system inside Lebanon.\footnote{Ibid.} Another telling sign that religion mattered to the Pahlavis was the fact that nations with sizable Shi‘i populations often sent Shi‘a diplomats as ambassadors to Iran, such as Lebanese ambassador to Iran Khalil al-Khalil (1971 – 78).\footnote{Ibid.}

These confessional ties and the status, however small, the Pahlavi dynasty afforded its religious role regionally and international helps to explain why in the beginning the Shah’s regime he was willing to subsidize the activities of a cleric such as Musa al-Sadr.\footnote{Chehabi & Mneimneh, \textit{Op. Cit.} at 26} In a rudimentary way, even before the Islamic Revolution, Iran did function as external country of reference for some segments within Lebanon’s Shi‘i community, although this role does not compare to France’s ties with the Maronites of Lebanon, Russia - and later the Soviet Union’s ties with the Orthodox and to lesser extent Great Britain’s ties with the Druze.\footnote{Ibid.} The role of foreign powers in Lebanon is a long and complicated history, but is in no way limited to the influence of the Iranians on the Shi‘a. Musa al-Sadr serves as a prominent example of one type of cultural exchange between the two entities, an example which helps to highlight the complicated nature of the relationship between the two.

\textit{Musa al-Sadr}

As we have seen, Arab Shi‘a have been a politically, socially, and economically marginalized minority yet have been present in Lebanon for at least 6 centuries, becoming a star in the Shi’ite crescent by

\footnote{Chehabi & Mneimneh, \textit{Op. Cit.} at 26}
\footnote{Ibid.}
\footnote{Ibid.}
\footnote{Chehabi & Mneimneh, \textit{Op. Cit.} at 26}
\footnote{Chehabi & Mneimneh, \textit{Op. Cit.} at 28}
playing a leading role in the Shi’i-fication of Iran in the early sixteenth century.162 The al-Sadr family, prominent in Iraq today, were among those Lebanese jurists who went to Iran and Iraq centuries ago to answer than call, and Musa al-Sadr is a lasting example of this transnational network continuing on into today.163

Born in 1928 in Qom, Iran, Musa al-Sadr came from a long line of distinguished clerics tracing back their ancestry to Jabal ‘Amil.164 Al-Sadr’s complex family ties’, spanning three countries, showing his relationship to many prominent Ulema, exemplifies the Shi’i cosmopolitanism that blurred and continues to blur the lines between Arab, Persian, and Turk, with the ‘Atabat at its center.165 Al-Sadr received both a secular and classical Islamic education, unlike many other clerics of his time, and in 1955 took his first trip to Lebanon, where he met Sayyid AbdullHusayn Sharafeddin, the leader of South Lebanon’s Shi’is.166 This trip left a lasting impression not only with al-Sadr, but with Sharafeddin and the Shi’a of the South. In late 1957 Sharefeddin died and was buried in Najaf - this death left a power vacuum in Lebanon for the Shi’a and the community went through many pains to find a successor to their leader.167 Since a consensus within the community could not be reached an outsider seemed to be the ideal choice; thus the community leaders wrote to Ayatollah Borujerdi requesting him to persuade al-Sadr to move to Lebanon, not as a wakil or representative but as an indigenous leader.168

Sadr’s move to Lebanon reveals something about the structure of the clerical establishment of Shi’ism. The fact that the Shi’is of southern Lebanon chose to ask an Iranian to lead them, and addressed their request to the highest authority of the faith in Qom, proves the existence of a transnational hierarchy, although, as argued by Chehabi & Tafreshi, not nearly as centralized as the organization of a ‘church’ in

163 Ibid.
165 Chehabi & Tafreshi, Op. Cit. at 139
166 Chehabi & Tafreshi, Op. Cit. at 143-44
167 Ibid.
168 Ibid.
the Weberian sense. The absence of a centralized ecclesiastical organization allowed for different climates of opinion to hold sway among Shi’is in Lebanon and Iran - a freedom that made Lebanon attractive to al-Sadr who could pursue his vision of active Islam based in social justice that had been so harshly criticized in Iran.

Al-Sadr began where his predecessor had left off, taking over the philanthropic activities of his predecessor in Tyre through the ‘Charity and Philanthropy Association’. While such activities are often attributed to al-Sadr, he in fact had only picked up where Lebanese Shi’a leaders had left off, continuing and expanding the work started indigenously. Al-Sadr soon expanded the charity to cover all of Lebanon, with the culmination of the socio-political movement in 1967 with the creation of the Highest Islamic Shi’ite Council or al-Majlis al-Islami al-Shi‘i al-A’la, as an official religious institution, set up to support and over-see to the concerns of the congregation. This body, now led by impressive thinker and ‘alim Shaykh Muhammed Mahdi Shams al-Din, while it does not have extensive grassroots support, it does enjoy guaranteed access to the state and is widely regarded as an institutional rival to Berri’s Amal as well as to Hizballah.

Al-Sadr also founded a complimentary movement titled “Harakat al-Muhrumin” or ‘the Movement of the Oppressed’, with the primary mission of alleviating poverty especially in southern Lebanon, the eastern Bekaa district and the so-called boroughs of misery around the capital. Alongside the Movement of the Oppressed, al-Sadr founded AMAL, or Afwaj al-Muqawama al-Lubnaniya (the ranks of the Lebanese resistance) as the military arm of the movement with the intention of resisting Israeli incursions and occupation. Al-Sadr’s whirlwind effect on the Shi’a community in Lebanon ended in 1978, just before the Islamic Revolution when he was kidnapped in Libya following an

169 Ibid.
170 Ibid.
172 Otherwise translated as the Supreme Islamic Shi’i Council, and cited in Norton as being founded in 1969
173 Qassem, Op. Cit. at 15
175 Qassem, Op. Cit. at 14
invitation received from Libyan President Muammar al-Qaddafi to attend the annual national celebrations.\textsuperscript{176} His fate remains unknown until today, making his memory a potent mobilizational factor not only for Amal but for the Shi’a in general.

Al-Sadr forged a powerful new communal sense of dignity and self-help by organizing schools, clinics, economic promotions, and political institutions; all before the Iranian Revolution.\textsuperscript{177} Al-Sadr, notably, also forged alliances with militias against Israel but was also very much anti-PLO, a sentiment reflected by many of the Shi’a of the south, who suffered disproportionately from reprisals due to their actions. This anti-PLO stance influenced the formation of organizations to come, namely Hizballah, as did other political and social decisions al-Sadr made during his time in Lebanon. Al-Sadr stands as an example of Iranian-Lebanese relations prior to the Iranian revolution and exemplifies the dynamic realities of Shi’a networks of authority.

The Islamic Republic: the Export of the Revolution

In the first half of the twentieth century Beirut, with its cosmopolitan blend of East and West, was a source of inspiration for Iran’s elite. In the 1980s the flow of inspiration went in the opposite direction, as Iran’s new rulers ousted the old self-consciously cosmopolitan elite, and turned against Western cultural influence promoting instead a return to an (ideologically constructed) Islamic ‘self’.\textsuperscript{178} These revolutionaries found sympathizers for their quest for authenticity among those left behind by Lebanon’s fabled quest to be the Switzerland of the Middle East; poor Shi’i men and women whose concerns had been addressed by neither the political system nor traditional zu’ama, and whose socio-cultural marginality was composed by dislocations caused by a decade and a half of civil war and Israeli invasions. For these people the Iranian revolution was proof that the downtrodden could change their ranks and confirmed these hopes by providing generous material and organizational help when no one else would. Thus the exportation of the revolution and an acceptance by the Iranian state of its visionary

\textsuperscript{176} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{177} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{178} Chehabi & Mneimneh, \textit{Op. Cit.} at 43
role for Shi’a world wide helped the regime cultivate, to use Joseph Nye’s term, a certain measure of ‘soft power’ throughout the region.

Like the French, Russian, Chinese, and Cuban revolutionaries before them, the Iranian revolutionaries did not confine their ambition to their own country and made explicit in the preamble of the constitution of the Islamic Republic, their intention to export the revolution. The exportation of the revolution was meant to support the ‘oppressed’ and ‘down-trodden’ in the world, with the notion of ‘oppressed’ often schematized by scholars in the form of three concentric circles: an outer circle consisting of third world countries and liberation movements in general, a middle circle comprising Muslims and an inner circle consisting of Twelver Shi’a. The first circle, defined by its anti-imperialist thrust, can be easily explained by the revolutionaries’ perception of the Shah’s regime as a vassal of the United States. This perceived trial with the horrors of imperialism and the resentment thereof led the post-revolution regime to support not only groups such as the Sandinistas in Nicaragua and the Pan-African Congress in South Africa, but also the Irish Republican Army. In this era the Iranian regime not only accepted and trumpeted its role as the only Shi’a state in order to support Shi’a causes regionally and internationally, it now took this calling further making anti-imperialism and third worldism, as Nikki Keddie has come to call it, a hallmark of the Islamic Republic.

The naming of streets in the capital of Teheran (alternatively spelled Tehran) remains not only a continuing symbolic policy on the part of the regime to represent the oppressed and downtrodden as heroes but serves as a vivid historical record of who and what the regime has supported and why. While most nation’s name there streets after former leaders, presidents, financial pioneers and the like, in Iran it is the normally unnamed that are glorified and made icons. To this day the street behind the British embassy in Teheran is named after Bobby Sands, the IRA activist who died as a result of a hunger strike in 1981. It was not until 2004, amidst much controversy, that the Islamic Republic changed the name of a street named after the assassin of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat. Tehran severed ties with Cairo in

179 Chehabi & Mneimneh, Op. Cit. at 32
180 Ibid.
181 Chehabi & Mneimneh, Op. Cit. at 33
1980 in protest of Egypt's peace treaty with Israel signed two years earlier and a key Egyptian demand in the normalization of relations between the two countries has always been that Iran change the offensive street name. The street, where the Egyptian Embassy building is located bears the name Khalid Al Islambouli and what’s more, facing the embassy's main entrance is a giant-size mural of the assassin executed in Egypt in 1981. The street was eventually changed from Khaled Eslamboli Avenue to Intifada Avenue.

By the latest count, there are some 30 Teheran streets that bear the names of various Iranian and foreign ‘terrorists’/freedom fighter. This includes not only foreign nationals but Iranian as well; the street where Hassan Ali Mansour, one of Iran's prime ministers, once lived is named after the man who murdered him. Unlike Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, other world leaders have put up with these ‘insults’ and have continued to visit Teheran including British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw and various French foreign ministers, who visit despite the streets named after ‘terrorists’ who killed more than two dozen French men and women in Paris in the 1980s. The naming of streets as symbolic gestures of unity with the struggles of the oppressed world wide is just one lasting indicator of the revolutionary and resistance-bent ideology of the Islamic Republic.

While the most prominent and consequential exponent of this kind of anti-imperialist internationalism was Mohammed Montazeri, who set up a liberation movement unit within the revolutionary guards in 1979 and become known for his role in the foundation of Hizballah, the revolutionary regime cultivated friendships with many non-Muslim liberation movements such as regimes set up by victorious liberation movements (i.e. Zimbabwe) and generally anti-American states. Cooperation between Iran and such states often took place only where it served the national interests of both sides – as with North Korea, which profited handsomely from its arms sales to Iran at a time when

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184 Ibid.

185 Ibid.

186 Ibid.
Iran was at war with Iraq and had to get arms where it could.\textsuperscript{187} This was especially true as the Islamist rhetoric of the movement was emphasized more.

Like previous attempts to export a revolution, the Iranian attempt was ultimately unsuccessful, except for in Lebanon. It was only in the context of the weakened Lebanese state that such exportation made head way in the way that it did in that Iranians where allowed to operate on Lebanese territory without interference.\textsuperscript{188} While the establishment of a theocracy in Iran no doubt provided a major fillip for Shi’i self-assertion in Lebanon, one must not forget that this self-assertion has its own indigenous roots and antedated the Iranian revolution by many decades (a fact which will be discussed in subsequent chapters).\textsuperscript{189} As described previously, for most of the twentieth century, relations between the Shi’a of Lebanon and those of Iran were mediated by the ‘Atabat in Iraq.\textsuperscript{190} A variety of geopolitical factors changed the nature of this relationship, including the establishment of an Islamic Republic in Iran, the civil war in Lebanon, and the totalitarian regime of Saddam Hussein in Iraq which threatened the holy shrine cities; these factors combined to force the two communities to forge direct links between them.\textsuperscript{191} Since this shift, Iranian Shi’ism has had a certain unmediated influence on Lebanese Shi’ism which can be seen through, for instance, the popularization of such titles as \textit{hujjat al-Islam} and \textit{ayatollah}, which were largely unknown before the 1980s.\textsuperscript{192}

Shifts in the flow of cultural patterns and the influence of the Iranians’ newly earned ‘soft power’ become most obvious in the exploration of Muharram practices in this new era. As we have previously discussed, Muharram rituals came to Lebanon with the first wave of Iranian immigrants in the sixteenth century. Before the Iranian revolution, these rituals were more commonly seen in southern Lebanon than in Beirut or the Bekaa, but as Hizballah took hold in these places in the 1980s, the practices flourished.\textsuperscript{193} While Muharram rituals are common in Shi’a Islam, most high ranking clerics having always been

\begin{thebibliography}{999}
\bibitem{ChehabiMneimneh98} Chehabi & Mneimneh, \textit{Op. Cit.} at 33
\bibitem{ChehabiMneimneh98} Chehabi & Mneimneh, \textit{Op. Cit.} at 37
\bibitem{ChehabiMneimneh98} Chehabi & Mneimneh, \textit{Op. Cit.} at 38
\bibitem{ChehabiMneimneh98} \textit{Ibid.}
\bibitem{ChehabiMneimneh98} Chehabi & Mneimneh, \textit{Op. Cit.} at 42
\bibitem{ChehabiMneimneh98} \textit{Ibid.}
\bibitem{ChehabiMneimneh98} Chehabi & Mneimneh, \textit{Op. Cit.} at 44
\end{thebibliography}
opposed to the more violent rituals in which flagellants draw blood with knives and daggers (called *latm* in Arabic or *qamehzani* in Persian) but it was not until 1994 that Iran’s Supreme Leader Ali Khameneh’i outlawed the more violent of the practice on the eve of the mourning month, saying “how can this be called mourning? These practices do not belong to religion.”

In Lebanon, this shift in official Shi’a practices, emanating from the newly found center, rather than as traditionally from the ‘Atabat or prominent scholars, and their effects can be observed through the various practices of Shi’a groups in the country. Hizballah, which had officially acknowledged Khameneh’i as *marja’* or object of emulation, implemented the ban on drawing blood in the processions it organized. The practices were continued though in processions sponsored by Amal and the Supreme Islamic Shi’i Council. On the surface, it appears as if Hizballah followed the Iranian line, while ‘moderate Shi’is working within the confines of the system’ and the non-political Shi’is continued the traditional Lebanese practices - except of course for the fact that Khameneh’i outlawed a custom Lebanese Muhsin al-Amin had condemned more than seventy years earlier whereas Amal had clung to the ritual patterns Iranian immigrants introduced in the late nineteenth century. In the new era, authenticity and origin have now become blurred and what was once Iranian or Lebanese has taken on a political and symbolic life of its own. Muharram practices are clung to as if they are symbols of authenticity and shifts in practice resonating from the Revolutionary vanguard state have a stronger and less subtle influence on actors on the ground.

In a sense, history between the two entities has come full circle in the few centuries since the inception of their relationship. In the sixteenth century, we observed scholars from the Jabal ‘Amil move to Safavid Iran to assist in the establishment of orthodox Twelver Shi’ism as the official state religion, leaving a lasting imprint and legacy behind them; in the twentieth century, first an Iranian with ‘Amili roots, Musa al-Sadr, helps to bring the culture of Jabal ‘Amil to the Bekaa valley soon followed by a

194 Originally the practices are neither Persian nor Arab in origin and were rather introduced in Iran by Caucasian Turks. Chehabi & Mneimneh, *Op. Cit.* at 44

195 Ibid.

196 Ibid.

197 Ibid.
revolutionary fervor in Iran which sweeps across parts of Lebanon’s Shi’i community transforming it as it goes.\footnote{Chehabi & Mneimneh, \textit{Op. Cit.} at 45} Along the way, we see how Iranian nationals immigrated into Lebanon bringing with them their own rituals, which over time slowly were woven into the fabric of cultural/religious authenticity. Beirut served as not only a cosmopolitan and educational haven for Iranian elite and secular middle class, but also became home to Iranian dissidents looking for a place free enough to permit the mobilization of opposition forces. It was not only the weakness of the Lebanese state that allowed for such ‘interference’ as Chehabi & Mneimneh point out, but also its eclectic and open intellectual environment and the freedom that has been present in the Lebanese nation since its inception as a sectarian and confessional nation. The diversity of the nation has forced the hand of the state which must afford a liberal attitude in terms of political and ideological freedom. In this way we can see that Iran is not the only vanguard in the relationship, and uneven as it might seem, the nature of the ties between the two entities is a reciprocal one. Connections between the two are multifaceted and diverse, extending beyond the simplistic religious dimension they are often attributed to.
Iran in the twenty-first century has represented more than anything, contradiction. Since the Islamic Revolution, Iranian politics has stunned Western commentators. With each cycle of protest, reform, and popular unrest, the depth of the world’s misunderstanding concerning this old polity in the developing world is revealed. Today, Iran at once represents a formidable regional power, a budding democratic plurality, a cultural and intellectual resource, and a zealous revolutionary state. Iranian society often appears to be gripped by contradictions: a theocracy coexists with democratic practices; a secularized middle-class youth culture shares the public sphere with a sizable populace that still puts trust in Khomeini and his legacy; daily newspapers run full-page discussions of debates between French philosophers over the meaning of ‘postmodern discourse,’ yet the country continues to languish, according to some, or struggle to triumph, according to others, under the Islamic Republic.

In many regards Iran presents the modern and post-modern face of Islam - Persian is now the third most popular language on the internet, after English and Mandarin Chinese, in some areas of mathematics and physics, such as string theory, Iranian research centers rank among the best in the world, as Iranian cinema is becoming an increasingly powerful force. Within this diverse sphere exists a multiplicity of voices, some continuously expressed, others repressed, and still others in a state of constant negotiation. Iran has adapted and changed to various international currents in the last two decades while remaining a fiercely anti-imperialist and a self-proclaimed vanguard for the downtrodden throughout the world. The most recent president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, is the latest expression of Iranian distaste with geopolitical stratification, domestic economic stagnation, and growing frustration with a regime that makes reform seem like status-quo. Iran plays in between the line of power politics and popular politics, often embarking on Faustian bargains with its various fragments, failing often, succeeded

201 Ibid. at 214
rarely, but negotiating nonetheless. If Hizballah represents the internal consistency of resistance rhetoric throughout an articulated movement and despite its fragments, then Iran represents the contradiction.

Iran is one of the few third world states that is not “new” in the sense that they do not owe their present configuration to European colonialisms. While Iran’s political development certainly lagged behind that of Western Europe, it can still be analyzed in terms of a time-frame roughly similar to that of most European nations. Nations do not develop in isolation and the influence of the international environment is perhaps most significant in the case of old non-Western states such as Iran, for it is often the particular place of such a country in the international system that enables it to preserve its independence through a position of resistance. Iran is a pivotal country at the juncture of the Middle East, Central Asia, and South Asia, with ambition, oil, and a population over seventy million strong which makes it a regional power and important international player. Iran has long been a part of the ‘Great Game’ of Central Asia, the term that has come to signify the race for influence and power in the resource rich area, first between the Soviet Union and Britain and later the United States.

The normative pivotal states thesis put forth by Paul Kennedy and others articulate what an economic and political consolidation of US foreign and specifically aid policy should look like in an environment of drawn down US resources and a lack of domestic political will, namely, that the US must target its foreign assistance strictly yet rigorously to pivotal states. These states, one of which is Egypt, another which is Iran in their estimation, are those whose extensive political and economic linkages within their respective regions provide the conditions under which targeted US efforts will create positive spillover effects for US interests in other states.

202 Chehabi, Op. Cit. at 7
203 Ibid.
Regardless of the West’s interest, and long time support in certain eras, distrust in others, Iran has long surprised the West. Unlike many Middle Eastern and Central Asian states whose borders have been haphazardly drawn by British and French and Russian officials in backrooms in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Iran’s boundaries are not ‘artificial’ in this sense. While Iran’s borders have more or less been imposed by the powers that be through the creation of other states on its once vast imperial territory, Iran has an ancient history that still lives in popular memory. While other countries leaders and schoolbooks often try to foster an artificial narrative of their history, retroactively creating nationalism, as Saddam Hussein did, rebuilding the ancient city of Babylon and inscribing “from Nebuchadnezzar to Saddam Hussein,” Iran does not need to create an artificial tradition. Iran’s imperial legacy remains important to Iran’s contemporary narrative, which is why religions such as Zoroastriansim are permitted when they are technically pagan by Islamic standards and Hollywood films such as the recent 300, depicting an ancient Persian army as monstrous and defeated at the hands of Spartan soldiers has led to several public statements of out-roar by officials of the Islamic Republic. Many authors have argued that there is a strong sense among Iranians that Iran is a great civilizations that needs to be treated as a great power, a sort of Iranian sense of cultural superiority.

A medieval monarchy until the mid-nineteenth century, Iranian shahs undertook ambitious drives to modernize their country helped along by western investment, loans, and as the twentieth century dawned, growing oil wealth. In the first decade, the nation fought a bitter civil war to win a constitution and parliament. Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, the Iranian government raced ahead with economic, social, and legal reforms that paralleled and exceeded those in Turkey at the time. Despite the 1951-53 confrontation over oil nationalization under Prime Minister Muhammad Mosaddeq, Iran continued to

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207 Ibid. at 11
210 Ibid. at 1
211 Ibid.
modernize rapidly. Then came the Islamic revolution in 1979; Iranians shocked the world, though, not so much by overthrowing the Shah, but by replacing him with a theocracy.\footnote{Ibid.}

Since the initial shock of the Islamic Revolution and its victory, the West has gone on to be shocked quite a few more times. First by the election of reformists to Government, later by the stream of popular, youth-led protests, and finally by the landslide victory of a so-called hardline government in 2005, after a string of Islamic victories at the ballot box throughout the Middle East. The United States was not getting the new Middle East it bargained for and now its actions in the region were not only fuelling Islamist movements and the resistance narrative, but democratic victories, domestic reform, and international alliances. The issues important to the Middle East were finally becoming issues important to the world, and now rather than frighten the world, as Khomeini once did, Ahmadinejad embraces leftists such as Chavez and reaches out towards a ‘globalized’ anti-imperialist identity. Whether or not Iran believes it is a different question.

**Iran and Social Movements**

*Revolution and War: 1978 – 1988*

The Iranian Revolution of 1979 has closely scrutinized by modern social scientist, as it stands as one of the few genuine revolutions in the modern age.\footnote{Poulson, *Op. Cit.* at 1} Khomeini’s campaign to illuminate the evils of the Shah’s regime and subjugate it to morality began in the early 1960s at the same time, Ali Shariati was convincing the people of Iran that the act of intizar, of patiently waiting for the Hidden Imam, would not serve the nation, from an intellectual and reformist standpoint.\footnote{Varzi, Roxanne. (2006) *Warring Souls: Youth, Media, and Post-Revolution Iran*, London: Duke University Press.} “The Hidden Imam will not reappear of his own accord,” Shariati, the famed Iranian sociologist and outspoken critic of the Shah’s regime one said, “human intervention is needed to pave the way for his final coming. People need to begin the Imam’s work of overthrowing oppression and implementing universal justice in order to occasion his
ultimate return and revolution."\(^{215}\) Between Khomeini’s juridical authority and Shariati’s mass appeal, many in the general public were convinced that the nation must rise up and prepare for the coming of the imam, even if that imam was not officially the Hidden Imam.\(^{216}\) The Islamic Revolution is one of the most intensely studied revolutions of the modern era, and space does not permit a truly accurate discussion of the specifics of the revolution but we will delve a little into the principles of Khomeinism.

Khomeini’s brand of politicized Islam is based on his own interpretations of several key issues in Shi’a Islam and the adaptation of the solutions to the new reality of the twentieth century.\(^{217}\) A central principle is his stance that calls for taking an active approach in order to facilitate the goals of Islam and achieve salvation. The end of *intizar* and the beginnings of Khomeini’s philosophy grew and spread against the background of not only the Shi’a’s historical feelings of frustration and harsh socioeconomic reality, but pervading feelings among Muslims in the region in general during the Cold War era.\(^{218}\) Khomeini’s theory responded to feelings of impotence and hopelessness in the new era, as the Iranian leadership moved further away from the desires and needs of the masses. His theory granted legitimacy to Shi’ite activism, preferring to adopt, instead of the classic passive approach symbolized as the period of waiting during the occultation of the Imam, for an active approach. Even before Khomeini there were interpreters that called for struggle against corrupt rulers in an attempt to restore justice, but these voices had always represented a minority in the Shi’a community until now.\(^{219}\)

The activist worldview conceived by Khomeini in 1970s, a man of his time, provided legitimization for the idea that it was permitted for man to act to facilitate his fate and that his principle applies to all of society.\(^{220}\) This shift opened the door for the definition of the goals necessary for social changes and the steps Muslims must take in order to achieve their objectives. Khomeini took this active approach to the occultation of the Hidden Imam a step further by granting legitimacy to a ruling regime.

\(^{215}\) *Ibid.* at 39

\(^{216}\) *Ibid.*


\(^{218}\) *Ibid.* at 18

\(^{219}\) *Ibid.* at 19

\(^{220}\) *Ibid.*
Traditionally it had been held that no ruler was to be afforded legitimacy so long as the Imam had not appeared, Khomeini adapted this belief, saying that rulers must be granted legitimacy but based on preconditions. Legitimacy was not automatically awarded, but judged based on a regime’s treatment of the Shi’a, Muslims, respect for Islamic Law and the eradication and rejection of any foreign influences (social, economic, and cultural) by the international powers as this leads to corruption, weakness, and rifts in the Muslim world.221

One of Khomeini’s unique contributions, central and innovative in his theory, was to permit the sacrifice of an individual’s life for Muslim society; a contribution which brought notions such as sacrifice and martyrdom to center stage.222 According to Shay, Khomeini was the first to permit self-sacrifice for Islamic goals, and it was the example of Imam Hussein, as a newly found symbol for Islamic resistance, that held the key to this new interpretation. The death of Imam Hussein, who went into battle knowing not only that he would die, but that he would die brutally, has come to symbolize the ultimate example of a martyr in the fight for Islam for many Shi’a Muslims. In the past, many Shi’a were very doubtful of the permissibility of initiating *jihad* so long as the “Vanished Imam” had not appeared, as it can only be declared on the basis of a legitimate political authority, and on the basis of Shi’ite legal theory, that time had not existed since the disappearance of the twelfth Imam.223 Khomeini sharply deviates from this passive line and martyrdom is another example of this profound shift in interpretation in Shi’a jurisprudence.

Beyond this, Khomeini universalized the notion of Shi’a oppression, making the Shi’a representative of all the oppressed people of the earth, and in this way, adding Third Worldism to his twist on Shi’a jurisprudence.224 Traditionally the Shi’a regard themselves as the victims of oppression at the hands of evil regimes, victims of historical injustice, in Khomeini’s vision, this status made the Islamic Revolution not only a movement to rid the injustice of the Shi’a but a spearhead in the struggle against all

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222 Shay, *Op. Cit.* at 21
224 *Ibid.* at 22
forms of oppression. Add to this mix of activism and revolutionary fervor Khomeini’s twist on notions of juristical authority and what you have is a revolutionized system for political control. Khomeini argued that rather than passively wait for the return of a leader, until the return of the Vanished Imam, the most educated Mujahid should and must lead and serve as the main guide while the government should be placed in the hands of an elite group of religious leaders. In this way, the authority of his government stems mainly from the sequence of leadership from the prophet via the Imams, as the Mujahid is a direct link to knowledge unattainable. The *velayat-e-faqih*, is imbued with a mystique, charisma; a mystical faith and spiritualism that drives its power. To Khomeini, hidden truths existed as he maintain an esoteric perception of the knowledge of the Qu’ran, this knowing the truth of the Qu’ran is beyond the capabilities of the average person, and must be left to a well-trained select few that would come to make up the religious leadership of the nation and protect the goals of the Islamic Revolution.

Khomeini’s greatest achievement – while many consider it to be his ability to construct a new politicized spin on Shi’a Islam, was his ability to elicit a feeling of equality among members of a nation composed of seventeen different ethnic groups and six different religions, not mention highly stratified class system. Every class, ethnic group, and religion came together under Khomeini to fight for justice. He created a group feeling similar to what Ibn Khaldun terms *assabiya* (Unity): a Muslim nation that extends beyond the boundaries of the Iranian nation. Khomeini was able to articulate eloquently what so many were afraid to voice. Khomeini strove to ignore religious difference between Sunnis and the Shi’ites, as well as national divisions, and aspired to create a unified revolutionary Islamic power that “would include a billion Muslims.” Many have called this the ‘Export of the Revolution’ and is one of the central fears of not only many Arab states in the region, but the international community to this day.

Iran has tried to export its revolution, as any other revolution in the modern era has hoped for itself, and has presented its system as a model for emulation. While many point to the success of

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225 Ibid.
227 Ibid.
228 Ibid.
229 Shay, *Op. Cit.* at 23
Hizballah as an example of a successful exportation, even if that example stands, it is the only one. In most ways, Iran has failed to export its model. Some argue that the revolutions limited influence in Islam and elsewhere has to do with the regimes failure to adequately provide satisfactory solutions for Iran’s social and economic problems, others argue that regimes in Muslims countries were afraid of the danger posed by radical religious groups, still others say a clear objective obstacle to export has been hostile Sunni majority in the region; either way, Iran has not stood as a model for emulation, even in newly forming Iraq today.  

What the Islamic Revolution has been successful at inspiring is resistance. In Egypt, President Anwar Sadat’s assassins brought up Khomeini during their trial as a source of inspiration; King Hassan of Morocco accused Khomeini of being behind the wave of riots in 1983; a series of suicide attacks in Lebanon against French, America, and Israeli targets was perpetrated under Iranian inspiration and direction – while the Revolution may not have shaped state entities politically it seems two historical trends have been significant to the Middle East’s sociopolitical development and continue to shape the region: long-term Muslim/Arab determination to resist Western hegemony, and a widening self-assertion by minorities within their own political orders, both of which the Islamic Republic has come to represent since the revolution. Although the Revolution was Islamic in character, it had come to represent broad trends that could be generalized not only through the region but the world.

As an articulated movement, it was not without its contradictions internally. Although the Iranian Revolution was led by radical clergy and liberal Islamic leaders, it was carried out by very diverse social groups, including the secular middle class, workers, students, urban lower classes, ethnic minorities and women.  

It became clear only later that different social clusters and constituencies had different purposes, prospects and expectations of the ‘change’. Indeed, the differences and divergence came to the surface no more than few weeks after the regime change in April 1979. At the time when Ayatollah Khomeini, reacting to various economic demands made just after the revolution, commented that ‘We

230 Shay, Op. Cit. at 26
have not made the revolution for cheap melons; we have made it for Islam’, a factory worker reacted: ‘They say we have not made revolution for economic betterment! What have we made it for, then? They say, for Islam! What does Islam mean then?’ In a letter to a daily in Tehran a young women from a provincial village stated in July 1980: [During the revolution], I used to think revolution meant clothing and covering bare feet of the poor. I thought it meant feeding the hungry. Now I know how optimistic I was. . .Because neither my bare feet are covered, nor my hunger is satisfied.” In short, the political repression under the Shah, the remarkable generality and ambiguity of the message of the revolutionary leaders, the speedy unfolding of events, and the lack of time and opportunity for debate and clarity caused the participants to ‘imagine’ a consensus of interests and values within the broad revolutionary movement. And while this consensus may have existed on key border guards, such as the relationship with the West and Israel, it did not exist where it was not negotiated and later governments have had to respond to the gaps in this failing mythomouter.

Whereas generality, imagined solidarity and thus unity, are features of autocratic polities and movements, democratic conditions and movements often breed internal difference and dissent, since the availability of both means and opportunities allows for an open, clear and dissenting exchange of ideas. While many have blamed the autocratic nature of Khomeini’s reign for the internal dissent, later Iranian reformers, operating more or less under the rubric of democracy, failed in a similar fashion. Thus, unlike the revolutionary movement of 1979, the Reform Movement, which enjoyed adequate resources (a massive rise in literacy and relative freedom of the press and of assembly) and political opportunity (support from the Khatami government) was also afflicted by difference and fragmentation. While the contradictions may have accelerated under the Islamic Republic, as Men chanted ‘Death to America’ but watch American soap operas on their illegal satellite receivers when they returned home, even under President Muhammad Khatami, who called for the oft-mentioned ‘Dialogue of Civilizations,’

232 Ibid.
233 Ibid.
234 Ibid.
235 Ibid.
authorities paraded missiles draped with banners threatening the United States and calling for Israel’s annihilations.\textsuperscript{236} Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamene’i might lambaste the West’s alleged mistreatment of Muslims, but sides with Christian Armenia against Muslim Azerbaijan and remains silent with the Russian army levels whole cities in Muslim Chechnya.\textsuperscript{237} It must also be remembered that it was under Khatami that the nonconventional weapons programs receiving so much attention today, was begun. Often Iranian politics are divided between reformers and conservatives, but the divisions in this imagined collective are negotiated broader than you may think.

\textit{The ‘Second’ Islamic Republic: 1989 – 2005}

The long term reign of supreme religious leader Ayatollah Khomeini and the eight-year Iraq war in many ways defined the first republic of Iran; with the end of the war and Khomeini’s death the next year, new leaders tried to deal with the challenges of restoring people’s love for the revolution.\textsuperscript{238} This era, marked by a shift in policy towards the outside and attempts to reform more radical elements of the revolution, has come to be known as Iran’s ‘Second Islamic Republic,’ closely temporally linked to the rise of Lebanon’s ‘Second Republic’. For the most part, successors to power have lacked Khomeini’s charisma, and though the 1989 – 1997 presidency of Ali Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani saw some reforms, that change was erratic and revolutionary principles always prevailed in key areas such as foreign policy.\textsuperscript{239} Hashemi Rafsanjani was the architect of the “Second Islamic Republic” – a towering figure in Iranian politics during his eight year tenure as president, surrounded by technocrats willing to compromise on some aspects of the revolutionary fervor in order to quell popular unrest at home and in order to preserve decent relations with countries that were important trading partners.\textsuperscript{240} However the team did not bring about the changes expected, partly because of the opposition faced but also because Rafsanjani was never interested

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\item \textsuperscript{236} Clawson & Rubin, \textit{Op. Cit.} at 2
\item \textsuperscript{237} \textit{Ibid.}
\item \textsuperscript{238} Clawson & Rubin, \textit{Op. Cit.} at 116
\item \textsuperscript{239} \textit{Ibid.}
\item \textsuperscript{240} \textit{Ibid.}
\end{itemize}
in reforming the most problematic features of the post-revolutionary system.\textsuperscript{241} One of the enduring themes in the history of the Iranian Islamic Republic has been the high hopes – both abroad and among Iranians tired of revolutionary excesses – that ‘moderates’ would triumph over ‘radicals’.\textsuperscript{242} High hopes often lead to big disappointments; this has been the pattern of the Iranian Islamic Revolution, which has never developed the well-oiled totalitarian structure of communist, fascist, or Baathist regimes.\textsuperscript{243}

**Khatami’s Presidential Victory**

When the 1997 presidential election rolled around, all had expected traditionalist candidate, Nateq-Nuri, Speaker of the Majlis to win; when the obscure former culture minister and national library head Khatami reached out to disaffected youth and campaigned, by bus, across the nation rather than stay in Tehran a storm of excitement swept the country and 29 million, as compared to 16 million four years before, turned out to vote giving Khatami a crushing victory.\textsuperscript{244} Many scholars and the international media celebrated that while the rest of the region was being engulfed by ‘extremism,’ Iranians were rejecting it in favor of liberal reformist ideals.\textsuperscript{245} But the story of Khatami’s eight year presidency is one of high hopes dissipating, as the reformists attempts to wrestle control from Supreme leader Khamene’i, with his unlimited veto power and unelected control over the nation’s security apparatus was unsuccessful.\textsuperscript{246} I think what would more accurately describe the failure of the reformist movement is Khatami himself, and his unwavering commitment to the most basic tenets of the revolution. While debate regarding the *velayet-e-faqih* and its validity was sparked during his term, Khatami, nor any other leading cleric, was ready nor is today about to question clerical rule. This cornerstone of the Islamic Republic stands as a major border guard in the Iranian regime, one that cannot be questioned without questioning the integrity of the revolution itself.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{241} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{242} Ibid. at 121
\item \textsuperscript{243} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{244} Ibid. at 127
\item \textsuperscript{245} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{246} Ibid.
\end{itemize}
It is in this way that Khatami became known for inaction and unwilling to use confrontational tactics, for whatever Khatami was willing to reform, he was not to be, as many had called him Ayatollah Gorbachev, and risk the integrity of the revolution for reform projects.\textsuperscript{247} Khatami was always determined to preserve unity among the clergy and refused to openly break with the hardliners, which put him to a serious disadvantage. When the youth, who had voted him into office, went to the street protesting violations of freedom concerning the press in 1999, and suffered, Khatami did not speak out, and thus made clear his stance vis-à-vis the establishment. Khatami was dedicated to perfecting the Islamic Republic, not replacing it, and his major mobilizing factor, mainly the youth, was neutralized but the border guard was maintained.

\textit{A Third Way: 2005 Presidential Election}

The 2005 presidential election confirmed the demise of the reformist movement and signaled the mark of a new Iranian tenor, one that seemed to be harkening back to revolutionary times, but would turn out to be its own incarnation. After a some what controversial election, a first round many describe as tainted with irregularities, the two candidates said to have received the most votes was former president Rafsanjani and Mayor of Teheran Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.\textsuperscript{248} Most candidates in this election represented themselves as modern men, which would open up Iran, putting reform on the agenda; the exception to this rule was culturally conservative Iran-Iraq War veteran Ahmadinejad.\textsuperscript{249} He, like many Iraq-Iran War veterans, was humble in origin, enamored of revolutionary populist economics, and uninterested, maybe uniformed about the outside world.\textsuperscript{250} Ahmadinejad went on to win an unprecedented runoff, a rebuke both to Rafsanjani’s insider politics and to the Khatami reformers.\textsuperscript{251}

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\textsuperscript{247} \textit{Ibid.} at 131
\textsuperscript{248} \textit{Ibid.} at 135
\textsuperscript{249} \textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{250} \textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{251} \textit{Ibid.}
\end{flushright}
Many questioned after this surprise victory, why did Iran elect Ahmadinejad? Zita, from Ireland and Iran called the victory, “Iran’s second revolution, showing that they want an Islamic State and system,” as did Nasrollah Hamadani, interpreting the results similarly saying, “the results of the election clearly and unequivocally attest to the loyalty of the Iranian nation to the fundamental principles of the Islamic revolution. Go Ahmadinejad go!” Many others responding to this BBC poll highlighted the economic concerns of the nation and the failures of the reformist governments to make good on their promises. Soheil, from Tehran said, “the Iranian nation has just spoken. Political and social freedom, in view of the election results, are not high on the Iranian people’s list of priorities. Battling rampant poverty, corruption and a high unemployment rate clearly is.” Iraj Najafi responding on BBC Persian from Ardabil, Iran, commented, “the result of the election was affected by the people's financial problems, a dislike of cleric figures as presidents and widespread dissatisfaction with corruption.” Ali from Tehran lamented, “I hope Ahmadinejad's victory can be interpreted correctly. He won because he promised to fight against the economic mafia. It does not mean that people vote for fundamentalism.”

In many ways Ahmadinejad’s electoral victory was generated by his ability as a conservatism populist, to mobilize electoral support by attacking the dominance of Iran’s socioeconomic elite. The key element of Ahmadinejad's rise to power being his critique of entrenched social and economic interests in Iran. During the campaign, Ahmadinejad promised to challenge the dominant economic elite, open up opportunities for ordinary people, and root out corruption. His populist stance prompted many Iranians who had not voted in the first round to turn out to vote for him in the second - thus helping to explain the upset of his victory over former President Hashemi Rafsanjani, a man widely seen as the symbol of elite corruption. As Rizvan from Detroit points out, “this election just goes to show that the liberalizing/Westernizing trend amongst young Iranians was confined mostly to the educated and wealthy Tehran elite, and was not shared by Iran’s poor,” while Ali from Tehran shares, “I have asked my friends

252 (2005) “Why did Iran Elect Ahmadinejad?” BBC, 30 June
253 Ibid.
254 Ibid.
255 Ibid.
256 Ibid.
who voted for Mr. Ahmadinejad why they voted to him and all they could say was ‘I just didn't want Rafsanjani to become a president for the next four years.”

In addition to the dissatisfaction with former reformist attempts and the need for socioeconomic change, many observers pointed to the role of US interference in the surprise victory. As Behzad from Iran said, “the one thing that is crystal clear is that Iranians don't take too kindly to other countries telling them what they can or can not do or have. Phrases such as "reformist" or "ultra-orthodox/hardliner" cut little ice now.” As Ghasem from Tehran emphasizes, “In our area of Tehran, AbbasAbad, almost everyone (80%) in our area voted for Mr Ahmadinejad. These people have got fed up with corrupted politicians and so-called reformists and now want someone who will be for the people. What you must remember is that these people who are voting for Mr. Ahmadinejad, their parents are those who supported a revolution in 1979 and gave their children to defend our country against Saddam. Mr. Ahmadinejad does not need the polls to be rigged, the people are behind him.” And with this victory a new populist leader was born in the Middle East, and while time will still tell if President Ahmadinejad will deliver on his promises of economic change, so far he has been tested.

Ahmadinejad, like many other charismatic leaders of this generation, comes from humble origins. Both Nasrallah and Chavez have too come from humble origins. Ahmadinejad, like Nasrallah, has a reputation for being a ‘true believer,’ a very honest, pious and uncorrupt man with a reputation for quite efficiency. Moreover, Ahmadinejad has succeeded in mobilizing three key constituencies behind him: the rural masses, the urban poor, and religious conservatives. Meanwhile, the fundamental cleavages in Iranian politics and society - between state and society, between elites and masses, and among generations - also have not changed. While the socioeconomic elite may value political freedoms, the masses are exhausted with politics and care more about issues of economic security. The generation gap is more complex than is generally recognized, cutting not only across the public but also across the ruling elites. Ahmadinejad represents the new generation of conservatives, whose rise to power will be a defining feature of his presidency.

257 Ibid.
Ahmadinejad's image as a conservative hardliner needs to be qualified. He does not place much importance on political freedoms; for him, the main issues are economic freedom and opportunity. Yet neither is he a proponent of rolling back the social liberalization that has taken place in recent years. In fact, it was President Ahmadinejad that proposed and approved a controversial law that would allow women to attend soccer games. The law was eventually overturned due to the outrage, but signified Ahmadinejad’s tenuous position as a hardliner. Even during his campaign Ahmadinejad rejected the idea of trying to clamp down on freedoms for women and the young. In some respects, Ahmadinejad is willing to concede even more than the reformists were.

In foreign policy, as a newcomer in a Iranian high politics, Ahmadinejad is quite dependant on Supreme Guide Ayatollah Khamene’i for support and guidance, that being said, Ahmadinejad has embarked on a few novel policy maneuvers, the most visible being his rush to enhance his ties with the East, and the Third World. Recent trade contracts and expanded relations with China and Venezuela is indicative of this trend. In terms of the Islamic Republic’s position on border guard issues, such as opposition to Israel and the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, as well as its policy on the nuclear program, such policies are deeply engrained, and will neither be escalated nor impeded in this new era of Iranian politics. There is little doubt that Ahmadinejad favors a hard-line position on the nuclear issue; he has said that Iran does not need relations with the United States and should retain a full nuclear fuel-cycle capacity. Iran's stance on the nuclear program is long established and will not be easy to change no matter who is president. Nonetheless, Ahmadinejad's election represents a setback for the European strategy of engaging Iran.

A factor that cannot be disregarded in this new era in Iran, is the influence of neighbor Iraq and rising regional aspirations for the Islamic Republic. The Shi’a ascendancy in Iraq, as recently articulated by academic Vali Nasr, is supported by and is in turn bolstering another important development in the Middle East: the emergence of Iran as a regional power. The so-called, and greatly feared ‘Shi’a revival,’ which Nasr describes as inevitable, which I view as constructed, is in either case inextricably

tied to the rise of Iran in the wake of the occupation of Iraq. Many including Nasr believe that the Islamic revolution is today a spent force in Iran, and the Islamic Republic is a tired dictatorship facing pressures to change. Rather than view Ahmadinejad’s victory as a boost for the revolution, Nasr argues that the election cannot conceal the reality that grassroots concerns about democracy and economic reform are the key defining factors in Iranian politics as a whole today.

The ‘Geopolitics of Exclusion’: Towards Anti-Imperialist High Politics

Ahmadinejad, the newcomer and populist leader, ranking high in Middle Eastern popularity polls, seems to have taken a liking to the high political route. Rather than deliver on his promise of to focus on the poor, deliver economic security, and social and economic development, Ahmadinejad seems to have made high political power games the center of his attention, costing him much of his popularity domestically, while gaining him favor and animosity world-wide. With the nuclear issue, Hizballah’s armed status, and Iran’s relationship to Iraqi militias high on the international communities agenda these days, and with Ahmadinejad focusing so much of his time on these issues, in addition to other sensational concerns such as the question of Israel’s existence, the start of an Iranian space program, and the beginnings of a new anti-imperialist international financing regime funded by Iran and Venezuela, it seems the popular in the populist has gotten lost. Ahmadinejad has focused so much on ‘countering’ U.S. hegemony and acquiring high cost political status symbols (such as a space program and nuclear power) that he has lost the support of his internal constituency, while reinvigorating and championing a resistance narrative regionally and internationally.

‘Geopolitics of Exclusion’

Richard Falk, famed scholar of international law, identified and named what he saw as a fundamental problem in systems of international law and governance, using mainly the framework of human rights, as

259 Ibid.
260 Ibid. at 213
261 Ibid.
a regime of universal rights, to outline these basic problems of power imbalance. Many other authors have
described similar problems with notions of universality in international systems of governance such as,
Chidi Anslem Odinkalu, Makau Matua, and Bahey El Din Hassan. Human rights, women’s rights,
democracy, nuclear proliferation, all these various buzz words, regimes, systems of international
governance that are meant to be operable on a universal level fail often resulting in fault lines along these
same lines. Iran, and its current break with the international system on the issue of nuclear power, as well
as more broadly, the right to economic development and national integrity, is reflective of this same
debate.

Authors such as, Chidi Anslem Odinkalu, Makau Matua, and Bahey El Din Hassan, discuss the
western/modern origins of human rights to point out their lack of universality. For many of these authors,
it is impossible to believe that many who drafted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights could have
believed they were drafting a rule applicable to all of humanity considering that they, as colonial powers,
were opposed to the idea that colonized peoples were capable of exercising their will, especially in the
choosing of their government.262 Makau echoes many of these sentiments portraying human rights as a
Eurocentric grand narrative meant to transmit western ‘civilization’ and morality to the non-western
world.263 He views human rights as one part of a cultural package, one where the bible wielders, explores,
and colonial administrators of old have been replaced by the human rights zealot.

The same suspicions of human rights come out of the Middle East. Bahey El Din Hassan
discusses what he calls ‘colonial residue’ in the region. Heiner Bielefedlt points out how decision makers
in Middle Eastern states feel threatened by the imposition of human rights as an attempt to ‘westernize’
their nation and impose a particular set of western values upon them.264 Hassan often discusses the
double standard perceived by Arab states. In what we will call the post-George W. Bush era, the
relationship between the Middle East, the West, and human rights has been strained by incidences like

262 Ibid. at pp 35
   4, pp 587 – 617.
Abu Ghareb, conflicts like Iraq, and places like Guantanamo Bay. In Falk’s opinion, universalism in the world-system becomes a mask worn to obscure Western civilizational hegemony – a hegemony far greater than sum of political, economic, and even cultural parts as it is civilizational – including distinctive ideas, memories, beliefs, practices, misconceptions, myths, and symbols that go to the core of human identity and create in essence a false sense of universalism.\(^{265}\)

One of the most important features of empire is that it seeks to order not only its own territories, but also the entire world, by its standard of acceptability, or as Falk calls it, ‘false universalism.’\(^{266}\) An empire attempts to spread and enforce, “…its particular vision of politics, economics, culture, and ultimately of such fundamentals as human nature and the meaning of life itself. This together comprises the imperial ideal.”\(^{267}\) This ‘spreading of civilization’ is a main source of the violence perpetuated by imperialism. Whether by bible, by gun, or by political pamphlets – the forced ideological conversion of the controlling empire's domain inhibits freedom, self-determination, and independence resulting, more often than not, in war and other forms of direct violence. Has human rights, the nuclear proliferation regime, power in the United Nations become only additional tools for the powerful to control; another ‘civilizing mission’ to tame the savages and save the poor helpless, illiterate masses ‘over there’? Whether or not this populist rhetoric is true, it does sway the masses. In Falk’s understanding, there are a few major areas were core issues of power imbalance stand out as striking examples of bias towards international players. This bias, or relative disparity, is bound to spark reactions.

Huntington once called these fault lines, civilizational divides, based on a civilizational identity, To Falk, this same notion of civilizational identity stands out at this historical moment, as an important and potent political, moral and psychological category that presents a multi-faceted challenge to the hegemonic, almost monopolistic, dominance of the role of the state in the modern world order system.\(^{268}\) ‘Inter-Civilizational’ relations, whatever that means, is of a new significance for world-order thinking

\(^{265}\) Ibid.

\(^{267}\) Ibid.
\(^{268}\) Allain, Op. Cit. at 48
according to Falk, especially in reference to political ideology, human rights, and the future of nationalism. As the significance of supra-national forms of identification, such as religion, rise, along side global market forces and the influence of non-state political actors, the nation and the ideologies that accompany them must adjust. Thus new power struggles are initiated on the supra-national level that concern not only the nation, but the international system. Today men fight and die not only for their nation, but out of religious duty, and allegiance to a larger ideological goal – be it democracy, Islam, or anti-imperialism. Nations, as before, when cleavages occur in the world-system, align across so-called civilizational divides based on common misunderstandings within the world system. Just as non-alignment professed a desire for a form of self-determination beyond the rigid polarized ideology of the Cold War, today nations profess alignment based on various common discontents and not simply anti-Americanism.

Among these discontents is the concern for the discriminatory treatment of non-Western civilizations, with respect to participatory rights, or the geopolitics of exclusion with respect to both the dynamics of global governance and substantive and symbolic issues that seem to be of great concern to the Islamic and/or Non-Western world. There have been several rounds, so to speak, of challenges to the various exploitative and unequal relationships in international law, beginning particularly from complaints stemming from experiences in Latin America. In the 1960s and 1970s, this intra-civilizational critique from various third world countries was generalized to emphasize the overall unfairness of the way rights and duties were distributed on a north-south basis; what has been come to be known as calls for a ‘new economic international order,’ or the second tier of human rights (Social, Cultural, and Economic Rights). North-South categories, as well as a reliance on the third world or non-aligned movement, during this period were used as points of reference; generalized designations referring to historical, geographical and developmental affinities rather than a cultural or civilizational solidarity. This is what I believe continues until today, not a civilizational debate, or intra-civilizational alliances, but rather,

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269 Ibid.
270 Ibid.
particular border guards used to generate points of reference point for a common imagined community. What has survived from this first struggle to find a more equitable economic international order in the 1990s is “the right to development.”\textsuperscript{271} This first round has shaped the way issues such as environment, population, and human rights are generally addressed, adding a new vernacular to human rights advocates push for not only development, but sustainable development.

The second challenge and maybe the first truly inter-civilizational critique of the international order through the human rights discourse emerged from the concerted struggle of indigenous peoples in the 1980s and 1990s.\textsuperscript{272} The struggle of indigenous peoples, beginning again mainly from discourse in Latin American, took shape against a background of exclusion, discrimination, persecution, extermination, assimilation, and marginalization as well as a persistent and expressive of aura of arrogance, racism, and ignorance on the part of the international system.\textsuperscript{273} The extraordinary efforts by indigenous peoples to protect the remnants of their shared civilization identity, an identity coherent and self-consistent only in relation to the otherness of modernity, achieved result and exposed the inadequacy of civilizationally blind approaches to human rights, and the utter failure of modernist instruments such as human rights to take account in any way satisfactory the claims, values, grievances, and outlooks of indigenous and traditional peoples.\textsuperscript{274} Transnational activism by indigenous peoples in the last two decades has given rise to an alternative conception of rights, and has given birth to what has now been called the third tier of rights, or collective rights and peoples rights.\textsuperscript{275} While it is still doubtful that any meaningful declaration of Indigenous people rights will ever come to light, given that it must ultimately be approved through state-centric procedures and the great fear of what might happen in indigenous peoples are substantially allowed the right to self-determination.\textsuperscript{276}

\textsuperscript{271} Ibid. at 50
\textsuperscript{272} Ibid. at 52
\textsuperscript{273} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{274} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{275} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{276} Ibid. at 56
Islam has been presenting the third challenge to this universal order of state-centered international governance. The geopolitics of exclusion has led to several substantial grievances with the international order, if viewed first through an Islam-centered lens. These grievances have begun to reach past the ‘civilizational’ divide as other excluded and marginalized elements within the world system begin to respond to the same grievances. One such grievance concerns participation in the United Nations system, another concerns the nuclear proliferation regime.

Participation in the United Nations

Despite more than one billion adherents in over forty-five countries, there has never been an Islamic member on the Security Council. There are many contentious issues regarding representation in the UN and the rights of Security Council members. One such debate is over the right of Veto power, while another regards the inclusion of a permanent African seat in the Security Council. All these various debates focus on the imbalances of power, and west-centric orientation of the international body; grievances that have begun to affect its credibility, not only in the Muslim world, but in all places that self-identify as ‘oppressed.’ While the call for a permanent Islamic seat, or African seat may seem impractical or useful when other attempts at reform are considered, such as the recent alliance among ‘G4’ or group of four nations (India, Germany, Japan, and Brazil) that leaves over 1.2 billion Muslims worldwide (which is not limited only in the Middle East, and also include areas such as Southeast Asia) and all African nations without any permanent representation on the UN security council, no longer does it seem so ludicrous. This is a highly controversial issue within the Islamic world and adversely impacts the UN's credibility in the Middle East and Islamic world, in fact, much of the recent resistance to the reform draft proposals emanating from the G-4 states can be attributed in part to this highly sensitive issue.

Venezuela’s recent bid and subsequent failure to win a permanent seat, and Iran’s support in this respect is one example of this border guard issue in international relations, reaching beyond so-called ‘civilizational’ debates, connecting what is seen as marginalized or ‘oppressed’ states. Venezuelan
Foreign Minister Nicolas Maduro said that Venezuela would oppose "the imperialist vision of the United States" if the South American nation was elected to the Security Council, continuing by saying, "Facing the empire, we are saying, 'Yes, we are going to build a new consensus, not of war, not of abuse. We are going to build the consensus of the peoples of the Middle East, Africa, Asia,'"277 In response to Venezuela’s aggressive bid, U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice campaigned that Venezuela's anti-U.S. stance would make the 15-member Security Council unworkable, warning further in an with *The Wall Street Journal* that Venezuela's ascension "would mean the end of consensus on the Security Council," confirming the validity of this major grievance with the international system.278 In President Chavez’s words, Venezuela’s bid for a non-permanent seat is due to, “the need to block the cannons of the U.S. empire.”279 In Chavez’s opinion, “the U.S. fears Venezuela's presence on the Council because it knows we'll be an independent vote for the Third World,” something as Rice made clear, would compromise the consensus in the Council.280

Both Chavez and Ahmadinejad have made United Nations reform a central feature of their foreign policy. Both men spoke heatedly about such reform when addressing the General Assembly the organs annual meeting in September 2006. President Ahmadinejad poke fun at the legitimacy of the Security Council saying, “apparently, the Security Council can only be trusted to secure the rights and security of certain big powers,” calling on the General Assembly "to rescue the Security Council from its current state" by including envoys from Africa, the Middle East and the Non-Aligned Movement as members.281 Chavez, like Ahmadinejad, called for drastic change to the world body to reduce the influence of the United States and other permanent members.282 Chavez went as far as to say that UN headquarters should be moved away from New York, as he called for an expansion of the Security


278 Ibid.


280 Ibid.


Council, more effective means to handle world conflicts, greater powers for the secretary general and an end to the veto of any resolution from the permanent members: the United States, Russia, China, Britain and France.283 “Let's be honest,” the Venezuelan leader said, “the UN system born after the Second World War has collapsed, it is worthless.”284 Chavez went on to call the General Assembly a “merely a deliberative organ” that meets once a year, emphasizing, "we have no power, no power to make any impact on the terrible situation in the world.”285 Chavez and Ahmadinejad’s alliance on this issue, among many, emphasizes the cross-civilizational nature of these fundamental grievances. This is not just about Islam, as a peculiar system that requires adjustment in order to fit within a universal system of governance; it is about deep structural inequalities with which such nations, seeking power and influence, must bang up against in order to push past the glass ceiling. The UN is just one element of these fundamental grievances.

**Double Standards**

Israel has come to represent in this historic moment, the most entrenched border guard of all, not only for Muslim and/or Arab nations or movements, but across so-called civilizational divides. The perceived bias of the west when it concerns the actions of Israel, or violence against Muslims, has come to represent the ultimate grievance. As Ahmadinejad said when addressing the General Assembly, in reference to Israel, “that regime has been a constant source of threat and insecurity in the Middle East region, waging war and spilling blood and impeding the progress of regional countries.”286 Yet, as Ahmadinejad further commented in an interview with CNN, “Everyone is prevented about questioning the regime. Whenever a question is raised, some American politicians react very strongly to it. I would think it would be a good question to ask from American politicians, the extent of the prejudice we see with them about Israel, given the massacres committed by Israel, killing people in their own homes. Should they not be subject to

283 Ibid.
284 Ibid.
285 Ibid.
criticism? Should nobody complain and raise objections about the violations of rights and the murders that they commit? Are they free to do such acts? This grievance has been long-standing in the Muslim world, since the birth of the state of Israel, with no adequate response from the West or world-system, leading to its entrenched nature; Ahmadinejad and Chavez are just reiterating what many nations have felt for decades. The rights of the Palestinian people have come to represent not only the exclusion of Arabs and Muslims, but oppressed people in general.

Chavez has become a champion of this cause citing Israel as an extension of U.S. imperialism's drive to dominate the world on behalf of its corporations, telling Al Jazeera that the "real threat to the world is the imperialistic threat posed by the U.S., and Israel is one of its imperialistic instruments in this part of the world." Chavez argued, "We must defeat imperialism in this century, so that this elite will not annihilate the world." In his acknowledgement of this deep-seated grievance Chavez has been made legendary in the eyes of millions of Arabs and Muslims world-wide, who see his actions, as the first non-Arab head of state to cut diplomatic ties with the State of Israel as heroic.

As Venezuela's chargé d'affaires to Australia, Nelson Davila, announced to cheers at an 12 August Sydney demonstration against the war on Lebanon, "We cannot have relations with states that attack humble peoples." Following Venezuela's withdrawal of its ambassador, the Palestinian Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign issued an open letter to Chavez hailing the move: "This courageous step is valued by all of our people as the model of action we would expect the world to take to protest against [Israel's] continued war crimes." The letter explained that "we need to know that we are not alone. The withdrawal of the Venezuelan ambassador has given us new confidence and hope that the solidarity with our cause is gaining strength." The Associated Press reported on 5 August that Mahmoud Komati, a

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289 Ibid.
290 Ibid.
291 Ibid.
292 Ibid.
representative of Hizballah, told the Latin America-wide TV channel Telesur that Venezuela's actions were "an example for revolutionaries" in defending "the oppressed, enslaved, and humble peoples of the world," with Sayyed Nasrallah expanding on this statement by saying, "What most of the Muslim states could not do has been done by Chávez by the withdrawal of their ambassador to Israel. He furthermore communicated to us his support for our resistance. This has been an immense source of [morale] for us."293 This act by a non-Muslim state has reified this border guard and sent hope across a region that has long given up on the hope that the international system will acknowledge what it sees as a valid complaint and bias.

*Discriminatory Non-Proliferation Regime*

The discrimination of the nuclear proliferation regime must be seen in light of the politics of geopolitical exclusion. When combined with other factors, such as impediments to participation in the UN, notions of double standards, and imbalances in the economic system (to be described shortly), this final straw can be seen as a weighty bias. Aside from China and Pakistan/India, declared nuclear weapons today are all western in orientation. At the same time, states with genuine security concerns are denied off-hand. The dual structure of this system has not been uniformly implemented as communist states and Islamic countries are the object of strong non-proliferation efforts, while Israeli acquisition and development is completely overlooked.294 The media has reinforced this notion with such blatant examples of bias such as referring to Pakistan’s drive for nuclear power as the search for an ‘Islamic Bomb.’ To many observers, the implementation of the global non-proliferation regime appears to have an anti-Islamic component.295 With this in mind, Iran’s push to complete its nuclear fuel cycle and develop nuclear power, for deterrent purposes, but more importantly for development purposes, and the heated reaction of the world community, specifically the United States, has brought the geopolitics of exclusion to the fore.

For Iran and Venezuela, who have taken on the challenges of such politics of exclusion, these concerns now figure centrally in the creation of an unbiased and free system of governance, where their respective nations may have the equal opportunity to provide and protect its populations. Iranian and Venezuelan lawmakers have recently signed a document condemning nuclear weapons, yet stressing all nations’ right to peaceful uses of nuclear energy.296 During a visit he paid recently to the Venezuelan capital Caracas, Iranian Parliament speaker Ghulam Ali Haddad stated that the U.S. persistent rejection to recognize Iran’s right to pursue nuclear technology to be used for civilian purposes was "only a pretext."297 "They are worried that we want to be independent," Hadad Adel said.298

Nuclear power means many things in our world today. In one respect it is the ultimate universal fear. In another, nuclear capability represents the ultimate form of power, one which can immunize an entity from attack and molestation. Nuclear capability at once represents the peak of development and the abyss of destruction. To Iran, where the nuclear bomb as been declared haram by the Supreme Guide, nuclear power represents not only the contradictions and power imbalances of the international regime, but also a national dream. Domestically, the Iranian leadership has had mixed opinions about nuclear activity. On the one hand, many senior officials have ruled out developing nuclear weapons, but on the other hand, others have implied they are desirable.299 The breakdown is not along simple hardline versus reformist lines either, for instance, those on record implying nuclear weapons are useful include leading reformer Ayatollah Mohajerani who has justified it due to Israel’s nuclear capability.300 The most famous comment about Iran’s desire for nuclear ability, came in 2001 when Hashemi Rafsanjani said, “if one day, the Islamic world is also equipped with weapons like those that Israel possesses now, then the imperialists’ strategy will reach a standstill.”301 Rafsanjani’s statement combines two of the most important reasons for Iran wanting nuclear capabilities. One, Iran ascribes to the theory that has come be

297 Ibid.
298 Ibid.
299 Clawson & Rubin, Op. Cit. at 143
300 Ibid.
301 Ibid.
known as ‘nuclear deterrence,’ and thus sees nuclear power as a method to counter threats passively, especially from the United States and Israel. Secondly, Iran desires the technology as a way to gain an edge in the region, project power and gain prestige as a developed nation.\textsuperscript{302} Prestige politics has come to dominate Iran’s political line, as it seems it is set to prove its status as a world player.

In an interview with \textit{Time} magazine, President Ahmadinejad made what seemed to many to be perplexing statements in describing their nuclear program, but if viewed within the above frame, his answers seem to make perfect sense. When interviewer Scott McLeod asked President Ahmadinejad whether Iran had the right to nuclear weapons, the president answered, “We are opposed to nuclear weapons. We think it has been developed just to kill human beings. It is not in the service of human beings. For that reason, last year in my address to the U.N. General Assembly, I suggested that a committee should be set up in order to disarm all the countries that possess nuclear weapons.”\textsuperscript{303} McLeod pushes Ahmadinejad on this issue question whether or not Iran feels threatened by nations possessing nuclear weapons, the president responds, “today nuclear weapons are a blunt instrument. We don't have any problems with Pakistan or India. Actually they are friends of Iran, and throughout history they have been friends. The Zionist regime is not capable of using nuclear weapons. Problems cannot be solved through bombs. Bombs are of little use today. We need logic.”\textsuperscript{304}

Ahmadinejad sticks to the Party line, and the high moral ground, saying that while nuclear weaponry cannot solve problems today, development and technology can. When asked why Iran will not suspend uranium as a confidence-building measure, Ahmadinejad scoffs, “Whose confidence should be built? When I studied the provisions of the NPT [Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty], nowhere did I see it written that in order to produce nuclear fuel, we need to win the support or the confidence of the United States and some European countries. In this brief exchange we see how Iran is determined to complete the nuclear fuel cycle, not merely for the sinister plot of threatening the world, but more importantly, as

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item \textsuperscript{302} \textit{Ibid.} at 144
\item \textsuperscript{303} MacLeod, Scott. (2006) “Interview with Iran’s President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad,” \textit{Time}, 17 September. \texttt{http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1535777-1,00.html}
\item \textsuperscript{304} \textit{Ibid.}
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
we’ve seen with North Korea’s recent action, to gain a powerful and important bargaining chip in the international arena. Iran will not negotiate what it sees as its national right, to develop and pursue a power that can elevate its status, provide energy for its people, and more importantly, calm internal dissent. Whether it can achieve such goals even if successful is yet to be seen, but these are the ideological goals of the Islamic Republic.

Participation in the World Economy

Being independent does not only refer to being free from military occupation or physical threat. A large part of this drive for independence is economic, and refers to the nation’s right to develop and grow as it please. Participation in the world economy, another central element of Iran and Venezuelan cooperation is a main objection in the politics of exclusion. Since the first round of challenges to biases in the international system, leading to the ‘right to development,’ the structural inequalities of the world economy have figured centrally in debates internationally. Details, such as the fact that permanent membership in the security council, the directorate of the world economy, and the group of seven or G-7 does not include a single Islamic state, only fuels such concerns in the Middle East, especially when nations such as Malaysia, Saudi Arabia or Indonesia have as good a claim as Canada or Italy in such groups. 305 Latin America has led the way in such criticisms of international economic systems, and today, Venezuela is the vanguard of a group of Latin American countries working to counter-prevailing economic norms in the region.

Iran and Venezuela’s budding relationship has also attempted to counter such norms through various allied actions. One such action has been the combined effort on the part of the two nations to undermine the US dollar. 306 In 2005, Chavez announced that his country's plans to move its foreign-exchange holdings out of the dollar into the euro, calling for the creation of a South American central bank designed to hold in euros all the foreign-exchange holdings of the participating countries. Iran, on

305 Allain, Op. Cit. at 60

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the other hand, has been demanding oil payment in euros, not dollars, since 2003.307 The Islamic Republic has already announced plans of opening the Iranian Oil Bourse, challenging by that the NYMEX (the New York Mercantile Exchange) and IPE (London's International Petroleum Exchange). By joining forces in a move expected to deal a major blow to the U.S. economy, Iran and Venezuela are encouraging and creating a golden opportunity for other states to shift foreign-exchange holdings out of dollars and into euros or other currencies, a move expected to severely affect the United States.308

Beyond attempting to affect the hold of the United States over the world economic system, Iran and Venezuela have devoted their alliance to not only boosting their corresponding nations, but the ‘South’ in general. Chavez said Iran and Venezuela are "two heroic nations" with "two revolutions that are giving each other a hand."309 The two presidents are to conclude some 20 commercial accords, including plans to set up a joint petrochemical company, produce surgical tools and help train Venezuelan iron foundry workers, said Jose Khan, Venezuela's basic industries minister.310 The two countries have already signed more than 80 cooperation pledges since early 2005, said Alcides Rondon, former deputy foreign minister for the Middle East, including an agreement to set up a US$200 million (euro160 million) investment fund, a plant for producing gunpowder and other components of ammunition, factories to produce bricks, cement and bicycles, accords for joint oil and gas extraction, a joint-venture tractor-assembly factory, while further, Iran has agreed to build 10,000 homes in Venezuela.311 This flurry of economic deal making comes in light of common objectives, not only a common enemy in George W. Bush as many analysts claim, but rather a common plight centering around the geopolitics of exclusion. As Ahmadinejad said on his last visit to Caracas, "The distance between our countries may be a bit far,

307 Ibid.
308 Ibid.
310 Ibid.
311 Ibid.
but the hearts and thoughts are very close.\textsuperscript{312} To correct this physical distance, the two countries have already begun direct flights, another sign of increasingly close ties.\textsuperscript{313}

Venezuela under Chavez has not limited its efforts to Iran and the Middle East, but as pursued a broad ranging self-described anti-imperialist policy throughout all its efforts; the response in the Arab world has been enormous. Chávez was already popular throughout the region for his government's anti-imperialist policies and for its willingness to use Venezuela's oil wealth to tackle poverty, but as Tariq Ali noted in the March/April \textit{New Left Review}: "Over the last few years, Chávez has visited the major countries in every continent, embarrassing some of his hosts by demanding a global front against imperialism," and in this way, his popularity has skyrocketed, alongside his allies, Ahmadinejad and Nasrallah.\textsuperscript{314} By taking the Venezuela's state-owned oil industry out of the hands of the pro-U.S. elite who ran it previously, the Chávez government has been able to redirect the country's oil wealth to social programs that, according to government figures, decreased the number of people living in poverty by 2 million last year alone.\textsuperscript{315}

Despite being the fifth-largest supplier of oil in the world, when Chávez was elected in 1998, as much as 80 percent of Venezuela's population was living in poverty — a fact that the president insists condemns the system of imperialism, whereby the world is dominated by First World nations on behalf of corporate interests, condemning the majority of the world to poverty and underdevelopment. Latin America has been treated by the U.S. as its "backyard" for decades.\textsuperscript{316} It is here that Chavez finds his solidarity with Muslim, Arab, and other third world leaders, not based on a shared enemy, but rather, on a shared experience. The enemy is not the United States, it is the global system of exclusion, which the United States happens to protect.

The solution promoted by the Chávez government, and allies such as Ahmadinejad is a new form of Third Worldism or the unity of Third World nations to challenge imperialism. Chavez has started with

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\textsuperscript{312} Ibid. \\
\textsuperscript{313} (2007) “Iran, Venezuela to Begin Direct Flights,” \textit{Associate Press}, 9 February. \\
\textsuperscript{314} Munckton, \textit{Op. Cit.} \\
\textsuperscript{315} Ibid. \\
\textsuperscript{316} Ibid.
\end{flushright}
Latin America and has pushed for Latin American nations to forge a bloc to counter U.S. domination.\textsuperscript{317} This is the reason Venezuela's revolution has been dubbed "Bolivarian" referring to Venezuelan-born revolutionary Simón Bolívar who liberated much of South America from Spanish rule and advocated a South American union.\textsuperscript{318} Chávez used a speech to the World Social Forum, held in Caracas in January 2006, to explain how imperialism exploits Third World nations, citing Ecuador as an example, saying, "Ecuador exports crude petroleum and imports fuel [at much higher prices]. See, colonialism!"\textsuperscript{319} Today, Venezuela is assisting Ecuador to build a refining plant to break this cycle and enable it to produce its own fuel.\textsuperscript{320} During a July trip to Vietnam, which is in the same predicament, Chávez signed a similar agreement. In this way, Venezuela is helping undermine the economic exploitation enforced by the First World governments and corporations.\textsuperscript{321}

Venezuela has even extended its policies to the people of First World countries, recognizing that the poor are also abandoned inside the rich nations.\textsuperscript{322} Thousands of poor people in the U.S. have benefited from Venezuela providing cheap heating oil via community groups and local governments.\textsuperscript{323} In an effort to counter the International Monetary Fund, which offers Third World nations loans, but in return, these countries are forced to implement policies that further open them to exploitation by First World multinationals and leaves them stuck with crippling debt repayments, Chávez has proposed an "international humanitarian fund" as an alternative.\textsuperscript{324} Venezuela has begun to make moves to make this a reality via the Bank of the South, which aims, in conjunction with other Latin American nations, to make funds available to nations in the region without the exploitation associated with the I.M.F.\textsuperscript{325}

In order to address issues of geopolitical exclusion by state actors, such as the bold moves in contemporary times of Chavez and Ahmadinejad, requires and necessitates normative adjustment. Major

\textsuperscript{317} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{318} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{319} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{320} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{321} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{322} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{323} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{324} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{325} Ibid.
systems, such as the UN, Human Rights, the non-proliferation regime, double standards in the enforcement of international law, and the international economic order, must be re-shaped as to address the fundamental concerns of various marginalized actors, represented today by Ahmadinejad and Chavez. Much of the world order has been de-legitimized in the eyes of many populations, in order to legitimate the world order, improved participation and representation. Beyond these major and fundamental criticisms, the growing alliance between Iran and Venezuela is case and point for the articulated nature of the Islamic Republic and today’s growing contemporary social movement. It is not one current, one class, one voice that is represented in these serious criticisms, but rather many articulated positions that coalesce around these main border guards, left to imagine the rest of this generalized union under a form of Third Worldism.
Hizballah’s rise to prominence defies simple explanation. In part, Hizballah is a social movement, like many other indigenous movements responding to local conditions of socio-economic deprivation, political disenfranchisement, and international preconditions similar to the post-colonial and modern reality. Hizballah is also a religious movement, with similarities and differences akin to many other Islamic political movements and parties indicative of political participation in the Middle East since the 1980s. But complicating matters in the analysis of Hizballah’s mobilization, organization and collective identification is the unification of various seemingly polar identities into one unified social movement. Hizballah is at once universalistic, nationalistic, religious, and leftist. Hizballah cannot be separated from either the economic and social conditions of the Shia of Lebanon, nor the religious revivalism and ‘third worldism’ sweeping the region and the world. Thus, in order to understand Hizballah, especially in its most recent transformation, we must work with in a broad, ‘articulated’ framework that allows for the negotiation of meaning in order to uncover identity and reconcile social movements theory with various notions of Islamism. It is also an attempt to find the middle ground that stands between binaries such as tradition and modernity, modernity and post-modernity, and finally secularism and religion.

The following three chapters will discuss various aspects of the formation, transformation, and articulation of Hizballah as a social movement beginning in chapter four with an analysis of the factors leading to the formation of the Party. This chapter will begin with a brief discussion of the existing literature on the Party and continue by setting the stage through a discussion of Lebanon as a national entity and the place of the Shi’a historically within it, as the phases of Lebanese national crisis are introduced. The various factors involved in the formation of this Islamist Party will be analyzed through our theoretic lens and evaluated against existing literature. Chapter five presents an outline of Hizballah’s worldview while exploring the myriad of identities negotiated within the Party’s ideological frame. Through the subdivision and discussion of major border guards, chapter five will discuss the evolution of
Hizballah’s identity and ideology over time pointing to the articulated nature of this social movement. The final chapter on Hizballah is devoted to the analysis of Party’s ideological transformation beginning with its inception in 1985 and continuing to December 2006. Chapter five argues that Hizballah has successfully transformed, accommodated and negotiated in response to four distinct periods of change, each time maintaining its ideological consistency through the strict fortification of key border guards. In these three chapters, Hizballah as a social movement, political and religious vanguard in the Middle East, and emergent and powerful non-state actor will be discussed from various perspective, in all instances emphasizing the politics of identification and the role of the mythomoteur.

**Hizballah Perceived**

Of the many Islamists groups that have emerged in the Muslim world since the mid-1980s perhaps none has had as great an impact on the Middle Eastern and international affairs as Hizballah. Existing studies that discuss the Party of God are mainly concerned either with its militancy or conversely, with the contradiction between its fierce ideological stance, as displayed in the “Open letter” of 1985, and its responses to the shifting landscape of regional as well as Lebanese politics. Nothing has increased Hizballah’s infamy or the level of fervent study of the Party as the consistent labeling of the group as a terrorist organization; a classification that has proven less useful in producing a cognitive map of the organization than the Party’s study and labeling of its own adversaries. There has long been a consensus in Washington as to Hizballah’s status as a terrorist organization, since its inception in the 1980s; on 3 November 2001 however, the US refined its list of terrorist entities and official labeled Hizballah a ‘Foreign Terrorist Organization with Global Reach,’ authorizing the imposition of sanction against it or any third part that failed to freeze assets or extradite its operatives. Famously, former CIA director George Tenet told the US congress in 2003 that “Hizbollah, as an organization with capability

328 *Ibid.* at 177. See for a further discussion of Hizballah’s knowledge production capabilities.
329 Harb & Leenders, *Op. Cit.* at 175
and worldwide presence, and is [al-Qaeda’s] equal if not a far more capable organization. I actually think they are a notch above in many respects,” while in a similar vein, Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage asserted that, “Hizbollah made the A-team of Terrorists [but] maybe al-Qaeda is actually the B-team.” Such indictments have served to highlight the image and imagining of the group in the Western mind as an organization to highly feared, while also heightening the Party’s sense of paranoia.

This label has been applied due to several indictments against Hizballah for suspected involvement in a number of high profile attacks. Some of these indictments include: Responsibility for the bombings of the US embassy and US Marine barracks in Beirut in 1983 where 241 marines died; Bombing of the embassy’s annex in 1984; for kidnapping of several US and other Western citizens in Lebanon in the 1980s, including Terry Anderson and CIA station Chief William Buckley; Three alleged members of Hizballah, including infamous Imad Mughniyeh, are held responsible for the hijacking of TWA flight 847 in 1985; Orchestrating the attacks on the Israeli embassy in Buenos Aires in 1992 and the bombing of a Jewish community centre in the same city in 1994; Accused of cooperating and working with Al-Qaeda; Running international criminal networks to finance terrorist activities; Providing arms, logistical, and financial support to Palestinian groups including Hamas, al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade, and Islamic Jihad, all equally qualified as a terrorist organization; and finally, the group is accused of maintaining a close relationship with Syria, with which it has willingly cooperated, and whose attacks in the occupied zone have served Syria’s purpose of underlining the insistence that Israel withdraw completely from both the Golan Heights and southern Lebanon. While all of these indictments are of a very serious nature all charges, except for cooperation with Syria and Palestinian organizations – which they argue is there right as a national liberation organization, have been clearly and

330 Ibid.
331 Marine bombing killing 241 was the largest non-nuclear explosion since the Second World War. The US had not suffered this level of loss of life in a single incident through the Vietnam War. Jaber, Op. Cit. at 77
332 The policy humiliations of the Iran-Contra scandal stem from direct efforts to secure the release of US hostages allegedly held in Lebanon. Norton, Op. Cit. at 1
333 These networks allegedly raise funds from the illicit trade in drugs and other goods in Latin America and conflict diamonds in Africa.
334 Harb & Leenders, Op Cit at 175-76; Norton, Op Cit. at 1-2
publicly been denied by the organization on many occasions and in fact, cannot and have not been proven definitively by Washington to be attributed to the Party of God. Washington has relied on shaky facts and unstable connections to pin these indictments on Hizballah, but not many have stuck to the organization as they have maintained throughout their career the firm backing of not only the Lebanese Government but the regional population in general, for their activities.

Due to the labeling of Hizballah as a super-terrorist, many studies have shown that the production of knowledge about and understanding of Hizballah has suffered accordingly as the accuracy of information suffers due to sensationalism. Students of terrorism have been seriously hampered by systematically resorting to factual incorrectness regarding what can be known, by skipping relevant historical data, by anachronistic arguing, through the use of biased material, and, according to Harb & Leenders, by relying on philological essentialism.

While this misinformation may be due in part to Hizballah’s secretive nature, its highly effective regime of internal disciple and concealment, and given the astonishing fact that it has never produced a talkative defector, with attempts by intelligence to penetrate the group having long failed to do so to any threatening degree, this does not excuse the amount of misinformation continually reproduced. There is a constant reproduction of false facts in the literature, including the naming Sayyed Fadlallah as the spiritual guide of the Party, the dating of its foundation before its actual inception in 1984, and allegations of internationalist efforts and ties to al-Qaeda that systematically do injustice to historical facts and the political stances taken by the organization. Further examples of this misinformation include the argument that Hizballah is just a mere tool or even derivative of the Iranian or Syrian governments. While the Iranian Revolutionary Guards played an instrumental role in the establishment of the group in the

335 *Ibid* at 173.
336 The authors cite the example of entire books based solely on interview with Israeli intelligence sources lacking any fieldwork in Lebanon. *Ibid.*
338 The allegation of Hizballah’s links to al-Qaeda seem to be the most preposterous of all as the two groups of publicly stated their animosity towards each other. Hizballah has publicly condemned the attacks on the Twin Towers and the Luxor attack by Gama’at al-Islamiyya. Some see a connection between two in their use of suicide attacks but Hizballah has not carried out such attacks since 1985. Harb & Leenders, *Op Cit* at 178
1980s, to simply transpose the historical given in order to account for its subsequent career and current status pays no heed to Hizballah’s strenuous and politically costly efforts to reconcile its Islamic agenda with a form of Lebanese nationalism.\textsuperscript{339} While also disregarding the highly sophisticated catering the Party undertakes to meet the needs of its Lebanese Shi’ite constituency and ignores its growing reliance on donations from the Lebanese Diaspora; a fact reinforced by strong indications of dwindling financial support from Iran.\textsuperscript{340}

All in all, the threat Hizballah poses, due to the labeling experience and Hizballah’s status as a super-terrorist, is not due to the organizations actual operations or political outlook but due to its unpredictability and secrecy.\textsuperscript{341} In this way, the terrorist label is meant to construct Hizballah as the ultimate alien who \textit{can not be known} or understood - in this sense, making the study of Hizballah’s terrorism appear as the very antipode of both academia and intelligence.\textsuperscript{342} On another level, the focus on Hizballah and its ‘global reach’ has often been attributed to its links to foreign powers. Hizballah’s regional connections, and budding international following has caught the attention of the world, and it is these links more than anything that inspire the cause for alarm.

**Lebanon, Briefly**

Lebanon in and of itself is a contested territory; the very incarnation of a ‘fragmented’ nation whose identity has been not only debated but fought over since its birth as a modern nation-state. Each group, class, community, and family seems to have its own constitutive myth about the identity of Lebanon and its purpose in the world. But in Lebanon, the struggle for identity, place, and power is brought to the fore by not only its sectarian diversity but due to its precarious location on the rim of regional conflict. The literature on the birth of the Lebanese nation and its development is rich and well-developed, and will not take much time here due to this fact but will only be touched upon briefly to provide context.

\textsuperscript{339} Harb & Leenders, \textit{Op. Cit.} & 179
\textsuperscript{340} \textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{341} \textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{342} \textit{Ibid.}
As described in chapter two, defining Lebanon and the roots of the modern state is complicated problem as five centuries ago there was no territorial jurisdiction called Lebanon. Some elements of the Lebanese population imagine the birth of the nation with the glory of Phoenician times and extend a historical bridge from that ancient society to the one living there today. Others prefer to highlight the ambiguous nature of the Lebanese nation, a country carved out of Greater Syria by colonial powers with an invented tradition. This imagining of the nation’s origin continues into today, with various groups emphasizing and deemphasizing history in ways to construct a particular image of Lebanese identity. Given the variety of interpretations available, the weakness and vulnerability of Lebanese historiography thus far, and the volatile nature of the political situation in the area, identity politics or the iconography of ideology, become central factors in the struggle for power, hope, and harmony. The Hizballah movement is no different.

Periodization being as it is, and as discussed previously, it is conservative and productive to place the origins of the modern Lebanon, as a polity and society, in the closing era of Mamluk rule and the beginnings of Ottoman rule. In the Ottoman Empire, the area of Mount Lebanon had been an autonomous region for over 400 years, dominated by the Christian Maronites. After World War I, the area became part of the French Mandate of Syria, created by the League of Nations after the split-up of the Ottoman Empire by the Treaty of Versailles in 1919. The Maronites of Mount Lebanon have had historic ties with France, seeing them in this period as their ‘protectors’ as the French had come to aid the Maronites in their fighting in the mountains against the Druze in 1860. The Maronites asked the French for their own state during this time of nation-building and state-creation, and in September of 1920 they got it as France declared the French mandate of Lebanon, an ethnic enclave within greater Syria, awarding the new nation with a capital, Beirut, and a flag – the merging of the French flag with the Lebanese cedar.

344 Ibid.
345 Today the blue has been replaced with red and the stripes have been flipped the other way, but the skeleton of the old colonial flag remains.
The creation of this new Republic was not without its controversies and between the time the
Lebanese Republic was carved out of Syria by France and formed in 1926 and its independence from
France in 1943, several ‘national pacts’ so to speak were created.\textsuperscript{346} For the Christians of the country,
Lebanon was a European enclave in the Middle East, a status they hope to maintain through a privileged
relationship with France. For the Sunni Muslims, Druze, and later, the Shi’a, Lebanon was just one part of
a greater Syria, an Arab land connected in history and trajectory to the rest of the region. The creation of
an independent state meant, for Sunnis, putting aside dreams of uniting with Syria, while for Maronites it
meant conceding that Lebanon was an Arab state and not an appendage of Europe and their long favored
ally of French power.\textsuperscript{347} The Shi’a were an autonomous group whose political allegiance during this
period of identity conflict was highly desirable. In fact, the Maronites and the French courted the Shi’a as
an attempt to persuade them onto their side against the Sunni Muslims, and in 1926, France permitted the
Shi’a to establish their own religious courts and to practice their religion freely – which under the
Ottomans, had been precarious.\textsuperscript{348} Ironically, thanks to their actions, the Shiites emerged as a distinct
political group in Lebanon for the first time.\textsuperscript{349} It was this first concession and coalition, with the Muslims
lining up against the Christians that formed the outline of the confessional political system to come.

In 1932, the infamous census was taken – the only census to ever be taken in Lebanese history
and in coordination with its results, Lebanon was subdivided into seventeen sects. This marked the
beginning of identity politics in Lebanon. Today, eighteen sects are official recognized by the Lebanese
Constitution and afforded the right to independent family law, courts and traditions. In additions to this,
each sect is accorded political privilege in rough proportion to their size measured in the 1932 census.
When the modern state won independence in 1943, the defining compromise was made, known as mithaq

Foreign Relations, pp 4.
\textsuperscript{347} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{348} Jaber, \textit{Op. Cit.} at 9. Persecution by Sultan Fakhr al-din provoked a war between the Shi’a and the Druze, this
persecution was accompanied by policy of discrimination, where unlike the Sunnis, Christians and the Druze, Shi’ite
were considered heterodox and were not allowed into the millet system of personal status laws and courts, moreover
the Shi’ites ‘ulema were conscripted in times of war, unlike the Sunni ‘ulema. Hamzeh, 2004 10.
\textsuperscript{349} \textit{Ibid.}
al-watani, or the National Pact, and unwritten understanding between the two dominant political communities – the Sunni Muslims and the Maronite Christians – agreeing to let go of their independent political aspirations to bond together and form a national union.\textsuperscript{350} Maronite Christians were awarded the presidency in the new Republic with Gaullist prerogative and powers, while Sunnis won the premiership - a second fiddle, according to Norton, to the president.\textsuperscript{351} The Shi’i community was awarded the speakership of the parliament, a weak office in terms of relative power. Beside communal power-sharing differences in the new system, allowing for the domination of Christians and Sunnis over the Shi’a, the political elites of the system, who all derived their political authority from familial, confessional and location sources, maintained their influence by distributing to their constituents the resources available to them through government connections, resulting in another level of domination through clans and godfather figures such as Pierre Gemayel, who formed the Christian Maronite Phalangist party in 1936.\textsuperscript{352} The result was the almost permanent incumbency of a handful of powerful men and families in each sect as well as an unevenly divided sectarian system.

\textit{The First National Crisis}

The confessional system, since its inception, has been a hot bed of discontent in Lebanon with sectarianism being one of the great laments of the Lebanese people as well as possibly their savior. And while the National Pact was widely supported at the time, many Christians and Muslims still had there individual reservations concerning what sort of state Lebanon should be: a unique entity culturally and politically tied to the west, or a state attuned to its Arabic heritage and well-integrated into the region.\textsuperscript{353} As such, power sharing agreements and identity issues are continuously worked out in the political sphere, becoming one of the most persistent themes in the development of the nation and resulting in three different periods of civil unrest, war, or ‘national crisis,’ as it has come to be called.

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\textsuperscript{350} Norton, \textit{Op. Cit.} at 3  \\
\textsuperscript{351} Norton, \textit{Op. Cit} at 4  \\
\end{flushright}
The first of these periods of national crisis came in 1958, fifteen years after Lebanon’s precarious National Pact and independence from France. But calm did not last long after the initial agreement. In 1948 the debate about Lebanon’s identity heated up again as the state of Israel was established, and again in 1952 as Gamal Abdul Nasser mobilized Arab masses towards a vision of pan-Arab socialism. As Palestinians flooded into Lebanese territory and conflict enlivened old divisions, the pro-western orientation of the Christians came into conflict with the pan-Arab ideology of the Muslims. When President Camille Chamoun refused to break diplomatic relations with the Western powers that had attacked Egypt during the Suez Crisis, not only was Nasser angered, but domestically, Muslim populations felt alienated by policies of the State. These communities found a voice in Prime Minister Rashid Karami who supported Nasser not only in 1956, but in 1958 when Egypt and Syria united to create the United Arab Republic. At this time Lebanese Muslims, who had had enough of the Christians western orientation and appeasement of imperialist powers, pushed the government to join the newly created republic.

While these external factors, in addition to the meddling of Syria and Egypt, are often cited as the impetus to this conflict in reality, the crisis was rooted in a series of interlocking factors of domestic, regional, and international origin. Agwani and Qubain argue that the primary causes of the war were domestic in nature and were shaped by the policies of the presidential regime of Camille Chamoun (1952 - 1958), whose personal ambitions capped a domestic politics and foreign policy that greatly exacerbated existing divisions in a state whose civil and national consciousness were considerably under-developed.

The war that was sparked by the assassination of the journalist Nasib Matni, on 8 May 1958, but was rooted in preexisting grievances that involved questions of political access; social justice; confessionalism and class; group identity and national consensus; and the major discontent of political

354 Harik, Op. Cit. at 17
356 Alongside political grievances with the sectarian system, rural citizens received a much smaller portion of the benefits of modernization, benefits clearly noticeable in the capital, other regions deprived, as a result of rising discontent in 1950s and 60s, social justice became another bone of contention – identity questions only deepened the chasm. Harik, Op. Cit. at 18.

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elites displaced by corrupt elections in 1957, as well as the dissatisfaction of those constituencies deprived of significant representation – all in all, the same problems that were to plague the state from here on in, including the intervention of foreign powers.\footnote{Ibid.}

Under the Chamoun regime, Lebanon became a staunch advocate of U.S. policy and the Eisenhower Doctrine of 1957\footnote{President Chamoun turned to the US under the Eisenhower Doctrine, promising military and economic assistance to Middle East states which were threatened by international communism. In those early days, not difficult to equate President Nasser’s pan-Arab socialism with communism, particularly since the soviets had begun supplying him arms since 1955. Jaber, \textit{Op. Cit} at 9}, along with their allies in Pahlavi Iran, a position which staunchly identified Lebanon with the anti-Nasserist and anti-Arab nationalist forces in the region.\footnote{Ibid.} The intensification of domestic tensions exploded with the Matni assassination, and President Chamoun was challenged by the opposition.\footnote{Ibid.} The Lebanese government's response was to blame civil strife on interference by the UAR and to charge it with the attempt to undermine Chamoun regime and state.\footnote{Ibid.} These charges came before the League of Arab States (Arab League) and the United Nations, which assigned a task force to investigate charges of massive infiltration by foreign forces in Lebanon and it was on the basis of this charge that President Chamoun requested military assistance from the United States.\footnote{Ibid.} President Eisenhower responded by authorizing Operation Blue Bat on 15 July 1958. The goal of the operation was to bolster the pro-Western Lebanese government of President Camille Chamoun against internal opposition and threats from Syria and the United Arab Republic.\footnote{The recent Muslim rebellion and toppling of the pro-western government in Iraq had everyone in the region on edge, concerned that another conservative Arab government may fall to a populist coup. Gerges, Fawaz A. (1993) "The Lebanese Crisis of 1958: The Risks of Inflated Self-Importance", \textit{Beirut Review}, pp. 83–113. Lesch, David W. (1996) "Prelude to the 1958 American Intervention in Lebanon", \textit{Mediterranean Quarterly}, Vol. 07, No. 03, pp. 87–108.} And although the war had a high cost, with some 2,000 to 4,000 lives lost, it was regarding by many as ‘a comic opera,’ as the Library of Congress points out, especially with such incidence as 5,000 U.S. Marines landing and wading to shore\footnote{Agwani, \textit{Op. Cit.}; Qubain, \textit{Op. Cit.}}
on beaches near Beirut as people swam and sunbathed on the sand. US marines intervened in the fighting and remained in Lebanon overseeing the election of a new president; order was restored with the election of Fouad Chehab, leader of the army. While order reigned for a period before the beginning of the civil war, the fundamental roots of this first national crisis had not been satisfactorily resolved.

In a meeting with Dr. Mustapha Allouche, a member of the Lebanese Parliament elected in 2005 on Hariri’s Tayyar al-Mustaqbal (Current for the Future) list in the wake of the so-called ‘Cedar Revolution’, the start of a national crisis that would mirror this first period of unrest very closely, Dr. Allouche articulated a vision of Lebanon’s fragmented identity. Allouche described the development of Lebanese identity as having endured three temptations. The first temptation, according to this Sunni parliamentarian, was the Arab world; as many Lebanese preferred to identify themselves as Arab first rather than Lebanese. The second temptation, according to Allouche was the Western world; one sects desire to move towards Europe and the United States and away from a regional identification. The third temptation facing the Lebanese in this prophetic vision is a contemporary one. According to Allouche, this last temptation before a unified, singular “Lebanese first” identity would become a reality, is the temptation of the Shi’a world currently facing the nation.

In the words of this Future Movement party member, leading the fight against Syrian presence in Lebanon, the conflict today has been caused by a split in the nation between those who believe an association with Iran and Syria is better for Lebanon and another side that believes that Lebanon's involvement with any major powers in the region does not beneficial impact the country. Like in 1958, the ruling power maintains that rather than a wide-ranging list of grievances, what is at the root of political problems and ideological battles is the interference of regional powers. In 1958, it was Egypt and

366 Alternatively spelled Mustafa Alloush.
367 Allouche, Mustapha. M.D. Meeting With Delegation; Question and Answer sessions. 10 January 2007. Trablos, Lebanon
368 According to Dr. Allouche, there is a part of Lebanon that used to identify outside of Lebanon with the Arab world, more so than within Lebanon with other Lebanese. Today that has changed and Sunni Lebanese identify first as Lebanese, rather than first as Arab. This is the roots of the now popular political slogan, "Lebanese First" Allouche, Op. Cit.
Syria, the two leaders in the struggle against colonialism and imperialism, promoting the populist vision of pan-Arabsim. Today the instigators are Syria and Iran, the two nations again leading the discursive battle against American influence in the region and promoting the populist rhetoric of resistance. Whether or not this is a strictly sectarian battle as Allouche describes, we are yet to see, regardless, this may indeed be the final preclude in the search for Lebanese identity.

Socio-Political Mobilization: The Lebanese Shi’a

The prevailing national myth, the mythomoteur, has always been contested in the Lebanese social fabric. In successive eras the root of what it means to be Lebanese, what the State should represent, and the role the nation is to play both internally and throughout the region, basically, the constitutive myth of the ethnic polity necessary to describe how and why the collectivity was created, why it is unique, and what its mission is, is missing in any hegemonic sense. 369 Thus, this constitutive myth exists in various versions among different classes and segments within the collectivity, and is not only continuously narrated and negotiated through time, but due to a mix of other factors, is violently played out over and over again in a ‘comic opera,’ to use the CIA’s term, until the roots of the problem are solved.

Hizballah was born within the complicated fabric of the Lebanese nation, but more specifically, was formed due to the specific history and experiences of the Shi’a population within the locality. The Shi’a of Lebanon are one of eighteen different religious confessions in Lebanon, which include Sunni Muslims, Christian Maronites, Greek Orthodox, and Druze Muslims. 370 Authors have often pointed to a history of repression, speaking of a Shi’ite heritage of oppression and suffering which affords the sect a distinct communal nature and later, ignited their mobilization. As discussed in Chapter two, the Shi’a community, along with many other strains of Islam, were persecuted by Mamluk and Ottoman authorities in a variety of different ways. Much scholarship has been devoted to this ‘historical tension between the

369 Anthias & Yuval-Davis, Op. Cit. at 34
370 Jaber, Op. Cit. at 9
sects of Islam’ with a sort of revival occurring today, but it is necessary to take some time to review the strength of the claim to historic persecution.

Scholars such as Chehabi and Abisaad have questioned the Orientalist literature and nationalist scholarship coming out of Iran and Lebanon, arguing that such Orientalist literature reduces social and political complexity of Jabal ‘Amil’s history to the unfolding of hostile Sunni policies of persecution of Twelver Shi’is, rather than emphasize, as Abisaab has, the fluid boundaries between various forms of Shi’ism and Sunnism, and the political constructions of ‘orthodoxy’ and ‘heterodoxy’, showing how they have been continuously redefined and negotiated.371

There was in fact a Shi’a ‘Golden Age,’ known colloquially as the ‘Shi’i Century.’ As Hamzeh points out, Shi’ism was dominant in the Muslim world in the tenth century at a time when the Buwayhids ruled in Iraq and Iran, the Fatamids in Egypt, Syria, and north Africa, and in Andalucia. After the downfall of the Fatamids and conquest of Syria by Salah-al-din-al-Ayyubi in 1171, the centuries of oppression began.372 Repression did exist, but as Abisaab has presented, much of the literature on the Shi’i populations of Mamluk and Ottoman Syria and their relations with Sunni governors, seems inadequate as most treat the multifaceted and complex relations between Shi’is and Sunnis somewhat anachronistically and suggest the existence of a systematic Sunni ‘policy’ to dispense with the Shi’i presence.373 Proponents of this view invariably reduce the wealth of historical data to examples of primordial hostility, persecutions and counter persecutions, while their narratives undermine the internal social setting of Jabal ‘Amil and the diverse and shifting local interests of the provincial elite and those of Mamluk and Ottoman authorities in Syria.374 In contrast, other approaches deny any Ottoman attack on Syrian Shi’is and remain silent on the execution of prominent Shi’i scholars like Shamseddin Muhammed

374 Ibid.
ibn Makki, known as al-Shahid al-Awwal (734-786/1333-1384) and marginalizes the socio-religious motives behind the execution of yet another notable scholar, namely, Zayneddin al-‘Amili, known as al-Shahid al-Thani (911-966/1506-1558). 375

Modern Shi’i scholars project a distinct historical memory of Mamluk Ottoman rule as periods of intellectual marginalization and persecution of Shi’is, this historical memory emerges more specifically from the Ulema circles in connection with the Mamluk and Ottoman executions of two prominent theologians – there is a tendency to collapse these two incidents into one uninterrupted Sunni policy against the ‘Amilis even though they are separated by two centuries. In brief, the two Shahids, rather than being the target of a well-defined policy, suffered at the hands of the authorities due to the fact that they lacked the protection of a solid religious institution or a social base from which to launch their professional ambitions albeit under diverse historical circumstances. 376 For example, al-Shahid al-Awwal came to the attention of Mamluk officials not through a confrontation with Sunni scholars or officials but rather through his involvement in a social struggle at the local level among a number of contending groups. 377 Internal struggles and dissent in Jabal ‘Amil is what obstructed the goals of leading jurists, but then again their execution was made possible by Mamluk and Ottoman measures to curtail and suppress Shi’i political activism that deviated from the officially-defined orthodoxy and its political underpinnings. Once clerics were identified as politically threatening to the ruling elite, the second step was to ‘de-Islamize’ them in concordance with a discourse of ‘orthodoxy’ that served and protected the government, 378 thus Mamluk and Ottoman rulers cannot simply be summarized as fair or neutral towards Shi’is, nor can they be judged by a fixed persecution theory. 379

Thus, despite the mobilization value of Shi’ite cultural heritage of oppression and suffering, which accorded Shi’ite politicization a distinctly communal character, the chief determinants of Shi’ite

375 Ibid.
376 Abisaab, Op. Cit. at 73
377 Abisaab, Op. Cit. at 70
378 The example of Ibn Tamiyya stands out – seen as heretical at times, at others, heading the drive against other heretics. Look at Abisaab, 2005 for more information.
379 Abisaab, Op. Cit. at 73
activism in Lebanon have been the same social, economic, and political conditions which have spurred Third-Word radical and populist movements to action.\(^{380}\) So while authors such as Hamzeh insists that elements of identity crisis – or a crisis of soul and personality, characterized by acute alienation and feelings of normlessness, powerlessness, insecurity, and self-derangement, cause by a historical pattern and a Shi’ite experience or ‘legacy more than fourteen hundred years old, a legacy of martyrdom, persecution, torment, suffering, powerlessness, and insecurity,’ have been a main factor in the emergence of Hizballah and social movements among the Shi’a, I attribute this so-called ‘legacy’ to a crisis within the founding of the nation and to an emergence of ‘myth-history’ and an attempt to re-write the Shi’a into history.\(^{381}\) While Shi’a symbols, such as the martyrdom of Imam Hussein and the Image of Yazid are still used to mobilize the masses, they are used to reference a history of resistance rather than a history of persecution.

Many aspects involved in the emergence of Hizbollah are the same as those that may be attributed to the rise of populist movements throughout the world. One such condition involves various aspects of the modernization process which of course can be closely correlated with political activism and social movement formation in modernizing countries. One aspect of modernization that heavily impacted the Shi’a community of Lebanon, along with other members of the rural poor and agricultural class was urbanization. Traditionally, Shi’is were either tenant farmers on the large estates of traditional land-owning families or employees of the state-owned tobacco monopoly.\(^{382}\) Political and religious actors such as Sayyid Fadlallah have blamed state policies, such as there lack of a fair and equitable agricultural policy that would allow the community to earn a decent living and educate its children, for Shi’i ‘backwardness’.\(^{383}\) Alongside discontents with the division of power in the new republic, rural citizens became increasingly disgruntled with the much smaller portion of the benefits of modernization they were

\(^{381}\) Hamzeh, \textit{Op. Cit.} at 07
\(^{382}\) Harik, \textit{Op. Cit.} at 263
\(^{383}\) \textit{Ibid.}
receiving; benefits clearly noticeable in the capital were absent in other deprived regions, making social justice another major bone of contention in the political game.  

The urbanization of the Shi’ites began in the late 1950s, as the modernizing policies of the state disproportionately affected sections of society, leaving those on the outskirts of the center out in the cold. A decade later, it is this foundation that encouraged in many ways the mobilization of the Shi’a community, prompted by the extreme deprivation of the long neglected Shi’ite rural ‘peripheries’ of the south and Bqaa and the Shi’ites migration to the Beirut core around which they settled in slums. As Saad-Ghorayeb argues, in the communally segregated rural setting of old, the ‘community-class’ tension and structural division was somewhat hidden from site, but as slum-dwellers in the ‘belts of misery’ they could not help but be exposed to the affluent and westernized life-styles of their Christian and Sunni counterparts in the new urban milieu. This new proximity engendered a sense of relative deprivation and encouraged the self-identification of the Shi’a as ‘the proletariat of Lebanon’ – at a time when Arab socialism and pan-Arabist movements where rising. This sense of historic injustice, mistrust of the State and its equity, and a disbelief in the promises of modernity has helped to foster a communal consciousness among the socially, culturally, and psychologically dislocated settlers.

For the Shi’a in Lebanon, modernization, urbanization and migration took on many of the same forms and patterns as described throughout the rest of the region and the world and the reaction was of course comparable. Migration, religious revival, violence, and politicization were all common reactions to various structural problems in the country. Low levels of political development, under-representation in parliament, civil service, and government came to be more commonly viewed as characterizing exclusion from the system thus engendering frustration, radicalization and sometime politicization. The natural rate of increase for the Shi’a community outpaced all others in Lebanon with Shi’a families averaging 9

384 Harik, Op. Cit. at 18
385 Saad-Ghorayeb, Op. Cit. at 3
386 Ibid.
387 Ibid.
388 Ibid.
389 Saad-Ghorayeb, Op. Cit. at 8
children per household in the 1970s; three more than Christians and one more than other Muslims.390 This growth in size not only contributed to a structural imbalance in terms of resources but also within the confessional system. Between 1956 and 1975 the Shi’ite population tripled, from 250,00 to 750,00 boosting proportional size to 30 percent of total population.391 By 1980s, widely believed to be the largest group in the nation, almost 1,400 000 people, but regardless of this fact, no change has been made to the confessional system and no knew census has been conducted.392 Families surviving on the agricultural economy, selling tobacco to the state monopoly or growing fruits and vegetables, could no longer subsist on what they had before.393 This structural neglect, political exclusion, and managed marginality sparked various responses. Some moved, from the rural to the urban or abroad, while others turned to politics.

As Saad-Ghorayeb describes, although these conditions would be considered ‘conducive to the espousal of religion as ‘a goal-replacement mechanism’ in Islamic societies,’ the political mobilization of the Shi’a community was initially channeled not into religious avenues, but into non-Islamic avenues of political participation.394 The roots of Shi’ite political mobilization and hence the formation of Hizballah lie first and foremost in the community’s radicalization by Arab nationalist, socialist and communist organizations with the loss of Palestine in 1948; the influx of Palestinians after 1948 and again in 70-71 after Black September and the exclusion of the periphery from the benefits of modernization, henceforth ‘signaling the inception of Shi’ite political consciousness.’395

Shi’i politics, having been traditionally controlled by zu’ama or political bosses - a handful of dominant families who maintain power through extensive patronage networks and whose power depended on support from clients, witnessed a change in the 1960s.396 Many of the young, alienated by old-style politics, frustrated and in search of agency, were attracted by new forces, mainly the variety of secular political movements such as, Lebanese Communist Party (LCP), Syrian Social nationalistic Party (SSNP),

390 Norton, Op. Cit. at 5-6
391 Hamzeh, Op. Cit. at 12
392 Ibid.
393 Norton, Op. Cit. at 6
394 Saad-Ghorayeb, Op. Cit. at 8
395 Ibid.
396 Norton, Op. Cit. at 7
Organization for Communist Labor Action, Amal, and later Hizballah.\textsuperscript{397} As the fortunes of secular movements have declined, and the rise of the clerical movement began, loyalties and sympathies of Shi’a remain widely distributed.\textsuperscript{398}

The early 1960s witnessed the beginnings of an active clerical movement in Lebanon centered in Shi’a concentrated areas; a movement which served to re-invigorate Islamic principles in the struggle for social justice, political participation, and resistance.\textsuperscript{399} The movement began with limited activity in Mosques, then cultural events with limited participation, according to Hizballah’s Deputy Secretary-General Na’im Qassem, of university students and women.\textsuperscript{400} Soon, three of the active clerics within the movement drew the spotlight with their comprehensive ideological visions: Imam Musa al-Sadr, Ayatollah Muhammed Mahdi Shamseddine, and Ayatollah al-Sayyed Muhammed Hussein Fadlallah.\textsuperscript{401} Shamseddine began by leading prayers and attending to social and cultural aspects of his congregation. Known for his intellectual capacity and speaking ability, his participation in public life has been limited due to his role as Deputy Head of the Highest Islamic Shi’ite Council, a role which requires a sort of passive neutrality.\textsuperscript{402} Fadlallah began in east Beirut founding the Brotherhood Association and has adopted a messenger role through cultural works, lectures, published works and education.\textsuperscript{403} Fadlallah was the product of Hawzat al-‘Ilmiyyah of Najaf, and was very much influenced by the Iraq based Hizb al-Da’wah al-Islamiyyah.\textsuperscript{404} The Da’wah ideology represented a brand of activist religio-political revivalism inspired by Ayatollah Baqir al-Sadr.\textsuperscript{405} During the early years of the Hizballah, his name became associated with its own and though he was a symbol of many of the ideological concepts within the party, so much so that Fadlallah was nominated to be a leader in the Party, according to Qassem, but

\textsuperscript{397} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{398} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{399} Qassem, \textit{Op. Cit.} at 16
\textsuperscript{400} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{401} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{402} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{403} Ibid at 17
\textsuperscript{404} Hamzeh, \textit{Op. Cit.} at 22
\textsuperscript{405} Ibid.
he refused opting to remain ‘a-political’ through his roles as a cleric.\textsuperscript{406} In Sharp contrast to Musa al-Sadr’s commitment to Lebanese identity, Fadlallah’s nascent movement stressed its loyalty to the emerging transnational ideology of Shi’ism with roots in Najaf, a difference that was to take hold in the wake of al-Sadr’s disappearance and the resulting fractionalization.\textsuperscript{407} Musa al-Sadr, as we have discussed, was an active member of the clerical movement through his many broad based efforts, yet although many have looked to him as a visionary in the Shi’a community and main impetus to the politicization of the Shi’a during this period, as we see, loyalties, as common in Shi’a Islam, have always been divided.

In the period following al-Sadr’s disappearance in 1978, many in the younger generation were attracted to the sense of religious identity generated by an activist interpretation of Shi’ite ideals under the leadership of Ayatollah Sayyid Muhammed Husayin Fadlallah.\textsuperscript{408} Suffering from the loss of charismatic Musa al-Sadr, the Supreme council and Amal were incapable of containing the ‘new shi’ite militants’ and as a result, Sayyid Hussein al-Musawi, broke away in June 1982 and founded Islamic Jihad.\textsuperscript{409} With the success of the Iranian Revolution, several Sheikhs inspired by Islamic Iran’s ideological line looked beyond Amal, and 1982, the Shi’a openly rallied behind Islam against the Israeli invasion.\textsuperscript{410} In the beginning there were several groups involved, Islamic Amal, the Islamic Movement, Islamic Jihad, and the Revolution committees; Hizballah emerged as a marriage between Lebanese Shi’ite militants, Leftists and Islamic Iran, and grew to become the most influential Shi’ite militant movement in the region.\textsuperscript{411} As Qassem and Norton have argued, Lebanese Islamists divided their allegiance among Amal, the range of Islamic committees, the missionary faction and the independents, with no one group gaining a sense of hegemony.\textsuperscript{412}

\textsuperscript{407} \textit{Ibid}.  
\textsuperscript{408} Hamzeh, \textit{Op. Cit.} at 23  
\textsuperscript{409} \textit{Ibid}  
\textsuperscript{410} \textit{Ibid} at 24.  
\textsuperscript{411} \textit{Ibid.} at 25  

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Scholars involved in the study of Hizballah have often made the point of noting Hizballah’s almost hegemonic level of political support within the Shi’i community in Lebanon, Norton however makes clear that political loyalties among the Shi’a, and Lebanese in general, are often shared between two or more organization and it is common to meet people whose personal biographies include membership in 3 or 4 different political organizations, including a medley of religious, secular, and leftist affiliations. Over time Hizballah has consolidated its hold over its constituencies, but never in a way to preclude a sense of hegemony, which accounts for many of its transformations over the years. Norton emphasizes that “support is lent and political loyalty is fungible [in Lebanon],” and I would argue that it is due to the tenuous nature of the mythomoteur. The marginalized population, along side the majority, has searched for answers through multiple avenues, as the constitutive myth of the nation, national pact, or social contract, has not been able to maintain a monopoly on hegemonic symbols and narratives for long.

To review, the politicization of the Shi’a in the 1950s, 60s and 70s was caused by several overlapping causes. The modernization project of the new nation left the periphery of the country excluded from the promise of a more prosperous tomorrow. The Shi’a community, historically marginalized with a myth history of ancient persecution, were pauperized and disenfranchised while coming in close contact with the wealth being affording other segments of society. While many scholars have attributed the politicization of this community to their sectarian peculiarities, as we have seen, this process of politicization, migration, and radicalization is not uncommon throughout the Middle East and third world in general.

Shi’a in Lebanon did not turn first to religious symbols, but rather turned to leftist and pan-Arabist organizations and narratives to solve the various issues facing their community including issues of structural neglect, political participation, anti-imperialism (as the government was seen more and more as aligned with the west), regional solidarity and resistance to the Israeli regime. There are many that argue that before the formation of Hizballah in the 1980s, and apart from Musa al-Sadr’s *Harakat al-

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413 *Ibid*
Muhrumin (Movement of the Dispossessed) and later its militia, Amal, that the Shi’a were simply a poor, passive and disorganized community. Ranstorp argues, “prior to organizational formation of Hizb’Allah in June 1982 the Lebanese Shi’a community was largely regarded, by other militia and outside observers, as politically irrelevant. This came as no surprise given the Shi’a community’s historical background as socially excluded, politically marginalized and economically deprived within Lebanon, itself reinforced by the institutionalized political system of confessionalism which disadvantaged the representation of Muslims.”

This position, generalized as it is, does not hold water. From the 1950s we have seen the activism of the Shi’i community in various forms, either political participation through various organizations, through the provision of social services through community groups and religious centers such as those organized by Musa al-Sadr and Sayyed Fadlallah. Religion in fact cannot be portrayed as being the first force to mobilize the community; an important point being as this participation in secular movements has influenced the way Hizballah identifies itself. The politicization and migration of the Shi’a most importantly, raises the question of the durability of Lebanon’s founding compromise, whose lack of resilience would substantially contributed to the violent turmoil that enveloped the country in the years to come.

**The Second National Crisis and the Birth of Hizballah**

The Lebanese Civil War has fascinated the mind of scholars for years now with volumes of studies being produced on almost every aspect of the war. With the space allowed, I will only be introducing the topic very briefly emphasizing its pertinence to the subject at hand. The war has been described by many as the bitter grievances of Lebanon’s confessional system. While many portray the War as a sectarian one, the opposing sides were not fighting each other simply because of their respective religions but rather as a

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415 Norton, Op. Cit. at 6
416 Jaber, Op. Cit. at 12
result of major differences of opinion on matters concerning ideology, identity, nationality, and power. Authors have discussed a slew of other factors concerning the impetus of the war, most specifically the growth of Palestinian population and militants in the small and demographically sensitive country. This surge of people and a political conflict brought to their front doors, led to clashes, first with the Phalangist militias, as Christian Maronites started to take matters into their own hands.\textsuperscript{417} Dr. Elias Saba, two-time Minister of Finance and Defense (1977, 2000) describes the war as the “War of Others on Lebanese soil,” pointing out that while many view the ‘bus incident’ between Maronite Christians and the PLO as the trigger of the infighting, larger geopolitical factors may have been at play, including the role of the Lebanese banking economy and the Oil Crisis of 1973 – 74.\textsuperscript{418} This was not simply a Civil War; it was a Lebanese-Palestinian war, a Lebanese-Lebanese war, a Palestinian-Syrian war, a Palestinian-Israeli war, a Lebanese-Syrian war, a Syrian-Israeli war, and a Lebanese-Israeli war. Add to these dimensions Libyans, Iraqis, Americans and Russians, and the resulting chaotic mix of well over seventy groups fighting in Lebanon and what you have is complexity. The significance of foreign interference in this War, and Lebanon’s history, up to this point and beyond, cannot be understated, but irrespective of this fact, in the words of Dr. Saba, the war was the “responsibility of Lebanon.”\textsuperscript{419}

Foreign manipulation of the political scene in the Lebanese context is nothing new. The French supported the Maronites, the Syrians have alternatively backed the Christians, Sunni, and Shi’a depending on geopolitical situation.\textsuperscript{420} Other Arab states – Egypt in Nasser’s day, Saudi Arabia in more recent decades – have supported the Sunnis for long periods. Libya and Iraq have both aided Sunni political

\textsuperscript{417} \textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{418} Dr. Saba discussed how during the time of the Oil Crisis, an event that impacted the United States tremendously, most of the managers of the oil money from the Gulf were Lebanese Banking firms, the most trusted services sector in the region. The Lebanese Banks thus held the power of the invested Gulf money in the States in their hands. He points out that the Civil War started right after the assassination of Faisal ibn Abdul Aziz al-Saud in 1975. It was after this, according Dr. Saba, that Lebanon became the “place that had to be eliminated” due to the power of the gulf money and oil money in the US and Israeli conflict. He refers to this point to a plan that has also been called the Kissinger plan, with the purpose of installing a pro-Israeli president in Lebanon, or assisting in the creation of a unified Syrian-Lebanese state with which to place the Palestinian population. Saba, Elias Phd (2007) Meeting: lecture and Question/Answer Session, Center for Arab Unity Studies, Beirut, Lebanon: 9 January.
\textsuperscript{419} Saba, \textit{Op. Cit.}
elements inside Lebanon for decades, while Israel has funded the Maronites and various minor groups within the Shi’ite community.\(^{421}\) The Soviet Union actively supported a significant Communist movement. The United States provided covert funding to facilitate the election of various leaders in the 1960s and has regularly lent support to various factions over the years.\(^{422}\) The potential ascendancy of the Shi’i community, in and of itself, enlivened a variety of foes, domestic and foreign, with anti-Shi’a coalitions find ready encouragement from outside of the country, sometimes Syria, mostly Saudi Arabia, which has made little secret of desire to buttress position of Sunni Muslims.\(^{423}\) In this context, Iran’s involvement is hardly exceptional, given their near complete absence of support during the Civil War.

Whatever dimension of the war is emphasized, this catastrophic event, the second national crisis in less than twenty years, had a lasting impact on the Lebanese national memory and communal politicization. Shi’ites, receiving a majority of the causalities in the fighting between the PLO and Israel in the south began to blame the Palestinians as well. When al-Sadr accused the PLO of creating anarchy in the South, the relations deteriorated.\(^{424}\) Prior to the outbreak of civil war in 1975, it was the Shi’ites socio-economic and political deprivations which propelled them to political action, but once the war took its toll, it was the political mobilization of the Maronites which instigated the Shi’ites militant counter-mobilization.\(^{425}\) Off all Lebanese sectarian groups, the Shi’ites incurred the highest number of fatalities during the civil war, especially the first year at the hands of Maronite militias amongst others – it was not until the late 1970s that this radicalization was re-channeled to Amal which witnessed a considerable upsurge due to the disappearance of Musa Sadr in 1978, the Israeli invasion and the Islamic Revolution a year later.\(^{426}\)

As a result of administrative and service gaps created by fierce fighting, militia leaders had to take on the role of the State and provide for their populations the basic services they required to survive.

\(^{421}\) Ibid.
\(^{422}\) Ibid.
\(^{423}\) Norton, *Op. Cit.* at 21
\(^{424}\) Ibid.
\(^{426}\) Ibid.
In this period, the idea of social justice took on new meaning. Essentially, each militia was responsible to create mini-public administrations to handle essential tasks such as electricity, road repairs, provision of educational and health services.\textsuperscript{427} In this role, these militias took on the additional task of proving to their constituencies what kind of leaders they maybe when given a chance at power. Most of these militias failed this task, falling into traps of corruption, violence, and theft. Many militias plundered state resources to provide for their neighborhoods, often deteriorated to thugs extorting afraid, trapped families.

While Hizballah rose in this general atmosphere, they operated their ‘social service’ capacity differently. Rather than begin by providing for needy populations, Hizballah begun by helping their fighters and martyrs families and extend out, receiving funding from either abroad or through religious donation. While other groups had to exploit government resources, Hizballah had other sources of funding immunizing the Party from having been viewed as preying on the disintegrating Lebanese state, a charge leveled on Amal and other parties.\textsuperscript{428} In essence, Hizballah’s free money, and the disciplined behavior of its partisans in comparison with that of Amal encouraged the ‘Mr. Clean Image’ the Party acquired in the future. While the Civil War tarnished the image of many actors in the Lebanese political arena, for Hizballah, who had not formed yet, it served to bolster its image by tarnishing that of all its would be competitors. By the time Hizballah came into the fore, it was a welcome relief to the people looking for new solutions.

\textit{The Era of Invasions and the Birth of Resistance}

No single factor contributed to the conception and birth of Hizballah and the Islamic Resistance as the Israeli invasions of 1978 and 1982. These direct invasions combined with the extensive financial and military support the Israelis were provided segments of the Lebanese population directly fed the already politicized masses giving them the enemy they were looking for and making Israel the ultimate border guard from this point forward.

\textsuperscript{427} Harik, \textit{Op. Cit.} at 82
\textsuperscript{428} Ibid.
Israel has had a long history with the Christians of Lebanon, having cultivated a relationship with them almost from the advent of the Zionist movement. Some Zionist politicians had envisaged a Jewish-Maronite alliance to counterbalance Muslim regional dominance. After Israel's independence in 1948, some Israeli leaders advocated extending the northern border to encompass Lebanon up to the Litani River and to assimilate the Christian population living there. In 1955 Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion and General Moshe Dayan conceived a plan to intervene in Lebanon and install a Lebanese Christian president amenable to improving bilateral relations. The patriarchs of Lebanon's Christian community, particularly Pierre Gemayel and Camille Chamoun, were tempted by Israeli offers of assistance, but they nevertheless resisted entrusting the security of the Maronites to Israel but in 1976, threatened by the escalating War, a new generation of Lebanese Christian leaders turned to Israel for military support, the two parties united in their hatred for the PLO, united against the ascendant PLO and the Muslim left.

By this time, the PLO had already created a quasi-governmental autonomy in Lebanon that has come to be known as ‘a state-within-a-state.’ Israel, who was skeptical of the Lebanese government and army’s willingness to control the militants on their territory began in 1977 to equip and fund a renegade Christian remnant of the Lebanese Army led by Greek Catholic army officer, Major Saad Haddad. Haddad's force, which became known as The Free Lebanon Army, and later as the South Lebanon Army (SLA), grew to a strength of about 3,000 men and soon occupied the south of Lebanon, almost ten percent of Lebanon’s total area, an area that came to be called ‘the Security Zone.’

On March 11, 1978, PLO terrorists made a sea landing in Haifa, Israel, commandeered a bus, and then drove toward Tel Aviv, firing from the windows. In retaliation, four days later Israel launched Operation Litani, invading Lebanon with a force of 25,000 men. The purpose of the operation was to push PLO positions away from the border and bolster the power of the SLA. The operation failed, however, to

429 Qassem, *Op. Cit.* at 89
430 Qassem, *Op. Cit.* at 89
break the power of the PLO in the south and soon the PLO was able to rearm and fortify its bases in southern Lebanon. Moreover, the offensive killed 2000 people, displaced some 250,000 and was the start of the occupation of the South by the Israeli army.433

On March 19, 1978, five days after the start of the invasion, the United Nations Security Council Resolution 425 was issued calling on Israel to withdraw its forces immediately and establishing the United Nations Interim Force In Lebanon (UNIFIL). It was not until twenty-two years later that Israel would withdraw its troops from ‘the Security Zone’ and resolution 425 would be implemented. President Emile Lahoud argued that this resolution, signifying the beginning the Israeli occupation and defiance of UN authority and Lebanese integrity, marks the beginning of the formation of the ‘National resistance forces’ as he called them.434 “It was not the National Army that fought Israel,” President Lahoud made clear, “it was the resistance. Why? Because only a resistance force, fighting using the techniques and tactics of guerilla warfare can succeed against such a strong and mighty enemy. This is why I have always backed the resistance in Lebanon, even as the Head of the Army.”435

While the first invasion may have marked the beginning of the occupation, the resistance, and international peace keeping efforts, the events to come, including the disappearance/kidnapping of Musa al-Sadr, echoing the fate of the twelfth Imam, and the Iranian Revolution in 1979, would add a religious element to the politicization of the Shi’ā while also intensifying its third worldism and anti-imperialism. The Iranian Revolution served to impact Islamic activists, Sunni and Shi’ite alike, serving as a sort of demonstration effect.436 Lebanese Shi’ites were the most receptive to the message due to a long history of cross-cultural relations, including the relationship between the Lebanese Shi’ite clergy and Khomeini and al-Sadr, before and after the Iranian revolution, helped to establish an effective network that would subsequently facilitate Iran’s demonstration effect in the Lebanese political arena.437

433 Saad-Ghorayeb, _Op. Cit._ at 10
435 Ibid.
436 Hamzeh, _Op. Cit._ at 18
437 Many leaders in the Lebanese Shi’a clerical circle emerged from the Najaf-Qom network included Musa al-Sadr, Fadlallah, Shams al-Din, al-Musawi, Tufayli, Qasim, Nasrallah. Hamzeh, _Op. Cit._ at 19
When the Israeli Army invaded for the second time in 1982, the forces which emerged to resist its occupation was the child of these ground breaking events.\textsuperscript{438} Saad-Ghorayeb argues that the pre-eminent factors directly responsible for the movement’s birth and hence the Islamization of the Lebanese Shi’ites was the invasion – although radicalization had already taken root over a decade earlier, this second invasion imbued it with a distinctly Islamic character.\textsuperscript{439} Although there had been a significant number of religious groups and associations prior to 1982, many which arouse as a result of the Iranian revolution their merger was not inevitable in the absence of an Israeli invasion.\textsuperscript{440} As expressed explicitly by Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, Secretary-General of Hizballah today, ‘had the enemy not taken this step, [the invasion], I do not know whether something called Hizballah could have been born. I don’t think it would.”

As the brainchild of Ariel Sharon, minister of defense in Menachem Begin’s government, ‘Operation Peace for Galilee’ stated aim was to drive the PLO from Israel’s northern border, similar to the aim of ‘Operation Litani.’\textsuperscript{441} An air raid was launched on Palestinian targets in Beirut, a siege that caused an international stir, and on July 6 the Israeli army invaded. Some authors argue that while the elimination of the PLO was one aim of the invasion, another major aim was to confront Syria and quell its hegemony in Lebanon as well. A US-led agreement between Israel and the PLO was brokered which called for the departure of all Palestinian fighters from Beirut. On August 12, 1982, multinational forces arrived on to oversee execution of agreement.\textsuperscript{442} The number of causalities in this war was tremendous, but the numbers are disputed. \textit{An Nahar}, a Lebanese paper published in Beirut, estimated that the total military personnel and civilians dead from the Israeli campaign (up to and including the siege) was 17,825. Syria is estimated to have lost from a few hundred to 2,000 soldiers, the PLO lost about 1,400 men, while Israel is said to have lost 344-368 IDF soldiers. The Massacre of Sabra and Shatila, lasting

\textsuperscript{438} Jaber, \textit{Op. Cit.} at 13
\textsuperscript{439} Saad-Ghorayeb, \textit{Op. Cit.} at 10
\textsuperscript{440} Saad-Ghorayeb, \textit{Op. Cit.} at 11
\textsuperscript{441} Jaber, \textit{Op. Cit.} at 07
\textsuperscript{442} Qassem, \textit{Op. Cit.} at 87-89
three days killing over 1500 people, left an indelible mark on the national psyche and continues to send
shock waves through the Middle East.

After the invasion, siege, and the removal of the PLO, a relative calm descended on the south of
Lebanon. Amal, along with many Shi’ite and other Southerners felt a ‘certain affinity’ with the invaders,
according to Jaber, and were ‘almost grateful’ to be rid of the heavy-handed Palestinian reign which had
terrorized their villages and populations for many years. 443 While many authors have made a similar
claim, alleging a Shi’a celebration at the removal of the PLO, I have found little evidence to corroborate
this claim. While no doubt many Shi’a leaders must have been relieved to have this agitating force
removed from within their midst, I cannot imagine a Shi’a population that would welcome the IDF into
their territory after a conflict with such heavy casualties. Nonetheless, Israel’s ‘success’ in this war, the
end to the PLO in Lebanon and an expansion of their territory through the creation of the ‘security zone,’
was the last success Israel was to have for many years as the calm in the south began to unravel very
quickly. Israel’s victory in eradicating the armed Palestinian presence also removed the Palestinians’
resistance hegemony in the southern battlefield, opening the space to other resistance groups allowing
them to come to fore. 444

Resistance activities against the Israelis started very quickly, with the main impetus being an
attempt but the IDF to create an Israeli trained and armed Lebanese ‘National Guard’ force in the
‘security zone’. 445 As the Ansar prison in the south slowly gained infamy, filling to capacity with the
family members of those inhabiting the occupied zone, mistrust was awakened and years of dormant fear
that Israel had the same designs on South Lebanon as it did on Syria’s Golan Heights and Jordan’s West
Bank were ignited. 446 When Ahmed Kassir completed the first martyrdom attack, targeting headquarters

443 Jaber, Op. Cit. at 14
444 Saad-Ghorayeb, Op. Cit. at 10
445 Jaber, Op. Cit. at 15
446 This two territories were seized in the 1967 war. In 1919 the Zionists had requested land up to the Litani river in
Lebanon but was refused by France. At the time Israel cited water concerns and many believe such water issues
should be considered as a major geopolitical factor in the Arab Israeli conflict. Speaker of the Parliament Nabih
Berri commented that it is his firm belief that water issues stand at the center of the Shebaa Farms conflict, with the
of Israeli Command in Tyre, the first ever use of such tactics according to Jaber, on 11 November 1982, the Resistance had officially flung into full gear.\textsuperscript{447}

Israel’s mass detention of Lebanese southerners was a major driving force behind the resistance’s zeal. By 1983, 10,000 Lebanese and Palestinians were held captive in Israeli-controlled jails.\textsuperscript{448} The Ansar prison alone was reported to have detained half the south’s male population at one time or another between 1982 and 1985 when it was closed.\textsuperscript{449} Moreover, the internment of detainees outside of Lebanon in Israel’s Atlit prison in violation of Geneva Convention (relating to treatment of prisoners) along with their torture in the notorious Khiyam prison in the South, further ignited the resistance’s ardor.\textsuperscript{450} Detention, imprisonment, and torture not only fuelled the resistance’s zeal, providing it with man power, but creating a strong popular base for resistance activities given the widespread and erratic detention of men in the south. Former captive and detainees, upon their return, where taken in by the resistance – a major part of Hizballah’s backbone in terms of objective and organization is the retrieval, rehabilitation, and inclusion prisoners, former detainees and their families. In my very brief time in the south of Lebanon with members of Hizballah, all three of the men assisting us and the delegation had spent time in Israeli jails. The role of former detainees, and an ethic of seeing such imprisonment as an honor while supporting the victims of such violence with rehabilitation and employment, remains a major part of Hizballah’s resistance structure and organization.

As resistance to the occupation intensified, Israel began targeting who they saw as leading clerics in the resistance. Claiming such men were responsible for inciting the villagers with their fiery sermons and for turning the religious centers into resistance bases and safe houses, they first began by arresting such figures as Sheikh Ragheb Harb – a powerful figure and symbol, the man who had turned Jibsheat into a Resistance stronghold – but when arrest wasn’t enough, they turned to assassination. Sheikh

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\textsuperscript{448} Saad-Ghorayeb, \textit{Op. Cit.} at 12
\textsuperscript{449} \textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{450} \textit{Ibid.}
\end{flushleft}
Ragheb was the first in a string of cleric to be killed, shot three times on 12 February 1984. As the first year came to a close, Israel had became more and more concerned about the Lebanese resistance forces, due to the increased success by collaborated efforts between the Islamic Resistance, the National Resistance, and Amal.

As for Hizballah, the second that Israel dropped the very first bomb on Lebanese targets, the movement shifted from a factious Shia guerilla movement into an army of national liberation. This fundamental fact rests on the articulated disposition of all national liberation movements and guerrilla organizations that fade in and out of their national and subaltern dispositions. From Vietnam to Africa to Latin America, the history of all national liberation movements testify to this fact - they can degenerate into violent malignancies or manifest as emancipatory national liberation movements, they can even become democratic participants as an opposition party, all depending on the circumstances of their historical unfolding. And nothing can help a guerrilla operation assume national leadership than a savage military invasion by a colonial or imperial power as military defeat and foreign occupation opens the way for militant movements; in Lebanon the Israeli invasion 1978 and occupation in 1982, with 55 per cent of South Lebanon (eleven percent of the country’s total area under occupation), this military action and defeat has served as a catalyst triggering the emergence of Hizbullah and its guerrilla organization.

The emergence of Hizballah has been attributed to a variety of factors. Many of those factors are broad discontents that can be seen as having generated the wider Islamic resurgence – secularism, corruption, conflict, and resentment of Israel – all of which were present in Lebanon during the 1970s and were shared by members of the Islamic current developing there. Of course there are also the

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454 Ibid.
455 Ibid.
457 Harik, Op. Cit. at 28

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conditions that can be generalized to third world movements – uneven modernization, exclusion from the political system, migration, and war. But there are also local and historically confined elements that must be considered such as the Iranian revolution, conditions prevailing in Lebanon, such as the Civil War, the Palestinian/Israeli conflict, and National Crisis that also shaped Hizballah’s ideology and practices in ways that set it apart from other ‘fundamentalist’ and leftist organizations.458

**Foreign Interference**

No aspect of Iranian-Lebanese relations has exercised the minds of Middle East experts and scholars more than the patronage of Hizballah.459 The ascendancy of Hizballah on Lebanon’s political scene since the early 1980s, which allowed Shi’a to acquire a measure of power in Lebanon’s complex communal constellation of forces, is arguably the most significant long term development in recent Lebanese history, thus all the attention.460 It would be a capital mistake to ascribe the new prominence of Lebanon’s Shi’as above all to the mobilizational capacity of Iran’s revolutionary ideology or to a financial power generated by Iran’s monetary contributions - Lebanese Shia’s dissatisfaction with their position near the bottom of their country’s communal stratification ladder and their subsequent efforts to ameliorate their lot predate Iran’s revolutionary movement by many decades and Hizballah is but one manifestation of this long-term trend.461 The emphasis on Iran’s links to Hizballah also in many ways reduces the complicated network of Shi’i clerics and authority, and the long standing cultural and intellectual links the two entities have enjoyed. That being said, it is unlikely the resistance would have been as ideologically strong and effective had it not been for the inspiration of a revolutionary paradigm, and moreover without Iran’s political, financial, and logistical support, its military capability and organizational development would have been greatly retarded.462

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The Islamic Republic and Hizballah Party Officials have both readily admitting the connections between the two. The Islamic Republic and the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corp (IRGC) has trained Hizballah forces in eastern Lebanon’s Bekaa Valley and in Iran itself, also providing a bulk of their weaponry, including missiles and rockets, and remains in close and regular contact with the Party. This relationship being as it is, it must be noted that Hizballah today does not operate at the command of the Iranian government. Former Prime Minister, Salim Al-Huss, when commenting on foreign influence in Lebanon this past January 2007, made clear, “Iran listens to Sayyed Nasrallah; Sayyed Nasrallah doesn't listen to Iran,” but those in the country which are connected with the West, “do not tell the West what they want, the U.S. tells them and they listen, that is the difference in power dynamic.” Sheikh Nabil Qaouq, Chief of Military Operations in the South, commented on the same day, “Hizballah is all Lebanese, not Iranian or Syrian or Cuban or Venezuelan; Hizballah is an indigenous Lebanese movement,” and although when famed sociologist Dr Saad Eddin Ibrahim interviewed Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah he emphasized the indigenous Lebanese nature of the resistance, the headline in Israel’s Haaretz newspaper regarding the two hour interview read, ‘Nasrallah admits Hizballah Gets Arms from Iran’. Regardless of the fact that Hizballah’s funds have grown, particularly from wealthy Shi’ite merchants in Lebanon and from the sizable West African, South American, and US Lebanese Diaspora and that no serving Israeli official, intelligence officer, or other military officer with whom author Fuller had spoken, felt that Hizballah had acted under the direction of Iran or Syria, the role Iran plays to Hizballah, however slight, remains a main focus of the international arena, especially the United States and Israel.

To Iran, Lebanon has often represented a pivotal state. Norton argues that for Iran, the creation of Hizballah represented the realization of the revolutionary state’s zealous campaign to spread the message

463 Fuller, Op. Cit. at 143
464 Alternatively spelled al-Hoss
467 Fuller, Op. Cit. at 143
of the self-styled “Islamic Revolution,” and while it may not have been ‘zealous’ the regime did view Lebanon, due their historic connection, as having an important role in the region. As Chehabi has noted, for policy-makers in Iran, Lebanon was an ideal locus. Iran’s former Ambassador to Lebanon once said (1984), “if we concentrate on the point that Lebanon is considered the heart of the Arab countries in the Middle East, a platform from which different ideas have been directed to the rest of the Arab world, we can conclude that the existence of an Islamic movement in that country will result in Islamic movements throughout the Arab world.” Iran obviously saw Lebanon as an important player in regional politics, with which it has a natural alignment and from which an alliance can be formed in order to spread a similar message, but notice that that message is an Islamic one, not Shi’i.

Beyond, the Arab-Israeli conflict is absolutely crucial to Iran. For years, the symbol of the liberation of Jerusalem has stood as a pivotal point in the national vision of Iran as Israel has represented the ultimate evil due to their treatment of the Palestinian people. Without the ability to play a key and instrumental role in the resolution of the conflict, Iran’s credibility as a leader in the Muslim world, both internal and throughout the Islamic world would be severely undermined. ‘The liberation of Palestine’ is at the central core if Iran’s revolutionary discourse and struggle, especially as the Palestine question embodies a series of key issues: justice for Muslims, defense of the oppressed and dispossessed Shi’a community, Islamic Iran’s revolutionary vanguard position as the leader of the Muslim world, and US hegemony. The issue of Palestine transcends Arab/Persian divides and Sunni/Shi’a divides, and without having the opportunity to actively engage that front and prove, through the border guard of the Israeli enemy, there importance at the regional and pan-Islamic level. And while of course, commonalities in vision do occur between Hizballah and Iran, these commonalities are due equally to the weakness and unpopularity of current pro-US autocrats in the Arab world, a belief in a common juristical order, and generalized animosity towards Israel and the U.S.

468 Norton, Op. Cit. at 10
469 Chehabi, Op. Cit. at 229
470 Ranstorp, Op. Cit. at 50
471 Fuller, Op. Cit. at 144
Furthermore, Iran’s support for Hizballah cannot be thought of as unconditional. By the end of the 1980s Iran’s support wavered, especially in terms of its use of violence, regardless of Lebanon’s status as a successful revolutionary foothold.\(^{472}\) By the late 1980s, with the death of Khomeini, Iran’s policies were changing in ways that were unsettling to adherent of the Islamic revolution; with the charismatic symbol of the revolution gone, men of more modest proportion came to the fore who would have to address the challenges of post-revolutionary Iran.\(^{473}\) By the 1990s, Iran’s IRGC force decreased, indicating a shift in Iran’s stance vis-à-vis Lebanon.\(^{474}\) By 1998, the force withdrew completely, signifying to many Iranians the definitive end of any serious effort to export the “Islamic Revolution.”\(^{475}\)

By highlighting Iranian involvement with Hizballah, one risks giving the impression that Hizballah was merely an instrument of Iranian leadership’s desire to spread the revolution and to gain a say in Middle Eastern affairs beyond its borders.\(^{476}\) Such a view would be as absurd as to conclude that the Maronite militias, which received $150 million from Israel between 1974-77, were nothing other than instruments of Israeli policy, or that general Aoun in 1990 was motivated by nothing other than serving Saddam Hussein, or that finally, all the groups trained, funded, and equipped by the School of the Americas in Fort Benning, Georgia, now known as the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation, did nothing but serve American foreign policy goals in Latin America.\(^{477}\) The various armed groups in Lebanon all had their own reasons to do what they were doing, but when a congruence of interests between them and foreign powers appeared they were happy to seek the help of outsiders; many did so against their own compatriots, Hizballah did so in order to resist occupation and provide economically and socially for its constituency.\(^{478}\)

Syria, which is not a main focus of this work, but nonetheless pivotal to understanding the political landscape of Lebanon, has seen Westerners distributed and annex its lands like slices of cake;
since the First World War, Turkey, Jordan, Palestine, Lebanon, and Israel have all been recipients of pieces of Syrian land, a dismemberment which has caused great bitterness and frustrated nationalist aspirations.\(^{479}\) The most important annexation of Syrian territory, impacting Syria’ foreign policy tremendously, was the loss and subsequent annexation of the Golan Plateau, 1,860 square kilometers of water rich, strategically important land to the state of Israel in 1967. This loss triggered a crisis from which nation has never recovered, and recuperation of this territory remains Syria’s major foreign policy concern today.\(^{480}\) It is this struggle with Israel and the determination to recover its occupied territory that most encourages Syria’s support of Hizballah, as well as Amal, and its alliance with Iran.

Syria’s alliance with Iran presented a means, for both countries, to strike at mutual enemies, such as Israel, Iraq, and the US. Syria, in the late 1970s was deeply concerned about regional isolation, the possibility of separate Lebanese/Syrian deals with Israel, the reality of Lebanese – US – Israeli Relations, and viewed a relationship with Iran as a way buffer these concerns.\(^{481}\) The alliance began with cooperation regarding Iraq. When Iran was invaded and bombed by Iraq in 1980, beginning an eight year long battle for supremacy, Syria broke relations with Saddam Hussein, accusing him of doing the CIA’s dirty work.\(^{482}\) In May 1982, after signing ten year trade pact with Iran, Damascus closed its border to Iraq and the pipeline for Iraqi oil exports through the Mediterranean, this act deprived Iraq of about 40 percent of its oil revenues and solidified the alliance between the two nations, despite the many differences between them, namely, Syria’s mistrust of Islamist political ideology.\(^{483}\) From this point forward, the two States have cooperated reciprocally, almost tat for tat. It was Syria that allowed the introduction of the Pasdaran (Revolutionary Guards), 1500 men, to Ba’albak in Eastern Lebanon during summer of 1982, an area which became a nodal point for Iranian training, supply, and support of Hizballah under eye of Ali Akbar Mohtashemi, the Iranian Ambassador to Syria.\(^{484}\)

\(^{479}\) Harik, \textit{Op. Cit.} at 29-30  
\(^{480}\) \textit{Ibid} at 30  
\(^{481}\) Hamzeh, \textit{Op. Cit.} at 26  
\(^{482}\) Harik, \textit{Op. Cit} at 33  
\(^{483}\) \textit{Ibid}.  
\(^{484}\) Norton, \textit{Op. Cit.} at 11
In many ways, Hizballah’s most problematic relationship has been with Syria. Through its leading role in the resistance in the south, Hizballah serves as a useful mechanism for pressuring Israel to withdraw from the Golan Heights, but Syria has assiduously pressured the group to get what it desires.\textsuperscript{485} There have been several bloody clashes between Syrian troops and Hizballah. The first in February 1987, when Syrian forces killed 20 Hizballah militiamen, provoking protest from Iran; the second came in 1993, when Lebanese troops shot demonstrators in the southern suburbs.\textsuperscript{486} Syria has no interest in seeing either Amal or Hizballah gain power in Lebanon and has consistently followed the pragmatic principles of realpolitik.\textsuperscript{487} To adopt the dictum of Lord Palmertson, Syria has no eternal allies and no perpetual enemies in Lebanon, thus Hizballah is always a wary ally of Damascus, ever aware that alliances of convenience may eventually become inconvenient.\textsuperscript{488}

\textit{In Closing}

While, there is no denying that Hizballah has earned its reputation for radicalism, nonetheless, US policymakers have begun to come to terms with the fact that Hizballah may not simply be dismissed as an extremist group. As an Islamist movement, we see in the above evolution that the development of an Islamic ideology is neither related to class in any fixed sense, sect, foreign intervention nor historic persecution. It is not peculiarly Islamic or generalizable in the international sense. The emergence of Hizballah, and as we will see, the development of its ideology, has been shaped by a confluence of factors - marginality, conflict, occupation, national crisis, the search for a mythomoteur, migration in addition to reactions to the international regime, regional politics, and of course foreign interference. This movement represents not only an attempt at national liberation militarily, but metaphysically in its search for an identity that can encompass its many fragments.

\textsuperscript{485} Ibid at 23
\textsuperscript{486} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{487} Ibid at 11
\textsuperscript{488} Ibid.
Hizballah represents an umbrella movement which banded together alienated Amal members, Islamic Amal, individual clerics along with their following, the Lebanese Da’wa, the Association of Muslim ‘Ulema in Lebanon and the Association of Muslim students; Hizballah can thus be considered the political and military outgrowth of this broad cultural movement. What originated as a religious current in the early 1970s, metamorphosed into a relatively disorganized resistance movement, which in turn, transformed itself into a structured political party. Various factors contributed to the number of transformations that took place within the ideology of the party, but many of the founding principles of the organization have stayed the same. The construction of border guards, some permanent, others negotiable, has allowed Hizballah to maintain it broad based support without losing its ideological consistency as it tries to navigate the construction of a mythomoteur that can solve some of the essential questions of its following.

While many authors talk of a Hizballah pre-Israeli invasion, it was not until 1985 that the organization made its official debut. After two and a half years of foundational work, according to Deputy Secretary-General Qassem, through ‘jihad activities,’ or resistance to the Israeli regime, the organization felt as though it had solidified its framework and ideology enough to declare its ideological, jihadist, political, and social visions, as well as the launch of its political movement. Hizballah waited until February 1985 to announce the birth of organization through ‘al-Risalah al-Maftuha’ or the Open Letter. This letter marked the first anniversary of the assassination of Sheikh Rahib Harb and the second anniversary of the Sabra and Shatila Massacres, symbolically signifying in the date of its release, the issues that made it stand a part – a religious/clerical orientation and support for Palestine. In the

490 *Ibid*
492 Hamzeh, *Op. Cit* at 26
words of Qassem, this letter initiated a new phase for the Party, a shift from secret resistance activities that ran free from political or media interaction into a political and public work campaign, “an expression of the belief that no party could separated itself from complimentary political work that builds on fruits of resistance, and draws the objectives nearer.”\textsuperscript{494} This was to be the first of what I see as four major shifts in Hizballah’s stance towards the outside, the second at the start of the post-Ta’if and post-Khomeini era, the third after Israeli withdrawal, and a final one at the start of the so-called Cedar Revolution and with the end of the July War. Each shift marks a change in the dominant mythomoteur, yet at each point key border guards remain consistent, distinguishing Hizballah through its ability to remain both broad based and ideologically unswerving.

The ‘Open Letter’ is not a remarkable document, but as the first public statement by the Party of God, it is often used to describe Hizballah’s ideology and political stance. While much of the language has changed since the Letter was issued, it can still serve as a model of Hizballah’s identity and may stand as a map of how and where the Party’s ideological line has shifted since its inception. In that sense, I will be using the Open Letter as a backbone to our discussion of the worldview, ideology and identification of Hizballah.

\textbf{A Worldview Deconstructed}

\textit{Oppressors and Oppressed}

The opening line of the Letter is addressed to “the downtrodden in Lebanon and in the world,” making clear from the start that the principle demarcation in the worldview of Hizballah is based on a specific understanding of oppression. The Open Letter describes a world in which ‘the countries of the arrogant world’ struggle for influence at the expense of the Third World, “consequently the oppressed countries have become the struggle’s bone of contention and the oppressed peoples have become its fuel.”\textsuperscript{495} This is where the influence of the Iranian Revolution can be seen most clearly, as the Letter itself emphasizes that

\textsuperscript{494} Qassem, \textit{Op. Cit.} at 98
\textsuperscript{495} Norton, \textit{Op. Cit.} at 13
the Revolution served as an inspiration to action, a proof of all that may be accomplished when the faithful gather under the banner of Islam, exclaiming that “Islamic Iran left no one any excuse since it proved beyond all doubt that motivated by faith are capable of breaking the iron and oppression of tyrannical regimes…”.

Central to the Party’s notion of political action is the division of the world into ‘oppressors’ (mustakbirin) and ‘oppressed’ (mustad’afin), formulated by Ayatollah Khomeini. So pivotal is this conceptual dichotomy to Hizballah’s political thought that it is invoked in almost every officials’ speech, enshrined in the Open Letter, and inscribed in the electoral programme of 1992. Borrowed from Marxist theory and the Qur’an, Khomeini’s theoretical construction is infused with a sense of moral dualism and millenarianism in its division of humankind into good and evil force pitted against each other in an apocalyptic battle, from which the oppressed emerge victorious, however, as to not fall into the category of Sunni-centered work, a clear distinction must be made between this dichotomy and the division of the world of other Islamic theorists into ‘dar al-Islam’ versus ‘dar al-Harb’ which sets Muslims against non-Muslims. This error is committed by Norton and James Piscatori who confuse this Sunni formulation with the Shi’ite oppressor/oppressed division, and argue that this division authorizes the use of violence against the enemies of Islam.

In fact, in this formulation the oppressors do not represent the non-Muslims and the oppressed the Muslims, but rather those who are socially and economically deprived, politically oppressed and culturally repressed vis-à-vis those who practice this oppression regardless of their religious identity. As articulated by the Party, its basis for political action is this purely humanistic criteria, and as Sheikh Qaouq articulated, “What hurts Palestine hurts Hizballah. We are not Sunni, we are Shi’a, and they are

496 Alternativly spelled Khumayni
497 Saad-Ghorayed, Op. Cit. at 16
498 Ibid
499 Norton, Op. Cit. at 12
500 A more appropriate comparison according to Saad-Ghorayeb would be the analogy of Dar al-Islam with the notion of Hizballah and Dar al-Harb with Hizbu’shaytan, which has religious as well as humanistic connotations. Op Cit. at 17
Sunni and Christians, but we feel for them, because it is a human problem, an ethical problem…tell me, if you see a child drowning are you going to wait to ask what religion he is before you save them? Of course not. \(^{501}\) Thus action is determined not by sect or religion but a certain morality.

The concept of oppression and the oppressed is derived from the Qur’an, but its usage is essentially humanistic referring to all ‘those who were being oppressed on earth’ (28:5). \(^{502}\) This Qur’anic concept was conjoined by Khomeini, and later the Party of God, with a secular designation of the oppressed as a ‘fanonesque’ wretched of the earth whose exploited status as Third World peoples adds a secular class dimension to the concept. \(^{503}\) The juxtaposition of exploitation with oppression renders the concept applicable to poor Muslims and non-Muslims throughout the world. It is in this way that not only are Palestinian Christians supported in their ‘holy struggle’ but support is garnered around the globe, including most recently, the support of Venezuela’s Hugo Chavez.

The secular origins of the class criterion are underplayed by Khomeini and Hizballah’s conceptualization of oppression, or rather, the Islamic meaning of the word are emphasized, resulting in the Islamicisation of class analysis whose defining elements, exploitation and poverty, become Islamic virtues. \(^{504}\) Such sayings as ‘Islam originates with the masses not from the rich,’ by Khomeini and ‘the sweat of a worker is more precious than the blood of a martyr,’ a hadith attributed to the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH), have become oft repeated catch phrases while, Hizballah’s glorification of the underdog and characterization of Imam Ali as one who ‘loved the poor and deprived,’ fits within the symbolism as well. \(^{505}\) So while gender elements of class discrimination and oppression and left completely out of the narrative, all social classes are included in the category as it is not poverty per se that is the marker of oppression but deprivation and exploitation thus while women remain absent from the dialogue, those who are economically, politically, or culturally weak vis-à-vis the ‘arrogant’ oppressors are enshrined by the Party of God. Anyone who is free, who resists Zionism, and who may be

\(^{502}\) Saad-Ghorayeb, *Op. Cit.* at 17  
\(^{503}\) *Ibid.*  
\(^{504}\) *Ibid.*  
\(^{505}\) Saad-Ghorayeb, *Op. Cit.* at 17
exposed to danger as result of his beliefs qualifies as an oppressed person, thus distinguishing our first border guard in the resistance based movement. So while the occupation of ones land by Israel or any foreign power emerges as principal determinant of oppression, this fades away if seen by Hizballah to be aided by the west; as the Afghan mujahidin were in their resistance to the soviets. The Afghan cooperation with the US deemed them ‘American mujahidin,’ a highly pejorative slur in the Hizballah lexicon thus detracting from their moral integrity. It is on this basis that the call in the Open Letter is to ‘free’ downtrodden men – operative word being free – signifying the refusal of the downtrodden to succumb to American or imperialistic domination in their just cause. It is with this opinion that Hizballah judges the Iraqi opposition and resistance, arguing that they should not turn to the US to fight their current occupation. Thus, the fight against Israel, non-cooperation with the West, exploitation, occupation, ‘freedom’, an element of risk or danger, and marginality all stand as markers of oppression, while gender, class, and religion are left out of the picture.

Secularism

Unlike many Islamic groups, Hizballah does not engage in what has been called ‘takfiri’ discourse; that is, the use of religion, and various degrees of orthodoxy and heterodoxy defined subjectively, to intimidate and punish opponents. In other words, Hizballah does not blame or focus their assault, verbal or physical, on those that choose to cooperate with the State or pursue a secular agenda. Rather, Hizballah chooses to focus their vision and target their assault on who they see as ‘oppressors’. In the Hizballah paradigm, secularism does not equate oppression or sin. As Hizballah Member of Parliament Muhammed Fnaysh has underlined, it is only the secularist who disavows Islamic principles and sanctities or enforces secularism as a state religion that is considered oppressive to the Party.

506 Saad-Ghorayeb, Op Cit at 19
507 Ibid at 21
508 Ibid.
509 Ibid. at 20
510 Ibid.
Hizballah’s relationship with the Syrian Ba’ath regime is a vivid example of how far the Party stretches its cooperation with secularism for the sake of its resistance. For many Islamists organizations the Syrian Ba’ath Party represents ‘a crusader party’ bent on subverting Islam. Hizballah tries to mitigate the sacrilege associated with secularism by commenting, as Sayyed Nasrallah has, ‘Assad is not an atheist.’ Moreover, it is Syria’s unyieldingness towards Israel and safeguarding of Arab rights which not only protects it from Hizballah’s rebuke but renders it an oppressed state in the eyes of the Party of God. In other words, it is not a ‘crisis of secularism’ per se, but rather one of modernity, where the state has failed to deliver on promises of social, political and economic equality. In response, Hizballah has not called for the obliteration of the system but rather has opted to remain focused on its resistance role, and if it is secularism that brings them closer to that goal without compromising or threatening their core religious beliefs than that is the path they will take.

Hizballah has sympathized with many secular, Marxist, and third world leaders such as Nelson Mandela, Daniel Ortega and Fidel Castro. More recently it is Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez who has topped the list of heroes in the Lebanese suburbs. The Party has supported these leaders due to their countries’ perceived status as oppressed, and their individual roles as ‘free downtrodden’ leaders. Fidel Castro, for example, was deeply respected for having preserved Cuba’s independence and challenging US hegemony in South America, while Mandela was esteemed for his role in resisting apartheid regime. Today, Chavez has been looked up to for his role in opposing the United States, but more importantly, he has become a hero by cutting ties with the State of Israel and supporting the Islamic Resistance. Moreover, the recent support Hizballah has extended towards Chavez post-July War serves as a potent example of how fluid and yet durable Hizballah’s resistance border guard remains today.

513 *Ibid.* at 21
As Dina Khatib, a reporter for Al Jazeera has pointed out, Chavez won the hearts and minds of the Arab street in one move; condemning the aggression of Israel. Hugo Chavez withdrew his most senior diplomat from Israel, not for something Israeli did to his country, but for its acts of aggression against the Palestinians and Lebanese people. The 2006 Summer War between Lebanon-Israel stands as a clear turning point in the relationship Venezuela has taken towards the Middle East and in turn, the way Hizballah has marketed its resistance globally. Since the July War, Chavez has become an active spokesperson in the ‘fight’ against Israel’ including it in almost every public speech he has made. In his UN address in 2006, Chavez gave ruthlessly condemned the US and Israel when he said: "It wants peace. But what's happening in Iraq? What happened in Lebanon? In Palestine? What's happened over the last 100 years in Latin America and in the world? [Bush] spoke to the people of Lebanon. Many of you, he said, have seen how your homes and communities were caught in the crossfire. How cynical can you get? What a capacity to lie shamefacedly. The bombs in Beirut with millimetric precision? This is crossfire?” This is imperialist, fascist, assassin, genocidal, the empire and Israel firing on the people of Palestine and Lebanon. That is what happened…”

Chavez's affinity with Arabs is nothing new. He often mentions them in his speeches and tells stories of his adventures with Arab leaders in their faraway lands. He admires the desert and says he is a Nasserite; he mentions Iraq more than Arab leaders do and never misses an opportunity to "salute the Iraqi resistance against imperialist forces.” Chavez's uncompromising position with Israel has embarrassed Arab leaders, as none of them have cut or even downgraded ties with Israel despite all the massacres its army has committed in Lebanon and Palestine. While the relationship may have been good in 2000, when OPEC came to Caracas under the banner of ‘brotherhood,’ today, these same leaders do not like Chavez’s closeness to Iran, and probably feel that his continuous, provocative anti-Bush
statements are too compromising. Chavez has tried for years to forge alliances with Arab governments and share projects to break the current world economic order in which, as he sees it, third-world countries are all tied to the big powers and not to each other, but now he has seemingly given up on his Arab counterparts, or most of them, now that he has come to realize that they are not anti-imperialist - not even anti-Israeli - and that some strongly dislike his ally, Iran.

Chavez’s sense of disillusionment echoes that of many Middle Eastern populations who are frustrated by their governments’ inaction and detachment in the face of such War in Iraq, Palestine, and Lebanon. It seems as nothing is bale to shake these governments out of their slumber and as such a sense of ‘Arab dignity’ has suffered. It is in this environment that the resistance narrative has come back, and it is to this voice that Hizballah and Chavez speak through their ideology, alliance and identification. This is what has made Hizballah and Chavez legendary in the region and the world, and what inspires the Party of God to hold so tightly to their border guard of resistance and support for the oppressed.

Today on many Arabic internet sites one can read such comments as: "I wish there were elections to elect the leader of the Arab Umma [Islamic Nation] and I am sure 100 per cent that Chavez will win the elections although he is Venezuelan." One internet writer commented: "I am Palestinian but my president is Chavez, not Abu Mazen." Or: "I don't want to be an Arab. From now on I shall be Venezuelan." On world television channels we have even seen Venezuelan flags flying in demonstrations in Beirut, next to Lebanese and Palestinian flags, and in many prominent newspapers across the Arab World, columnists wondered: why can't Arab leaders do what a Latin American non-Arab non-Muslim leader dared do? During my brief time in Lebanon I saw various posters serving as a tribute to Chavez in Hizballah strong-hold neighborhoods such as the Dahiye, one reading “Gracias Chavez” with a large picture of the anti-Imperialist leader and a call to write letters of thanks for Chavez’s contribution to the resistance. A second one shows a jubilant Chaves next to an armed Nasrallah and smiling Musa al-Sadr,

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521 Ibid.
522 Ibid.
523 Ibid.
524 Ibid.
with a background of bombed buildings reading “7 Anos…Por Ahora” and “Lebanon Victorious…(Arabic)” signifying at once the victory of Hizballah despite its losses, the unification of resistance forces, from Amal to Venezuela, and the pledge of continuing alliance from the War forward. Even Nasrallah has commented publicly about this new friendship saying, to his congregation, “With your steadfastness and resistance a man such as Chavez (whom I can describe as a significantly great Arab) can say what he said yesterday in the United Nations. The Lebanese resistance today inspires all the resistance in the world, all the free persons, all the noble people and all who refuse to surrender to American humiliation in the world. This is our victory and this too is the result of our battle.”525 With this brief comment, Nasrallah has awarded Chavez the title of ‘great Arab’ indicating his position in the Hizballah paradigm of oppression and signifying him as a ‘true’ fighter in the resistance battle, as opposed to Arab leaders that refuse to stand up against ‘arrogant oppressors.’

**Resistance**

Resistance is one pillar in the Party of God’s ideological structure which has not been amendable to any form of accommodation or temporization. This pillar, the Party’s resistance priority, is not only part of the group’s sense of religious obligation, but its primary metaphysical reason for existence. It is through the logic of not only armed resistance, but political resistance and struggle, that Hizballah defines and gives meaning to its constituency and attempts to provide the answers to basic and fundamental questions about the meaning of nationality, the purpose of existence, and value to the losses the Shi’a of Lebanon of have experienced. Hizballah has proven over the years its unyieldingness in terms of its resistance priority, forsaking many issues and concerns to maintain its front and position as vanguard in the Islamic Resistance movement, while protecting and providing for its people. Hizballah must be defined first and foremost as, to use Saad-Ghorayeb’s term, a *jihadi* movement, or a party of Resistance.526

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While authors such as Ranstorp have argued that the Party’s resistance narrative is merely a tool for legitimating the existence of Hizballah and expanding its popular base, while existing in reality as secondary to the goal of establishing an Islamic state. This theory, describing some insidious design for power underlying Hizballah’s movement and resistance to occupation and oppression based on vague references to an Islamic state in the Open Letter, just does not hold water when the facts are taken into consideration. Hizballah has made no attempt to take power or force the existence of an Islamic state. As many authors and members of Hizballah have pointed out repeatedly, while an Islamic state represents the ultimate form of justice for the Party, a delineation must be made between the intellectual vision and practical manifestation of the conception.

The Islamic state ideal is the corner stone of Hizballah’s intellectual structure, however, its realization is not actively pursued due to the firm belief that there is no compulsion in religion (Surah No. 02, al-Baqara, Verse 256). So while the Open Letter did call for the establishment of an Islamic state and rejected participation in Lebanon’s confessional system since the Party acknowledges that in a pluralist Lebanon this condition can not be fulfilled today or in the near future without imposing it forcefully on the population, and as such has become a ‘legal abstraction’. Further, since post-Civil War participation in government began, there has been no attempt to call for the establishment of an Islamic state, nor has it been mentioned in election programs, nor have members of parliament pushed for legislation or policies suggesting it. Hizballah has opted instead, due to the absence of the right social and political circumstances, to adopt a strategy of self-preservation, focusing on the continued existence of the resistance in all of its various forms.

Hizballah has protected its right to resist oppression and continue its jihad like no other border guard in the movement; the Party has clashed with Amal based on a dispute over the primacy of resistance over political power; it has acquiesced to Syria on several occasions to save its resistance

528 Qassem, Op Cit. at 31; Saad-Ghorayeb, Op. Cit. at 16
530 Harb & Leenders, Op. Cit. at 179
531 Saad-Ghorayeb, Op. Cit. at 16
activities at the cost of its political independence and integrity, and as Sayyed Nasrallah has commented on several occasions, “the Resistance if Hizballah and Hizballah is the Resistance.” Part of the centrality of resistance to the movement is its role in combating oppression and enhancing the position of its constituency, but another very significant part is Hizballah’s understanding of jihad and its meaning as a religious obligation. As Qassem has explained from his position as spokesperson for the Party, jihad means to struggle, as in against one’s enemy in military combat, but also against one’s internal foes. Often cited in the Party’s definition of resistance and jihad are border guard markers such as this hadith attributed to the Prophet (PBUH), who expressed when welcoming a group of Muslims back from battle: “Welcome to a troop that has fulfilled that smaller jihad and whom the bigger jihad still awaits.” In Hizballah’s understanding of Islam, the world is seen as a perishable, temporary home, a departing pleasure, a place of tests and tribulations, and as such jihad is considered a basic endeavor in a Muslim’s life, be that jihad against one’s soul or struggle against the enemy, it is a necessary sacrifice in one’s struggle for salvation. The struggle for one’s soul being much greater than the struggle against one’s enemy.

Given the number of hardships and misfortunes the Shi’a of Lebanon have experienced, as well as throughout the Middle East, this religious foundation, awarding sacrifice, struggle, and hardship a position of honor, nobility, and most important of all, sanctity, answers a great number of questions for the population while providing meaning for a life of misfortune and sacrifice. In the system of belief held onto by Hizballah, life is a continuum of misfortune and hardship, but one must remain thankful, patient, and enduring, as the results are believed to be forthcoming and God is believed to always award such sacrifice generously. This is the mythomoteur perpetuated by the Party to provide meaning and answers to basic questions. To Hizballah and its constituency, the path towards God is not an easy one, nor is the

532 Saad-Ghorayeb, Op. Cit. at 116
533 Qassem, Op. Cit. at 34
534 Qassem, Op. Cit. at 36
535 Ibid. at 37
path towards freedom and justice, but this sort of dedication to the right choices requires courage and audacity, and that is the resistance and *jihad* of Hizballah.\(^{536}\)

In this view, martyrdom is no longer suicide but rather it is the ultimate expression of faith and reinforces the main pillars of a believer’s faith: one’s readiness for death for the sake of God and a belief in life after death.\(^{537}\) Martyrdom is a voluntary act and becomes the supreme act of self-giving, mirrored in the symbolic image of the life of Imam Hussein, who willingly sacrificed himself, and died brutally but voluntarily for his faith. *Jihad*, Islamic resistance, and the belief in martyrdom for the sake of God is viewed by the Party of God as its ultimate weapon in battle against oppression. It is described as a weapon that cannot be defeated, as a man marching for the love of God cannot be defeated since one cannot implant the fear of death in him; it is this blind faith that inspires courage, a courage that cannot be matched no matter how strong the enemy.

Hizballah attributes a number of its victories to the strength of its resistance and *jihad*. Some of these practical achievements include, compensation for a military imbalance and the infliction of painful losses on enemy ranks; the reconsideration of Israeli command’s military approach in Lebanon; surge in patriotic fervor across the region; the outbreak of the Palestinian Intifada; the 2000 Israeli withdrawal; prisoner exchange deals; and the 2006 military victory as well as the restoration of hope for a comprehensive liberation.\(^{538}\) Hizballah’s *jihad* is used often as a marker of the Party’s uniqueness and Hizballah militants are often compared by the Party to Israeli soldiers who are ‘exposed’ by the resistance as cowards hiding behind machinery, afraid of contact, and unwilling to die for his country.\(^{539}\) Martyrdom as a part of resistance thus becomes central, acting as a means of setting the resistance apart from its enemies ‘in steadfastness’ but also by providing meaning to a group in search of meaning.\(^{540}\) In this formulation military and spiritual victory are made equal and thus survival and martyrdom are both considered victories, creating a win-win situation when *jihad* is waged righteously within the

\(^{536}\) Ibid.  
\(^{537}\) Ibid. at 49  
\(^{538}\) Ibid.  
\(^{539}\) Ibid. at 50  
\(^{540}\) Saad-Ghorayeb, *Op. Cit.* at 129
As Nasrallah has commented (1997), “the greatest thing is resistance; greater than liberation or victory.”

Another aspect to resistance in the Hizballah world view is public work. Such social work has evolved alongside military resistance activity and according to Qassem, has served to relieve the resistance of considerable burden by assisting the populace in their endurance of Israeli aggression and the remnants of occupation and also fostering a humane and social environment of joint responsibility shielding the resistance from a social catastrophe caused by government alienation. Many scholars have argued that this social work is for recruitment purposes only, and that people only gather round the Party to benefit from its large pool of resources, but in the words of Deputy Secretary-General Qassem, social work serves to enrich supporters’ confidence in the viability of the Party’s cause and course, as it cooperates, collaborates, and joins forces to remain strong and tenacious in its political and resistance roles. In this way, the Party’s public works and social justice efforts serve not to recruit for the resistance, but is part and parcel of the resistance. Hizballah cannot be divided into a military wing and social or political wing, ‘All of Hizballah is Resistance’ as Nasrallah often says, and this means all of it.

In the Party of God’s search for social justice, it has articulated a very specific ideology, one which shuns Western-inspired developmental plans or socialist Marxism, focusing instead on its own blend of Islamicized policies through which to create “God’s Just Society.” In this ways Hizballah calls not for class conflict but a transcendence of all class difference to be achieved through the Islamic just order, which is determined by moral behavior; thus social justice means spiritual unity, self-sufficiency, and independence. Social justice means the welfare of the community above and beyond the welfare of the individual and this provision of services to the community is a fundamental tenet of their faith, not

541 Ibid.
542 Ibid. at 131
543 Qassem, Op. Cit. at 86
544 Ibid.
545 Hamzeh, Op. Cit. at 42
546 Ibid.
Marxist dialectical forces, meant to allow enough independence that freedom from exploitation may be achieved.

Much has been written on the public works and social networks of Hizballah, here I will only discuss in brief some of the Party’s main projects to provide an outline of just how extensive their social work is while allowing a glimpse into their methodology. Since the mid-1980s, Hizballah has worked to provide, first to their fighters and their family and later to the various Shi’a communities in the South, Bekaa, and around Beirut. With the help of Iran and many Iranian charities, Hizballah founded Jihad al-Binaa Association (for construction and development) less than three years after its creation, beginning the associations work by restoring homes damaged by Israeli bombings, continuing reconstruction efforts until today. Hizballah has refurbished over 17,212 homes, shops and public utility structures since 1991 and between 1988 and 1991, worked to remove all waste accumulation in Beirut’s southern suburbs, running at an average of 65 tons per day, solving the major problem of government neglect. Hizballah’s most celebrated public works activity has been the distribution of drinking water, the creation of 110 water tanks, and the use of mobile units to reach 15000 families. Such services have been running free of charge since March 1990 to the present day.

The Party of God also engages in agricultural activities, such as providing credit, distributing tractors, saplings, seeds, giving advice, training, transferring knowledge, providing vocational training, and villages with electricity, while also building health centers in much needed rural areas. With a focus on health, Hizballah founded the Islamic Health Organization, managing nine health centers, sixteen fixed and three mobile infirmaries, catering to 51 villages, and providing free medication and health services to eighty-eight schools, along with vaccination rounds. The Party is also attentive to the educational requirements of the needy, providing educational support through grants, materials,
scholarships and so on. Of course there are also special institutions for the wounded and the Philanthropic and Social Martyrs’ Institution for fighters, martyrs and their families, which works independently at financial, operational and managerial levels.

Hizballah’s social work and emphasis on social justice is motivated by a desire to resist occupation and provide for a constituency left behind by the State, doing so through the use of modern methods of socialization as well as post-modern organizational techniques. Hizballah does not face a crisis of modernity, but rather, tries to embrace the modern in its post-modern reality, valuing modernity as much, if not more than the West, often utilizing modern institutions to develop. Hizballah has created think tanks, data bases and catalogues of information pursuing an academic track to understanding its ‘enemies.’ It has encouraged secular education for its adherents and provided money for women and men to attend college. It is one of the rare Islamist groups that has an entire informational bureau devoted to the study of Israeli news, engaged in the study of the Hebrew language, and dedicated to studying the foreign policy of Israel and the United State. Just go to their website, wa3ad.org, and select Zionist affairs to see one example of such focused intellectual endeavor. The embrace of modernity is shared by a number of Islamic movements, such as Algeria’s FIS. Authors such as John P. Entelis have argued that political Islam is fundamentally modern in that it employs modern ways, such as education, technology, modern science, management, government, and media, to rectify the social, political, and economic problems that plague society. Hizballah is thus the epitome of the modern Islamic movement, with a post-modern identity that incorporated nationalism, pan-Islamism, locality and universality all at once.

Identity and Identification

Hizballah’s identity and identification, combines a number of interlocking identities and beliefs into one coherent system of identification. Above all Hizballah is an Islamic party defined by its belief in the

551 Ibid.
552 Ibid.
553 http://english.wa3ad.org/
554 Saad-Ghorayeb, Op. Cit. at 110
concept of al-Wali al-Faqih. When discussing Hizballah as an Islamic party what is meant is the Party’s belief in Allah, worship through the five pillars of Islam, and the belief in ten additional pillars including: *jihad*, ordinance to do what is right and kind, forbidding the prohibited, representing affinity and harmony, and infallibility or obedience.\(^{555}\) Furthermore, as defined by Qassem, being Muslim means self-discipline, a concern for politics and economics,\(^ {556}\) using reason and refusing subordination, the belief that there is no compulsion in religion, justice as the basis of every action, and believing in piety as the determining factor of one’s worth rather than race, gender, color, or beauty.\(^ {557}\) Islam becomes not just a religion but a way of life, political system, economic outlook, and nationality, as even serving one’s nation or ruler can be seen as serving God and participating in life as part of God’s orders.\(^ {558}\)

What distinguishes Hizballah as an Islamic group and Party is its firm belief in the Jurist-Theologian (*al-Wali al-Faqih*). This is the distinctly Shi’a belief in a custodianship of the Jurist, who is entrusted with implementing Islamic jurisprudence, guarding the Islamic structure, undertaking political decisions, deciding on war and peace, and ensuring the wealth of the nation.\(^ {559}\) This theory of religious authority argues, based on an interpretation of an *aya* or verse from the Quran (*Surat al-Ma’ida* 5:44), that men of religious learning are the third level of Allah’s testimony and thus appointed authority over the people.\(^ {560}\) While many authors have looked to this belief as a signature of Hizballah’s obedience to forces outside of the nation; in reality, there is substantial independence at the practical level, as we will see later in the discussion regarding splits in the clerical network, and further there is no connection between the internal administration of the Iranian state and Hizballah’s administration.\(^ {561}\) This belief, central to Khomeinism, has provided reinforcement for the prominent role of clerics in the Hizballah movement, and has fortified the notion of obedience in the movement. As Nasrallah had made clear,

\(^{555}\) Qassem, *Op. Cit.* at 20-23
\(^{556}\) Economics in this instance refers to: fair, just, without interest, equitable, specific tax method for re-investment and development, joint social responsibility, and the distribution of *zakat*. *Ibid.* at 27
\(^{557}\) *Ibid.*
\(^{558}\) *Ibid.*
\(^{559}\) *Ibid.* at 54-55
\(^{560}\) Hamzeh, *Op. Cit.* at 32
\(^{561}\) Qassem, *Op. Cit.* at 57
obedience, along side resistance, is the key to their success, commenting, “the secret of our strength, growth, unity, struggle, and martyrdom is wilayat al-faqih, the spinal cord of Hizballah.”

Nasrallah has continued on this topic clarifying, “the spinal cord of Hizballah is wilayat al-faqih. Take out wilayat al-faqih and Hizballah becomes a dead body, even a divided one. An Ummah without ‘Ali is an ummah without spirit, an ummah without Hussein is an ummah without a soul, and an ummah without al-wali al-faqih, who must be obeyed, is a dead, torn Ummah.”

In short, it is Hizballah’s Islamic identity that forms the core and center of its hierarchical understanding of identity, integral to that belief, separating it from other groups in the centrality of the notion of Wilayat al-Faqih, without belief in which one cannot be called a member of Hizballah. Hizballah’s Islamic ideology is essentially juristical, and provides for the legitimacy of ijtihad in the face of changing political circumstances. Neither Sunni fundamentalism, with its stress on the Prophet’s Ummah and on consensus as the perfect model, nor Marxism, with its dialectical historical change not subject to human intervention, can provide similar flexibility for the changing political circumstance provided by Hizballah’s divine jurist. The divine jurist, is both flexible and rigid, allowing for structure as well as accommodation. Al-Wali al-Faqih is afforded the right to adapt religious principle to local conditions, and can do so with full authority and with righteous obedience due, in this way, al-Wali al-Faqih can adapt to current circumstance religious principle, that in many other instances would be controversial, but in this case becomes the duty of followers to obey. In short, Hizballah’s ideology in which the role of the jurist is determinant, is key to the Party’s future survivability or decay, and integral to the management of the myriad of identities involved in the formation of Hizballah.

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562 Hamzeh, Op. Cit. at 33-34
563 Hamzeh, Op. Cit. at 36
564 Hamzeh, Op. Cit. at 43
The Politics of Identification

The Muslim Ummah: Religion

While Hizballah operates within a Shi’a cosmology and ideology, it expresses a solidarity and identification with a general ‘Muslim Ummah,’ that figures prominently in its self-identity. The call and expression of the unity of the Islamic Ummah is a reflection of the Party’s attempt to cross national boundaries and relate its local cause to one of universal proportions. Thus, Hizballah proclaims the unity of the Islamic Ummah, and relates this belief to the call for the liberation of Jerusalem or ‘the Jerusalem liberation culture’ as Hamzeh calls it. By focusing on Palestine and Jerusalem, the Party of God has made an active effort to undermining the differences between Sunni and Shi’a Islam, and bridge the gap in order to move beyond difference. With this in mind, the movement is always defined against Zionism, using the symbol of Jerusalem, and rituals such as International Jerusalem day\footnote{International Jerusalem Day has been celebrated by Hizballah every year since a Fatwa was issued by Khomeini in 1979 decreeing the last Friday in Ramadan as Jerusalem Day. Hamzeh, \textit{Op. Cit.} at 40} as a way of enforcing the centrality of the Muslim unity in the fight against oppression. By deflecting blame from either Muslim sects and onto external factors, at once, reconciliation chances are enhanced and the creation of a scapegoat or extraneous threat, real or imagined, promotes Islamic unity, killing two birds with one unified stone.\footnote{Saad-Ghorayeb, \textit{Op. Cit.} at 74}

Hizballah uses the image of Jerusalem to connect and sympathize with broader Muslim constituencies in the Philippines, Burma, Bosnia, Somalia, Azerbaijan, and Chechnya, as they, in the eyes of the Party as ‘oppressed Muslims’ struggling for autonomy.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.} at 76} Hizballah has moreover afforded support to beleaguered state Sudan, and Sunni mainstream movements such as the Muslim brotherhood in Egypt and Jordan.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}} That being so, these peripheral Islamic causes and movements, while supported by the party in its pan-Islamic vision of the Ummah, they do not figure as centrally in speeches as Lebanon, Iran, and Palestine, all of which are mentioned in almost every public speech.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}} Thus the symbol of Jerusalem,
becomes another reinforcing factor in the border guard of Israel, constituting a demarcation line between those with the Party and those against, including other Islamist or Shi’a groups, such as Amal, that are perceived to have abandoned the Palestinian cause.

The Party has engaged in extensive attempts to encourage Sunni-Shi’ite reconciliation throughout the years as Nasrallah stands as one of the staunchest critics of sectarian fighting and often lashes against those that divide the *Ummah* in factions. As early as 1985 the Party was exhorting Muslims to thwart ‘Imperialist’ plots that sought to sow discord, and refuse to blame disunity of the *ummah* to any doctrinal or ideological differences between the two sects.\(^{570}\) Today, with the international and regional focus on sectarian splits and conflicts, first in Iraq, then with Iran’s increased regional power, and finally in Lebanon, Nasrallah has made combating sectarianism a main part of his post-July War effort. In his first speech given after the ‘victory’ of the summer war, Nasrallah had this to say,

> A real predicament exists in Lebanon today, especially after the war, where a sharp national rift exists, not a sectarian division, since the ongoing dispute is not between Sunnites and Shiites, Muslims and Christians, or Druze, Sunnite, Shiite and Christian, not at all. There is a national political rift, based on a group of strategic and political choices agreed upon by Shiites, Sunni, Druze and Christian political forces, opposite to another group of choices agreed upon by other political forces within those same religious communities. Thus, we face national division, and on today’s celebration of victory, made by the Lebanese from all areas and religious denominations, my plea is to draw your attention by saying; do not allow anyone to turn political division into sectarian and religious division.\(^{571}\)

In an interview by Al Manar, Nasrallah explained his conception further to the anchorwomen interviewing him saying, “What difference is there between me and the Sunnis in order to raise the issue of sectarianism? How do I as a Muslim differ from the Christian who cares for the oppressed people and for the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in the same way as he cares for the Al-Aqsa Mosque? Let us look at the basic issues for which I am devoting my life, effort, and blood. Are these sectarian or factional issues in order to deal with me on sectarian or factional bases? Are they not national issues which concern the nation?”\(^{572}\) In fact, in a speech made to Hizballah Committee members in November of 2006, Nasrallah made explicit his ban against sectarianism, saying, “We have clear red lines: civil war; damage to stability

\(^{570}\) Saad-Ghorayeb, *Op. Cit.* at 74


and civil peace; clashes and interior sedition in Lebanon are all red lines,” thus making the use of such language impermissible for the constituency of Hizballah.\footnote{Nasrallah, Hassan. (2006) \textit{Speech to Members of Hizballah’s Committees}, Lebanon: 21 November.} To combat the increasingly sectarian label applied to the group and its resistance activities in post-July War Lebanon, Hizballah has turned to the other end of its ideological spectrum, nationality, and has begun to strongly emphasize not only the unity of the Islamic \textit{Ummah}, but the Arab and Lebanese nature of the resistance activities.

\textit{Arab Identity: Ethnicity}

Hizballah professes a strong belief that it belongs to an ‘Arab-Islamic world,’ a concept which has been acknowledged by Nasrallah in his speeches from 1992 and 1998.\footnote{Saad-Ghorayeb, \textit{Op. Cit.} at 80} So although an Islamic civilization represents the broadest level of cultural identity for Hizballah, to borrow Huntington’s terminology, the Party’s recognition of cultural and national types of Islam allows for the compatibility of nationalism and Islamism within its cosmology of identification.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}} To Hizballah, an Arab-Islamic world is one marked by its intellectual commitment to Islam but which retains a unique cultural character that constitutes the basis of its politically motivated unity, so while an Islamic civilization is defined by shared values, institutions and beliefs, an Arab-Islamic unity is bound together by a shared fate and history in addition to common language, customs and dress.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.} at 81} This subdivisions indicates a flexible religious orientation by the Islamist organization, one where shared fate is not only attributed to religion but also to a shared sense of ethnicity. For example, Sheikh Tufayli, the organization’s first Secretary-General, has called Christians both physically and spiritually part of the Arab-Islamic region back in 1986, due to their common and shared history.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}} While some have called this a pragmatic attempt to gain popular legitimation in a predominantly Sunni Arab region by presenting the movement as distinctly Arab, nonetheless, it shows that Hizballah very clearly does identify as Arab movement and views a commonality of vision not only
among fellow Muslims, or oppressed, but along ethnic lines as well based on the key border guards we have discussed, such as freedom and struggle against Zionism.


Lebanese Identity: Nationalism

While authors such as Ranstorp have claimed that Hizballah’s allegiance to authority outside of the state precludes any idea of a functional nationalism, this argument ignores the intellectual and spiritual nature of allegiance and disregards the nationalist dimensions of the Islamic resistance, as well as Party’s endeavors to reconcile its Islamic identity and universalism with its nationalism.  

As Nasrallah has argued, one’s affiliation, whether to communism, Christianity, or Islam, does not undermine one’s ‘Lebanese identity or patriotism,’ it is only one’s actions that can determine one’s patriotism, and according to this charismatic leader, Hizballah fighters have proven that loyalty through their blood.  

Beyond, Hizballah makes the point of underlining that foreign support does not render any party less nationalist, making very clear that the Islamic resistance was founded by Lebanese, not Iranian Shiites, and decision-making comes straight from the Party’s leadership. More than anything else, it is Hizballah and its fighter’s willingness to sacrifice for their nation that exemplifies them as a nationalist force. No other group has proven their commitment to their homeland in the same volume, laying their lives down to protect the nation’s border. If we are to take Anderson’s words to heart, it is this unique characteristic, the willingness to fight and die for one’s nation that stands at the heart of nationalism; no other sacrifice confirms Hizballah’s nationalist credentials more, rendering Hizballah, to use the words of Nasrallah, the ‘most patriotic of all Lebanese movements.’

Hizballah’s sense of nationalism has evolved over time, but throughout that time, the Party’s sense of resistance and national duty has been an Islamicized one. Hizballah believes that the defense of

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578 Saad-Ghorayeb, Op Cit. at 84
579 Ibid.
580 Ibid.
581 Ibid.
one’s nation is a wajib shari’ (religious duty) enjoined by Islam.\textsuperscript{582} Resistance is thus at once fulfilling a religious duty and a national duty, and according to the Party, it is the combination of these two identities that has made the Islamic resistance the most effective. As Qassem has said, “if I had not been a committed Muslim I would not have had this perception of nationalism,” in this sense, Hizballah’s Islamic identity can be seen as re-enforcing its ethnic and national affiliations rather than detracting from it.\textsuperscript{583}

In 1997, Hizballah took its claim of nationalism a step further, creating the ‘Lebanese Brigade of Resistance to the Israeli Occupation.’\textsuperscript{584} This multi-sectarian military adjunct to the Islamic resistance was created according to the Party, as an effort to allow all that want to participate in the liberation of national territory a chance. As the Islamic resistance is restricted to those who believe in \textit{al-Wali al-Faqih}, the creation of this broader brigade can be seen as an effort by the Party to emphasize its national quality. The use of the Lebanese flag and national anthem during its rallies, prayers, and meetings is another attempt by the Party to project an image of national belonging.\textsuperscript{585} Once called the ‘Maronite flag’ and rarely used by Islamic opposition parties, today the flag has never sold as quickly and covers the streets in neighborhoods all over the city, flying at protest for every side of the political spectrum, representing the government, the opposition, and the one’s caught in the middle, all at once. The Lebanese flag, the nation’s anthem, the colors and symbols of the Republic are no longer a monopoly of the state for its exclusive use and now these symbols are imbued with various meanings by various different actors. For Hizballah, it has become a marker of its national identity, serving as a reminder to its critics of the heavy sacrifices that have been made in the name of the nation.

While Saad-Ghorayeb has argued for a split between intellectual and political identification, commenting that the Party confines its Islamic identity to the intellectual realm while its national identity

\textsuperscript{582} Qassem, \textit{Op. Cit.}
\textsuperscript{583} Saad-Ghorayeb, \textit{Op. Cit.} at 86
\textsuperscript{584} \textit{Ibid.} at 84
\textsuperscript{585} \textit{Ibid.}
remains in the political realm, I would have to disagree. Hizballah is composed of a myriad of identities which all play into the other. Its Islamic identity reinforces its ethnic and nationalistic self-identification, while supported a nationalistic cause enforces its Islamic and ethnic identities. Each identity plays into the other with the border guards of Israel and oppression standing near by to demarcate. While each element of the total identity is involved in the other, they are ranked by the hegemonic system, in this case a form of political Islam and Shi’a symbols. While many argue that Hizballah’s precarious identities and attempts to conjoin its Islamic state ideal with its political endorsement of democracy and its intellectual commitment to the concept of the Wilayat al-Faqih with its submission to the authority of the Lebanese state typifies a marriage of convenience and pragmatism which cannot persist indefinitely, in my opinion, these various beliefs, border guards, and identities form an interlocking system of flexibility and structure, permitting the inclusion of the many groups that constitute Hizballah’s constituency. This is done without the Party losing ideological and religious consistency. As long as Hizballah maintains its main border guards – Resistance, Struggle against Zionism, Social Justice and Equity, and Oppression – while keeping in line with its Islamic identity, this sort of negotiation can persist and has.

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\(^{586}\) *Ibid.* at 19
CHAPTER SIX
THE TRANSFORMING MYTHOMOTEUR

Hizballah has endured the landscape of Lebanese politics, not an easy task considering all that it has been up against; a civil war, more than four acts of Israeli aggression, two occupations, one Israeli the other Syrian, and through it all Hizballah has continued not only to grow, but to transform and refine its identity within a landscape of shifting realities. Since its ‘Open Letter’ to the downtrodden, Hizballah has reacted to major changes, the end of the Khomeini era in Iran, the end of the Civil War in Lebanon, the end of Israeli occupation in the South, and the end of a Syrian presence in the country. Any single one of these factors would be able to put even the most philosophically sound and politically tested Party, organization, or social movement to the test. But Hizballah has endured, and by most accounts has remain true to its constituency, gaining in popularity and in many instances claiming victories, something that many Arab governments and Islamist movements have failed to do in a very long time. Since the last Lebanese-Israeli War in the summer of 2006, Hizballah has faced its most difficult challenge yet remains insistent on maintaining its core border guards, the issues that have provided answers to so many people for so long. The most controversial of these border guards has proven to be the most difficult to adapt, as the resistance narrative has taken center stage in the battle not only in the Middle East, but internationally.

A plethora of scholars have devoted their study of Hizballah to the discussion of one major shift in the organization and practice of the Party; namely, the participation of the once ‘clandestine militia’ in politics and the subsequent transformation of the Party into a political party. Authors such as Norton view this shift, or in my opinion, diversification of strategy, as a pragmatic response to the shifting political landscape of regional politics, as well as the changing terrain of Lebanese politics.587 Others view it more insidiously, as a way of infiltrating the Lebanese state with the purpose of installing an Islamic State. Still others see the change as a transformation, from a radical clandestine militia to a moderate, mainstream political party with a resistance wing, arguing that the Party has put aside its resistance efforts

587 Norton, Op. Cit. at 20
in favor of a democratic stance and in an attempt to fend of a terrorist label.\textsuperscript{588} It is my contention that Hizballah has neither compromised its ideology, nor attempted to infiltrate the State but rather has responded to a changing geopolitical climate and adjusted with the central aim of preserving its core border guards. As such it has responded to the changing needs of its evolving constituency and adapted to new international circumstance manifesting as an articulated movement, negotiated in real time and space.

\section*{The Transformations of Hizballah}

\textit{Use of Media}

Many authors have identified Hizballah’s first shift in policy, not only as its only and most significant transformation, but by the Party’s accommodation of the political system and decision to enter politics. This is not the only shift that took place during this period. In addition to political participation and a negotiation of its resistance agenda, this period also witnessed the expansion of the Party’s resistance methodology through the introduction and refinement of the use of media. The development of a media department and satellite television channel, an unprecedented move for an Islamist organization or political party, allowed a constantly beamed message of resistance throughout the Muslim and Arab worlds, where popular support insulated it against terrorist charges in its fight against Israel.\textsuperscript{589} The adoption of modern political techniques and post-modern technologies to spread their message and expand their reach in many domains of national life and on the battlefield, suited the needs of their varying constituencies, and has proven over time, to be one of the hallmarks of Hizballah.\textsuperscript{590}

Since its inception, and alongside growing military initiative, Hizballah has made use of a newly discovered power – the media.\textsuperscript{591} Its weekly newspaper, \textit{Al-Ahed} (the pledge), was launched 13 June 1984, while Hizballah’s radio station, ‘Al-Nour’ was launched during the Amal-Hizballah war, as group

\textsuperscript{588} Harik, \textit{Op. Cit} at 1
\textsuperscript{589} \textit{Ibid.} at 4
\textsuperscript{590} \textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{591} Jaber, \textit{Op. Cit} at 42
of young Hizballah followers spontaneously began to broadcast news of the conflict.\textsuperscript{592} The television station, al-Manar or the Beacon, soon followed. Its first broadcast was the funeral of Ayatollah Khomeini in 1989, after which it began to broadcast Islamic Resistance activities, going as far as to follow guerrillas on attacks and raids while filming to prove the effectiveness of the resistance against the Israeli occupation beyond doubt.\textsuperscript{593} With each broadcast, Hizballah gained momentum and recruits, realizing quickly enough that the groups self-imposed underground existence had hurt its image.\textsuperscript{594}

From this realization onward, Hizballah has firmly engaged itself in the propaganda war, not only with Israel, but with the United States, and the Lebanese Government. As Sheikh Nabil Qaouq, Chief of Military operations, has been quoted as saying, “while it is important for Israel to portray the battle as a fight between them and Hizballah, it is more important for us to show it in its true form – a war, not just between Hizballah and the Israeli soldiers but one in which the whole of Lebanon and its people are in danger. In this we can say Hizballah has largely succeeded in transforming the outlook of people towards its Resistance.”\textsuperscript{595} Sheikh Qaouq’s expression is an example of Hizballah’s growing awareness of the importance of the war of words.

On many occasions Hizballah has used Israeli failures to capitalize in the propaganda war. Israel’s policies have made that effort quite easy as Israel has often failed to distance its acts of aggressions from the Lebanese public, thus pushing the public closer to Hizballah and the Islamic resistance. The assassination of Sayyed Musawi, the second Secretary-General of the Party of God on 16 February 1992 was one such action. Musawi had been attending the anniversary of Harb’s murder and launch of Islamic Resistance when he was murdered along with his wife and baby girl. This assassination coincided with a period of Hizballah stagnation as the Lebanese public was weary after sixteen years of strife, the Civil War had ended, and people were reassessing political affiliations; the loss of Musawi, although a heavy blow to Hizballah, acted as a positive catalyst for re-emergence the groups re-

\textsuperscript{592} Jaber, \textit{Op. Cit.} at 42
\textsuperscript{593} \textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{594} \textit{Ibid.} at 43
\textsuperscript{595} \textit{Ibid.; Harik, Op. Cit.} at 131
emergence due to the groups ability to capitalize on such mistakes.\textsuperscript{596} Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah was immediately elected following the election and in 1996 in televised debate on LBC, Nasrallah summarized the groups achievements and ideology: “Let us look at our experiences. Between 1982 and 1985, Israel withdrew from a large sector of the land which it occupied. Who do you think forced it to withdraw to its current ‘security zone’? [former president] Amin Gemayel? Negotiations? The Americans? The United Nations Security Council? The Arab league? Only the resistance forced it to withdraw. If Lebanon has or wields any power in the peace process, it is solely because of its resistance. We believe and consider the Resistance to be the only way.”\textsuperscript{597} In this period, many Lebanese tended to agree with him, including the government.

\textit{The Beginning: 1985 – 1989}

The early years of Hizballah, following the release of the ‘Open Letter’ served first as a training period for the military resistance, and secondly as a negotiation round for the group. One of the main features of this period was the infighting between Amal and Hizballah that took a toll on the Shi’a community but served to formulate an alliance between the two, the ruling powers and Syria that has lasted until recently, of course not with negotiation.

Amal gained adherents in the late 1960s and early 1970s as more people soured with the experience of growing numbers and fortunes of Palestinian guerrillas in Lebanon.\textsuperscript{598} Amal movement gained at the expense of leftist parties drawing its support from a growing Shi’i middle class for whom the movement represented an assertive voice against the political zu’ama, of whom its new leader, Nabih Berri was an example.\textsuperscript{599} Amal stood as a challenged to the domination of Palestinian guerrillas, whose public support plummeted in the late 70s, early 80s.\textsuperscript{600} Amal clashed with Palestinian guerrillas, and from 1985 – 88, the infamous “War of the Camps” was waged by the militia to prevent the Palestinians from

\textsuperscript{596} Jaber, Op. Cit. at 44  
\textsuperscript{597} Ibid. at 45-46  
\textsuperscript{598} Norton, Op. Cit. at 8  
\textsuperscript{599} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{600} Ibid. at 9
gaining the position of dominance they had enjoyed prior to the Israeli invasion.601 This campaign, alongside the perceived anti-Palestinian leaning of founder Al-Sadr, enlivened Hizballah, not only to assist the Palestinians in order to thwart Amal, but to respond to a segment of the population that still felt an alliance with the Palestinian cause and people. Amal’s reaction to the Israeli invasion, alongside the perceived betrayal of central leaders, conspired against the militia and led to clashes between the two groups as territory and identity were demarcated.

When leaders Nabih Berri and Daoud Daoud participated in talks with Israel, the US, and the Lebanese Government led by President Elias Sarkis, not only did it seriously damaged Amal’s reputation, but it broke with a main border guard, fighting oppression and maintaining freedom.602 Negotiating with ‘arrogant oppressors’ whose ears will not listen as their hearts are stone, is not tolerated and to Hizballah, and its many followers, this act broke with this demarcation point. By the time the Civil War ended, Amal had gone from a populist movement to a full-blown patronage system with all the corruption, inefficiency, and inequity that Amal had long ascribed to the traditional zu’ama.603 Nabih Berri, at the end of the internal war between Amal and Hizballah in 1990, became Speaker of the Parliament and is now privately derided for his pocket-stuffing and publicly feared for control of a patronage system few Shi’is can afford to slight.604

Divergent opinions over a few major political issues, in the late 1980s, as well as competitive atmosphere due to mutual recruitment and mobilization efforts led to violence between the two Shi’a groups, what in 2005 Qassem calls “a black page in history – which lasted for two and a half years and bread only suffering.”605 The fighting finally ended in 1989606 the intervention of Syrian and Iranian officials who mediated between Nabih Berri and then Secretary-General of Hizballah Sheikh Tufayli,

601 Ibid.
602 Ibid.
603 Norton, Op. Cit. at 9
604 Ibid.
605 Qassem, Op. Cit. at 101
brokering an agreement known as the Damascus Agreement. If Hizballah harbored any notions of replacing Amal, it was forced to realize that the secular movement was Syria’s political arm in Lebanon. This Damascus Agreement marked the first watershed for Hizballah in its first transformation, in this act the ground rules and border guards were established between the four actors and Hizballah continued its war of liberation with Israel.

Transformation, Cooptation or Articulation: 1989 – 2000

The First Challenge: Lebanon after Khomeini and the Civil War

On 3 June 1989, Ayatollah Khomeini passed, serving as a watershed point for both Hizballah and the Islamic Republic. With Ayatollah Khamenehi succeeding him and in August Rafsanjani assuming the presidency, an era of change and controversy was ushered in as Lebanon, Iran and Hizballah adapted to a changing geopolitical landscape. In Iran, the presidents powers were increased in the course of a constitutional revision and an era of reform was ushered in while on 25 October members of Lebanon’s parliament reached agreement in the Saudi Arabian city of Ta’if over a reform of their country’s political order; enhancing the power of Sunni Muslims while preserving a weakened presidency for the Maronites. This paved the way for the end of the Civil war, and signaled the beginning of a new decade. For both nations this shift coincided with the birth of what has been called, ‘the Second Republics’.

In the 1990s and early 2000, Hizballah and Iran developed along parallel lines. While the Party integrated into the Lebanese political system, the Iranian regime cautiously tried to rejoin the international system in an attempt to improve relations with Europe and the Arab world. For both countries, a slew of international factors were influential in generating this change, in addition to the many domestic factors

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608 Ibid.
609 Ibid.
610 Chehabi, Op. Cit. at 287
611 Ibid.
612 Ibid. at 307
specific to each locality. The end of Iran-Iraq war forced Iran’s leaders to focus on reconstruction as a priority, a fact which necessitated improved relations. The end of the Cold War left the United States as sole the superpower, depriving Iran and Syria of any leverage against US. The reconstitution of the Lebanese state under Saudi Arabian, Syrian and American auspices at Ta’if and the popularity of the peace process among ordinary Lebanese made it difficult for Hizballah to maintain its revolutionary anti-status quo posture and acted as an incentive for the Party to turn loyal opposition. After the horrors of the Lebanese Civil War, Iranian Revolution, and Iran-Iraq War, most Lebanese and Iranians were focused on ways to rebuild economically and politically so that they may move forward.

For Hizballah, the post-Ta’if period constituted its first challenge in the maintenance of the resistance. While Lebanese land was still occupied, the people and the Government were focused on moving forward, but with Syria’s new found hegemony on the ground, all the rules of the game had been changed. Hizballah would have to learn to navigate through this new terrain of shifting domestic currents, adjusting to the changing needs of its two major foreign allies. In Qassem’s words, Hizballah went into this period wanting to secure and ensure a position for the resistance in the South despite internal politics and as a part of the new balance of power. To avoid clashes between the government and the resistance in this new period, Hizballah pursued a dual path agreeing to focus on resistance and leave behind any aspirations for an Islamic state without being forced to negotiate with Israel. The government, in turn, would be left to pursue the diplomatic route, such as the implementation of UN resolution 425 alongside other negotiation channels. In this compromise, the Party’s jihad activities would receive official authorization to continue by virtue of the government’s recognition of the armed struggle as a national resistance. Integral to this compromise was the acceptance by each party of the others legitimacy, a
foundational compromise which would hold for over a decade.\textsuperscript{619} Strict adherence to this compromise was essential to not only warding off international pressure on the Lebanese Government and the Resistance during conflict periods, but in preserving the integrity of Hizballah’s ideological tenor as a resistance party. Hizballah managed to maintain its enmity for Israel and commitment to resistance while also entering into the game of politics in Lebanon.

\textit{The Decision to Enter Politics}

The politically exclusive and intolerant tone adopted by the first secretary general, Shaykh Subhi al-Tufayli, gave way to the politically inclusive and conciliatory discourse initiated by the Party’s second Secretary-General al-Sayyid ‘Abbas al-Mussawi, who pursued the Party’s participation in the secular, democratic political system.\textsuperscript{620} This decision to participate did not come without negotiation, and this period is marked most notably by the successive efforts within the Party to not only negotiate notions of resistance and participation, but clerical authority in and of itself. After Mussawi’s assassination by Israeli forces in February 1992, his successor, al-Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah, continued this discourse and accentuated the themes of Christian-Muslim reconciliation and co-existence in a politically pluralist society, whilst overseeing the party’s political integration.\textsuperscript{621}

Following the logic of the post-Khomeini Iranian political current, the Party felt that the resistance needed to be legitimized on the popular and international front and only by integrating into the political system could the Party convince the majority of Lebanese people of the logic of the resistance while also receiving international legitimization as a popular current, democratically elected to government, as opposed to an artificial, alien current imposed by political or international equations.\textsuperscript{622} This political integration was necessitated by the urgent demands of its social base which called for popular representation, thus the Party’s infiltration of the political system was not only attributable to the

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{619} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{620} Saad-Ghorayeb, \textit{Op. Cit.} at 2
\textsuperscript{621} \textit{Ibid;} Qassem, \textit{Op Cit} at 109
\textsuperscript{622} Saad-Ghorayeb, \textit{Op Cit.} at 53
\end{footnotesize}
aforementioned regional developments or Iranian currents but was also a product of its strong domestic roots. It was precisely because of these roots that Hizballah’s embrace of democracy, Saad-Ghorayeb argues, should not be considered an abrupt volte-face, but a natural development over its decade of existence.

Clerical Splits in the theory of Wilayat al-Faqih or Velayat-e-Faqih

In Shi’a Islam, a great importance is attributed the role of religious leadership in guiding the cause of an activist movement, given the reality of an era after the occultation of the twelfth imam and in the face of crisis conditions regionally. In this post-occultation reality, the Shi’a faithful have split into faction, and given the allowance for varying authority figures in the religion, this fractionalization is common. Thus when there are internal struggle’s in Iran for power among top leaders, this is reflecting in the ranks of Hizballah and the Shi’a community in general, as new Marja’ are chosen and ideology hammered out.

Just to give a little background about how such decisions over authority work out, we will move back a little in time in order to show how while Iran and Hizballah are connected by a broad network of Shi’a clerics and by Najaf and other Shrine cities, authority remains contested in the Shi’a world, and by no means does hegemony exist. In Lebanon, Twelver Shi’is widely recognized Ayatollah Hosein Borujerdi as supreme spiritual authority (marja’ al-taqlid in Arabic and marja’-e taqlid in Farsi) between 1944 and 1961 even though his actual influence was limited in Lebanon. In Iran, a number of Maraji’ competed for allegiance after Borujedi’s death, including Ayatollah Khomeini after 1964. Khomeini differed from his peers in that his religious leadership was generated not by traditional religious criteria (whereby Shi’i ulama distinguished themselves until accepted by believers as a marja’) but rather had been precipitated by political events, namely opposition to the Shah’s consolidation of personal power in 1963-

623 Ibid.
624 Ibid.
625 Hamzeh, Op. Cit. at 22
626 Ibid. at 109
627 Chehabi & Mneimneh, Op Cit. at 39
628 Ibid.
In February 1979 a blueprint for the constitution of an Islamic Republic of Iran, incorporating the notion of *wilayat al-faqih* was published in Beirut. It was in Beirut that the first widely distributed doctrinally reasoned refutation of Khomeini’s concept was published, by Muhammed Jawad Mughniyya. Mughniyya praised Khomeini’s revolutionary action, but contested the idea that the Hidden Imam’s authority passed to the clergy in their absence on the question of infallibility of Imams versus clergy, whose their mistakes would this harm religion.

In 1982 the groups that came together in the Bekaa adopted the concept, and in 1985 it became the official Hizballah party line. Sayyid Fadlallah soon endorsed it as well, but not all actors did, as other Shi’i distanced themselves from the Iranian regime. So while Berri compared Amal’s relationship to Khomeini with that of Catholics and the pope, Sayyed Fadlallah did the opposite, accepted the political leadership of the Islamic Republic while maintaining his ties to the apolitical Ayatollah Khu’i and remained his representative or *wakil* in Lebanon until his death in 1992. For Sheikh Shamseddin whose focus was on Lebanon from the beginning, “the Shi’is in Lebanon are primarily Lebanese, in second place Muslim, and only in last place Shi’is. Their Lebaneseness is a matter of principle and any change in Iran or in any other place will not change this reality.” It is very clear that not all Shi’a are aligned with Iran, and even those who are, do so to varying degrees.

With Hizballah’s ascendance in the 1980s, a number of Lebanese Shi’is chose Khomeini as their *marja’*, but between Khomeini’s death in 1989 and Ayatollah Golpayegani’s death in 1993 all *marja’* of that generation disappeared, posing a serious succession problem. In 1994, the Iranian government tried to elevate Ayatollah Khameneh’i, who succeeded Khomeini as supreme leader, to the rank of a *marja’*, but the attempt met with considerable resistance and soon afterwards both Fadlallah and Shamseddin

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629 Ibid.
630 Ibid. at 40
631 Ibid.
632 Ibid.
633 Ibid.
634 Ibid.
635 Ibid. at 42; Ranstorp, *Op. Cit.* at 43
636 Ibid.
assumed the position of marja’ as an act of defiance. Various credentials in the Shi’i world has led to splits within the religious hierarchy and ranks, exacerbated by various degrees of belief in the concept of Velayet-e-Faqih. With Fadlallah’s declaration of his own marja’iyya arguing that Arab Shi’is needed a leader who spoke their language and was familiar with their world, Sheikh Shamseddin also became regarded as a marja’ by his followers and by the late 1990s more Lebanese Shi’is chose Fadlallah as their source of emulation.

This negotiation of religious authority should highlight the fact that Hizballah is not a monolithic body with total subservience to Iran but rather a coalition of clerics, who each have their own views and networks of followers as well as ties to Iran’s clerical establishment. This was highlighted by Nasrallah who admitted that “not everyone is Hizballah thinks the same. Views are usually raised. But differences are always settled through a higher religious authority.” Each individually practicing Shi’a Muslim belonging to Hizballah at the grassroots level has always the freedom to choose which high-ranking cleric to follow as a guide, based on particular preference for their religious stature within the local community, their clerical code of conduct and their local community-based programme as such, allegiances vary and cannot be said to be hegemonic or dictated.

Participating in Democracy: Election Politics

The decision to participate in parliamentary elections in 1992, the first held in Lebanon in twenty years, to some, was symptomatic of Hizballah’s coming to terms with its sociopolitical setting, to others it was an acknowledgment that Lebanon is its own and that imported Iranian models may not be applied, to Saad-Ghorayeb it signified tact acceptance of Rafik Hariri’s post-Ta’if government as opposed to the Gemayel regime, all in all, fundamentally, the decision to participate caused the one and only clerical break in the

638 Ibid; Hamzeh, Op Cit. at 35; Jaber, Op. Cit. at 71; Ranstorp, Op. Cit. at 43
639 Chehabi, Op. Cit. at 300
640 Al-Ahd, February 1994. Ranstorp, Op Cit, 43
641 Ranstorp, Op. Cit. at 43
The argument has been made by some writers that “[Hizballah] men traded their camouflage uniforms for suits and ties, their clashes for ministerial portfolios and their Qur’an for a profession in democracy,” is not convincing, in fact, playing the parliamentary game is no proof of Hizballah’s support of Lebanon’s confessional system, rather, it is an opportunity to protect the Party’s resistance in the regions under its control, while pressing for the elimination of the confessional system, seen as oppressive.

In the first round of parliamentary elections in 1992, Hizballah captured eight of 27 seats allocated to Shi’ites in a parliament made up of 128 seats equally divided between Christians and Muslims, while additionally winning four ‘allied’ seats, forming one of the strongest blocs in the parliament and the first Islamic bloc in history of Lebanon. This success has been attributed to a number of factors but most importantly: the presence of an ideologically committed constituency which voted massively for Hizballah in southern suburbs, South Lebanon, and Biq’aa; the Party’s social welfare services which made a difference in the lives of Shi’ites, especially the most poor; the Islamic resistance and its perceived success and image as sincere, honest and heroic, contributed to popularity. From this point on, Hizballah developed a reputation - even among those who disagree vehemently with their ideologies - for being a "clean" and capable political party on both the national and local levels. This reputation is especially important in Lebanon, whose parliamentarians are the wealthiest legislature in the world, where government corruption is assumed, clientelism is the norm and political positions are often inherited. As a group, Lebanese parliamentarians are the wealthiest legislature in the world.

The 1996 parliamentary elections did not bring any drastic changes in representation in parliament as the ratio between Hizballah and Amal stayed the same in favor of Amal and the ratio dropped from 8 to 7 seats (Amal dropped from nine to eight, but its allies, Shi’ite notables, increased from

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643 Hamzeh, Op. Cit. at 112
644 Ibid. at 113
645 Ibid.
Despite the fact that Amal and its allies still had the majority of Shi’ite representation, Hizballah’s success in sustaining representation was perceived as a great challenge by Berri.649

Retribution and its Affects

Since the start of the occupation of southern Lebanon, there has been an active line of confrontations between Hizballah and its resistance and Israel. In 1993, Israel began a policy of retribution, which it continued in 1996. In both cases this policy failed to achieve its objectives and led to not only military wins by Hizballah but in turn political success resulting from the popularity of the resistance won in fighting the occupation. The invasions of 1993 and 1996 were strikingly similar acts of aggression, launched at the same targets with the same goals and strategies. Both unleashed massive destruction in the south of Lebanon in order to pressure the Syrian-backed Lebanese government to halt Hizballah’s attacks on northern Galilee.650 The broader objectives of both was to drive a wedge between Syria and Lebanon at a time when Damascus counted on foreign policy coordination with the Lebanese government to achieve national and regional objectives.651 Israel understood the frictions between a government trying to recoup state authority after years of impotence on the one hand, and on the other an armed force conducting independent military activities in the country, in addition to the realities of political occupation by Muslim Syria, a situation highly resented by many in the country.652

Operation ‘Accountability,’ launched in July of 1993, was a grand assault that lasted seven continuous days, the fiercest land and air offensive to hit the South since 1982.653 The objective of the offensive as described by foreign minister Shimon Peres, was to make “the Lebanese government decide whether Hizballah represents it or not. If it does then the whole of Lebanon is at a state of war with Israel and this also means Hizballah wants the destruction of all of Lebanon. The Lebanese government will

648 Ibid. at 114
649 Ibid.
650 Harik, Op Cit. at 112
651 Ibid.
652 Ibid. at 113
653 Jaber, Op. Cit. at 171; Qassem, Op. Cit. at 110
then have to cooperate with us in silencing Hizballah and ending its activist."654 Through the course of the operation, 130-140 civilians were killed, enforcing old tactics of penalizing the residents of the South for the activities of the Islamic Resistance in hopes of turning them against the fighters.655 Each time this strategy has failed, and this time was no different. Beirut did not cooperate with Israel to disarm and quell Hizballah, instead it stuck to the founding compromise and pursued a diplomatic path to end the conflict, while limiting actions on the ground to the assisting of the displaced.656 The aggression ended with a tacit agreement dubbed ‘the July Accord’ which was negotiated by the US and Syria in which it was agreed that rocket attacks would be used by Hizballah to limit Israeli aggression towards civilians, confining Israeli attacks on the resistance to the ‘security zone.’657

The July Accord lasted three years, but the tacit agreement was never really honored. UN along with other Western sources confirm that between 1993 and 1996, Israel had broken the truce and attacked civilian targets 231 times with Hizballah retaliating with rockets in thirteen of those instances.658 It was such tit-for-tat fighting in response to Israel’s breaking of the July Agreement which eventually led to the 1996 aggression that has come to be known as ‘Operation Grapes of Wrath.’ In this offensive air raids were used and the southern suburbs of Beirut were subject to direct shelling for the first time since 1982.659 This second act of aggression in three years was a much tougher than in 1993 and covered a wider geographic scope, lasting for sixteen days and including four notorious massacres – most notable the infamous massacre at Qana.660 250 civilians were killed during the entire operation, and again, the resistance not only stunned the enemy but the population as well. Nonetheless, the Israeli military was

654 Harik, Op. Cit. at 115
655 Jaber, Op. Cit. at 172
656 Harik, Op. Cit. at 116
657 Qassem, Op Cit. at 111
658 Jaber, Op. Cit. at 173
659 Qassem, Op Cit. at 115
660 Qana transformed into an international condemnation of Israel, and transformed the national memory in Lebanon. On 18 April 1996 Israeli tank fire attacked a UN base in the village of Qana, killing the 109 Lebanese refugees who had taken shelter there from Israeli bombardment. Placards at the site read: “The massacre of Qana is a real witness of Israeli terrorism.” Amnesty declared the attack intentional and a UN investigation concluded it unlikely for the attack to have been an accident. Israel has never apologized or compensated victims for this act. Jaber, Op. Cit. at 171
completely powerless to silence the highly mobile guerrilla units during this conflict and this remains the case today.661

The Lebanese government adhered to its commitment to the founding compromise and reaffirmed its commitment to the resistance. Hariri made clear in all diplomatic affairs that all of Lebanon was resisting the aggression, not simply the Islamists and even remarked during diplomatic meetings that “any Lebanese official who tried to stop the resistance would be risking political suicide.”662 Such statements were common and continuous throughout the war and clearly reaffirmed the position maintained by Beirut for years; that Hizballah had the approval of the nation behind it and was completely within its rights to resist occupation.663 This aggression, similar to 1993, brought the population closer to the resistance, who in turn turned their wrath against the occupation, reawakening their sense of historical bitterness against the West.664 Many have charged the Israelis with hampering Lebanon’s reconstruction after the Civil War, as two newly built power stations were partially destroyed in the attack.665 This particular offensive also came at a time when Lebanon was in the process of shedding its image as a city of terror and attempting to attract foreign investment, thus the attack is believed by many Lebanese to have economic motivations fueling the sense of bitterness even further.666

This act of aggression ended with the creation of the ‘April Accord,’ an agreement that made clear that the war would continue but specified that in the future it would be contained to guerrillas and Israeli soldiers.667 Israel undertook not to shell or attack civilians and Hizballah pledged not to fire rockets at Israel’s north border, making clear that Israel was not to retaliate against civilian targets, while Hizballah would be free to attack military targets, providing the Resistance with the legitimacy of defying occupation through the recognized right for self-defense.668 Many believe that this accord signifies not

661 Harik, Op. Cit. at 118
662 Harik, Op. Cit. at 119
663 Ibid.
664 Jaber, Op Cit. at 172
665 Ibid.
666 Ibid. at 177
667 Qassem, Op Cit at 117; Jaber, Op Cit at 173
668 Qassem, Op Cit at 117; Jaber, Op Cit at 173
only Israel, but the United States acceptance of Hizballah’s right to exist, but also its right to defend its territory as a national liberation movement, although the two have denied as much.

The star achievement in this batter for Hizballah’s resistance was hands down the strong public support the resistance maintained across the sectarian board throughout the duration of the conflict; a victory which led to a Arab and Muslim recognition of the value of the Islamic resistance. In many ways, and for the first time, this conflict marked Israel’s first loss in the propaganda war. Its acts of aggression were seen as illogical, imprecise, and most of all, without justification; the destruction of homes, roads, electrical supplies and water tanks stood in stark contrast to the Israeli boasts of surgical strikes, precision, and smart missiles. ‘Operation Grapes of Wrath’ killed 160-200 people and forced nearly forty thousand southerners to seek refuge northwards, a human tragedy that is not easily forgotten.

For many Arabs and Lebanese, ‘Operation Grapes of Wrath’ stood as further proof of the West’s two faced policy in the region, with many commonly remarking, “If this isn’t terrorism, what is?” Between 1982 and 1996 fifteen Israeli citizens were killed as a result of Hizballah’s Katyusha attacks while more than 300 Lebanese civilians had died as a result of military operations. The Israeli strategy to pressure Beirut to curb Hizballah by perpetuating massive destruction on the country’s infrastructure was not abandoned but actually used three more times between 1999 and 2000 in various degrees – each time the strategy proved as threadbare as before and each time it again took unfortunate tolls in Lebanon far beyond the southern battlefield. But regardless of the number of causalities, or damage done to the infrastructure of Lebanon, Hizballah continued to wage its resistance and by the end of June 1996, only two months after the ceasefire, Hizballah guerrillas had already killed nine Israeli soldiers and wounded twenty-one.

669 Qassem, Op. Cit. at 118
670 Jaber, Op. Cit. at 179
672 Ibid.
673 Harik, Op. Cit. at 123
674 Ibid. at 124
1998 Municipal Council Elections

The 1998 Municipal Council elections, the first held in thirty-five years, provided Hizballah the opportunity to consecrate its resistance victory. Hizballah candidates won 12 of 128 seats in 1992 and nine in 1996 making it the largest single party bloc in the parliament both times, nevertheless, these elections were not true measures of the Party’s clout in Shi’ite arena since competition was restricted in resistance areas - meaning in the Bekaa and the south, Amal and Hizballah had to form consensual lists rather than compete directly against each other. The 1998 Municipal Elections was the first opportunity for the Party to compete without resistance restrictions.

During this election, Hizballah proved that its election machine, which had been finely tuned in preceding elections, had developed campaign tactics in ways that could not be matched. Hizballah candidates offered comprehensive programs of a practical rather than ideological nature, emphasizing the economic, social, and developmental aspects of the municipalities, and introducing candidates based on merit, honesty and seriousness in municipality work rather than on a sectarian basis. For the first ballot of direct competition, the Party performed very well. The most striking result came in Mount Lebanon, where Hizballah won a landslide of ninety seats, while Amal won none. There were many factors that contributed to this victory, one of which was its exploitation of its resistance and public services records. The election proved that the Party stood on a solid record of achievement powerful enough to generate public support, and further, reinforcing the role of its already entrenched resistance.

A second factor in Hizballah’s electoral success, was the Party’s reliance on democratic precepts to counter challenges from rivals. During this election, Hizballah proved that it would enter into electoral competition through the use of democratic means and remain loyal to democratic principles, refusing to succumb to Lebanese old-style politics of the zu’ama. Throughout the election battle,

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675 Harik, Op Cit. at 95
676 Ibid. at 96
677 Hamzeh, Op. Cit. at 123
678 Ibid. at 27
679 Harik, Op. Cit. at 99
680 Ibid. at 108
681 Ibid.
Hizballah was seen as championing the right of people to choose, while the government was viewed as hampering freedom in the elections through its injunction on the participation of political parties. This debate gave citizens the chance to ponder contrasting democracies being brandied and opened the forum, turning the spotlight on the electoral practices of the contenders, with Hizballah coming out looking like the most supportive of democratic principles.682

The Post-Withdrawal Period

Since the inception of Hizballah’s resistance activities, scholars have wondered what would happen to the Party if and when the Israeli occupation ended. In 2000, the theories were tested and Hizballah persisted despite the speculation. The post-withdrawal period represented a difficult time for Hizballah, who set out to prove the importance of the resistance in the face of a distanced enemy. In this period Hizballah faced not only the challenges of maintaining its resistance paradigm, but also had to learn to accommodate the new and evolving challenges of a post-September 11 world.

The occupation of south Lebanon was costly for Israel. Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak made withdrawal a campaign promise in 1999, and later announced that it would take place by July 2000. A month and a half before this deadline, after SLA desertions and the collapse of potential talks with Syria, Barak ordered a chaotic withdrawal from Lebanon, taking many by surprise.683 At three am on 24 May 2000, the last Israeli soldier stepped off Lebanese soil and locked the gate at the Fatima border crossing behind him.684 Nasrallah reveled in the victory, emphasizing it as a national victory, belonging to all Lebanese and not to any one party, movement, organization, or community, taking the time of course to remind everyone the price paid for victory.685 1,276 Hizballah martyrs were announced to have been killed during the period of occupation in the fight against Israel, the memory of which would never fade to far in the distance. Many predicted that lawlessness, sectarian violence and chaos would fill the void

682 Harik, Op. Cit. at 99
684 Ibid.
685 Harik, Op. Cit. at 140
left by the Israeli occupation forces and the SLA, which rapidly collapsed in Israel's wake; those predictions proved false as Hizballah maintained order in the border region and continued to exist, even gained strength, despite all odds.686

Many have speculated that Hizballah’s resistance narrative would die at the withdrawal of Israeli troops, the reality was different. Not only did the resistance narrative persist, but so did the cooperation of the state with Hizballah and their resistance agenda, as on the very day of Israeli pullout president Lahoud declared loudly that this victory was still not enough to realize the comprehensive peace desired. For that to occur, according to Lahoud’s statement dictating the new rules of the game, Israel would have to return all Arab lands, including Shebaa Farms.687 Despite withdrawal, a territorial dispute continues over a 15-square mile border region called Shebaa Farms, an area which Hizballah and the Lebanese government claim remains under Israeli occupation.688 Lebanon and Syria assert that the mountainside is Lebanese land, while Israel and the UN have declared it part of the Golan Heights and, therefore, Syrian territory (though occupied by Israel). Since 2000, Lebanon has also been awaiting the release of long held prisoners and the delivery of maps for the location of over 300,000 landmines the Israeli army planted in southern Lebanon.689

With a new military situation, new unstated ‘rules of the game’ were established by the combatants, as attacks on Israeli army posts in the occupied Shebaa Farms were reciprocated by limited shelling of Hizballah outposts.690 Both sides have broken the "rules of the game," in the course of the new dispute but not quite equally or proportionately. As one UN observer report of the numbers of border violations found, Israel had violated the Blue Line between the countries ten times more frequently than Hizballah has.691 Israeli forces have kidnapped Lebanese shepherds and fishermen as Hizballah abducted

687 Harik, Op. Cit. at 139
689 Ibid.
691 Ibid.
an Israeli businessman in Lebanon in October 2000, under the pretext that he was a spy.\textsuperscript{692} The two have even negotiated with one another in this new period. In January 2004, through German mediators, Hizballah and Israel concluded a deal whereby Israel released hundreds of Lebanese and Palestinian prisoners in exchange for the businessman and the bodies of three Israeli soldiers.\textsuperscript{693} At the last minute, Israeli officials defied the Supreme Court's ruling and refused to hand over the last three Lebanese prisoners, including the longest-held detainee, Samir al-Qantar, who has been in jail for 27 years for killing three Israelis after infiltrating the border.\textsuperscript{694} Since this time, prisoner exchange has also remained high on the list of Hizballah demands.

Immediately after the withdrawal in 2000, another parliamentary election took place. The results of this election would determine whether Hizballah had a continuing mandate for their resistance following their performance against the Israelis a few months earlier while also determining if the post-withdrawal government would assign the same priorities to the resistance as previous governments had.\textsuperscript{695} Although a ban on resistance competition was in place for this election as well, Hizballah showed more clearly that it was able not only to enhance representation over Amal for the first time, nine to six, but also to perform as a first-class pragmatic player.\textsuperscript{696} In addition to the Party’s committed constituency and the success of Hizballah’s social welfare services, two other factors contributed to its success. One factor was the liberation of the south which boosted the Party’s image as a heroic organization whose resistance won against the Israeli occupation through sacrifice.\textsuperscript{697} The Israeli withdrawal, a profound victory for any Arab state, made it extremely difficult for rivals to ignore Hizballah as a political force. Moreover, the results of the election proved, democratically, that Hizballah had hegemony over the resistance narrative in the country.

\textsuperscript{692} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{693} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{694} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{695} Harik, \textit{Op. Cit.} at 148
\textsuperscript{696} Hamzeh, \textit{Op. Cit.} at 115
\textsuperscript{697} Ibid.
Hizballah’s actions in Parliament as the most important player in the strongest opposition bloc, has cemented its view as an ideological sound and democratically compatible Party. It actions as a political party have not only proven its commitment to its own principles, and pledge to participate with the Government, but has exemplified the compatibility of this Islamist party with democracy, a claim never made by the Party. In Parliament, the Party has presented its opposition not in the form of a boycott (opposing every move by the government) but rather selectively supporting and opposing various policies providing a ‘constructive opposition’ as described by the Party. Hizballah has pursued a non-disruptive role, behaving responsibly and cooperatively in voicing their opposition to the Hariri government, according to Norton.

Hizballah has not opposed government policies based purely on Islamic issues, but rather has based its opposition on mainly an ‘inclusionary’ and ‘issue-based’ social, economic, and political critique of the government, pursuing secular issues such as the abolition of the sectarian system, social justice for the oppressed, public freedoms, diffusion of political power and political transparency. The opposition bloc has voted ‘No’ on three successive Hariri government budgets on the basis that a government should not profit from the reconstruction of its country. Hizballah has also pushed for investment in the nation’s agricultural and industrial sectors, as Hizballah believes that Hariri’s governments have bankrupted the country in the name of reconstruction, raising the public debt to over $40 billion. The opposition bloc has also continuously castigating the government for popular themes of political corruption, administrative inefficiency, overspending on reconstruction projects on the large-scale and underdevelopment of deprived areas.

While Hizballah does not necessarily believe in democracy as the best system of rule or government it does endorse it as the next best system to Islam on the political level and thus participates.

698 Saad-Ghorayeb, Op. Cit. at 30
700 Ibid.
701 Hamzeh, Op. Cit. at 121
702 Ibid.
703 Saad-Ghorayeb, Op. Cit. at 30
When participating, it has been shown that the Party works to advance the platform of democracy, or at least works to hold the government to their commitment ideologically to the notion of democracy. This can be discerned from the Party’s views on public freedoms and responses to the Hariri government’s attempts to curb them. When the Government instituted a ban on demonstrations and the broadcasting of news by non-state owned television media, Hizballah stood up against the ban, arguing it violated the public’s right to free expression. When the government attempted to obstruct free elections, the Party construed this effort as an encroachment on the publics’ right to freedom of choice, which is a fundamental ‘constitutional and human right’.

In short, Hizballah has participated in government, not to insidiously pursue a religious objective, or to install a ‘foreign’ power as ruler, but rather has held the government to its rhetoric of democracy castigating for only subscribing to democracy in appearance and not being committed in principle. Hizballah’s goal of de-confessionalization can be seen in the same light, as a demonstration of the Party’s commitment to the implementation of democracy, rather than as a plot to establish an Islamic state. This central goal of the political process for Hizballah represents an essentially secular and democratic demand for equality of opportunity, a call to replace a system of sectarian democracy with a citizen’s democracy, where representation is based on citizenship. Moreover, the demand for the abolition of the sectarian system is not matched by a demand for a majority system, but rather a system based on proportional representation, which would guarantee the inclusion of all Lebanese sects and prevent any one from monopolizing the executive branch. So even if a democratic system may assist in the development of an Islamic regime, what Hizballah demands is not power, but equal and just representation for its, and ever constituency.

704 Ibid. at 55
705 Ibid.
706 Ibid.
707 Ibid.
708 Ibid.
709 Ibid. at 56
710 Ibid.
711 Ibid.
September 11 and the War in Iraq

The events of 11 September served to heighten the already tense situation in the Middle East and pushed Hizballah further into a strategy of calculated response regarding the new political stage created by the US in the region.\textsuperscript{712} This period marked an increased effort by the United States to demand that its ‘war on Terror’ demands be met. While Syria, Lebanon, and Iran agreed to assist the US in their fight against terrorism in certain respects and with certain demands – all three took exception to the US’s demands on Hizballah, insisting on considering Hizballah a legitimate resistance organization.\textsuperscript{713} This period may in many ways be considered the height of the success of Hizballah’s resistance narrative, as authorities began putting cases together with legal precedents and international conventions, to support Hizballah’s claim to a legitimate and legal use of force.

The Lebanese government went through great lengths to defend Hizballah as an authentic resistance organization, using guerrilla tactics to liberate national territory.\textsuperscript{714} Beirut’s long standing position on Hizballah’s national resistance status was constantly supported, negotiated, and defended against international pressure of various kinds over the years.\textsuperscript{715} But throughout the years, many scholars have wondered whether the Lebanese authorities’ support for Hizballah’s \textit{jihad} activities was the result of official conviction or coercion by-ever present Syria and to a lesser extent, Iran. In the final transformation of Hizballah, this question remains, as actors try to negotiate new meaning to old compromises.

As efforts to disarm to the Party have increased on the international level, the Party has opened a new front in its battle to maintain its resistance. This new front is not a militaristic or political front, but rather, a propaganda front as Hizballah has engaged the US, in not a physical fight but instead an extensive war of words.\textsuperscript{716} In order to remain focus on the movement’s principle enemy or threat, Hizballah did not declare a war or \textit{jihad} against the US, even after the Iraqi invasion; instead, the Party decided to rejected

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{712} Hamzeh, \textit{Op. Cit.} at 135
  \item \textsuperscript{713} Harik, \textit{Op. Cit.} at 165
  \item \textsuperscript{714} See Harik for a more detailed discussion.
  \item \textsuperscript{715} Harik, \textit{Op. Cit.} at 196
  \item \textsuperscript{716} Hamzeh, \textit{Op. Cit.} at 137
\end{itemize}
the US-led invasion and proposed an initiative of reconciliation between Saddam and the Iraqi opposition. Nasrallah remained acutely aware of the tension in the region in the wake of the Iraq invasion and occupation, even commenting, “if you say something against the Americans, some will understand it as defense of Saddam, and they will clap for you, but if you criticize Saddam’s regime, some will clap for you and others will accuse you of being an agent for the United States. Thus, the situation is very sensitive.”

Given the complexity of the post-9/11 atmosphere, and the shifting rules of the political game, Hizballah escalated its war of words with the US rather than turn to violence or threats of aggression. “We tell the United States,” Nasrallah boasted at a commemoration for Ashura, “don’t expect that the people of this region will welcome you with roses and jasmine, the people of this region will welcome you with rifles, blood, and martyrdom operations, we are not afraid of the American invaders, and will keep saying ‘death to America.’”

In the face of such imposing international pressure, the population rallied behind the resistance. Maronite Cardinal Nasrallah Boutros Sfeir commented at the accusation of Hizballah’s terrorist activity, “these are men trying to free their country from foreign occupation; we all thank them for their efforts.”

Even former president Amin al-Gemayel, assisted by the US back in the day, described calling the party a terrorist organization ‘a heresy’. In the Islamic world, at a meeting the Organization of Islamic Countries in Doha, foreign ministers drafted a final resolution condemning attacks in the US and agreeing that “any attempt to link Islam with terrorism and any confusion of terrorism with the right of peoples – notably the Palestinians and the Lebanese – to legitimate defense and resistance to Israeli occupation is totally rejected.” This statement representing 1.2 billion Muslims worldwide clearly reflected where they stood on the terrorism/resistance debate. Round one of the War of Words has gone to Hizballah, but in the most recent round following the Summer War, Hizballah has not been so lucky.

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717 Ibid. at 138
718 Ibid.
719 Ibid. at 138-39
720 Harik, Op. Cit, at 180
721 Ibid.
722 Ibid.
Hizballah’s sweeping victories in the 2004 municipal elections did not come as a surprise. Whether Hizballah is a resistance movement or a ‘terrorist organization, the fact remains that the Party won major victories in 2004, that have very little to do with Syria and Iran, and is very much of their own making. Hizballah’s continued success with social welfare services, its ongoing successes - the liberation of the South and fight against Israel in Shebaa farms including the success in securing the release of Lebanese and Arab detainees from Israeli prisons – all received various degrees of support from Lebanon’s religious committees.\(^{723}\)

Again, Hizballah’s success reflects its pragmatic approach to the municipal elections, particularly its emphasis on economic, social, and developmental imperatives as all candidates backed consisted of individuals from professions – engineers, doctors, lawyers and businessmen – chosen as the best qualified to understand the needs of a particular municipality.\(^{724}\) This election, like the others, further demonstrated Hizballah as not only a first class player but also a dominant political force within the Shi’ite community. Hizballah did not only defeat Amal in Beirut’s southern suburb and the Biq’a but also won over Amal the majority of municipalities of the provinces of the South and Nabatiyyah.\(^{725}\) Amal had lost its stronghold and Hizballah, though still not hegemonic, was celebrating the victories of good management, governance, and ideological soundness.

Despite these successes, in the post-withdrawal period, Hizballah continued its ban on participating in the government through a cabinet position and ministerial portfolio. Despite Hizballah’s great success in entering Lebanese parliament and improving its representation, the Party opted for the time being not to take a position in the Lebanese cabinet or accept a ministerial portfolio.\(^{726}\) As Sheikh Qassem has made clear, “We do not want to enter or cast a vote of confidence for a government that does not represent the interests of the people, or whose program we do not know. Our loyalty is to a

\(^{723}\) Hamzeh, *Op. Cit.* at 135
\(^{724}\) *Ibid.*
\(^{725}\) *Ibid* at 131
\(^{726}\) Hamzeh, *Op. Cit.* at 119
government that represents and serves the people, not to cabinet spoils.”727 So although the Shi’ite demographic would like to be better represented given their alleged majority, politically, Hizballah has decided to protect the interests of the resistance over and above its pursuit of political power. Being a part of the government would compromise their resistance efforts by making the Lebanese state unequivocally responsible for their actions – leading ultimately to their disarmament and possibly peace negotiations with Israel.

**Lebanon’s Third National Crisis: 2004 – Today**

*The ‘Cedar Revolution’*

There was hope for Lebanon in the aftermath of the Israeli withdrawal from its southern territories. The invasion and occupation had happened and ended in disgrace. The civil war had exhausted all internecine factionalism and Lebanon was still intact - in body and soul. While Hizballah seemingly survived the withdrawal of Israeli troops, would it survive the withdrawal of Syrian presence? While the post-Israeli Withdrawal period represented the most secure period for the resistance of Hizballah, the Post-Cedar revolution period in Lebanon represents the Party of God’s most significant challenge by far. Many scholars have wondered whether Hizballah’s identity and resistance narrative could survive the withdrawal of Syrian presence from Lebanon and in 2005 they were faced with that very situation. How would Hizballah, Iran and the region adjust to the various shifts in the domestic and international reality?

Lebanon has always had a precarious national balance, facing two prior national crises, each crisis was solve with a new precarious balance, each one unstable for different reasons. The most recent balance, struck after the Civil War through the Ta’if Accords, negotiated a new identity for Lebanon, one based on the centrality of resistance and a compromise on this basis between the ruling regime and Hizballah, Syrian presence and a more equitable but not perfect sectarian political balance. What Ta’if did not negotiate was the end to Hizballah’s armed struggle or the role of the Shi’a in the new power sharing agreement as their power increased. Ta’if also failed to fully address the question about Lebanon’s

727 Ibid. at 120
regional identity as people in the country still wondered what exactly it meant to be Lebanese. Identity politics along side resistance activities would come to define the new period, as more and more actors emerge in the Lebanese playing field and Hizballah once again tries to answer the questions of its constituency in a new geopolitical era.

Lebanon’s precarious balance was slowly destabilized by a serious of events. Aside from the events of 9/11 and the increasingly tense international political climate, Israeli withdrawal from the south of Lebanon also signaled the collapse of Syrian-Israeli land-for-peace negotiations. This complicated by the death of prolific President Hafez al-Assad along with the election of President George Bush in the United States fundamentally altered the US/Israel/Syria triangle, as well as the compromise struck between Syria, the Lebanese Government, and the Resistance; an arrangement based on the primacy of peace negotiations, consent to Syrian military presence and political hegemony in Lebanon and Syrian and Lebanese support for Hizballah until the Golan issue and Occupied Lebanese territory was retrieved.\(^{728}\) Particularly in light of the Iraq invasion and increasing competition between the US and the alliance of Iran, Syria and Hizballah, Lebanon’s precarious balance was thrown way off. Add to this another Arab-Israeli War on Lebanese soil and what you have is an equation for national crisis.

To mark a turning point in this national crisis would be difficult, but one that clearly stands out is the adoption of Resolution 1559 by the United Nations Security Council in September of 2004 coming in the wake of the controversial extension of President Emile Lahoud’s term in August. For many, the amendment of Article 49 of the Lebanese constitution to allow for the extension and renewal of the Presidency to beyond one six year term has stood as a stark reminder of Syria’s continuing iron grip in Lebanon. Despite general Lebanese outrage and vivacious debate, the Lebanese parliament did amend the article, to many doing Syria's bidding, and permitted Lahoud to serve for three more years. In response to this action, not only was Resolution 1559 issued, but in October, Prime Minister Rafik Hariri, architect of

the economy and popular international voice, resigned from the government to voice his opposition to the constitutional crisis.

Resolution 1559 stands out as a clear attempt by the international community, centrally, the United States and France, to interfere in the affairs of Lebanon; oddly enough, it was in the name of removing foreign influence from the Lebanese political process. In the wake of the War on Terrorism, and the increasing spotlight on Teheran and thus Syria in regards not only to Iraq, but regional stability, Hizballah as a force came into focus, and though Syria and Hizballah did not make it to the ‘Axis of Evil’ list, removing their influence in the region was high on the international agenda. 1559 marks the beginning of this process – one which has impacted the Lebanese political landscape permanently. Echoing the Ta’if Accords, this resolution called upon “all remaining foreign forces to withdraw from Lebanon” and "for the disbanding and disarmament of all Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias." Many have viewed this resolution as a direct attack on Syria, whose presence and control of the Lebanese political scene for twenty-eight years, is seen as a threat to peace in the region. In response, Syria moved about 3,000 troops from the vicinity of Beirut to eastern Lebanon, a gesture that was viewed by many as merely cosmetic.

The Lebanese government, though divided internally over the constitutional reforms, initially remained firm in its long standing stance, requested that Israel withdraw from the disputed Shebaa Farms and the hills of Kfar-Shouba and return the Lebanese detainees in Israel as a condition for fully implementing Resolution 1559. While the UN refused to acknowledge Lebanese rights to Shebaa Farms and reiterated the Blue Line as the official line of Israeli withdrawal, the Lebanese Government official responded through a statement, a copy of which has been posted on the official Lebanese Armed Forces website, remaining firm on various issues. Concerning Syria, the government said, "The only foreign forces existing in Lebanon are the Israeli forces which occupy the farms of Shebaa. Whereas the Syrian forces are friendly Arab forces which entered Lebanon according to the Lebanese government's demand and their existence is regulated by the convention of brotherhood and coordination and cooperation between Lebanon and Syria and a copy of this convention was submitted to the United States at that
time.” On the topic of Hizballah, the government initially had this to say, commenting, "The national resistance which is confronting the Israeli occupation has no security role inside the country and its activities are restricted to facing the Israeli enemy. This resistance led to the withdrawal of the enemy from the bigger part of our occupied land and is still persistent to free the farms of Shebaa. Preserving this resistance constitutes a Lebanese strategic interest with the aim of relating the struggle with the enemy and regain all the Lebanese legitimate rights achieving and at the forefront the withdrawal of Israel from the farms of Shebaa and the return of the refugees to their land." Even Druze leader, MP Walid Jumblatt has repeatedly insisted that he objects to the disarmament of Hezbollah, according to the international resolution, describing the party as a "resistance group" and not a militia. He engaged in an electoral alliance with Hizballah during the 2005 parliamentary election, with one of the titles of the alliance being "The Protection of the Resistance." Since the 2006 July War, Jumblatt has switched sides and is now calling on Hezbollah to be integrated into the Lebanese Army and hand in its weapons over to the government.

Aside from the resolution, this period, not only coincided with attempts by the United States to quash ‘militancy and Islamism’ in the region, but also what has been dubbed, the spring of democracy; a phenomenon, that to many analysts looked like the so-called ‘Orange or Color Revolutions’ in Eastern Europe. Since 2002, the United States has made it a central objective to pursue not only democratic reform in the region, but economic reform as well, trading in aid packages for free trade deals and forcing its ‘friends’ in the region to focus centrally on democratic reform, or at the very least, the appearance of democratic reform. Democracy and economic reform soon became the end all to solving the political problems of the Middle East and the Arab-Israeli conflict. By installing democratic regimes and connecting the economies of the region to Israel, through such free trade arrangements as the Qualified Industrial Zones of Jordan and Egypt, the United States believed it had found the formally for peace and an end to resistance and militancy. Democracy in the Middle East had replaced the buzz words of women’s rights and human rights, and all of a sudden, a race for democracy was begun. Lebanon was just one example of this regional trend. In Egypt, several constitutional reforms and presidential elections,
along side a popular movement for reform, Kefaya, made it seem like maybe change was close to a country that had been leaving under autocratic rule for over two decades.

From Kuwait, to Palestine, to Egypt, to Iran, it seemed like democracy was beginning to take hold – what the United States was soon to find out, as has been the trend in Lebanon since 1992, was that democracy is not a module form, and that when it is to take hold in the region, it is an indigenous form that will grow, and in this case Islamist powers that would win in the elections. From Hizballah, to Hamas, to the Muslim Brotherhood, to the Islamic Action Front – it was Islamist powers that were winning elections and gaining power on the State level, not only affirming their cause democratically, but proving that the resistance narrative would not be subsumed in a democratic wave, but rather, would use democracy to further its cause and broaden not only its national consensus but regional approval.

Economically, Lebanon seemed to be finally reaching stability and growing in terms of financial independence and reconstruction. Whatever the late Prime Minister Hariri did or did not do, downtown Beirut looked and exuded an emerging confidence - shops were full of goods and customers, fruits and vegetables were in full abundance, cultural activities, TV programs, the rambunctious press, the university campuses, the art scenes, the money that Ford and other American and European foundations were investing in the Lebanese creative imagination - all indicated that there was not just hope but a trust in what was happening, and what was happening was good, promising, beautiful, hopeful.729 According to Dabashi, you could tell by the number of native Lebanese living outside their country but going back for their summer holidays, the money and gifts they brought back to their families, and those members of the same family who were leading a happy and satisfying life inside Lebanon, that Lebanon was collecting itself and once again calling itself a homeland.730

730 Ibid.
The Assassination of Prime Minister Rafik al-Hariri and the Rise of Identity Politics

On 14 February 2005, Valentine’s Day, Prime Minister Rafik Al-Hariri was killed by a massive explosion by car bomb in Beirut, shaking not only the city, but the entirety of the Lebanese nation. This assassination, like no other in Lebanese history, invigorated the masses to put an end to what they saw as Syrian domination. Syria, in the wake of the constitutional controversy and Resolution 1559, was seen as the culprit in this massive attack, and as such, became the target of popular animosity. The assassination of Hariri, admired by the business community and the middle class Lebanese, while severely criticized by the progressive left, ignited both pro- and anti-Syrian sentiments and resulted in, not only the resignation of Prime Minister Omar Karami's cabinet, but the election of an entirely new government and the start of a new national crisis. By March 2005, hundreds of thousands of Lebanese joined pro- and anti-Syrian rallies in Beirut, signaling the beginning of a phase of propaganda wars, typical of the identity politics that would dominate the political stage form this point forward. By the following month, in April 2005, Karami resigned as Prime Minister, having failed to form a government, and yielding to the moderate pro-Syrian MP Najib Mikati.731 Pressure on Syria to withdraw its forces from Lebanon was now intensified, and finally Bashar Al-Assad yielded to the collective will of the Lebanese, who publically protested Syrian presence in the largest show of Lebanese support. This move was endorsed by the UN, and abused by the US and France, ending the Syrian occupation of Lebanon, but not the woes of the nation.732

What has now been dubbed by Washington as ‘the Cedar Revolution’ or alternatively as the ‘Gucci Revolution’ by the progressive Lebanese left, was fully underway. Middle class Lebanese bourgeoisie were now fully in line with a pro-American, pro-French, anti-Hizballah, and anti-Palestinian disposition and it was under these circumstances that an anti-Syrian alliance, led by Rafik Al-Hariri's son, Saad Al-Hariri, won control of the Lebanese parliament in 2005.733 Riding on the momentum of the so-called revolution, a coalition of Sunni-Muslim, Druze and Christian parties gathered under the label “March 14” (the date of the largest demonstration in the spring of 2005) and were able to score a significant victory in

732 Ibid.
733 Ibid.
parliamentary elections, and managed to include even the Shi’ite, pro-Syrian Hizballah in a new
government.734 These elections marked the first time Hizballah had accepted a ministerial portfolio
marking a significant change in approach for the Party. Hizballah and its allies also won a marked victory
in the parliamentary election, winning 35 seats.

At this point it seemed as though some sort of odd unity government had been formed and that
tensions, although not gone, may have been eased through the democratic process. The Syrians had
packed and left; the Gucci revolutionaries had demonstrated in their hundreds of thousands in a March
against Syria and made their presence felt, as had the disenfranchised and oppressed of Lebanon, the
Shi’a in particular, proving that they too were a force to contend with.735 As Dabashi has noted, “the
bizarre combination of pro-American, Francophone, bourgeoisie, (not even hiding their Sri Lankan
maids), met and were matched by the wretched of the Lebanese earth, the poor Shi’as, the disenfranchised
Palestinians, and an array of temporary slaves heralding from Syria, Iraq, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and all
across the world.”736

This tenuous union was not to last long in the unstable geopolitical climate engulfing the Middle East.
Tensions between the uneven partners rose quickly, especially in the wake of several assassinations and in
particular, the attempted establishment of an international court to try the assassins of Rafik El-Hariri.737
In June 2005, the prominent journalist Samir Qassir, severely critical of the Syrian presence in Lebanon,
was assassinated. His death was a major trauma in Lebanese consciousness as posters and even an
oversize statue of Samir Qassir sprang all over Beirut, and his diehard followers pushed for a UN
investigation and punishment of those responsible for his murder.738 By September of that year, four pro-
Syrian generals were charged over the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafik al-Hariri, and before
the year ended, a prominent anti-Syrian MP and journalist, Gibran Tueni, and anti-Syrian former leader of

February.
736 Ibid.
the Lebanese Communist Party, were assassinated.\textsuperscript{739} Furthermore, as Hizballah’s armed presence in the south took center stage in post-Syria Lebanon’s internal struggle for new harmony, not only did tensions rise, but a visible propaganda war between the two camps was ignited, a war which rages until today.

\textit{Post-Syria Lebanon}

\textbf{Entering Government}

In the past, Hizballah has felt secure enough in the compromise made between them and the government regarding the role of the armed resistance in Lebanon, and thus the protection of the resistance narrative, that they were able to steer free of political involvement to a large extent. While they participated in Parliamentary and Municipal politics, and did so with great success, they never felt the need to participate in a government, preferring to steer clear of such positions of power in favor of a purely resistance framework and role as a leader in a strong opposition bloc. In Hizballah’s framework, freedom was more important that gaining a share of ‘a tainted system,’ with which they would have limited influence as it stood any way, so long as they were able to defend and provide for their oppressed constituency and protect the \textit{jihad} politically. Through Hizballah’s parliamentary and municipal participation they were able not only to support the resistance by legitimizing it through the votes of the masses, but proved their capabilities as a political player in the democratic field, often supporting democratic initiatives more than the self-proclaimed democratic government.

In the 2005 elections, Hizballah increased their parliamentary seats to 14, in a voting bloc with other parties that took 35 and for the first time, the Party chose to participate in the cabinet – holding the Ministry of Energy.\textsuperscript{740} Rather than perceive this change in policy as a contradiction on the part of the Party, or as ‘another insidious effort’ to take control of the government, the Party itself sees these concession as a necessity given the changing political climate in the country. In fact, the first item on Hizballah's 2005 electoral platform pledged to "safeguard Lebanon's independence and protect it from the

\textsuperscript{739} \textit{Ibid.}

\textsuperscript{740} Deeb, \textit{Op. Cit.}
Israeli menace by safeguarding the Resistance, Hizballah's military wing and its weapons, in order to achieve total liberation of Lebanese occupied land," flying straight in the face of UN Security Council Resolution 1559 and those forces seeking to implement it, and re-iterating the importance of an armed national liberation force in Lebanon.741

As Nasrallah himself has reiterated, “Since 1982, we never thought of entering the government, let alone trying to control the Lebanese government. Prior to the year 2000, this issue was never a debate amongst us. After the year 2000, this issue was open for discussion– even though we never called for a ministerial share nor did we ask to be a part of the government. Even more than that of the last government which was set up by the Martyr Rafik Hariri and the government which was formed after Prime Minister Omar Karami's resignation, they all asked of us to participate in the government…Our reply to President Rafik Hariri and later to President Karami– "We do not want to enter the government."742

Hizballah saw its role in a national unity government as essential, not only to the nation and its constituency, but in order to assure that a specific segment of society would be represented in the policies of the government as Lebanon entered a ‘new phase’ of development.743 Prior to events in July 2006, it seemed as though Hizballah was making every attempt to branch out and engage all elements of the nation. As the Party feared more and more the end of its armed status and ability to provide meaning for its constituency through jihad, both politically and militarily, they broadened their strategies. Nasrallah and other party leaders attended a series of "national dialogue" meetings aimed at setting the terms for Hizballah's disarmament.744 The Party also played the political game very well, running candidates on multi-confessional district slates rather than as individuals, and forming alliances with allies (however temporarily) with politicians who did not back its program.745 In the 2005 parliamentary contests, the

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743 Ibid.
745 Ibid.
Sunni on Hizballah's slate in Sidon was Bahiyya al-Hariri, sister of the assassinated ex-premier.\textsuperscript{746} Since the elections, the strongest ally of the Shi'i movement has been the former general, Michel Aoun, the quintessentially "anti-Syrian" figure in Lebanese politics.\textsuperscript{747} Aoun's movement, along with Hizballah, was an important component of enormous demonstrations on May 10 in Beirut against the government's privatization plans, which would cost jobs in Lebanon's public sector and the alliance of the Free Patriotic Movement of Aoun, formerly a main pillar of the ‘Cedar Revolution,’ with Hizballah and the opposition in and of itself was considered a major setback for the ‘March 14\textsuperscript{th}’ coalition.\textsuperscript{748}

Hizballah, in the face of mounting international and internal pressure to destroy one of the groups founding and most basic border guards, its armed existence as a national liberation army, did everything it could to out maneuver the pressure. Hizballah continued mounting attacks in Shebaa Farms against IDF targets, as it had been doing successfully since 2000, leading to the release of prisoners; but in addition to its normal resistance activities, social services, participation in elections, Hizballah decided to formally take part in the new chapter of Lebanon’s existence. As Syria moved out, leaving a vacuum of political authority and a terrain of unstable conflicts, Hizballah stood up to replace them and to support, from this point forward, its own battle. Syria had protected the resistance for quite a long time, but in this period, after decades of trying, Syrian occupation was finally put to an end as the West succeeded in doing what it could not do before - divide the nation based on the legitimacy and primacy of armed resistance.

The Survival of Resistance

Despite the tension though, before the aggression of the summer, all indications came together saying there was hope for Lebanon. Syria was out, Hizballah was part of the government, religious factions were regrouping, popular protest had reinvigorated the democratic system, the progressive left was challenging the anti-Syrian camp, and so, as Dabashi says, “all was well.”\textsuperscript{749} Hizballah, as a social movement and

\textsuperscript{746} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{747} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{749} Dabashi, \textit{Op. Cit}. 

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political party had survived the test thus far, engaged the political system as never before while continuing their resistance activities in the south. Hizballah’s border guards had been challenged, but remained in tact as the mythomoteur for this historical moment was dissipating. No longer could Hizballah subsume all the various threads of identity into the larger whole of *jihad*, justice, equality, and religion as the path forward. The Party’s public works were paying off, its political engagement was proving fruitful, increasingly so with each round showing consistent efforts to study and improve in their electoral performance, yet the people of Lebanon, and the region as well, were increasingly torn between two narratives. The first, a vision of democracy, prosperity, and peace; a cold peace, but peace nonetheless. The second a vision of resistance, struggle, and faith; divine victory as it has come to be known in the recent vernacular. Each narrative articulates its own imagining, constructing respective border guards or meaning there in. In Lebanon, both the March 14th camps and the opposition led by Hizballah have used resistance to Israel as a definitive border guard, in each instance the symbolic value changing.

Hizballah has always vehemently claimed its patriotism using the symbol of martyrdom as the ultimate example. Today martyrdom, patriotism, and resistance to Israel as well as foreign domination becoming major points of contention between opposing camps, each one claiming their ‘authentic’ hold over the same border guard, creating a fascinating example of a living contest over a national imagining, one in which international stakes have been placed, as each one tries to develop and negotiate to influence the prevailing mythomoteur. As evidenced in my short time in Lebanon, meeting with various political actors on different sides of the political spectrum, many new imaginings are being perpetuated in this new split in the nation. While some claim it is sectarian, others argue it is ideological. Still others believe it is about power and economic influence, while still a third blames it on outside intervention and the use of Lebanon as a ‘playground’ of sort for the proxy wars of others.

MP Mustafa Allouche of the Hariri camp Future Movement Party, described the split as first and foremost about those who believe an association with Iran and Syria is better for Lebanon against an opposing side that believes that Lebanon’s involvement with any major powers in the region would be
negative for the country (and by negation that means an alliance with the West). He goes further to discuss the ‘temptation of the Shi’a’ facing the nation today describing the ‘Shi’a problem’ as “1400 years old, it will not be solved today,” again going further to diminish the Shi’a claim to persecution or exclusion, saying vehemently, “the Shi’a in this country are getting their share and even more…” describing, as his wife had echoed earlier over dinner, how Shi’a children in the south have more schools than they can even fill while Sunni children in the north must attend crowded, broken down facilities.

President Lahoud on the other hand, the long time ally and associate of the Syrian government and a loyal supporter of Hizballah, what he calls the ‘National Resistance,’ describes the current split in very different terms. When asked about the assassination of Hariri, President Lahoud answers frankly saying that many suspect Syria, but one must look first to who benefits from the situation, from that angle, to the long time Lebanese President, the assassination should be blamed on Israel, as they are the only power that has gained from his death. “[Israel] is the one that gains,” he says, “the ones that suffer are the Lebanese in power and the Syrians of course.” Lahoud has consistently demanded that the constitution be upheld and in the most recent split, that a new government be formed in response to the call of a significant number of the population. "We must abide by the constitution,” President Lahoud emphasizes, “that has brought peace to Lebanon for so many years since the Civil War.” When speaking of the resistance, President Lahoud used very strong language, describing, "strongest army in the world cannot defeat the resistance." “We have won not once,” he says “but twice against one of the strongest armies in the region and the world,” and although ‘outside powers’ have attempted in the President’s opinion, to make it appear as though one sect is in control of all the guns, operating as a

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751 Ibid.
753 Ibid.
754 Ibid.
755 Ibid.
756 Ibid.
terrorist organization in Lebanon, “this is not true…it is their land that is occupied, and they fight for the good of Lebanon, they are the resistance.”

In describing those that attempt to hamper the national resistance, President Lahoud alludes to their collusion with Israel. MP Allouche had done the same, alluding to Syrian collusion with Israel in order to discredit them both politically and ideologically, while emphasizing the vanguard role Lebanon has had in the Arab-Israeli conflict, describing Lebanon as the “only country fighting Israel”; a defeatist tone emphasized. President Lahoud, in justifying his friendship with Syria did so in reference to the national resistance and its fight against Israel saying, "being with Lebanon means wanting a strong Lebanon one that can fight its enemies, I am not pro-Syrian, I am pro-Lebanon and I want to be able to fight Israel; Syria has, can, and will help with that battle." In this, Lahoud constructs Lebanese identity based on its strength and territorial integrity, its ability to fight its external enemies without compromising its sovereignty or freedom. Syria represents an Arab ally in this fight, while the West and those that attempt to stop the national resistance from fighting the enemies that have proven time and time again threatening to the country, cannot represent a truly Lebanese identity. The border guard stands in one position to discredit the other, each time negotiated.

The nation is once again divided in its identity, although this round it is not a west or east question, nor a sectarian power sharing issue, maybe not even a democracy versus resistance scenario, but rather a quest to decide which path the nation will go down – one of cold peace with its long time enemy, letting go of symbolic victories in favor of a subdued calm and nights without fear of air raids or a continued fight to the death crusade in search for meaning and fulfillment through faith and symbolic victory. It was the most recent Arab-Israeli war that disrupted the patchwork of dialogue and national unity, and for the first time, Israel’s policy of retribution and collective punishment ‘paid off” tearing at the seams of a new precarious republic and bringing these questions to the fore.

757 Ibid.
The July War: Retribution in the Twenty-First Century

On repeated occasions, Hizballah's secretary-general al-Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah has reaffirmed that Hizballah will only fight its war against Israel inside Lebanese territory, and has remained true to this conviction. Despite Israel's incessant violation of Lebanese territorial sovereignty, since its withdrawal in 2000, 11,200+ times according to UNIFIL records up until the 2006 War. Compared to a mere 120 violations by Hizballah, it is apparent that Hizballah has stuck to its promise and even constrained its responses; its military wing had confined their operations primarily to Israeli military targets within the occupied Shebaa Farms and directly along the border.

On July 12, 2006, Hizballah fighters attacked an Israeli army convoy and captured two soldiers. The Party stated that they had captured these soldiers for use as bargaining chips in indirect negotiations for the release of the three Lebanese detained without due process and in defiance of the Supreme Court in Israel. Israel had every reason to suspect the kidnapping as Hizballah had tried and failed in divided border town of Ghajjar in 21 November 21. The raid had been planned for months, and Nasrallah had stated earlier that 2006 would be the year when negotiations would take place for the release of the three remaining Lebanese prisoners in Israeli jails. In a 20 July interview on al-Jazeera, he also stated that other leaders in Lebanon were aware of his intention to order a capture attempt, though not of the details of this particular operation. Hizballah assumed Israel’s response would be similar to policy after the 1996 ‘Operation Grapes of Wrath campaign – measured and confined to the border area – according to military strategist and analyst Exum, ‘had they paid attention to the kidnapping of an IDF soldier in Gaza and the response in 2006 they would have known better.” There were soon to find out that not only

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761 Ibid.
762 Ibid.
763 Ibid.
767 Exum, Op. Cit. at 2
would Israel continue its policy of retaliation and collective punishment, but that they would do so on a larger scale than seen in decades. Israeli Prime Minister, Ehud Olmert indicated soon after the kidnap operation, that he was to be holding the entire nation of Lebanon responsible and that the Israeli response was to be felt by all segments of the population.768

After the capture of the soldiers, Israel unleashed an aerial assault on Lebanon's cities and infrastructure on a scale unseen since the 1982 invasion.769 This attack was accompanied by a naval blockade, and a ground invasion; the ground invasion strongly opposed by Hizballah fighters along with fighters from other parties as both the Lebanese Communist Party and Amal have announced the deaths of fighters in battle.770 As verified by the world press and confirmed by Amnesty International, Israel mounted "more than 7,000 air force attacks and 2,500 naval bombardments particularly concentrated on civilian areas . . . The majority of the 1,183 Lebanese deaths were non-combatants, and about a third were reportedly children."771 Amnesty International further reports that Israel military blew up some 80 bridges around the country, with as many as 750,000 people displaced from their homes, also criticizing attacks on fuel and water storage sites with no obvious military value.772 In several cases, villagers who were warned by Israeli leaflets or automated telephone messages to leave their homes were killed when their vehicles were targeted shortly thereafter.773 Runways and fuel tanks at Beirut International Airport, roads, ports, power plants, bridges, gas stations, TV transmitters, cell phone towers, a dairy and other factories, and wheat silos have been targeted and destroyed, as well as trucks carrying medical supplies, ambulances, and minivans full of civilians.774 Human Rights Watch has documented Israel's use of artillery-fired cluster munitions, which it believes "may violate the prohibition on indiscriminate attacks contained in international humanitarian law" because the "bomblets" spread widely and often fail to

768 Nasrallah has since famously admitted that had he know the full scale and intensity of attacks in advance he would not have ordered the operation to have taken place (interview with New TV, 27 August 2006). Exum, Op. Cit. at 9.
770 Ibid.
772 Ibid.
774 Ibid.
explode on impact, in effect becoming land mines. On July 30, Israeli planes bombed a three-story house being used as a shelter in Qana, killing at least 57 civilians and reawakening memories of the horrendous 1996 Qana massacre and reinvigorating resistance narratives.

In our short meeting with Sheikh Nabil Qaouq, Hizballah Chief of Security in the South, the calm, blue-eyed expressive and emotional cleric told us the “Qana story,” saying emphatically, “I wish the smart bombs would have killed them, it would have been more humane that what happened.” “They didn’t have bread or milk for three days,” he described, due to the block aid. After the bomb hit, Sheikh Qaouq said there was 60 women and children stuck under the building. From seven am to one am, he said you could here their screams slowly fade away. “They died of suffocation,” he emphasized, “their bodies were blue when they found them, with dirt in their mouths from the screaming. A mother held her sons hand until it went from warm to cold and then she knew he had passed.” This story, along side the many other martyrs’ stories circulating, has become a lasting legacy reinforcing the principles of resistance. It was through such sacrifice, for the nation and for the ummah, for the oppressed in and out of Lebanon at once, that victory maybe attained – that is the message that has continued throughout Hizballah existence.

Hizballah responded throughout the conflict not only through the combined effort of resisting the ground offensive, but also by continuing there long standing policy of firing rockets into Israel in response to civilian causalities. Israel's initially stated goal of securing the release of the two captured soldiers has faded from Israeli discourse by the middle of the 33 day offensive, giving way to two additional stated goals: the disarmament or at least "degrading" of Hizballah's militia, as well as its removal from south Lebanon. Moreover, it has been widely agreed upon at this point that the Israeli invasion was, long in preparation, nation-wide and by no means limited to Hizballah targets, while

775 Ibid.
776 Qaouq, Nabil. Meeting: Talk and Question/Answer Session, Tyre, Lebanon: 12 January.
777 Ibid.
778 Ibid.
779 Ibid.
intended to ‘shock and awe’ and cripple Lebanese national sovereignty, polity, society, and economy.\textsuperscript{781} All an all, from 500 – 600 members of the national resistance where killed in combat, while 119 IDF soldiers were killed. 800 – 1,191 Lebanese citizens have been estimated dead compared to 43 Israeli civilians killed due to Hizballah rocket attacks. This long conflict, in respect to past Arab-Israeli wars, has left a lasting impact and created divides that have only deepened as time has passed, maybe finally, for Israel, driving preverbal stake between the two camps, sowing enough internal strife that Hizballah and its resistance has suffered.

\textit{Hizballah Victories}

While the results of the war were not without their controversies, there are some widely agreed upon victories the Party of God achieved. Israel’s mission going into the conflict was simple, to destroy Hizballah, cease rocket attacks, and free the two captive soldiers; Hizballah’s strategy was simpler, to deny Israel as many of these three goals as possible while remaining a coherent fighting force and inflicting causalities.\textsuperscript{782} Hizballah, despite the propaganda after the war, did achieve its objective and proved its strategy not only effective, but groundbreaking. It was evident from the fighting that Hizballah had been preparing the battlefield for some time, as such there were massive constructed fighting positions that caught the enemy off guard by their size and complexity.\textsuperscript{783} It terms of its military structure, Hizballah’s chain of command stayed in tact due to the adoption of flexible chains of command where junior officers are given the freedom to respond to threats on the ground.\textsuperscript{784} Hizballah was able to launch over 4000 Katyusha rockets into Israel, tactically maintaining a consistently heavy rate of fire against northern Israel throughout the war.\textsuperscript{785} On the last day of the war Hizballah managed to fire 250 rockets

\textsuperscript{781} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{782} Exum, \textit{Op. Cit.} at 8
\textsuperscript{783} Ibid. at 4; Haseeb, \textit{Op. Cit.} at 3
\textsuperscript{784} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{785} Ibid. at 12
into Israel, a testament not only to thorough planning and training but also to the dedication and skill of fighters involved.\textsuperscript{786}

Moreover, Hizballah effectively used the weaponry it had been trained on, most surprisingly, effectively using antitank weaponry, with the result of destroying eleven IDF tanks, making up over a tenth of the all IDF causalities during the war.\textsuperscript{787} These results reflect many years spent training on these weapons systems, and preparing the southern battlefield, an investment that will not be relinquished easily, and a fact the government should keep in mind. This war reflected the advances Hizballah had made as an Arab force, far surpassing the achievements on any other Arab military in the last fifty years.\textsuperscript{788} So while many argue that Hizballah is completely trained by Iran, and to be sure they do receive training and support, it must be noted, as evidenced by this last war, that the fighters and leadership of Hizballah have infinitely more combat experience and acquired tactical no-how than their sponsors, and as one observer has pointed out “Hizballah trains Iran, not the other way around.”\textsuperscript{789}

\textit{War on the War}

In Israel, the results of this most recent confrontation were almost unanimously agreed upon. Most Israeli citizens, analysts, as well as the international community at large have agreed that Israel failed to achieve the most basic objectives of the confrontation. Israel’s stated goal was to annihilate Hizballah from the south, force its disarmament, and secure its Northern border, as well as recover the two kidnapped soldiers. Israel not only failed to end the status of Hizballah as the national resistance, it failed to recuperate its captive soldiers, and in the mean time, inflicted heavy damage on its own civilian population while tainted its image in the region further.\textsuperscript{790} Israel also failed some perceived peripheral objectives of the conflict, to destroy the ‘Iranian Eastern Command’ before Iran becomes a Nuclear state, the reinstating of Israeli’s deterrent capabilities after withdrawal in 2000 and Gaza 2005, countering

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{786} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{787} Ibid. at 11
\item \textsuperscript{788} Ibid. at 7: Haseeb, \textit{Op. Cit.} at 4
\item \textsuperscript{789} Ibid.
\end{itemize}

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impression of weakness after withdrawal, as well as forcing Lebanon to act ‘responsible’ as a state entity. Furthermore, this was the first time since the 1991 Iraq attack on Tel Aviv that more than a million Israelis have been forced to abandon homes and move, while other cities were hunkered down in shelters. This invasion of Israeli territory has had a great psychological impact on Israeli citizens, who have not been convinced of the reasons behind such a sacrifice on the part of their government. Israel effectively failed to explain to their citizens effectively the reasons behind the full attack, or explain the losses legitimately, and as such, public opinion fell greatly due to this loss.

In Lebanon, the end of the War sparked the start of a new war, an internal battle over interpretation of the war. While during the conflict, the state and its national resistance where able to maintain the long-standing compromise, immediately after the ending of hostilities, a split occurred, that has proven to be enduring. While the March 14th camp has insisted that Hizballah’s armed status has endangered Lebanon’s safety, challenging its right to decide when and where to fight and charging the Party with doing Iran and Syria’s bidding, Hizballah has maintained that it has done what is right for the nation, defending its territory, its citizens, and its integrity as a state. The re-energized debate about Hizballah’s military autonomy and the ability of the Lebanese population to absorb attack in order to defend its resistance was sparked during the war, in an unprecedented move by the Party of God. In the midst of the war, Hizballah quickly accepted Prime Minister Siniora’s seven-point plan, even though it included provisions – most notably dispatch of the Lebanese army to the south – the movement had long

791 *Ibid.* at 10
792 *Ibid.* at 11
794 A survey conducted in Israel found: public satisfaction with Olmert, Peretz, and Halus performance during the war fell. For Olmert it fell from 78% at the start of the war to 40% on 15/08. Peretz, minister of defense went down from 61% to 28%. 70% of the population believed they should not have agreed to a ceasefire without the return of the two captive soldiers, and 70% did not believe that Israel had achieved its stated objective. In response to a question about who won the war, 30% believed Israel won, 30% believed Hizballah won. Haseeb believes this indicates a change in Israeli attitude and signifies that Israelis are no longer convinced that their state is always the winner in war and further, that the effort by the state to convince the public has failed. *Ibid.* at 12
resisted. Further, Hizballah accepted a ceasefire despite the continued presence of Israeli soldiers on Lebanese soil, something it had vowed never to do.

Rather than take this as a sign of cooperation and in a spirit of national unity, March 14 forces decided that this signified Hizballah’s vulnerability. To March 14, the Party had suffered considerable losses to its military and civilian infrastructure that required it to pursue for a ceasefire whose key terms it opposed. They pointed to additional evidence of the relative Hizballah vulnerability citing that it had not won a war it unjustifiably provoked; had illegitimately usurped the right to decide a vital national security matter; had been saved from destruction by the government’s international contacts; and had demonstrated the futility of its armed arsenal. According to Saad al-Hariri, “what we are witnessing today is the execution of an Iranian and Syrian plan of which Hizballah is merely an instrument. Their goal is to prevent any forward movement in Lebanon, Palestine and Iraq and to compel the U.S. to negotiate from a position of weakness.” All these attacks were unprecedented coming from a Lebanese government, who since the post-Ta’if period, had strictly adhered to a policy of supporting Hizballah in its resistance efforts at the public level.

Hizballah on the other hand maintained an entirely different perspective. Hizballah contended that the war vindicated its resistance strategy, as a victory of this kind against an enemy of this size was unknown in the region in any recent history with its weapons protecting Lebanon from Israel’s military operations and salvaging the nation’s dignity. Hizballah, after its perceived victory, offered the Lebanese a clear choice: on one side, a “free society” founded on a “culture of resistance” defined through confrontation with Israel both to defend Lebanon and the Palestinian cause (muqawama) and to reject U.S. regional ambitions (mumanaa); and on the other, a “defeatist” outlook, willing to capitulate to Israel and join the Western-dominated international system. In the mind of Hizballah, this war had

796 Ibid.
797 Ibid.
798 Ibid.
799 Ibid.
800 Ibid.
801 Ibid.
“unmasked the evil of those who are prepared to put our nation for sale, and who, while claiming to want to protect the country, seek to prevent us from enjoying the fruits of our victory.”\textsuperscript{802} When the government stopped supporting Hizballah’s resistance efforts, this was interpreted first and foremost as an act of treachery in support of the enemy. Rather than celebrate victory, the government was seen as sowing discord and helping the aggressors to tear apart the country, expect from the inside this time. Of course March 14 forces responded to claims of a “historic resistance to Israel’s war,” with references to the “no less historic destruction the war brought upon Lebanon,” reinforcing the border guard of Israel and questioning in the same breath the patriotism and loyalty of the Opposition. From such clashing perspectives grew conflicting visions of the post-war landscape.

The politics of identification has taken center stage in this most recent transformation of the Lebanese landscape. Both groups have found it important to not only appear to be an indigenous element in the Lebanese playground, but more so, to be actively in support of the nation’s integrity and preservation. Moreover, the Lebanese population is again confronting critical questions in the imaging of its national unity. Where is Lebanon going? How can Lebanon be strong and protected, dignified and respected? How can the population best preserve itself in the face of constant attack and interference? All contenders realize that the Lebanese population is in search of such answers and so the battle is on to win the hearts and minds of the population, once again. Hizballah claims that its foreign alliances have been and continue to strengthen the nation, while its resistance to foreign aggression and occupation is presented as the primary reason for the nation’s survival. Hizballah argues that it has fought for the most disadvantaged, while being an out growth of that same group. Their voice, it is argued, represents the masses, that have risked their lives, shed their blood, and lost their children for the Nation. On the other side, it is argued that such alliances have pulled the nation apart for the benefit of outside powers, while the Lebanese have disproportionately suffered for a fight that is not theirs. March 14\textsuperscript{th} argues that the time of resistance is over, and such actions only place the nation at risk. It is time to economically prosper, and strengthen the nation through development, international cooperation, and regional peace and security. It

\textsuperscript{802} \textit{Ibid. at} 6
is through such internationally sanctioned actions that Lebanon may find peace, stability, and dignity in the new world order. There may be no simple answer in Lebanon to the answer of who won the war, or what the future identity of the Lebanese will be based on, nonetheless, the war and Hizballah’s actions during and after, have had an impact on the region and the international climate which can be measured and discussed.

Protecting the Resistance in the Capital

After the war, Hizballah’s resentment of March 14 forces grew as it discerned efforts to rob it of its self-proclaimed military victory.803 In a 1 November 2006 report by the International Crisis Group, Hizballah commented: “to protect its military presence in the south, Hizballah will fight politically in the capital”.804 As the question of disarmament and of UNIFIL’s mandate came to the fore, Hizballah leaders moved the struggle to Beirut. At a time when very obvious efforts to cut Hizballah down to size are being made, the Party has decided to use democratic means, such as popular protest, to not only protect its resistance rhetoric, but make a clear point about their objection to the economic direction of the country.

To date, the sit-in has lasted over four months, beginning on 1 December 2006. "I never came to downtown before these protests. I can't afford to come here. If I ate a sandwich here, I'd be broke for a week," says Emad Matairek, a 35-year-old carpenter from the dahiyeh, the Shiite-dominated suburbs of Beirut, who was downtown participating in the sit in, "it's well-known that this area was not built for us."805 Today, the Hizballah-led opposition calls for a national unity government – in which it, along with Michel Aoun’s Free Patriotic Movement and other sympathetic parties would enjoy a larger share of the political pie.806 The economic dimension to the protest can be seen everywhere, as such discontents have

803 ICG, Op. Cit. at 13
804 Ibid
806 ICG, Op. Cit. at 14
fueled the attendance in the much resented, and reconstructed downtown district. Around the square there are hand-drawn posters of Prime Minister Siniora sitting on a chair made of stacks of dollar bills.807

The November 2006 resignation of five Shi’ite and one Christian minister was a critical step invoking the constitution’s preamble which states that “there is no constitutional legitimacy for any authority which contradicts the ‘pact of communal coexistence.’”808 President Lahoud and the opposition maintain that decisions taken by a government that does not include Shiite representatives are invalid while March 14 forces reject this argument claiming that this provision does not apply to a willful decision by one community to resign and that the government remains in place unless the parliament passes a vote of no confidence or either the prime minister or more than a third of the cabinet resigns.809 Hizballah’s insistence in this latter case that General Aoun be included in the broadened government – and its statement that its own members need not be included at all – reflects important aspects of its shifted strategy.810 Hizballah’s central goal is to be viewed as a resistance party and does not wish to be suspected of pursuing hidden, sectarian agendas as the Party of God does not want protection of the resistance to be viewed as a purely Shiite, sectarian objective.811 Hizballah clearly sees as a concerted attempt – by March 14 forces as well as pro-Western Arab regimes that worry about the movement’s wide regional postwar resonance – to cut it down to size and lessen its pan-Arab aura by highlighting and fuelling Sunni-Shiite divides.812

Virtually all of Hizballah’s recent actions – its posture during negotiations over Resolution 1701; growing hostility toward the March 14 forces; attitude toward the tribunal; and, now, its demand for veto power in a new government – are best understood in light of the determination to preserve its armed status and identity as a resistance movement.813 More generally, Hizballah’s growing proximity since 1992 to the center of power has reflected its shifting calculation of how best to ensure state acquiescence in – and

808 ICG, Op. Cit. at 14
809 Ibid.
810 Ibid.
811 Ibid.
812 Ibid.
813 Ibid.
non-obstruction of – these core objectives, rather than any desire to promote a particular domestic agenda.\textsuperscript{814} It largely explains its decision to join parliament in 1992 in the wake of the Ta’if agreement (which called for the dismantling of all militias); its decision to join the government in 2005 following Syria’s withdrawal and adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1559 (which, again, demanded its disarmament); and, finally, its decision to seek a new national unity government at a time of increased domestic and international pressure against it and its Syrian ally.\textsuperscript{815} In each case, Hizballah’s seeming moderation, or attempt to seek power has been in reality, pragmatic actions aimed at ensuring the survival of the Islamic resistance in Lebanon.

**Resistance and its Reverberations**

*The Response from Arab Regimes: the Political Appeal of the Shi’a Revival*

One of the most surprising elements of this most recent conflict, second to the about-face of the Lebanese government in terms of their resistance position, was the position taken by many Arab regimes in the region and the resulting response from Islamists within the state. While Hizballah was making every effort to present itself as a nationalist cause, Arabizing its message as to reach across other divisions, such as religion and class, the Arab leaders interpreted this move not only as an attempt by Iran to pursue more regional power, but also and more importantly, as a threatening populist message capable of effecting their power bases. This war confronted Hizballah with a new twist in the regional power dynamic. So while Hizballah was ‘winning over the Arab street’\textsuperscript{816} along side the socialist street, leftist street, and anti-imperialist street, it was losing the high politics power game; a game which as it turns out, may have been more important.

The Summer War recharged the age-old ideological debate over the geopolitical relationship between Iran and Hizballah. Iran has dominated conversations on the Middle East of late; Tehran’s influence in

\textsuperscript{814} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{815} Ibid.

Baghdad, its nuclear policies, a growing fear of an emerging ‘Shi’ite axis’ that links Iran, Iraq, Syria and Hizballah in Lebanon.\footnote{Fuller, \textit{Op. Cit. at 139}} The image is designed to stir geopolitical blood and has prompted a new debate in Washington about how to treat the nature of this ‘threat’.\footnote{Ibid.} In the eyes of the Bush administration and much of the Israeli establishment, or at least their Public Relations Departments, Hizballah is a dangerous Iranian creation that promotes Tehran’s radical ambitions and forms an integral part of a dangerous and growing Shi’a bloc across the region.\footnote{Ibid.} Hizballah is feared more importantly though for its ability to organize effectively and further, its proven success in infiltrated the democratic process. In this way, Hizballah represents a populist current that serves to threaten not only the government in Lebanon, but moderate Arab regimes throughout the region. Hizballah’s success in transmitting its message not only across sectarian lines, but ideological and religious lines, puts Hizballah on the ‘A-team of terrorist’ groups increasing its potency factors. The fact that no Arab or Muslim regime prior to this most recent conflict was willing to go on record against the Islamic resistance force in Lebanon is testament to that fact. Moreover, the shift in this long-standing position indicates a broadening divide in the region, not only on the level of high politics, but in terms of the discontents of the powerful, with the popular.

Since the shift in power in Iraq, some near-hysterical pronouncements have come from Arab states, without meaningful Shi’a minorities, contributing to a feeling of hysteria and widening divide.\footnote{Ibid.} In December 2004, Jordanian’s King Abdullah II paraded fears of a new “Shi’ite crescent” cutting across the region.\footnote{Ibid.} His comments started a flurry of commentary and scholarship regarding this so-called crescent and instantly the term became a buzz term. In April 2006, Egyptian President Mubarak, in reference to the many Shi’a living in Arab states, darkly commented, “Most of the Shi’ites are loyal to Iran, and not the countries they are living in.”\footnote{Ibid.} This coming from a man with a nominal Shi’a population in his country. Then, at the outset of the summer war the Egyptian, Jordanian, and Saudi Arabian heads of state all

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\item \footnote{Fuller, \textit{Op. Cit. at 139}}
\item \footnote{Ibid.}
\item \footnote{Ibid.}
\item \footnote{Ibid.}
\item \footnote{Fuller, \textit{Op. Cit. at 145}}
\item \footnote{Ibid.}
\item \footnote{Ibid.}
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publicly opposed Hizballah’s actions, suggesting it and Hamas were engaged in ‘reckless adventurism’ that threatened Arab interests.\footnote{Ibid.}

These statements and actions ring awkwardly given the fact that while a historical rift does exist between the two confessional communities, tracing back 1,300 years, in practice, there is very little serious theological difference with their divisions have more to do with practice and in the overwhelmingly Sunni Egypt, Jordan, Palestine, North Africa, and Southeast Asia, the Sunni-Shi’a issue has remained relatively minor.\footnote{Ibid.} In States in which Shi’ites represent significant minorities – Turkey, India, Kuwait, the UAE, Yemen, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia, in rough order of their degree of successful minority integration – similar tensions arising from communal proximity exist, but outside of ‘close-proximity countries,’ anti-Shi’a feeling among Sunni is largely theoretical.\footnote{Ibid.} The effort to incite the masses against the Shi’a is a difficult task indeed. As Sayyed Nasrallah articulated in an interview with Al-Jazeera, "are they [the United States] going to incite them against us, the Shias? Why? What wrong did we do?"\footnote{Bin Jiddu, \textit{Op. Cit.}} The Shi’a have not been seen by the popular as threatening the rights of the Sunni populations, not in the same way as the United States, Israel, and corrupt Arab regimes. The Shi’a do not have a recent history of aggression or invasion in the region. Rather, it seems Sunni public opinion is galvanized at the prospect of changing the hated status quo, through Hizballah and Iran’s unyielding posture towards Washington.\footnote{Fuller, \textit{Op. Cit.} at 146} It is difficult to make the case that in modern history Shi’ites have acted in pursuit of narrow sectarian interests, at least on the international level; on the contrary, Shi’ite movements generally posses a pan-Muslim or pan-Arab political vision that avoid an invocation of Shi’ism, as Hizballah has.\footnote{Ibid.}

And while the shift in power in Iraq, and the recent victories of the Shi’a government, propped up by the United States, have begun to fuel some sectarian talk, it is more due to the influence of the United
States than Shi’a as a sect. The execution of Saddam Hussein is a potent example. While many a Sunni Arab leader criticized the obviously farcical trial and degraded execution on the morning of Eid, and jumped to blame the Shi’a, fueling tensions, populations overwhelmingly saw the hand of the United States behind what was largely considered an atrocity. Thus, while sectarian tensions where fueled by the show-trial and controversial execution, especially in Iraq, and by what was seen as Shi’a celebration, it was the United States who suffered most.

Thus, such statements from the leaders of Egypt and Jordan, both known as allies of the United States, with peace deals with Israel, have been spun as motivated by their respective alliances, and have served to alienate them from the masses. Oddly enough, it seems the root of such statement is a fear by these rulers of rising national resistance forces under the rubric of Islam and the growing power of popular radical or revolutionary forces craving change, now emerging from the Shi’ite world.829 The real regional fault line is not the Sunni-Shi’a axis, but rather, as Fuller describes, the entrenched, threatened, authoritarian rulers supported by the US who are opposed by domestic populations that seek to dislodge these rulers, end the US and Israeli occupation of Muslim lands and resist overall US policies.830 The enemy is the resistance narrative and the fight is very specifically over Israel and regional power.

Hizballah’s fight for autonomy and the right to liberate its national territory, without the infringement on that right by a state or international power, and its ideological stance as an articulated Party, appealing to broad segmented of the underprivileged in society, marks it out as a threat. Hizballah’s Shi’a orientation is nothing but an attempt, as the Ottomans and Mamluks did before them, to shift the understanding of ‘orthodoxy’ and ‘heterodoxy’ as to label their movement inauthentically Islamic or nationalist and cut it from its populist roots. What these state and international powers are forgetting to take into consideration, is the appeal this movement has garnered beyond its religious lens. High politics and the grassroots seem to be at odds.

829 Fuller, Op. Cit. at 146
830 Ibid.
Hizballah is a manifestation of deeply entrenched geopolitics of resistance and revolution in the Muslim world and its growing influence and popularity have long-term historical and ideological roots, and ambitions that are neither exclusively Shi’ite nor anti-Sunni in character.\textsuperscript{831} It represents a powerful regional current that is larger than itself and this cannot be easily suppressed or disarmed and in turn State powers fear the voices of self-empowerment and action such as Hizballah as such Islamist voices are closer to democracy than most other currently existing forces.\textsuperscript{832} Hizballah is not indicative of a burgeoning sectarian axis reinvigorated by the new power that Shi’a have gained in Iraq, what is certain however is that Hizballah’s growing power, although solidly rooted in Lebanon, reflects a growing intensification of resistance to the status quo throughout the Middle East.\textsuperscript{833}

**Populist Currents**

The Lebanon war had a profound effect on Islamist movements that have chosen to compete as legal parties in the political systems of their countries, testing their relationship with the ruling regimes as well as their respect for pluralism and tolerance.\textsuperscript{834} Bishara & Hamzawy have argued that two such movements, the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and the Islamic Action Front in Jordan, have both shown through their reaction to the Lebanon war and their respective State’s political stance during confrontations, their fundamental incompatibilities to the democratic process.\textsuperscript{835} To Bishara & Hamzawy, this most recent conflict has served to revive a dying resistance narrative, one that was slowly being killed off by the rising tide of democracy. And while I disagree with Bishara & Hamzawy on the point of the incompatibility of Islamist groups with democratic processes, I do agree that the resistance narrative has been revived, not only due to Hizballah’s actions, but compounded by the growing sense of alienation populations feel from their respective states policies towards Israel, Islamism, and resistance. The

\textsuperscript{831} Ibid. at 148
\textsuperscript{832} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{833} Ibid. at 140
\textsuperscript{835} Ibid.
strongly pro-Hizballah, anti-American/Israeli outpouring that resulted in response to the latest episode of
the Arab - Israeli conflict has risen to top of Islamist agendas, displacing, in Hamzawy’s opinion,
domestic political and economic reform, that in many ways is much more fruitful and important.

Hamzawy, along with many other scholars of Washington-based think tanks, has argued that the last
few years in the Middle East has seen a shifting of the agenda away from regional issues and US policies
and more towards domestic reform; a shift from the popular to the more pragmatic and political. In his
opinion, the war changed this positive trend. In my opinion, it is the failure of such reform to provide
change, and the image of a corrupt and mismanaged democratic reform process projecting itself
superficially in society. This in contrast with a seemingly ‘real’ victory, exercised through very different
means stands in sharp contrast in the minds of the populace.

In Egypt, while Mubarak was condemning Hizballah’s actions, the Muslim Brotherhood was incited
to action. Similar to Hizballah, the Egyptian Muslim Brothers have reacted strongly to the growing
tensions in the Arab world between Sunnis and Shi’ites, releasing their own statement directed at the
Heads of State in the region who “attempt to sow strife and defeat the resistance,” urging Muslims not to
“resurrect ancient animosities and disputes that previously ruined the mind and body of the umma and that
wise men had agreed to transcend.”836 Akif, the Supreme Guide, also stressed the legitimacy of
Hizballah’s resistance and the necessity of supporting it by all possible means, upholding the “true
Islamic character” of the resistance and the Arab identity of Hizballah, accusing the Governments of
Egypt, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia of justifying their “softness” on the war by provoking conflict and
accusing Hizballah of being an agent of Iran.837 By refusing to enter the maze of sectarian conflict, the
Brothers positioned themselves as a trustworthy actor working for the well-being of the ummah, a true
defender against Israeli-American hegemony and as recent polls indicate, also made gains in public
opinion in Egypt and outside for their defense of Hizballah, and “a clear victory for the Islamist resistance
narrative and its propagation,” according to Bishara & Hamzawy.

836 Ibid. at 9
837 Ibid. at 10
The Islamic Action Front (IAF) took a very similar stance, viewing Hizballah as a legitimate Islamist resistance movement, even issuing a Fatwa on 31 July making it a duty to support Hizbollah’s resistance against Israel. The same document laments anti-Shi’ite views expressed by Wahhabi scholars of Saudi Arabia, described them as having served Israel’s agenda of division in the region. Both the Brothers and IAF responded to the idea of an intertwined American-Israeli plot in the Middle East and viewed hostilities in Lebanon as an attempt to redraw the political map of the Middle East and break up the umma, into various sectarian entities, expressing similar sentiments as expressed by the opposition in Lebanon, showing a growing populist current in the region, which these movements represent.

In Bishara & Hamzawy’s view, both the Brothers and the IAF, in response to this crisis, crossed red lines that had governed its political role and relationship with ruling regime in recent years. I tend to disagree with this perspective. While the authors view this change as the rise of a resistance narrative over the democracy narrative and as a defeat for democracy, in that Islamist rhetoric that had once been moderated was re-radicalized against enemies such as the US and Israel, I see this as an example of these groups using their newly gained portion of political power to express the sentiments their constituencies expect them to represent. The IAF used the Summer War as an opportunity to express its own long held grievances with the regime in terms of corruption and ineffectiveness, proving to these authors a resurgence of resistance. In my opinion, these Islamist groups use of democratic means to express popular currents does not represent a resurgence of resistance in any negative connotation but rather stand as an expression of not only the increasingly divide in the region between sources of power and the population, but beyond, the increasing influence and opportunity such movements have gained through their participation in the democratic process. While it is often argued that such groups are ‘moderated’ by democracy, it seems in reality that they use such processes not in contradiction to their ideology, but to

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838 Ibid. at 14
839 Ibid.
840 Ibid.
841 Ibid. at 15
bolster their vision of resistance, a border guard necessary to the maintenance of their respective constituencies.

*New Alliances: Islamism and the Left*

Apart from Hizballah’s success in identifying itself broadly enough as to reach beyond the spectrum of sectarian divide, Hizballah also extended its support visibly beyond the extents of Islamism, proving itself successful in identifying its border guards not in Islamic terms, nor Shi’a terms, but resistance terms, feeding into wide-ranging fears on the part of many populations in the current geopolitical climate. Many in Lebanon in this last struggle fought with Hizballah against Israel, despite their varied ideological leanings. Ibrahim Sayid, a long time communist, and member of the Lebanese Communist Party, has embraced Hizballah’s cause, saying, "We all have the same goals," the first of these goals being "resistance" against Israel, but also the broader target of America, its allies in the Arab world and beyond, and global capitalism. 842

When the Cold War ended a decade and a half ago with the collapse of the Soviet Union, Mr. Sayid and others like him around the world mourned the apparent triumph of U.S. military, economic and ideological might. 843 Political Islam has always been seen as a threat, but conceived as limited in popular appeal due to the strong vein of religious zeal evident in such movements. Such assumptions are now under strain as secular rebels, antiglobalization militants and other strains of revolt rally to the banner of "resistance" offered by Islamist groups such as Hizballah and the Islamic Republic of Iran. It seems as though Marx’s "opiate of the masses," has become a great mobilizing force, even for once zealous atheists. 844 The phenomenon extends beyond the Middle East to Europe, Latin America and Africa, were causes that a few years ago seemed passé such as socialism, Third World solidarity, strident anti-imperialism, have been injected with a revitalized fervor. As Qassem told hundreds of secular activist

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from around the world at a meeting in Beirut, “We are all here to fight American hegemony.” As Higgins has described, they were there to celebrate the Islamic movement's "divine victory" over Israel this summer and cheer a broader battle against America's vision for the world. Mr. Qassem was dressed in flowing robes and a cleric's turban; many in his audience wore T-shirts or badges featuring portraits of Che Guevara, clenched fists and other emblems of secular radical chic. Some of Hizballah's biggest fans are in Europe, according to this Wallstreet Journal reporter, where the hard left, demoralized by the collapse of communism, has found new energy, siding with Islamist militants in Lebanon, Palestine, and in Iraq and in a wider campaign against what they see as an American plot to impose unrestrained free-market capitalism.

In Latin America, Mexico, Brazil, and Venezuela all publicly condemned the actions by Israel in Lebanon, making especially hard statements concerning the bombing at Qana. This solidarity with Arab causes is widely shared by most Venezuelans, and also by most Latin Americans, especially the poor. Many marched in the streets of Caracas and other cities in Venezuela - as well as in Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, Colombia and elsewhere - to show solidarity with the Lebanese and Palestinians in their plight. "We are all Hezbollah now," read posters carried through London the summer of 2006 during an antiwar protest march.

As described in brief in previous sections, it is Hugo Chavez, from deeply Roman Catholic Latin America, has become the exemplar of a new populism that sees common cause with Iran and Hizballah. A big part of Hizballah's appeal is simply that, unlike other tarnished icons of revolt, it can point to successes; it has defied Israel's military, by far the region's most powerful; it prodded Israel to end its 18-year occupation of southern Lebanon in 2000 and unexpectedly bloodied Israeli troops in clashes this

845 Ibid.
846 Ibid.
847 Ibid.
850 Ibid.
summer. Hizballah exemplifies that "resistance," whether fuelled by religion or secular zeal, "can break governments and roll back the American project," says John Rees, a former editor of the journal International Socialism and a leader of Britain's anti-Iraq war movement.853

According to journalist Higgins, nowhere is the Islamist-leftist axis more potent than in Lebanon, where the three-day Beirut jamboree previously described, was hosted jointly by Hizballah and the Lebanese Communist Party, once-bitter enemies now united by what they proclaim as common goals.854 These two groups, that once shared mutual animosity for each other, has put aside their anger, where now hostility to Israel and the U.S. trumps past differences.855 The Communist Party disbanded its own armed wing at the end of Lebanon's civil war in 1990, but twelve of its members died fighting alongside Hizballah this summer.856 Part of Hizballah's appeal lies in its tactical flexibility, which unlike many Sunni Muslim radical groups such as al Qaeda, which use takfiri discourse and denounce non-Muslims or fellow Muslims as heretics, Hizballah's Shi’ite leadership does not deride its allies, even if they are atheists, so long as their political opinions, or border guards, are compatible.857 This comes as a shift for the Party, who in its Open Letter of 1985, declared itself hostile to "both the USSR and the U.S., both capitalism and communism, for both are incapable of laying the foundations for a just society."

Eventually the Lebanese Communists began cooperating with Hizballah, attracted mainly by its power but also finding common cause in its emphasis on championing the poor, today the alliance between the two has been confirmed.858 "If there were a level playing field, I might choose different allies," Ibrahim, the long time communist turned Hizballah, says, but America's own policies left him with no choice: "I find myself on the same side as Hizballah, as Chavez. I didn't choose them. America did."859

852 Ibid.
853 Ibid.
854 Ibid.
855 Ibid.
856 Ibid.
857 Ibid.
858 Ibid.
859 Ibid.
In Closing

Many authors argue that Hizballah has gradual transformed into a tame political force. Beginning with political changes in Iran, the victory of Khatami over the conservatives, scholars argue that such changes encouraged the Party of God to demilitarize its identity and build a broader base in society as Lebanese domestic politics, which are not in favor of an Islamic revolution, were conceived of as being driven less by ideology in the post-war era than by political considerations related to the consolidation of its existence. These authors see the decline of radical Islam as groups are being neutralized and moderated by the political and democratic process and as they are more including into the national political fold.

While it is true that such groups have adopted democratic institutions and processes, they are only doing so as they fit within their ideological worldview, which places the defense of the nation, the oppressed, and jihad above all other considerations, especially at a time of conflict. With the region as it is, and paranoia among Middle Eastern populations at an all time high considering the high rate of foreign interference, or at least the role foreign interference has taken in the labeling going on in the region, narrative of resistance, that have proven victories are likely to resonate. They resonate, not only within the Shi’a community or Muslim world but throughout the third world because they have been able to not only prove success, as opposed to failing attempts at domestic democratic reform, but answer fundamental questions about the meaning of life. In this way, Hizballah has provided a version of the mythomoteur, beginning in Khomeini-esque terms and slowly metamorphosing into its present incantation; a story of national liberation, faith, economic equality, and integrity; a history of honesty, trustworthiness, and uncompromising ideology; these characteristics of the movement, commodities as they are in our world, have guaranteed its success as a geopolitical force.

860 Harb & Leenders Op Cit. at 184
861 Ibid.
AFTERWORD

The idea of the Third World, which is usually traced to the late 1940s or early 1950s, was increasingly used to try and generate unity and support among an emergent group of nation-states whose governments were reluctant to take sides in the Cold War.862 These leaders and governments sought to displace the 'East-West' conflict with the 'North-South' conflict. The rise of Third Worldism in the 1950s and 1960s was closely connected to a range of national liberation projects and specific forms of regionalism in the erstwhile colonies of Asia and Africa, as well as the former mandates and new nation-states of the Middle East, and the 'older' nation-states of Latin America.863 Exponents of Third Worldism in this period linked it to national liberation and various forms of Pan-Asianism, Pan-Arabism, Pan-Africanism and Pan-Americanism.

The weakening or demise of the first generation of Third Worldist regimes in the 1960s and 1970s coincided with or was followed by the emergence of a second generation of Third Worldist regimes that articulated a more radical, explicitly socialist, vision.864 A moderate form of Third Worldism also became significant at the United Nations in the 1970s, as described in chapter three, which centered on the call for a New International Economic Order. By the 1980s, however, Third Worldism had entered into a period of dramatic decline. With the end of the Cold War, some movements, governments and commentators have sought to reorient and revitalize the idea of a Third World, while others have argued that it has lost its relevance. As a world-historical movement, Third Worldism (in both its first and second generation modalities) emerged out of the activities and ideas of anti-colonial nationalists and their efforts to mesh highly romanticized interpretations of pre-colonial traditions and cultures with the utopianism

863 Ibid.
864 Ibid.
embodied by Marxism and socialism specifically, and 'Western' visions of modernization and development more generally.865

Apart from the problems associated with combining these different strands, Third Worldism also went into decline because of the contradictions inherent in the process of decolonization and in the new international politico-economic order, in the context of the changing character, and eventual end, of the global political economy of the Cold War.866 Today it has returned, focusing less on anti-colonial projects and more on a few concerted issues of global governance and balances of power. The first round of Third Worldist movements was not without its faults. Commonly a few vocal states assumed the leadership of the world’s oppressed, often personified by a strong nationalist, autocratic leader. During the Cold War, this was evident in numerous post-colonial states such as Indonesia, India, China, Vietnam, Kenya, Tanzania, Cuba, Algeria and Egypt, who took to policies of import substitution, state run economies, the confiscation and redistribution, if not total abolition, of private properties and political homogenization by building cults of personality around strong nationalist leaders. These leaders often strove to great lengths to ensure the country’s resources, failing often by over-spending on wasteful developmental efforts, such as the building of dams.

In Asia the glorious leaders were Mao, Ho Chi Minh, and Nehru. In Africa they were Kenyatta, Nyerere, and Nkrumah. In the Americas they were Che and Castro. In the Arab and Muslim World, they were Nasser, Saddam, the Ayatollah Khomeini and Ahmad Ben Bella. All of these sought to expand their influence beyond their borders. In the case of Ghana’s Kwame Nkrumah, he sought to unite Africa in a common state, from Carthage to the Cape, preferably under his rule. In the Arab world, Nasser, Saddam and Qaddafi all sought to unite the Arabic speaking world under their respective iron fists. None of these succeeded in their goals. Save for the liberation of Third World peoples from the scourge of abusive colonialislt rule, especially in Vietnam, Algeria and Kenya, these leaders did little to better their peoples’ lots, especially when crops failed because of poor collective farming techniques, and the native industries

865 Ibid.
866 Ibid.
they cultivated failed miserably. Socialism in Africa, Asia and the Middle East seems to never have meant to be.

Today, gone is the talk of Pan-unified forces, as high-minded and state-oriented modes of thought have largely died in the 1980s. Today’s third wordlist leaders, such as Chavez and Ahmadinejad must learn from the mistakes of the past as they seem to be following in some of their traps. The vilification of the enemy, sensational statements, incendiary politics; these methods have all failed in the past. The focus on social justice, the creation of solid economic unions based in sustainable methods, and the drive for a development from the bottom up are innovations in an old story that may serve to enhance the needs of the people, rather than simply the rhetoric. Populist language runs the risk of failing the people, by forgetting them and their needs. Ahmadinejad and Chavez must be careful that they do not run into the same problems as past movements, by delivering on the promises made to the people, not simply speaking a language that resonates with the masses. Iran seems to be draining its national resources in order to pursue nuclear development. Chavez is doing the same by expending the nation’s resources on the third world rather than on the nation. Each must be careful not to let the rhetoric do the walking. But it is the geopolitics of exclusion that remains the focus of their alliance, and the root of the high end political imbalance in the world system today.

Since the early years of the revolution, Iran as challenged the ruling status quo in the Arab world, calling for the overthrow of US-supported despotic rulers throughout the region. Khomeini put all his support behind social and political justice, especially for Palestinians, and generally presumes to speak for Pan-Muslim causes, rarely invoking Shi’ite character. Today, Tehran is determined to strengthen its resistance to US agenda by insisting on completing the nuclear fuel cycle, and calling for political change across the region in ways no Arab ruler dares.867 President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad’s violent speeches against Israel are as much for the wider Arab world as for the Iranian population, and while the Iranian

population may no longer be responding to such rhetoric, the region is. Iran champions genuinely popular issues that resonate in Muslim world and reflects the revolutionary spirit of resistance with deep appeal to impotent populations who crave bold leadership.

At home, that support for the resistance has not paid off and the sensational attempts to regain the fervor of the masses, such as the nuclear project, space project, and alliance with Chavez, has served only to highlight the emptiness of the rhetoric. In December 2006, Ahmadinejad faced his first domestic test in the form of a city council elections, and rather than succeed, as Hizballah has been so good at with the ballot box, Ahmadinejad faced a loud and resounded backlash. While the population had elected him by a landslide, just one year later, they were already fed up with their populist leader gained so much notoriety world wide. While enemies are being fought abroad, the people domestically seem to have been forgotten. Iran is pursuing its role as a vanguard of the resistance movement world wide with more enthusiasm than it is seeking to commit to its own masses, pursuing what it has perceived to be popular issues in an effort to garner regional and international support at a historical juncture where leadership in the region is needed. Shirking the undercurrents of its own nation, Iran has chosen to focus on broad faced, pan-Islamic issues that can generate mass appeal, whether this path towards social change is effective, has yet to be seen.

What is most novel and intriguing in this new round of third wordlist movements, is the marriage of convenience based in experience between Islamism and leftism. From Hizballah to Iran, as different as their struggles are, political Islam is reaching across ‘civilizational divides’ to focus resistance goals on central border guard issues. While religion and faith have come into the foreground, it has been as a unifying factor in this synthesis of localisms revolving around new global articulations of resistance to the imperial order. When we seen Hizballah Deputy Secretary-General Na’im Qassem addressing the recent Communist gathering in Beirut with reference to Marx's struggle being that of the poor, we are certainly seeing something novel, not only in the Shi’a context, but in the Islamist context. While Khomeini's

\[868\] Ibid.
\[869\] Ibid.
vision was certainly parochial in the Shia-centric sense, with the rise of the Ahmedinijads, Chavezs, and Nasrallahs from their humble and wretched beginnings among the poor class, we are definitely seeing something new, maybe not quite Gramsci’s ‘organic intellectual’ but novel. The question of whether the Hizballah/Iran axis can keep religion effectively distanced from their articulation to maintain the regional appeal outside the Shi’a foundation, let alone the global appeal to leftists everywhere, is still up for grabs, but so far, it has succeed and failed on high political ground, while managing to stay firmly attached to the grassroots despite recent accommodations.

Hizballah, throughout the tumultuous events of the last two decades, has managed to progressively advance, not only the organizations managements and recruitment, but its narrative and rhetoric, contributing to the way the Nation has been imagined for as long as it has been a player on the seen. Hizballah has brought its spirit of resistance into everything it does, and has thus made it a reality in the Lebanese identity. Hizballah-esque sub-state structures, and public work-led resistance methods have popped up all over the Middle East, as the state has continue to fail the poor across the region despite economic growth and successive oil windfalls. It is in this vacuum, with its ideological flexibility and consistency, that Hizballah has emerged as an entirely rational response to multiple stimuli. Moreover, Hizballah, like many other radical or Islamist currents, want to play the political game, but they're finding the state structures too archaic, corrupt and outmoded to accommodate their vision of change. This bargain has taken place before in other contexts with radical political movements "co-opted" into the political process, but now it seems different as these movements, such as Hizballah, use democratic means to implicitly or explicitly respond to the Western assault on their "anti-democratic" character. Hizballah has become not only the champion of the resistance and the oppressed, but the democratic and just. So, when we see Hizballah, Hamas, the Ikhwaan, and the IAF trying to play politics, we witness not their co-optation but their reactionary response to the West as well as to the changing needs of the resistance narrative in this historic moment.

As a final word, writing a history of a social movement by taking account of the multiple discourses is by no means an easy task. Not long ago a breed of historians entertained the idea that the
'subaltern can write its own history’ without needing the professionals. They were prepared to drop the ‘privileged’ position of the historian vis-à-vis their subjects. The idea was that narration, or the stories of the subjects, is as historically valid as the narratives, or historiographies, of historians. There were even those who wondered if academic historians kill history. However intriguing these propositions may be, they do not seem to salvage much. Serious questions still remain. This seems to suggest at least that depending merely on ‘discourse’ may not take us very far, and that we need to bring context, structure and practice into play. But this is easier said than done. This project has been an attempt to see how various actors, discourses, and histories interact with reference to particular historical moments. Drawing together the many threads and constructing a narrative from the many fragments will inevitably leave something out. What I hope has been accomplished, is that the many stories that once seemed so simple have now been made complicated, and from this complicated, critical perspective, may we begin to write histories a new.

870 Bayat, Op. Cit. at 905
871 Ibid.
872 Ibid.
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