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The American University in Cairo

**Hezbollah as a Norm Entrepreneur:
Reconstructing Resistance and Legitimacy**

A Thesis Submitted by

Ali Elbenhawy

To Department of Political Science

May/2016

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for

The degree of Master of Arts

Has been approved by

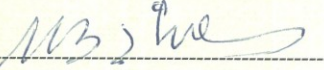
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The American University in Cairo

Hezbollah as a Norm Entrepreneur: Reconstructing
Resistance and Legitimacy

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Chapter 1-Introduction

Ideas and the construction of ideas matter. However, these ideas and process must be contextualized and understood analytically. Ideas include norms, identity, culture, and values. I analyze Hezbollah's role as a norm entrepreneur in the Middle East. Since World War II the term "Middle East has slipped into popular use [...], and though there remains divergences over its extension, both as whether it should be narrower, to exclude African Arab States west of Egypt, or broader to include (among others) the Muslim republics of Central Asia," a compromise definition is usually favoured."¹ Despite the plurality of claims, I have adopted Fawcett's version of the Middle East which is understood to include the Arab countries of West Asia and North Africa, members of the Arab League, Iran, Turkey and Israel. Despite no geographical closeness, Fawcett maintains that the Middle East "possesses certain distinctive 'systemic' properties and unifying characteristics."² The question driving my research is: how does Hezbollah function as a norm entrepreneur in the Middle East? More specifically, how does Hezbollah create the norm of resistance?

I argue that Hezbollah functions as a norm entrepreneur by constructing and physically manifesting ideas. Material resistance as a norm is created through institutionalized ideas, such as the concept of *jihad*, martyrdom, the oppressed/oppressor dichotomy, and anti-imperialism. Hezbollah is continuously constructing the norm of resistance while the party itself is the physical expression of resistance. Ideas are then operationalized and performed. What Hezbollah is resisting is the political order of the

¹ Louise Fawcett, *International Relations of the Middle East*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 2.

² Fawcett, 2.

world. It is variously categorized as a movement that is anti-globalization, anti-imperialist, anti-Western, and more importantly anti-Zionist.³ Resistance, as constructed by Hezbollah, is the necessary means to challenge the global order and this is believed to be achieved through struggle. Opposition or resistance to the status quo, as defined by the status quo powers (the West, the Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC] states, and Israel), is rejected and does not include the instrument of violence as a legitimate means for change. Therefore, the approach Hezbollah utilizes is not welcomed, and virtually from its inception the “Party of God” has been strictly policed. The most obvious example of this policing was the US State Department’s 1997 inclusion of Hezbollah on its list of “foreign terrorist organizations.”⁴

Theory

Social constructivism fills the analytical gap left by neorealism and neoliberalism by accentuating identity, norms, and the social construction of anarchy in global politics. Materialism is assumed by neorealists and neoliberals to take precedence over ideas. Material factors include war, gold, tanks, warships, military prowess, oil, bombs, and economic superiority.⁵ Constructivism, however, adopts social theory as an approach to global politics. Social theory stresses politics, economics, history, culture, and institutions

³ Dominique Avon and Anais Khatchadourian, trans. Jane Marie Todd, *Hezbollah: a History of the Party of God* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2012), 134.

⁴ Avon and Khatchadourian, 3.

⁵ Alexander Wendt (a), “Constructing International Politics,” *International Security* 20, no. 1 (1995): 4.

that are assumed to be humanly defined not naturally defined.⁶ Constructivism holds that the world is socially constructed, composed of thoughts, beliefs, interpretations, and presentations. A state's interpretation or perception of what constitutes a threat will differ from one state's interpretation or perception to another's. In essence, ideas are what construct the social world and global politics, and not material factors. Thus, from a constructivist viewpoint the world is built by human consciousness.⁷ Consequently, constructivism suggests that the world can change and is not handicapped by a natural anarchy or fear of war. The exchanges of ideas and interactions among agents allows for the world to be continuously under construction.⁸ Agents of construction may include states, sub-state groups, non-governmental organizations, international organizations, and transnational organizations.

Constructivism shares with neorealism the assumption that states are the principal unit of analysis. However, constructivism attempts to understand the behaviour of states by highlighting identity, norms, and institutions. Neorealists assert that states have only one identity which is self-interest. Moreover, neorealists maintain that states are interested in power politics. Constructivism counters by arguing that state identities and interests are constructed by social structures.⁹ Also, identities and interests are endogenous to the international system and are developed through interaction. Equally important, state identities and interests change over time. That is, identities and interests are socially constructed and not fixed. In addition, an agent may have multiple identities

⁶ Robert H. Jackson and Georg Sorensen, *Introduction to International Relations: Theories and Approaches*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 209.

⁷ Jackson and Sorensen, 209.

⁸ Jackson and Sorensen, 209.

⁹ Alexander Wendt (b), "Collective Identity Formation and the International State," *The American Political Science Review* 88, no. 2 (1994): 385.

at one time such as being democratic and capitalist, with Islam being the official state religion. Constructivists contend that small states such as Nepal, for example, would not be interested in power politics or self-help. Furthermore, relationships among states mature and are mutually constituted through meanings, interests, and norms. Subsequently, if identity and norms are analytically neglected then interaction and “exercises of power, or actions,” amongst states are rendered meaningless.¹⁰ Thus, in the world constructed of anarchy, identity becomes imperative in state relations. As Wendt lucidly puts it: “an anarchy of friends differs from one of enemies.”¹¹ Therefore, it is important to know and understand the identity of the Other.¹² In a nutshell, not all states share the same interests or have the same identity and “it would be extraordinarily wasteful to treat every state as though it posed the same potential threat or offered the same potential opportunities.”¹³

The construction of norms are another significant strength of constructivism. Norms expressed in international institutions help to define, socialize, and persuade states to behave in a particular manner.¹⁴ The norm of sovereignty has been constructed and reconstructed throughout history. Sovereignty is the notion that states are independent and equal. There are internalized norms of behaviour, such as the norm of non-

¹⁰ Ted Hopf, “The Promise of Constructivism in International Relations Theory,” *International Security* 23, no. 1: 173.

¹¹ Wendt (a), 78.

¹² Paul A. Kowart, “The Peril and Promise of Constructivist Theory,” *Ritsumeikan Journal of International Studies* 13, no.3: 159.

¹³ Kowart, 159.

¹⁴ Ian Hurd (a), “Constructivism,” *The Oxford Handbook of International Relations*, edited by Christian Reus-Smit and Duncan Snidal, 1-19. (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2008), 304.

interventionism.¹⁵ The construction of supreme power or legitimacy over a state's borders was challenged following Rwanda's genocide in 1994. This is understood to be the norm emergence of the responsibility to protect. The supreme authority of the state over its borders is challenged if the state is incapable of protecting its citizens. Sovereignty is challenged in the event of real or suggested genocide or mass atrocities.¹⁶ It is the responsibility of the international community to intervene to protect those in danger, effectively violating the norm of sovereignty. Sovereignty has become redefined and no longer provides immunity from intervention. The norm of responsibility to protect was internalized in 2005.¹⁷ Neorealists do not recognize changes in state attitudes or behaviour and neoliberals explain changes in behaviour through the virtue of cooperation. Norms are not part of their individual ontology. Finnemore argues that identity and interests are explained by "international forces," or by the norms of behaviour entrenched in "international society."¹⁸ The norms of international society are communicated to states through international organizations. Norms shape "national policies by 'teaching' states what their interests should be."¹⁹

I deploy social constructivism because it allows me to see Hezbollah from a unique perspective, otherwise not possible from a neorealist or neoliberal standpoint. "Anarchy is what States Make of it" is the title of Alexander Wendt's seminal work on

¹⁵ Alain De Benoist, trans., "What is Sovereignty?," *Telos*, no. 116: 100.

¹⁶ "Office of the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide," United Nations, accessed December 20, 2015, <http://www.un.org/en/preventgenocide/adviser/responsibility.shtml>.

¹⁷ "Office of the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide."

¹⁸ Jackson and Sorensen, 218.

¹⁹ Jackson and Sorensen, 218.

the essential pillar of neorealism, anarchy.²⁰ Neorealists argue that anarchy is the same for all actors, that is, that there is no central authority above the state. Kenneth Waltz adds that actors must resort to self-help to fend off potential threats.²¹ Wendt agrees with Waltz claim, but asserts that anarchy is socially constructed. Moreover, if actors have multiple identities not all states can be perceived or constructed as threats. By extension, having multiple identities means that different actors will have different understandings of one another.²² Effectively, having different understandings means that states will interact differently with one another. Wendt, for example, states that “500 British nuclear weapons are less threatening to the United States than 5 North Korean nuclear weapons, because the British are friends of the United States and the North Koreans are not, and amity or enmity is a function of shared understandings.”²³ This illustration is reflective of the example stated above that an anarchy of friends differs tremendously from an anarchy of enemies. This is due to identity which is constructed through interactions. The constructed understanding the United States has of Great Britain is one of friendship, but with North Korea one of enmity. Despite the smaller amount of nuclear warheads North Korea has compared to Great Britain, the United States would find the North Koreans far more threatening. Who a state is or the norm it identifies with is critical in global politics. Moreover, Hopf argues that the implementation of trade agreements, for instance, “where actors do not worry much about the potential costs of ceding control over outcomes” to other actors or institutions, illustrates “a realm of world politics where neorealist ideas of

²⁰ Alexander Wendt, “Anarchy is what States Make of it: The Social Construction of Power Politics,” *International Organization* 46, no.2 (1992): 391-425.

²¹ Jackson and Sorensen, 174.

²² Jackson and Sorensen, 174.

²³ Wendt, 73.

anarchy are just imaginary.”²⁴ Therefore, social constructivism provides a distinct opportunity to study Hezbollah as a norm entrepreneur. It allows me to study Hezbollah using social ontology employed by constructivism. This is in contrast to neorealism’s and neoliberal’s individual ontology. More specifically, utilizing social constructivism allows me to analyze norms, ideas, values, and identities ignored by neorealist and neoliberal analyses. Constructivism allows me to study sub-state groups and other non-state actors in global politics which are ignored by neorealists. Stated simply, neorealism is unable to study Hezbollah. Neorealism’s principal unit of analysis is the state.²⁵ Non-state actors such as Hezbollah are effectively exempted from neorealist analysis. Neoliberalism’s approach does not allow me to study Hezbollah as a norm entrepreneur, as neoliberalism does not recognize the social construction of norms in global politics. My novel contribution to the research already conducted on Hezbollah is to study the non-state actor as an agent of norm construction.

Norm Entrepreneurship

Norms are defined as values that outline the proper way for agents with a given identity to behave. Norms are intimately involved with identity and identity formation, as they standardize behaviour using rules.²⁶ For example, liberal democracies are associated with promoting and protecting human rights. The protection of human rights has become an

²⁴ Hopf, 174.

²⁵ John J. Mearsheimer (a), “Structural Realism.” In *International Relations Theories: Discipline and Diversity*, edited by Tim Dunne, Milja Kurki, and Steve Smith, 77-94. 3rd Ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 79.

²⁶ Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink, “International Norm Dynamics and Political Change,” *International Organization* 52, no. 4: 891.

integral element to any state that claims the identity of liberal democracy. A state cannot claim to be democratic without respecting or advocating human rights. This is an example of identity and norms being mutually constituted and how norms outline the proper way in which states or agents should behave. If states do not follow a particular norm such as human rights while adopting an identity such as being democratic then they run the risk of being ostracized by the international society.

According to Finnemore and Sikkink, there is a typology of norms, including regulative and constitutive. Regulative norms regulate existing norms or rules. The World Trade Organization, for example, serves to regulate trade among states. By effectively regulating rules on trade, the World Trade Organization is regulating state relations and behaviour.²⁷ Constitutive norms, on the other hand, refer to the formation of actors, interests or categories of action.²⁸ The instance of sovereignty as a norm regulates state practices, but these very rules are what constitute a sovereign state. Constitutive norms give meaning to regulative norms and are mutually constituted.²⁹ Norms are not made in a vacuum, Finnemore and Sikkink argue, but “emerge in a highly contested normative space where they must compete with other norms.”³⁰ Norms are propagated by what are known as norm entrepreneurs.

Norm entrepreneurs are critical for norm creation. “Norm entrepreneurs are critical for norm emergence because they call attention to issues or even “create” issues

²⁷ Michael N. Barnett, “Social Constructivism” in *The Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations*, edited by John Baylis, Steve Smith, and Patricia Owens, 150-164. 5th Ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 152.

²⁸ Finnemore and Sikkink, 891.

²⁹ Barnett, 152-3.

³⁰ Finnemore and Sikkink, 897.

by using language that names, interprets, and dramatizes them.”³¹ Norm entrepreneurs are convinced that an existing norm is inappropriate and in need of a change. Again, the norm of sovereignty offers an elucidating example. Following the atrocities in the mid-1990s, such as the Rwandan genocide, a new norm, known as the responsibility to protect, was constructed.³² According to this norm, while states remain the sole authority within their borders once they violate fundamental norms such as human rights or begin to commit atrocities such as genocide or ethnic cleansing against their own citizenry, then the international community has a responsibility to intervene, consequently violating the norm of sovereignty.³³ Norm entrepreneurs are driven by empathy, altruism, and ideational commitment. Many states may adopt a norm for political reasons and to enhance their domestic legitimacy. Empathy is the notion of feeling for others. This interconnectedness leads actors to care for the well-being of others even if it does not entail any benefits for the entrepreneur. Altruism is benefiting the other at the expense of oneself. The core of altruism lies in the notion that all people, as human beings, have rights and share common characteristics. Ideational commitment is the belief in the ideals of the new norm, even if the new norm under construction entails no effect on the entrepreneur. However, Finnemore and Sikkink are quick to remind that many norm entrepreneurs do not necessarily “act against their interests,” but rather act in “accordance with a redefined understanding of their interests.”³⁴ For example, de jure sovereign states had to be convinced that the authority they have been enjoying may be revoked if they violate the rights of their citizenry. Likewise, the International Red Cross had to persuade

³¹ Finnemore and Sikkink, 897.

³² Barnett, 163.

³³ Jackson and Sorensen, 149.

³⁴ Finnemore and Sikkink, 898.

military leaders that protecting the injured during war, for example, was in line with their war aims.³⁵

Norms have what Finnemore and Sikkink call a lifecycle. The life cycle has three stages. The first stage is norm emergence and is often led by organizations or epistemic communities. To replace an existing norm with an alternative, norm entrepreneurs are required to have an organizational platform to persuade policy-makers that the current norm is outdated and no longer appropriate.³⁶ A platform may already be in existence, such as a media outlet.³⁷ Equally important, is that occasionally norm entrepreneurs may have to act inappropriately to gain the attention of decision-makers to enact a new norm. Examples of such inappropriate behaviour include civil disobedience, refusal to pay taxes, hunger strikes, and vandalism of government property to gain the attention or interests of policy-makers. The Civil Rights Movement and the fight for international suffrage exhibited civil disobedience.³⁸ There is no precise timeline for norm emergence, as some new norms may take several years to reach the “tipping point.” A norm may either successfully continue to the next stage of the norm lifecycle (ascend) reaching the tipping point or fail to reach the second stage of the lifecycle (descend). Empirically, the authors contend that if enough *critical* states and one-third of all states adopt the new norm, then it will likely reach the norm cascade, or stage two of the norm lifecycle.³⁹ Critical states are not Western countries or the advanced economies of the

³⁵ Finnemore and Sikkink 899.

³⁶ Finnemore and Sikkink, 899.

³⁷ Finnemore and Sikkink, 896.

³⁸ Finnemore and Sikkink, 897.

³⁹ Finnemore and Sikkink, 901.

world per se, but countries that have stakes in a new norm being created. For instance, the norm of sovereignty affects all states recognized as sovereign but not all equally.

Norm cascade is the second stage of the norm lifecycle. This is the moment when agents are compelled to adopt the new norm because of an agent's legitimacy, reputation, and/or esteem. In this stage, states begin adopting the norm swiftly through "socialization" by NGOs, states, and other organizational platforms. The pressure to adopt the new norm is sufficient, as most states prefer to be norm followers and a part of the so-called "international community" rather than norm breakers. For example, a liberal democratic state will be inclined to adopt a norm relating to human rights which would further increase its legitimacy, reputation, and esteem. The norm cascade moment is intertwined with a state's identity. Slightly before stage three in the norm lifecycle, the peer-pressure on decision-makers and the naming and shaming through socialization⁴⁰ "to make the right choice" becomes so detrimental that the identity and behaviour of non-compliant states is questioned. The cascading norm must be adopted to re-legitimize and protect a state's identity and esteem if it is to remain a member in good standing of the international society.⁴¹

The final stage in the norm lifecycle is internalization. Professionals, bureaucracies, and international law integrate the norm, subsequently making the norm habitual and institutionalized. Following the norm cascade stage, the new norm is adopted without much thought or objection. Consequently, it becomes internalized. Sovereignty, human rights, and the responsibility to protect are examples of internalized

⁴⁰ Finnemore and Sikkink, 902-3.

⁴¹ Finnemore and Sikkink, 903-4.

norms that have been socially constructed and institutionalized.⁴² These norms, among others, have been launched by entrepreneurs and/or professionals, who, through persuasion and socialization, have successfully updated an existing norm.

Which norms matter is important to the process of norm construction. States or non-state actors will be more willing to adopt a new norm when their domestic legitimacy is under scrutiny. Furthermore, some norms are more successful than others due to prominence. “Norms held by states widely viewed as successful and desirable models are thus likely to become prominent and diffuse”⁴³ because of the image and power of these agents. For example, human rights, sovereignty, and the responsibility to protect are all norms valued by the West and have become institutionalized by the allure of the United States and other Western states. Norms that have intrinsic qualities are also likely to be successful. Keck and Sikkink argue that intrinsic norms are cross-cutting and affect all states. Norms relating to human dignity common to most cultures or issues aiming to protect minority groups from bodily harm or women’s suffrage are examples of intrinsic norms.⁴⁴ More specifically, an example of an intrinsic norm is the effects of smoking and secondhand smoke. Exposing the vulnerable or innocent bystanders to secondhand smoke is intrinsic in nature because it poses a serious health risk to any citizen, irrespective of his or her culture. When the apparent dangers associated with secondhand smoking became widely known this helped to propel an intrinsic norm against the habit of smoking.⁴⁵ Next, adjacent or norms succeeding older norms are also likely to succeed. Norm entrepreneurs work tirelessly to conjoin their issues with prevailing norms and

⁴² Finnemore and Sikkink, 904-5.

⁴³ Finnemore and Sikkink, 906.

⁴⁴ Finnemore and Sikkink, 906-7.

⁴⁵ Finnemore and Sikkink, 907.

emergent norms.⁴⁶ Lastly, world time may help norms advance. Following wars, shocks, or depressions, Sikkink and Finnemore suggest, states begin to seek new norms. New norms may replace existing norms adhered to by the losing side of a war. An example of world time would be the conclusion of the Cold War and Russia's adoption of neoliberal policies. Following the collapse of state communism in Eastern Europe, the disintegration of the Soviet Union, and consequently the end of the Cold War, Russia adopted neoliberal policies, including privatization and currency devaluation. Many became rich overnight, while many more were severely impoverished. This example of the disintegration of the Soviet Union illustrates how a country reacts to a shock, such as the economic collapse of the Soviet Union and then proceeds to accept emerging norms, such as neoliberal economics.⁴⁷ Due to the processes of globalization, new norms are now moving through the three stages of norm entrepreneurship quicker than before, accelerating the lifecycle.⁴⁸ The process of norm construction, with its lifecycle, agents, motives and mechanisms, is represented in Table 1.1.

	Stage 1	Tipping Point	Stage 2	Stage 3
Norm Cycle	Norm Emergence		Norm 'Cascade'	Internalization
Actors	Norm entrepreneurs w/ organizational platforms		States, Intl organizations, networks	Law, Professionals, bureaucracy
Motives	Altruism, empathy, ideational commitment		Legitimacy, reputation, esteem	Conformity (conform to the international community)
Dominant Mechanisms	Persuasion		Socialization, Institutionalization, demonstration	Habit, institutionalization

Table 1.1: Three Essential Stages of Norm Entrepreneurship.

⁴⁶ Finnemore and Sikkink, 908.

⁴⁷ Naomi Klein, *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*, (New York: Metropolitan /Henry Holt, 2007), 564 and 585.

⁴⁸ Finnemore and Sikkink, 909.

Source: Martha Finnemore and Katheryn Sikkink, "International Norm Dynamics and Political Change," *International Organization* 52, no. 4: 896.

Social constructivism allows for analysis of interactive processes among agents. It forces global politics not to be understood as given, but rather as an ongoing construction of norms, ideas, culture, values, and identity. Constructivism's social ontology allows us to better understand reality or rather helps us to place meaning to something. Constructivism allows for the world to be seen as a project continuously under construction. By extension, the norm of resistance and the neorealist assumption of anarchy are socially constructed. Constructivism's approach to global politics is unique.

Through the social construction of ideas, meanings, and norms, I analyze Hezbollah as a norm entrepreneur. Constructivism provides a critical and dynamic account of Hezbollah and this analysis is a valuable supplement to the spartan corpus of constructivist studies of Hezbollah. Constructivist analysis allows me to study Hezbollah as a norm entrepreneur, socially constructing the norm of resistance.

Concepts and definitions. The concepts of Hezbollah's ideology, including resistance, legitimacy, and *infatih*, require definition. Charles Tripp avers that resistance is implied in a relation of power. Where power is, resistance must also be present. However, both resistance and power share an inverse relationship, whereby those in power reject those who resist. Power, like resistance, is a relation between political actors. Similar to diachronic shifts in ideology, this relationship also changes, moulded by the shifting context of political activity and by the need for power.⁴⁹ An example of such a shift in

⁴⁹ Charles Tripp, *The power and the people: paths of resistance in the Middle*

context was in a speech presented by Hezbollah's Secretary-General, Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, in 2011, in which he extolled Hezbollah and the Syrian army, but condemned the uprisings against the Ba'athist government.⁵⁰ The norm of resistance is the contestation of space, material and discursive. That is, resistance takes on ideas, meanings, messages, and themes, but is also materially expressed on the battlefield where a resistance movement, such as Hezbollah, is needed to obtain the "material conditions for contesting the power structure in a given space."⁵¹ Resistance is also an action that requires the construction of an organizational platform, such as Hezbollah's TV network, Al-Manar. Resistance is a struggle aimed at achieving change against domination.⁵² According to Hezbollah, resistance is a struggle against the social construction of oppression, humiliation, and occupation of Arab and Muslim lands. Today, it is a struggle against neo-colonialism and the Zionist project, including its usurpation of Arab lands and water. Resistance is integral to Hezbollah's identity. The Party of God's principal party organ is its military wing. A former Hezbollah activist explains how critical resistance is: "Resistance is like a one-wheel[ed] bike that [Hezbollah] is riding. If it stops pedaling, it falls'."⁵³

Ian Hurd defines legitimacy as the normative belief of an agent that a rule or institution must be obeyed. Legitimacy is subjective and relational between the actor and

East, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 6.

⁵⁰ Tripp, 8.

⁵¹ Walid El Houry, "The Meaning of Resistance and Hezbollah's Media Strategies and the Articulation of a People," (PhD diss., University of Amsterdam, 2012), 49.

⁵² El Houry, 49 and 50.

⁵³ Emile El-Hokayem, "Hizballah and Syria: Outgrowing the Proxy Relationship," *The Washington Quarterly* 30, no.2: 44.

the institution. It is construed by the actor's perception of the institution.⁵⁴ The actor's perception may be derived from the process by which the rule was established. The actor's perception affects behaviour because it is adopted by the actor and helps to define how the actor sees its interests.⁵⁵ In a nutshell, legitimacy is the widespread belief that the actions of an agent are desirable, decent, or apt within a "socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions".⁵⁶ Indeed, a lack of legitimacy is costly to any organization which requires discipline, devotion, and political support, such as Hezbollah. Those in power require legitimacy to validate their rule.⁵⁷ Without legitimacy, authority is met with greater resistance. Furthermore, in the absence of legitimacy, norm construction becomes a difficult task. For an emerging norm to become acceptable, such as resistance, it must be exercised or manifested by an agent that is perceived to be legitimate. The identity and legitimacy of a norm entrepreneur is intimately connected to the norms it wishes to construct. The construction of being perceived as legitimate is important to those in power and/or seeking to construct new norms. Hezbollah has achieved legitimacy through elections and through its policies of *infitah* and Lebanonization. The Party of God understands that the construction of legitimacy cannot be confined to its local constituency in the south, but rather must extend to all Lebanese, regardless of sectarian identity. It constructs itself as a resistance movement that is resistant to the corruption and nepotism that have plagued Lebanon for years.

⁵⁴ Ian Hurd(b), "Legitimacy and Authority in International Politics," *International Organization* 53, no. 2 (1999): 381

⁵⁵ Hurd (b), 381.

⁵⁶ Mark Suchman qtd. in Hurd (b), 387.

⁵⁷ Robert A. Dahl and Charles E. Lindblom qtd. in Hurd (b), 388.

Hezbollah enacted *infatih* as a policy in 1991. Hezbollah adopted *infatih* as a part of its commitment to pragmatism and its willingness to “open up” and become a mainstream political party. This was in contrast to the party’s previous position of being clandestine. *Infatih* is a harmonization between Hezbollah’s Islamic identity and its Lebanese nationality. It is an expression of the idea that it is possible to resist oppression beyond the confines of Lebanon (regional and global dimensions) and be concerned with national-patriotic issues (domestic dimension).⁵⁸ Through *infatih*, Hezbollah is fighting for social equality and justice for all across both dimensions.⁵⁹ Hezbollah also adopted Lebanonization in 1991 and it refers to a political tactic whereby Hezbollah analyzes the prevailing circumstances in Lebanon and constructs its approach within that context, making exceptions for Lebanon’s specific circumstances, sympathetic to the country’s confessional differences, and its perception of its environment.⁶⁰ Lebanonization refers to the recognition or awareness that Hezbollah is a Lebanese organization, composed of Lebanese rank and file, its leader is Lebanese, and the Party of God is ultimately committed to the welfare of Lebanon. Hezbollah adopted *Infatih* and Lebanonization prior to the 1992 municipal elections in an effort to gain votes, notably from the Christian, and Sunni communities. The Party of God “employs the concept *infatih* or Lebanonisation to denote its political discourse, deeds, [...] or to signify its enrolment in Lebanese domestic political life.”⁶¹

⁵⁸ Joseph Alagha (a), *The Shifts in Hezbollah’s Ideology: Religious, ideology, Political Ideology, and Political Program*, (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press 2002), 170.

⁵⁹ Alagha (a), 170.

⁶⁰ Alagha (a), 169.

⁶¹ Alagha (a), 169-70.

Hezbollah's policies of *Infitah* and Lebanonization are critical in understanding its changing normative ideas. Without understanding *infitah* and Lebanonization, it would be difficult to analyze how Hezbollah has reconstructed itself from a clandestine movement to a mainstream political party. Hezbollah's changing normative ideas and norm construction can only be explained through the processes of *infitah* and Lebanonization. It is through the realization of *infitah* and Lebanonization that Hezbollah is able to continuously reconstruct itself as a legitimate resistance movement and not a militia.

Hezbollah's norms are not constructed in a vacuum. Hezbollah is entrepreneuring these norms in a context given to it by history. The social construction of *jihad*, martyrdom, oppressed/oppressor dichotomy, and anti-imperialism are not new ideas, but rather have been reconstructed over time. *Jihad* and martyrdom were constructed as integral ideas since the 7th century. Furthermore, they are not ideas exclusive to Islam, but are also entrenched in Jewish and Christian tradition. Regarding imperialism, Hezbollah is part of a larger continuum of resistance movements from the Middle East and the Muslim world who have challenged imperialism. Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood, Nasserism or Arab nationalism, Algeria's National Liberation Front (FLN), the Irish Republic Army (IRA), the Vietcong, Abu Nidal Organization (ANO), the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), the Kurdish Workers Party (the PKK), and HAMAS are all examples of movements across the world who have challenged imperialism either through *jihad* and martyrdom or through conventional warfare. The oppressed/oppressor dichotomy has also been constructed throughout history by several movements, including The Civil Rights Movement, the Women's Movements for International Suffrage, South Africa's African

National Congress (ANC), the Red Army Faction, the Tamil Tigers, and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia People's Army (FARC).

Project Organization

My project is organized into five chapters. In this introductory chapter I have posed my research question, articulated my thesis and reviewed the tenets of my analytical framework. In chapter two, I review the extant literature studying Hezbollah according to its theoretical foundation. This enables me to identify and address the lacuna in the corpus. In chapter three, I examine the ideas that are critical to Hezbollah and the normative shifts the Party of God has experienced over the years. More specifically, I examine jihad, martyrdom, the dichotomy of the oppressed versus the oppressor, and anti-imperialism. For example, I examine Hezbollah's dedication to *jihad* not only as a method of armed struggle, but also as an inner struggle for the cause of humankind. In chapter four, I discuss the physical expression of ideas. I survey Hezbollah's battle with Israel in 2006 and the current Syrian civil war to show that the 2006 war was a form of norm contestation, designed to strip the Resistance of its weapons and finally eradicate the Party of God. In response to Israel's construction of Hezbollah as a terrorist organization bent on murdering all Jews, Hezbollah uses the term terrorist as a rhetorical bludgeon to describe Israel. Terrorism or labelling the Other as "terrorist" is an expression of power. The idea that both agents accuse the other of terrorism is a form of norm contestation that manifested itself in 2006. The fact that Hezbollah is able to accuse

Israel of terrorism attests to the party's political power in Lebanon and in the region. In the case of the Syrian war, Hezbollah has constructed the conflict as a battle between the resistance bloc, including Al Assad, and the status quo powers. In contradictory fashion, Hezbollah's involvement has only jeopardized Hezbollah's norm construction and has alienated the party from its Sunni allies, such as HAMAS. I conclude by identifying some further research trajectories in chapter five.

Chapter 2-Literature Review

The literature on Hezbollah is large and growing. There a number of ways to organize the corpus. I have used the theories of neorealism, neoliberalism, and constructivism to categorize the literature. A succinct definition of each theory is given. All sources reviewed fall within the confines of neorealism, neoliberalism, or social constructivism. None of the literature I reviewed used post-structuralism or Marxism, and consequently, they were not one of the theories presented here. Neorealism's ontology does not recognize non-state actors and Hezbollah is a non-state actor, so only one source reviewed used neorealism. Neoliberalism is the dominant theory used to analyze Hezbollah. The majority of the sources reviewed have adopted a neoliberal approach. One of the advantages neoliberalism has over neorealism is that it recognizes non-state actors and institutions as significant actors in global politics. In addition, it is broad and encompassing and challenges neorealism's exclusivist analysis of the state and is able to produce a wide array of analyses that emphasize an inclusive framework. This allows neoliberalism to be dynamic when compared to neorealism and able to identify and examine many aspects of global politics, including Hezbollah. Social constructivism also recognizes non-state actors, but largely focuses on the (re)construction of ideas, norms, and identity; elements that have been ignored in neoliberal analyses of Hezbollah. My study of the Party of God fills the lacuna left by neorealists and neoliberals by examining Hezbollah as a norm entrepreneur. Sources are divided based upon themes, including ideas, identity and religion, martyrdom operations and *jihad*. Personal memoirs or interviews with Deputy Secretary-General Sayyed Naim Qassem and Secretary-General Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, a comprehensive analysis of the Shi'a organization, the

significance of Imam Hussein's martyrdom, and Hezbollah's role in Syria are also presented.

Neorealism

Neorealism is parsimoniously associated with power and the distribution of power.

Neorealism is a rational choice theory. Rational choice theory is an approach that emphasizes how actors seek to maximize their interests and how they choose the most effective way to achieve those interests.⁶² Rational choice theorists disregard norms, beliefs, values, and identity. In the realist and neorealist sense, power is material and tangible. Material power may include tanks and people. Neorealism adopts positivism as its principal epistemology. A scientific approach to the study of International Relations, positivism posits that knowledge of the social and political "dimensions" may be objectively studied and this knowledge may be acquired through empiricism. Those who advocate positivism see no difference between social sciences and natural sciences.⁶³ Neorealism's ontology is individualist and materialist.⁶⁴ That is, it is the material capabilities, such as war, gold, tanks, warships, and military prowess, *inter alia*, that are important in global politics. Thus, neorealism disregards ideas and holistic structures.

⁶² John Baylis, Steve Smith, and Patricia Owens, eds. *The Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations*, 5th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 573.

⁶³ Robert H. Jackson and Georg Sorensen, *Introduction to International Relations: Theories and Approaches*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 311.

⁶⁴ Alexander Wendt (a), "Constructing International Politics," *International Security* 20, no. 1 (1995): 4.

Realism maintains that it is the individual who desires power due to human nature.⁶⁵ That is, states, whether democratic or autocratic, are led by individuals who have an innate desire to dominate. Neorealism differs in this sense. Neorealism enjoins that it is not human nature that drives policy-makers to seek power, but the structure of the international system.⁶⁶ It is not hierarchy, however, that produces war, but anarchy. Anarchy is the notion that there is no government or international governing body above the level of the state.⁶⁷ As there is no proper disciplinary institution in place to ensure peace, states are left to settle disputes through other means, including war. Consequently, wars become a reality of global politics. Therefore, states must help themselves and must pursue power as a mechanism of survival. Mearsheimer accurately summarizes neorealism's notion of anarchy and power: states "are trapped in an iron cage where they have little choice but to compete with each other for power if they hope to survive."⁶⁸ Survival is the goal of every state and this is ultimately achieved by obtaining as much power as possible. Neorealism acknowledges states as the only significant actors of consequence in global politics. As a result, the theory is not widely used to study Hezbollah.

The author, Trita Parsi, briefly mentions the skyjacking of TWA Flight 847 and goes into further detail about the reaction of the Central Intelligence Agency and Iranian's former president Hashemi Rafsanjani. Parsi also explores the Lebanese-Israeli conflict in 2006 and how Iran uses its support for proxies as leverage when negotiating

⁶⁵ John J. Mearsheimer (a), "Structural Realism." In *International Relations Theories: Discipline and Diversity*, edited by Tim Dunne, Milja Kurki, and Steve Smith, 77-94. 3rd Ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 77.

⁶⁶ Mearsheimer (a), 78.

⁶⁷ Mearsheimer (a), 79.

⁶⁸ Mearsheimer (a), 78.

with the United States. Finally, Parsi devotes a paragraph to explaining Hezbollah's attack on U.S Marine barracks in 1983 which killed 241 servicemen.⁶⁹

Parsi focuses on foreign policy between the states of Israel, Iran, and the United States. His text excludes the domestic politics of each state from its analysis. *Treacherous Alliance* is useful because it provides a thorough history of foreign relations between the three states. He asserts that the enmity between all three states is not due to Iran becoming the first theocratic state in the modern Middle East in 1979, but rather due to a "shift in the balance of power in the Middle East after the end of the Cold War and the defeat of Iraq in the first Persian Gulf War."⁷⁰ The text's exclusive focus on foreign policy, dedicating a section to the "unipolar era," and use of the balance of power as a heuristic device belies its neorealism. Again, the historical relationship between the three states proves useful when exploring Iran's contemporary relationship with the United States and Israel. Alas, Parsi fails to capture the importance of Hezbollah in the region. The author cannot analyze Iran and Hezbollah as a part of the resistance bloc. Parsi cannot recognize Hezbollah's efforts as a norm entrepreneur because of neorealism's exclusivist focus on state actors. Also, because neorealists do not see the importance of norms and non-state actors in global politics which is evident in Parsi's shallow analysis presented on the Party of God. The author's choice to use neorealism only handicaps the author's ability to adequately examine a non-state actor such as Hezbollah and Iran's role in the so-called treacherous alliance.

⁶⁹ Trita Parsi, *Treacherous Alliance the Secret Dealings of Israel, Iran, and the United States* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007) 115, 111-12, and 274.

⁷⁰ Parsi, xi.

Neoliberalism

Like neorealism, neoliberalism is a rational theory in International Relations.

Neoliberalism emphasizes individualism and freedom as core values. Neoliberalism considers states to be unitary and rational. Unitary states are centralized governments with central authority. Rational states are states that are motivated by calculating the costs and benefits associated with any given decision.⁷¹ Neoliberalism maintains that cooperation is possible because states are rational. In addition to being rational, states seek to maximize their absolute gains through the value of cooperation. States are able to see the value in cooperation. By extension, states are not concerned about the gains of other states. Thus, global politics becomes less competitive. Cooperation is handicapped by states who do not wish to cooperate and by cheating states.⁷² Issue-areas that are perceived to be beneficial to all states are where cooperation is most likely. For instance, the environment and trade are areas of common cooperation. Cooperation is manifested in institutions, trade, and complex interdependence. Complex interdependence refers to the interconnectedness of the world attributed to world trade and globalization.⁷³ States being interdependent on one another mitigates against war.⁷⁴ Regarding democracy, Immanuel Kant posited the idea of democratization or democratic peace theory, suggesting that democratic states share common values and norms, and therefore, are less likely to be predisposed to violence or war with other democracies. Dyadic peace theory

⁷¹ Jackson and Sorensen, 78.

⁷² Steven L. Lamy, "Contemporary Mainstream Approaches: Neo-realism and Neo-liberalism" in *The Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations*, edited by John Baylis, Steve Smith, and Patricia Owens, 127-138. 5th Ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 133.

⁷³ Jackson and Sorensen, 107-8.

⁷⁴ Jackson and Sorensen, 107 and 110.

contends that democracy is inherently more peaceful than autocracy. Therefore, it is assumed, if all states are democratic then virtually no wars will occur.⁷⁵ This is because democratic leaders are responsible to their constituents and no responsible citizen would vote for an unjust war. Neoliberalism is synonymous with fanatical free market economics, free trade and deregulation.⁷⁶ It is performed by the Bretton Woods institutions (the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank), the United States, and is synonymous with globalization.⁷⁷ Like its counterpart, neorealism and other rational choice theories, neoliberalism adopts positivism as its epistemological underpinning. Its ontology, like neorealism, is also individualist and materialist, devoid of ideas or social structures. The neoliberal project began in Augusto Pinochet's Chile in 1973 and would later be advanced by former Prime Minister of U.K., Margaret Thatcher and former US President Ronald Reagan.⁷⁸ In all, neoliberalism is the economic side of liberalism and is facilitated by the state. Neoliberalism is the preferred theoretical framework for analysis of Hezbollah.

In *Syria and Iran: Middle Powers in a Penetrated Regional System* the authors emphasize cooperation and democratization as common themes. Ehteshami and Hinnebusch use Keohane's and Nye's complex interdependence to help explain Syria and Iran's foreign policies and the nature of their alliance, especially in Lebanon regarding

⁷⁵ Richard Herrman, "Linking Theory to Evidence in International Relations." In *Handbook of International Relations*, edited by Walter Carlsnaes, Thomas Risse, and Beth A. Simmons, 158-183. 1st Ed. (London: SAGE Publications), 166.

⁷⁶ Wendy Brown, "Neoliberalism and the End of Liberal Democracy." In *Edgework: Critical Essays on Knowledge and Politics*. 37-60. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 38.

⁷⁷ Brown, 38.

⁷⁸ David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 1 and 7.

the historical formation of Hezbollah.⁷⁹ The authors argue that Syria and Iran help to counterbalance pro-Western states in the Middle East and US hegemony in the region, especially following Saddam Hussein's defeat in the Gulf War. They may have opposing interests at times, but the authors consider Syria and Iran "middle powers" who seek to dominate the geopolitical order "in the name of defending regional autonomy."⁸⁰

Ehteshami and Hinnebusch's study on Syria and Iran is pertinent to my study, but it struggles to explain Iran and Syria's historical relationship. The authors cannot explain why both states have opposing interests at times while other times they have similar interests. Constructivism explains that interests are continuously under construction, and consequently, change over time. Ehteshami and Hinnebusch's emphasis on cooperation and complex interdependence falls short of understanding the reconstruction process of identity and interests. By not examining the reconstruction of interests, the authors cannot explain why interests change.

In *Syria, Iran, and Hezbollah: The Unholy Alliance and Its War on Lebanon*, Deeb gives a neoliberal assessment of the adverse effects Iran, Syria, and Hezbollah have allegedly had on Lebanon. The text focuses on more recent events, depicting Lebanon as a satellite state to the much larger Syria and Iran. Hezbollah's role is to function as a client of both Syria and Iran and serve as a means to maintain influence in Lebanon. The author argues that neither Syria nor Hezbollah favoured any peace accord between Lebanon and Israel, but rather "delayed the Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon" for years.⁸¹

⁷⁹ Anoushiravan Ehteshami and Raymond A. Hinnebusch, *Syria and Iran Middle Powers in a Penetrated Regional System*, (London: Routledge, 1997), 2.

⁸⁰ Ehteshami, and Hinnebusch, 12.

⁸¹ Marius Deeb, *Syria, Iran, and Hezbollah: The Unholy Alliance and Its War on Lebanon*, (Stanford, Calif.: Hoover Institution Press, 2013), 8-9.

Furthermore, Deeb repeatedly mentions “freedom” as a common theme throughout the book, citing “freedom” for the Cedar Revolution and “freedom and human dignity.”⁸² Individualism and freedom are two of the core values of neoliberalism.⁸³ The author inaccurately describes the premise of the “unholy alliance” as one that is founded on religious commonality. Deeb uses the term “unholy” to describe the alliance, highlighting the group’s apparent religious unity. Constructivism, however, provides a unique explanation of the “unholy” alliance that fills the lacuna left by Deeb. Using constructivism, I argue that it is not Shi’ism which unites the “unholy alliance,” but rather the norm of resistance. Deeb’s theory of the “unholy” alliance cannot, for example, explain why HAMAS is also considered a close ally of Iran, Syria, and Hezbollah, despite HAMAS being the Palestinian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood, a Sunni social and political movement. The author does not recognize the importance of norms in global politics, and as a consequence, provides a narrow examination of the so-called unholy alliance.

Similarly, *Deadly Connections: States that Sponsor Terrorism* by Danial Byman attempts to explain the connections between sub-state terrorist groups and their state sponsors. His principle research question is: why do states support terrorist groups? Byman argues that states fund or aid terror groups out of perceived necessity to preserve national security interests. According to Byman, the aim of mobilizing a terrorist group is to destabilize a neighbouring country, remove enemy regimes, counter American unipolarity, or to achieve other goals.⁸⁴ In addition, it is cheaper to arm and train a

⁸² Deeb, 24 and 44.

⁸³ Harvey, 56.

⁸⁴ Daniel Byman, *Deadly Connections: States That Sponsor Terrorism*,

terrorist group to wage covert operations against another state, for instance, than to arm and train a state's military forces.⁸⁵ Byman assigns a chapter to covering the historical relationship between Iran and Hezbollah, characterizing their "deadly connection" as "strong" in contrast to weak, lukewarm, passive, antagonistic or unwilling.⁸⁶ He claims that Hezbollah is under the tutelage of the Islamic Republic, although in his conclusion he does admit that after serving Iran well, Hezbollah has "retained a degree of independence from Tehran."⁸⁷ Byman discusses the potential adverse effects economic sanctions may have on a state that aids terrorists, directly or indirectly. As a rationalist, he argues that states calculate the costs and benefits of having sanctions in place. Byman suggests states may back down when they see economic losses due to sanctions, such as a drop in tourism and that vulnerability (whether the state could "replace the lost trade or investment") would be one of the principle concerns of any state.⁸⁸ A historical analysis of Iran and Hezbollah's relationship is given which provides useful information regarding their alliance, including why Iran has supported Hezbollah in the past and why it continues to do so today. Byman's text does not recognize norms as an important element in Iran and Hezbollah's relationship. The norm of resistance is an important, if not, *the* most important element in their alliance. By not analyzing norms, Byman provides a superficial examination of Iranian support for Hezbollah. What unites Iran, Syria, and Hezbollah is more than religious commonality and/or "terrorism," but norms that are continuously under construction. This cannot be understood using a neoliberal

(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 4.

⁸⁵ Byman, 5.

⁸⁶ Byman, 15.

⁸⁷ Byman, 115.

⁸⁸ Byman, 282.

framework. I fill the lacuna left by Byman, Deeb, Ehteshami and Hinnebusch, among others, by analyzing Hezbollah as a norm entrepreneur.

Cordesman's "Iran's Support of the Hezbollah in Lebanon" seeks to disprove that Hezbollah is being fully supported by Iran.⁸⁹ Cordesman, writing during Hezbollah's war with Israel in the summer of 2006, argues that Hezbollah is not entirely reliant on Iran or its Revolutionary Guard Corps, but still receives weapon shipments from the Islamic Republic, such as short-range and long-range missiles.⁹⁰ Cordesman urges American commentators to not make haphazard claims about Iran's role in the 2006 war before seeing any factual evidence.⁹¹ Cordesman sees Hezbollah, Syria, and Iran as rational actors who cooperate within an alliance or a resistance bloc. The author describes how Hezbollah, Syria, and Iran had regular meetings, including one with HAMAS' Khaled Mashal shortly before Hezbollah kidnapped two Israeli soldiers which ultimately led to the 2006 war with Israel,⁹² implying that the four had devised a plan to kidnap the Israeli soldiers. Actors that are rational and able to cooperate with one another in a world of anarchy is one of the principles of neoliberalism.⁹³ Indeed, constructivists maintain that states are rational actors, but that anarchy is socially constructed. Notably, states and state interests are also socially constructed. The value of Cordesman's work lies in his offering a fresh perspective that is uncommon in neoliberal discourse; that is, he does not reduce Hezbollah to a proxy of Iran. The notion that Hezbollah is not reducible to Iran is

⁸⁹ Anthony H. Cordesman, "Iran's Support of the Hezbollah in Lebanon," *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, 2.

⁹⁰ Cordesman, 3.

⁹¹ Cordesman, 2.

⁹² Cordesman, 2.

⁹³ Andrew Moravcsik, "Liberal Theories of International Relations: A Primer," *Princeton University*, 3-4.

a radical shift in direction, and as a result, uniquely helpful to my study. Cordesman explains how Iran supports Hezbollah and argues that both are equal in their relationship. However, Cordesman does not explain what unifies Iran and Hezbollah. The lacuna left by Cordesman is answered by analyzing the norms, identity, and interests of Iran and Hezbollah which are in line with one another. Both construct themselves as anti-Zionist, anti-imperial, and resistant to the status quo powers. The author explains the reasons for Israel going to war with Hezbollah by providing a tautology of events, including Hezbollah's mission where resistance fighters kidnapped two Israeli soldiers which eventually led to the outbreak of the 2006 war. By using constructivism, I am able to provide an alternative analysis of the 2006 war by arguing that the war was a contestation of norms with the intended goal of dismantling Hezbollah and stripping it of its weapons supply.

Similarly, background on Hezbollah's relationship with Syria is explored in "Hizballah and Syria: Outgrowing the Proxy Relationship." A neoliberal work, El-Hokayem gives a historical review of the relationship between the two parties, beginning with Hafez Al Assad's time in office to Bashar Al Assad's tenure as president. El-Hokayem states that Hezbollah is still viewed by many analysts such as Deeb as a "proxy" or "client" of Iran and Syria. El-Hokayem holds that the Shi'a revival as a political entity in the Lebanese polity and across the Middle East, and Hezbollah's military victory over Israel in 2006 has provided the Shi'a movement with autonomy by expanding its support base throughout Lebanon.⁹⁴ In fact, the author goes as far as to

⁹⁴ El-Hokayem, 35.

assert that claiming Hezbollah to be a client of either state is an “obsolete” practice.⁹⁵ El-Hokayem explains that it is not Hezbollah that is dependent upon Syria, but rather the opposite.⁹⁶ Nevertheless, Hezbollah and Syria have historically been a part of an alliance against the Israeli occupation of south Lebanon, the Golan Heights, and later the Shebaa Farms. According to El-Hokayem, Hezbollah and Syria have become dependent upon one another and this was illustrated in 2006 when Hezbollah defended itself against Israeli aggression with the help of Syrian support.⁹⁷ In exchange, Syria was seeking to regain its position in the region and give Al Assad’s government a “new lease on life.”⁹⁸ The author explains how peace and cooperation may be realized by having common objectives or preferences causing both parties, Syria and Hezbollah, to be interdependent upon one another, despite anarchy. The article was selected as it provides an insightful look into Hezbollah’s historical relationship with the Assad government constructed throughout the years. The article was written prior to the current Syrian conflict, but it is important to understand the historical relationship that draws these two allies together. Once clear, one begins to see Hezbollah’s involvement in the current Syrian crisis as more of a desperate measure in rescuing the resistance alliance, than a conflict for religious supremacy. El-Hokayem states that identity is important in global politics, but does not expound upon it.⁹⁹ The author avers that Bashar Al Assad relied on Nasrallah to help cultivate his identity as a capable leader. Al Assad did so in order to challenge presumptions that he was too young to lead Syria. However, the author does not explain

⁹⁵ El-Hokayem, 35.

⁹⁶ El-Hokayem, 36.

⁹⁷ El-Hokayem, 35.

⁹⁸ El-Hokayem, 35.

⁹⁹ El-Hokayem, 42.

why Al Assad has continued to be an ally of Hezbollah and Iran. I fill the lacuna left by El-Hokayem by using social constructivism. By using constructivist analysis, I explain the nature of Syria's relationship with Iran and Hezbollah by examining the role of norms in the resistance bloc.

Voice of Hezbollah: the Statements of Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah is comprised of speeches and interviews from the mid-1980s to 2007 conducted mostly with the Secretary-General of Hezbollah, Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah. The interviews were partly conducted in English and Arabic. In addition, sources used were translated from Arabic to English. The book shares the views of the leader of Hezbollah on several topics ranging from the Arab-Israeli conflict and the "War on Terror," to Iran's nuclear ambitions.¹⁰⁰ The *Voice of Hezbollah* is more than a mundane autobiography of the Secretary-General. It is one of the few dependable sources available in English to "compare and/or criticize the ideas expressed directly by Hezbollah's leader."¹⁰¹ Features of neoliberalism often emphasized by Nasrallah in the text include freedoms, capital, and economics.¹⁰² Moreover, the concept of cooperation is a common theme throughout the book. Nasrallah discusses cooperation as a favourable alternative to conflict concerning the several factions in the Lebanese government. Neoliberalism sees peaceful coexistence as a possible solution to anarchy mainly through institutions and complex interdependence.¹⁰³ The text uses complex interdependence to explain Hezbollah's position on cooperation in the Lebanese government, but fails to adequately explain that

¹⁰⁰ Nicholas Blanford and Ellen Khouri (a), *Voice of Hezbollah the Statements of Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah*, edited by Nicholas Noe, (London: Verso, 2007), 15.

¹⁰¹ Blanford and Khouri (a), 15.

¹⁰² Blanford and Khouri (a), 374, 69, 170, 192, and 344.

¹⁰³ Moravcsik, 6.

it is identity that has created a schism in the government, namely between the March 8 Alliance and the Cedar Revolution. The Cedar Revolution has historically mistrusted Hezbollah and its allies, claiming that the pan-Shi'a party is a client of Iran. Hezbollah's implementation of Lebanonization has done little to change this perception, especially following the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafiq al Hariri.

Similar to Nasrallah, *Hizbullah: The Story from Within* provides its readers with an intimate account of the dynamics of Hezbollah in a thematic sequence ranging from the group's goals and vision to essential milestones in the group's history, the Palestinian cause, regional and global politics with Iran and Syria, and lastly the future of Hezbollah as a non-state actor. A neoliberal text, Qassem reaffirms the importance of Islamism to the pan-Shi'a movement and argues that occupation of land is sinful, and therefore, must be resisted.¹⁰⁴ Moreover, the author praises Iran for its unrelenting support by stating "upon its foundation, Hizbullah saw a possibility for achieving its goals and aspirations through the backing and reinforcement expressed by Iran."¹⁰⁵ Qassem provides a neoliberal perspective of Hezbollah. This is in contrast to my analysis of Hezbollah, which allows me to study the movement as a norm entrepreneur, including its ideas, norms, and physical resistance. Qassem does not examine the importance of norms in global politics or Hezbollah's norm entrepreneurship. *Hizbullah: The Story from Within* was chosen in preference to other works, because it offers a fresh perspective from one of the leading members of the movement.

¹⁰⁴ Naim Qassem, 235.

¹⁰⁵ Qassem, 58.

Norton is known for his seminal book, *Hezbollah: A Short History*. This text is an encompassing neoliberal analysis of Hezbollah, ranging from its early beginnings to its war with Israel in 2006. The author's aim is to provide a more "balanced and nuanced account" of Hezbollah.¹⁰⁶ Norton posits that Hezbollah and other Lebanese movements may have participated in lethal violence against the Israeli Defense Forces, but were within their legal limits to do so, as long as Israeli forces occupied swathes of southern Lebanon.¹⁰⁷ Norton argues that the movement's ideas have become contradictory. That is, there is clash between Hezbollah's religiosity and pragmatism. However, in my study I argue that Hezbollah's ideas do not clash, but are congruent. Similar to identity construction, constructivism holds that ideas are continuously being (re)constructed. Thus, ideational changes can be explained from a constructivist perspective as dynamic shifts that have been (re)constructed in an effort to adapt and pragmatize. Indeed, this is what Hezbollah does.

A neoliberal text exploring Al-Manar TV, "Aiming at Liberation: Al-Manar Media Campaigns against the Israeli Occupation of Southern Lebanon (1998–2000)" argues "that Hezbollah decided to use the media systematically, as one of the tools to achieve the liberation of southern Lebanon from Israeli occupation" realized in May 2000.¹⁰⁸ For example, propaganda, including infomercials and messages, such as "why wait until June to leave Lebanon,"¹⁰⁹ were promulgated and employed as means to

¹⁰⁶ Augustus R. Norton, *Hezbollah: A Short History*, (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2007), 8.

¹⁰⁷ Norton, 77.

¹⁰⁸ Zahera Harb (a), "Aiming at Liberation: Al-Manar Media Campaigns against the Israeli Occupation of Southern Lebanon (1998–2000)," *Middle East Journal of Culture and Communication* 2: 1.

¹⁰⁹ Harb (a), 16.

demoralize Israeli soldiers stationed in south Lebanon. The messages resonated loudly and were able to reach viewers as far as Haifa, Israel. Harb examines the role of Al-Manar TV in Lebanon from 1996 until 2000. Harb provides a chronicle of events leading up to May 2000, citing Al-Manar's role in psychological warfare. However, the author is unable to analyze Al-Manar TV as an organizational platform for the party's norm lifecycle. The author explains how the transmission of ideas are imperative to the overall success of Hezbollah. Having an organizational platform such as a TV network is an indispensable tool to any norm entrepreneur. I use Harb's insights to explore Hezbollah's campaign of psychological warfare.

Bringing matters into the contemporary moment, Sullivan analyzes Hezbollah's military engagement in the Syrian conflict using a neoliberal framework. "Hezbollah in Syria" provides detailed information about the role of Hezbollah, Iran, and Iraqi militias in Syria's civil war. Major offensives led by Hezbollah, in conjunction with the Syrian army and the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps against opposition forces, are featured. The author concludes that the 'Axis of Resistance' has actually benefited, at least militarily, from fighting side-by-side. Equally important, the article illustrates how Hezbollah has impacted the outcome of the war and tipped the balance back in the favour of Al Assad after he seemingly lost his grip on power. Iran and Hezbollah contributed to the war effort by training Syrian troops and paramilitary groups supporting Al Assad, through reconnaissance missions in Al Qusayr, Al Qalamoun Mountains, Halab,¹¹⁰ Homs, Hama, and Damascus.¹¹¹ Indeed, the Syrian conflict has proved to be the litmus test for Syria and its allies and the outcome, according to Sullivan, has favoured

¹¹⁰ Aleppo in Arabic.

¹¹¹ Marisa Sullivan, "Hezbollah in Syria," *Institute for the Study of War*, (2014): 5.

Hezbollah, Iran, and Syria. The conflict has strengthened them. For example, the conflict has provided the opportunity for Iranian and Hezbollah fighters to gain valuable experience on the battlefield and allowed others, namely the Shias of Iraq, to join in the fight in Syria.¹¹² Again, cooperation is the common theme in “Hezbollah in Syria.” In fact, Sullivan argues that cooperation was and remains critical for Al Assad government to remain in power. Also, Sullivan discusses the relationship between Hezbollah and Syria and how strong it is.¹¹³ Despite the presence of anarchy, cooperation is feasible. This particular conceptualization of cooperation is one of the core principles of neoliberalism.¹¹⁴ Hezbollah is not authoring the norm of resistance alone, but, unsurprisingly, in conjunction with state agents such as Syria and Iran.

In sum, neorealism views states as paramount, excluding the role of non-state actors in global politics. As a result, little has been written on Hezbollah from a neorealist perspective. Indeed, the majority of the literature already written on Hezbollah is theoretically neoliberal, leaving a lacuna to be filled. I fill this lacuna by analyzing Hezbollah as a norm entrepreneur in the Middle East. In contrast to neorealism and neoliberalism’s individual ontology, social constructivism is based in a social ontology and emphasizes the role of norm construction in global politics. This allows for a unique and valuable addition to the corpus of literature already produced on Hezbollah.

¹¹² Sullivan, 4.

¹¹³ Sullivan, 4.

¹¹⁴ Moravcsik, 6.

Constructivism

Constructivists are concerned “with the centrality of ideas and human consciousness,” while emphasizing “a holistic and idealist view of structures.”¹¹⁵ Idealism holds that ideas are important in international politics. Structures, according to social constructivists, are social and not entirely material.¹¹⁶ Constructivists are concerned about whether or not the structure is what constructs the agent’s ideas, interests, norms, and identity or if agents are born with predetermined identities and norms. This suggests that agents are pre-social. This is known as the agent-structure problem.¹¹⁷ In contrast to individualist and materialist ontology (neorealism and neoliberalism), constructivism subscribes to a social ontology. Constructivists recognize materialism as a part of their ontology and enjoy that the world is composed of materialist and social structures. That is, the material world can only be understood through intersubjective meanings.¹¹⁸ As social beings, agents (states or individuals) cannot be detached from a world of normative meaning that constructs who they are and the possibilities open to them.¹¹⁹ Identity and interests also cannot be detached from a world of social meaning. Thus, identities shape interests. Interests are socially constructed and therefore change over time.¹²⁰

Constructivists adopt an intersubjective understanding of state relations, emphasizing ideas, social agents, structures, norms, and the mutual constitution of

¹¹⁵ Barnett, 155.

¹¹⁶ Barnett, 155.

¹¹⁷ Barnett, 166.

¹¹⁸ Wendt (a), 73.

¹¹⁹ Fierke, 190.

¹²⁰ Fierke, 191.

identity.¹²¹ It refers to social interactions among states which are constantly under construction. For example, cooperation and enmity between states is not given, but constructed through intersubjective meanings and interactions.

Norms and the roles they play in global politics as social constructs are also an important element in constructivism. Constructivism's epistemology is post-positivist.¹²² A response to positivism, post-positivism is a methodology which rejects the application of the natural sciences to the social sciences. Post-positivist methodology rests on the idea that people "conceive, construct, and constitute the worlds in which they live, including the international world, which is an entirely human arrangement and nothing else."¹²³

Hezbollah's norm of resistance has been reconstructed over time. This reflects the dynamic political landscape of Lebanon. Joseph Alagha discusses these changes in great detail. While other works recognize that Hezbollah is a pragmatic political and social movement, Alagha differs because he analyzes diachronically the group's fundamental ideas. In his dissertation, *The Shifts in Hezbollah's Ideology: Religious ideology, Political Ideology, and Political Program* Alagha examines Hezbollah's political and religious ideology and divides Hezbollah's ideological and political shifts into three stages: 1) 1978-1984/5, 2) 1984/5-1990, and 3) 1991-2005 respectively.¹²⁴ *Jihad*, martyrdom, the

¹²¹ K.M. Frieke, "Constructivism" in *International Relations Theories: Discipline and Diversity*, edited by Tim Dunne, Milja Kurki, and Steve Smith, 187-205. 3rd Ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 193.

¹²² Emanuel Adler, "Constructivism and International Relations," In *Handbook of International Relations*, edited by Walter Carlsnaes, Thomas Risse, and Beth A. Simmons, 95-119. 1st Ed. (London: SAGE Publications, 2002), 101.

¹²³ Jackson and Sorensen, 311.

¹²⁴ Joseph Alagha (a), *The Shifts in Hezbollah's Ideology: Religious, ideology*,

oppressed/oppressor dichotomy, anti-imperialism, and relations with the West and Europe are explored as ideas and practices.¹²⁵ Alagha enjoins that the movement has favoured a pragmatic political program, especially after the 1992 parliamentary elections in response to Hezbollah's ever-changing environment. Alagha's dissertation enhances my study of Hezbollah by providing fresh constructivist insights into the party's identity and ideological shifts.¹²⁶ Plenty of studies on the Party of God provide an analysis of the ideas and practices of Hezbollah, but do not do so diachronically. The ideas Hezbollah constructs have changed.

Another text by Alagha, "Israeli-Hizbullah 34-Day War: Causes and Consequences," explores the reality of indiscriminate warfare, including Israeli use of weapons such as white phosphorus and cluster bombs.¹²⁷ The author's thesis is that Hezbollah's resistance has shifted and is no longer directed at Israel, but after 2006, has become "Lebanonized" or internalized and more recently, has focused on the Syrian crisis. Alagha lucidly explains the recent changes in Hezbollah's norm of resistance. Alagha also examines the political schism that occurred following Hezbollah's "Divine Victory" in the 2006 war with Israel. The schism was the consequence of Hezbollah's demand that "a national unity Cabinet be formed, where the party and its Christian allies, the Free Patriotic Movement (FPM), wield the one-third veto power."¹²⁸ In a deliberate attempt to control the national political sphere, Hezbollah and its allies sought to exercise

Political Ideology, and Political Program, (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2002), 13-4.

¹²⁵ Alagha (a), 14.

¹²⁶ Alagha (a), 13.

¹²⁷ Joseph Alagha (b), "Israeli-Hizbullah 34-Day War: Causes and Consequences," *Arab Studies Quarterly* 30, no.2 (2008): 17.

¹²⁸ Alagha (b), 1.

power over the legislature and the presidency.¹²⁹ According to Alagha, the demand for a one-third veto crystallized out of Hezbollah's surge in popularity following Israel's failure to disarm and dismantle the group. The 2006 war with Israel signified a shift in Hezbollah's construction of resistance, from being regional to domestic. I deploy Alagha to make the point that Hezbollah's resistance shifts according to its political environment. Alagha's analysis of the 34 day war complements my study on Hezbollah's material resistance and illustrates how ideas of *jihad* and martyrdom are realized in war.

Hizbu'llah: Politics and Religion by Amal Saad-Ghorayeb is an indispensable account of the ideology of Hezbollah, often referenced by other texts. Saad-Ghorayeb explores inner and outer *jihad* as a concept which helps to provide discipline to Hezbollah, the relationship Iran and Syria have with the group, and what it means to be anti-Zionist. Most other books have similar reviews of the Shi'a movement, but Saad-Ghorayeb goes further and explains the dichotomy of oppressor versus the oppressed as one of the central elements of Hezbollah's ideology. It is the notion that the oppressed must rebel, regardless of their religion, race, or creed to challenge the oppressors. The oppressors are often described as the United States and Israel. An example of oppression is the perception of the Zionist project which is Israel's goal of occupying swathes of land encompassing the Nile in Egypt to the Euphrates in Iraq.¹³⁰ America's role in the project is that it seeks to subordinate the Middle East to its economic demands, usurping the wealth of the Middle East, and stimulating instability in the region.¹³¹ Saad-Ghorayeb's principle objective is to "examine the central pillars of Hizbu'llah's

¹²⁹ Alagha (b), 1.

¹³⁰ Amal Saad-Ghorayeb, *Hizbu'llah: Politics and Religion* (London: Pluto Press, 2002), 147-8.

¹³¹ Saad-Ghorayeb, 99.

intellectual structure within the framework of Lebanese socio-political reality.”¹³² Saad-Ghorayeb does not emphasize history as much as Hezbollah’s ideas that are continuously under construction. Furthermore, the author examines Hezbollah’s “clash” in identity, politically with “its Islamic principles” and how they contradict.¹³³ Of course, identity matters too.

Hamzeh’s *In the Path of Hezbollah* focuses heavily on the emergence, ideology, organizational structure, and modes of action, and their implications for Lebanon and the wider region.”¹³⁴ Organizational structure refers to the hierarchy of Hezbollah. The modes of action include militant (armed struggle) and the gradualist-pragmatic mode (participating in politics and gaining more seats in the legislature) which Hamzeh argues are not contradictory.¹³⁵ The author goes into detail about the concept of *jihad*, martyrdom operations, and the organizational structure of resistance. According to Hamzeh, the book offers a mosaic of theories, including crisis conditions, revolutions, leadership, personality, social class, and political parties.¹³⁶ However, these are not recognized “theories” in International Relations. Hamzeh’s analysis of Shi’a identity, Shia “identity crisis,” and ideology are reflective of constructivism.¹³⁷ Similarly to Saad-Ghorayeb’s *Hizbu’llah: Politics and Religion*, Hamzeh investigates issues that are at the core of my study, including how ideas matter and how they are implemented. For

¹³² Saad-Ghorayeb, 4.

¹³³ Saad-Ghorayeb, 3-4.

¹³⁴ Harvey, 2.

¹³⁵ Ahmad Nizar Hamzeh, *In the Path of Hizballah*, (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 2004), 2 and 3-4.

¹³⁶ Hamzeh, 2.

¹³⁷ Hamzeh, 7.

instance, Hamzeh examines the juristical ideology of Hezbollah and how it has transformed itself, ideologically, from militancy to pragmatism.¹³⁸

Conclusion

My study analyzes Hezbollah in terms of the construction of global politics. Using the notion of norm entrepreneurship developed by Finnemore and Sikkink, I fill the lacuna left by other texts by examining Hezbollah from a constructivist standpoint. This is a valuable addition to the literature already produced on the Party of God for several reasons. First, I demonstrate the importance of constructed ideas and how ideas are ultimately performed. Second, I illustrate that the meaning of resistance and what it means to “resist” are not given, but constructed. Equally important, by using social constructivism as my theoretical lens, I help the literature examine Hezbollah in a fundamentally different way; that the norm of resistance is continuously under construction, shifting and projecting new ways to resist. Third, I explain how ideas change over time. Prior to 2006, the norm of resistance was directed entirely towards Israel and the United States, but as I argue this is no longer the case. Due to the wars in Syria and Yemen, Hezbollah has constructed new enemies, such as the GCC states, and Sunni extremism. By seeing Hezbollah in this light, I argue that Hezbollah is creating a pragmatic version of resistance that is serving its interests, nationally, regionally, and internationally, effectively transforming its identity, transforming even the label of a resistance movement to a successful political party.

¹³⁸ Hamzeh, 27.

Chapter 3-Hezbollah's Changing Normative Ideas

Finnemore and Sikkink state that in order for a norm entrepreneur to be successful an organizational platform is required.¹³⁹ It is the necessary infrastructure required by a norm entrepreneur and is used as a launching pad in stage one of norm construction, known as norm emergence. Without an organizational platform to promote or propagate the emerging norm, the chance of the new norm reaching the “tipping point” decreases significantly and it is unlikely to reach stage two of norm construction, known as norm cascade. Accordingly, it is impossible to promote a new norm without a platform from which to advocate. Ideas must be objectified through an organizational platform. Through Al-Manar TV (literally means the Lighthouse), Hezbollah engaged in psychological warfare. Psychological warfare refers to messages that are delivered through violent and nonviolent methods. It was an alternative method of war in its fight for liberation from Israeli occupation. As Al Jammal asserts, Israel has attempted and continues today to portray Hezbollah as terrorists and thugs. He emphasizes the importance of changing terminology from terrorist to fighter, for example, and for the world to be presented with a more balanced representation of the party. This was only possible through an organizational platform, such as Al-Manar TV.¹⁴⁰ It is important to stress that norm

¹³⁹ Martha Finnemore and Katheryn Sikkink, “International Norm Dynamics and Political Change,” *International Organization* 52, no. 4:896.

¹⁴⁰ Please see Ron Schleifer, “Psychological Operations: A New Variation on an Age Old Art: Hezbollah versus Israel,” *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 29, no. 1 (2006): 2; Maura Conway, “Terror TV? An Exploration of Hizbollah’s Al-Manar Television,” *Centre for International Studies School of Law and Government*: 16-17; Zahera Harb (b), *Channels of Resistance in Lebanon: Liberation Propaganda, Hezbollah and the Media*, (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011), 180; Z. Huffman, “How the Party of God Uses Media and Resources to Succeed in the 21st Century.” *Journal of Georgetown University-Qatar Middle Eastern Studies Student Association* 3 (2014): 5; Naim Qassem, *Hizbullah: The Story*

entrepreneurship is reserved for those in positions of power. Not all norm entrepreneurs possess or have access to an organizational platform. Consequently, certain norms do not reach the “tipping point.” Having access to an organizational platform is an expression of power. Hezbollah’s norm entrepreneurship attests to its empowerment as being part of the Lebanese established order.

As a norm entrepreneur, Hezbollah has continued to construct and reconstruct the norm of resistance through the use of its ideas. These ideas have been the ideological pillars of the movement since its inception and remain integral to Hezbollah. These ideas are *jihad*, martyrdom, the oppressed/oppressor dichotomy, and anti-imperialism. The ideological foundation of Hezbollah has also shifted throughout its history in response to Hezbollah’s environment. To adapt, Hezbollah had to alter the ideas mentioned above that were developed and introduced during the late 1970s and mid-1980s when the movement was still clandestine. This chapter explains Hezbollah’s ideological pillars and illustrates how these normative ideas of resistance have been reconstructed over time. I argue that as part of its commitment to *infitah*, Lebanonization, and pragmatism, Hezbollah has had little choice but to adapt in order to survive the political climate in Lebanon and remain armed. Remaining an armed movement is Hezbollah’s *raison d’être* if it wishes to continue constructing the norm of resistance. Even if the weapons remain unused, the perception of having weaponry serves to further enhance the legitimacy of Hezbollah as a symbol of resistance in the region, even if some doubt the legitimacy of the claim.

from Within, (London, Qasi Books, 2005), 12-13.

Jihad

Violence and Islamic extremism are commonly misunderstood to be exclusively associated with *jihad*. However, *jihad*, originating from the Arabic verb *jahada*, means to struggle, exert, strive, or endeavor.¹⁴¹ This does not necessarily refer to violence, but rather to struggle in the way of God. *Jihad* is a dedication to one's religiosity, either through intention or action.¹⁴² The struggle may refer to any activity, be it internal or external. According to Hezbollah, any action that exercises effort in God's cause is *jihad*.¹⁴³ Furthermore, according to an Islamic scholar, the use of *jihad* in the Quran and *Hadith* is enjoined for believers to struggle with their possessions and selves in the way of God.¹⁴⁴ This struggle is not necessarily for God, but in the cause of mankind. Consequently, God's cause is the "cause of the people, the oppressed, the cause of pride, honour and glory, the cause of the defense of the land, the cause of the defense of the sacred, of religion and of the values of humanity'."¹⁴⁵ In Hezbollah's religious doctrine, *jihad* is defensive rather than offensive.¹⁴⁶ Defensive *jihad* is categorized by military and non-military *jihad*. Military refers to *jihad* by the hand or battling the enemy on the battlefield. Non-military *jihad* refers to persuasive *jihad*. Persuasive *jihad* is *jihad* practiced by the tongue and heart.¹⁴⁷ *Jihad* of the tongue is "supporting the right and

¹⁴¹ Amal Saad-Ghorayeb, *Hizbu'llah: Politics and Religion* (London: Pluto Press, 2002), 122.

¹⁴² Joseph Alagha (a), *The Shifts in Hezbollah's Ideology: Religious, Ideology, Political Ideology, and Political Program*, (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2002), 82.

¹⁴³ Saad-Ghorayeb, 122.

¹⁴⁴ Saad-Ghorayeb, 122.

¹⁴⁵ Saad-Ghorayeb, 122.

¹⁴⁶ Saad-Ghorayeb, 122.

¹⁴⁷ Alagha (a), 86.

correcting the wrong.”¹⁴⁸ *Jihad* of the heart is combating the devil and worldly temptations.¹⁴⁹ Hezbollah is not religiously sanctioned to launch a preemptive attack on its enemy (offensive *jihad*), reserving only the right to self-defense (defensive *jihad*). Moreover, defensive *jihad* does not necessarily refer to martyrdom. For instance, Hezbollah’s former Secretary-General Abbas Al-Mussawi was assassinated, along with his wife and son by Israeli fire in 1991 and was consequently honoured as a martyr even though he did not participate in military *jihad*.¹⁵⁰ Chapter 9 of the Quran titled *Al-Tawba* helps to construct *jihad*’s importance in Islam and those who devote themselves to the cause (9:29): “Fight those who do not believe in Allah or in the Last Day and who do not consider unlawful what Allah and His Messenger have made unlawful and who do not adopt the religion of truth from those who were given the Scripture - [fight] until they give the *jizyah* willingly while they are humbled.”¹⁵¹ Imam Ali Ibn Abu Taleb stated “*jihad* is one of the doors of heaven, God opened it for his special saints. *Jihad* is the garment of the pious; it is God’s shield and his assured Heaven’.”¹⁵² It is incumbent on all Muslims, young or old, healthy or ill to engage in *jihad*.¹⁵³ Quotations from the Holy Quran, and statements from Imam Ali, help to (re)construct the idea of *jihad* as a struggle that every Muslim must endure. Hezbollah constructs *jihad* as a struggle for God and not Hezbollah. However, through Hezbollah one is able to serve his religion by striving for

¹⁴⁸ Majid Khadduri, *War and Peace in the Law of Islam*, (Clark, New Jersey: The Lawbook Exchange, 2006), 57.

¹⁴⁹ Khadduri, 56-7.

¹⁵⁰ Saad-Ghorayeb, 122.

¹⁵¹ The Holy Quran 9:29.

¹⁵² Alagha (a), 83.

¹⁵³ Ahmad Nizar Hamzeh, *In the Path of Hizballah*, (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 2004), 38.

the sake and cause of God by fulfilling his duties of *jihad*. This is as an important starting point for Hezbollah.

Hezbollah has adopted a broader definition of *jihad* categorizing what Hamzeh labels major modes and submodes of *jihad*. Hezbollah has categorized the major modes of *jihad* as Greater *Jihad* (*al Jihad al-Akbar*) and Lesser *Jihad* (*al Jihad al-Asghar*). Greater *Jihad* refers to the inner struggle one faces throughout his or her lifetime. Hezbollah's Deputy Secretary-General Sheikh Naim Qassem explains Greater *Jihad* as: "placing one's powers and faculties under the yoke of Allah's commands and purging the domain of one's body of satanic elements and their forces".¹⁵⁴ Nasrallah emphasizes that the "battle with oneself is more dangerous than the battle with the external enemy. Thus our struggle against ourselves must be stronger than our struggle with our enemy".¹⁵⁵ Notably, Greater *Jihad* is not a struggle that ends expeditiously, but rather according to Hamzeh is an everlasting struggle.¹⁵⁶ Further, Greater *Jihad* prepares the believer for Lesser *Jihad*, that is, the armed or physical struggle. Following some battles, the Prophet Muhammed avers: "We returned from the smaller *jihad* (*al jihad al-asghar*) and we still have [to conduct] the greater *jihad* (*al jihad al-akbar*)".¹⁵⁷ The Prophet explained greater *jihad* as the "the struggle with the self (*jihad al-nafs*) [*jihad* of the self]".¹⁵⁸

Lesser *Jihad* or (*al Jihad al-Asghar*) refers to fighting the non-believers, or in the case of Hezbollah, the imperialists and the oppressors. Lesser *Jihad* is divided into two

¹⁵⁴ Hamzeh, 37.

¹⁵⁵ Hamzeh, 37.

¹⁵⁶ Hamzeh, 37.

¹⁵⁷ Alagha (a), 83-4.

¹⁵⁸ Alagha (a), 83-4.

submodes: Elementary (Offensive) and Defensive *Jihad*. Defensive *Jihad* is further divided into armed and unarmed *Jihad*. Only the Prophet or one of the Twelve Imams¹⁵⁹ may authorize elementary *jihad*, also known as “holy war” or “offensive war” according to Hezbollah’s ideology.¹⁶⁰ It is global in scale and is intended to spread Islam across the world. Despite the presence of the *faqih* Ali Khamenei, elementary *jihad* cannot be authorized. Accordingly, Qassem summarily concluded that the conditions warranted for offensive *jihad* are clearly not available, and therefore, non-existent.¹⁶¹ The conditions are unavailable because there is no living Prophet or Imam who can authorize elementary *jihad*.

Defensive *Jihad* (*al Jihad al-Difa’i*) espouses defense as an essential mechanism for resisting aggression from opponents of Islam who wish to harm the *umma*. Defensive *jihad*, some argue, also includes defending the Muslim *umma*’s right to freely proselytize the message of Islam. The *umma* is the symbolic representation of the total Muslim population of the world. The *umma* transcends borders, ethnicities, and races. Many Islamists hope for the *umma* to be a unitary political entity, ruled by a caliphate. Anarchy being socially constructed and an integral element of global politics, Hezbollah considers Defensive *Jihad* as the only means of defending the *umma* from unwarranted attacks. This is also an attempt to internalize the norm of resistance. Notably, Hezbollah’s cadres do not need the authorization of an infallible Imam to engage in Defensive *Jihad* in contrast to Elementary *Jihad*. Permission to engage in Defensive *Jihad* is granted by the

¹⁵⁹ Twelve Imams refers to the blood line of the Prophet Muhammed, beginning with Imam Ali as the first Imam.

¹⁶⁰ Hamzeh, 37.

¹⁶¹ Hamzeh, 38.

waliyat al-faqih, the Supreme Leader Sayyed Ali Khamenei.¹⁶² According to Shi'a tradition, defensive military *jihad* is a religious obligation in the following three circumstances:

- 1.) If the opponents of Islam attacked any of the Muslim countries to achieve imperial ambitions, then permission is granted or if Muslims are driven from their homes unjustly merely for their saying: ““Our Lord is Allah’ ... ” (22: 39-40).
- 2.) If there is an attack on the public purse of Muslims and the national assets of the Muslim countries.
- 3.) Defending the downtrodden or the oppressed (*mustad'afin*) who do not have the ability to defend themselves against the injustices and hostility perpetrated by the oppressors (*mustakbirin*)¹⁶³

Historically, Hezbollah has symbolically used the martyrdom of Imam Hussein Ibn Ali and the reenactment of the Karbala Drama as a reminder of oppression and to use *jihad* in defense of the *umma*. The Karbala Drama refers to the martyrdom of Imam Hussein Ibn Ali by the forces of Yazid, Caliph of the Umayyad dynasty. Imam Hussein's martyrdom in an effort to uproot despotism from the *umma* is used by Hezbollah as a metaphor to construct the ideas of *jihad*, martyrdom, and oppression. That is, by invoking the Karbala Drama, Hezbollah is constructing religious motifs and symbolism to provide legitimacy to its norm construction. Hezbollah's Defensive *Jihad* is rooted in the party's hostility towards Israel and its occupation of South Lebanon. Hezbollah is reconstructing its identity by historically engaging in *jihad* against Israel and by declaring its unwavering support for a sovereign Palestine. In doing so, Hezbollah is constructing the

¹⁶² Hamzeh, 38.

¹⁶³ Alagha (a), 85-6.

norm of resistance, resistance to occupation and Zionism. In a form of norm contestation, Israel constructs Iran and its allies, including Hezbollah, as the greatest threat to “world peace,” citing Iran’s nuclear ambitions as a palpable threat. Hezbollah also constructs Zionism as the principal threat to the Middle East and to the *umma*. Indeed, we live in a social world constructed by intersubjective meanings. Without interaction, Hezbollah and Israel would be incapable of being in a contestation of norms or unable to construct identities for the Other. Despite the terrorist label often exploited as a rhetorical bludgeon, Norton argues that so long as Israel occupied swathes of Lebanese land Hezbollah and other Lebanese factions were completely within their legal rights to resist Israeli occupation and to do so with lethal violence.¹⁶⁴ Israel eventually withdrew in May 2000. From Hezbollah’s perspective, it was *jihad* and the valiancy of the *mujahdin* that expelled Israel from the security zone and not land-for-peace deals.¹⁶⁵ Sayyid Nasrallah enjoins: “‘We want to make peace for our *umma* with our blood, rifles, and severed limbs ... This is the peace we believe in’.”¹⁶⁶ The party’s hostility towards Zionism and occupation illustrates the movement’s commitment to *jihad*, not only as a military struggle, but also an ideological one, grounded in fighting imperialism and oppression. Defensive *Jihad* may also be nonviolent. Sayyid Nasrallah explains the difference between armed and unarmed struggle: “‘An armed struggle means fighting the enemy with blood and involves martyrdom. An unarmed struggle involves political, economic, and cultural means’.”¹⁶⁷ In reference to his party’s policy of Lebanonization, Nasrallah

¹⁶⁴ Augustus R. Norton, *Hezbollah: A Short History*, (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2007), 77.

¹⁶⁵ Saad-Ghorayeb, 119.

¹⁶⁶ Saad-Ghorayeb, 119.

¹⁶⁷ Nasrallah qtd. in Hamzeh, 38.

goes on to state: ““Our defensive *jihad* in Lebanon involves both’,”¹⁶⁸ armed and unarmed *jihad*. The decision of whether to participate in armed or unarmed Defensive *Jihad* is left up to circumstances and is often left to the discretion of each individual. In line with its commitment to *infitah*, Hezbollah has vowed not to turn its guns on fellow compatriots, but instead engage in unarmed struggle that involves “conquer[ing] the state from the bottom up.”¹⁶⁹ This means striving politically and economically, lobbying government, participating in elections, and joining a multi-confessional cabinet.¹⁷⁰

Nasrallah’s position is that to reach Lesser *Jihad* one must first reach the level of felicity in Greater *Jihad* because the struggle with oneself is greater than the enemy. Once Greater *Jihad* is achieved, then one may proceed and strive for Lesser *Jihad*. Hezbollah constructs Greater *Jihad* to be more challenging than Lesser *Jihad*. Therefore, the success of Lesser *Jihad* is dependent upon the success of Greater *Jihad*. According to Saad-Ghorayeb, this is primarily due to man’s worldly desires and temptations and the difficulties in trying to battle or overcome such desires.¹⁷¹ Notably, Hezbollah did not always engage in Lesser *Jihad*. In Hezbollah’s early years, party cadres were required to devote themselves to Greater *Jihad*. The intention was to spiritually improve and reform the inner-self into a faithful confluent human-being.¹⁷² Once Greater *Jihad* was achieved, members could then engage the enemy using Lesser *Jihad*. Hezbollah understood that to defeat Israel militarily through Lesser *Jihad*, one had to defeat his greatest foe, himself. “Accordingly, the *raison d’être* of the Greater *Jihad* is the Lesser *Jihad*, for the

¹⁶⁸ Hamzeh, 38.

¹⁶⁹ Hamzeh, 39.

¹⁷⁰ Hamzeh, 39.

¹⁷¹ Saad-Ghorayeb, 122.

¹⁷² Saad-Ghorayeb, 196.

performance of the former necessarily entails a willingness to fulfil the latter.”¹⁷³

Therefore, Lesser *Jihad* is contingent upon Greater *Jihad*, and as a result, only regarded as greater in that sense. In a nutshell, Hezbollah prides itself as the defender of Arab lands and the downtrodden. This remains an integral element of its identity and norm construction. *Jihad* is only one of the essential ways Hezbollah constructs the norm of resistance, but one of the most important ideas constructed by the movement. Defensive *Jihad* is required of every Muslim and is “one of the eight ‘Ibadat (ritual practices) of Shi’ite Islam. This religious observance is grounded not only in the logic of self-preservation, but also a function of the Shi’ites’ historical preoccupation with the rejection of injustice and humiliation.”¹⁷⁴ The idea of oppression, suffering, and humiliation has long been part of the Shi’a psyche. The significance given to Defensive *Jihad* in the religio-political thought of Hezbollah and in Shi’ism is generally not relevant in Sunni Islam, which places equal importance on all Islamic requirements.¹⁷⁵ In fact, preserving the *umma* from external danger by engaging in Defensive *Jihad* is constructed by Grand Ayatollah Khomeini and Hezbollah to be more important than praying or fasting. Concomitantly, those who fail to engage in any type of *jihad* will live in shame, eventually giving in to his or her enemies’ demands, losing his or her religiosity which strengthens the self and weakens the enemy.¹⁷⁶

Hezbollah’s *jihad* has indeed changed over time, especially following May 2000. As the numbers suggest, the party’s engagement in defensive military *jihad* witnessed a dramatic drop in 2001, when compared to years 1996 to 2000. The party reached a peak

¹⁷³ Saad-Ghorayeb, 123.

¹⁷⁴ Saad-Ghorayeb, 124.

¹⁷⁵ Saad-Ghorayeb, 124.

¹⁷⁶ Saad-Ghorayeb, 83.

of 4,928 operations for 1996-2000, but dwindled to 16 operations by 2001-2. The unconditional withdrawal of Israeli forces from Lebanon explains the party's change in defensive military *jihad*. Following Israel's withdrawal from South Lebanon in 2000, the party began shifting its focus from resistance to the Lebanese political sphere. This is an exceptional transformation for the movement. Hezbollah had been engaging in Defensive *Jihad* from the late 1980s until 2001. The reconstruction of *jihad* is not coincidental, but is a pragmatic shift from the physical expression of resistance to achieving national political goals by conquering the state from the bottom up. This includes participating in the Lebanese political system through non-violent means. Up until 2005, Hezbollah could not fully engage in domestic affairs, such as participating in parliamentary elections, reforming the confessional political system that has been in place since 1990, or eradicating corruption that has been plaguing Lebanon for years.¹⁷⁷

In 2006, the kidnapping of two Israeli soldiers and Israel's readiness to seek any pretext to extirpate the pan-Shi'a movement from the Middle East subsequently resulted in a war that would span 34 days. Hezbollah shifted once again in 2006 to armed Lesser *Jihad* to resist Israeli bellicosity. Immediately following Prime Minister Fouad Siniora's sponsored Seven Point truce with Israel, Hezbollah began to embark on a political campaign, exploiting what the movement called Divine Victory (*Nasrallah*) in the 2006 war with Israel. The Seven Point Truce was Siniora's attempt to find a political solution to the war in 2006. The choice of words, such as divine, helps to galvanize feelings of religious zeal designed to construct Hezbollah as inspired and protected by God. This provides legitimacy to Hezbollah's norm of resistance. In order for resistance to be

¹⁷⁷ Saad-Ghorayeb, 196.

constructed, it must be legitimized. By invoking religious fervor, Hezbollah is reconstructing the norms of a pan-Shi'a movement which is resisting oppression and imperialism using *jihad* and martyrdom. After all, material resistance must be justifiable. In Lebanon, the state and Hezbollah reserve the right to use force when deemed necessary. The use of force is legitimized through Hezbollah's construction of the norm of resistance and religiosity. It is also legitimized by the movement's willingness to actively participate in elections.

Hezbollah engaged in unarmed Lesser *Jihad* from 2006 until 2010, demanding to have a greater role in government. This entailed an internal political battle with the Siniora government over Hezbollah's demands to establish a multi-confessional cabinet that would include members of Hezbollah which the Siniora government argued ran contrary to the Taif agreement. The goal was for the government to ultimately collapse or give in to Hezbollah's demands.¹⁷⁸ A part of its policy of *infatih* and Lebanonization, Hezbollah sought to reconstruct its identity from pan-Islamism to Lebanon's most powerful political force. Against this backdrop, the movement's national identity took precedence over pan-Islamism.¹⁷⁹ In order to appeal to a larger constituency than the South, Hezbollah was required to become more open in an effort not to alienate the Sunni and Christian communities. To do so, its construction of pan-Islamism was quieted, but not completely abandoned. In 2008, tension between Hezbollah and the central government was aggravated when Siniora announced that he intended to shut down the group's private telecommunication network which serves Hezbollah as an organizational

¹⁷⁸ Blanford, Nicholas (b), "Lebanon: The Shiite Dimension," *The Wilson Center* (2015):1.

¹⁷⁹ Alagha (a), 197.

platform. This caused Hezbollah to employ armed *jihad*, resulting in a temporary takeover of West Beirut by followers. Clashes ensued between government supporters and Hezbollah members, resulting in the death of 100 people from both sides.¹⁸⁰ Conflict would not subside until Hezbollah's demands were fully met. Hezbollah reformed the constitution by transforming the government make-up into a multi-confessional cabinet; holding more than one-third of cabinet seats, Hezbollah could now effectively overthrow an unfriendly administration.¹⁸¹ Hezbollah's resistance shifted from being external to internal. Hezbollah resisted the social structure of Israeli occupation and began resisting the dominant confessional system that has been in place since the end of the civil war. This shift is reflective of Hezbollah's pledge to Lebanonization. The Party of God was able to shift its norm of resistance from external to internal following Israel's withdrawal in 2000. Once Israel withdrew from Lebanon, Hezbollah refocused its efforts on becoming a powerful political force in Lebanon. Hezbollah managed to convince supporters of its shift in its norm of resistance by constructing the Shias as being underrepresented in government. Prior to Hezbollah's first electoral win in 1992, Subhi Al Tufayli, Hezbollah's first Secretary-General, was the first to object (and continues to object) participating in any elections, contending that Hezbollah would be "selling out" if it participated in the Lebanese political polity.¹⁸² In addition, by engaging in the political process, Al Tufayli warned, Hezbollah would be transformed from a revolutionary movement to a party that is politically tamed.¹⁸³ Al Tufayli resigned in protest in 1991. Hezbollah was, and remains, armed. By reserving a spot in the

¹⁸⁰ Blanford (b), 1.

¹⁸¹ Alagha (b), 8.

¹⁸² Norton, 100.

¹⁸³ Norton, 100.

government's cabinet, Hezbollah is ensuring that it remains armed and capable of vetoing any proposed bill perceived to be a danger to the Party of God.¹⁸⁴

While Hezbollah defined itself as a *jihadi* movement, its ideas of *jihad* have changed. Since the Israeli withdrawal from the security zone in 2000, and after 2006, Hezbollah shifted from Lesser *Jihad* to Greater *Jihad*. That is, Hezbollah has (re)constructed its normative ideology from a violent pan-Shi'a movement seeking national liberation to a mainstream political party whose goal is to internally reform the Lebanese political polity. Resistance and *jihad* have become internalized despite Hezbollah's *jihad* being historically constructed as an external struggle, manifested through violence. During Hezbollah's early years (1978-1990) the movement focused on inner-spirituality, religious indoctrination, self-discipline, and obedience to God, Islam, and *waliyat al-faqih*. Greater *Jihad* also extended to the movement's selection and enrolment process and recruitment. Upon recruitment into Hezbollah, trainees were required to engage in Greater *Jihad* as a means of self-enrichment in order to properly prepare for Lesser *Jihad*. Until then, Lesser *Jihad* was strictly prohibited.¹⁸⁵ Beginning in 1992, Hezbollah's participation in Lebanon's first general elections since the start of the civil war signaled a dramatic shift in *jihad*. Hezbollah's Greater *Jihad* did not remain confined to the inner practices of the movement, but extended to the political application of fighting venality in the Lebanese political sphere. Soon after Israel withdrew from Lebanon in May 2000, Hezbollah was able to mobilize greater resources and fully engage in Greater *Jihad*, otherwise not possible because of occupation. Its goal in engaging in Greater *Jihad* in Lebanese domestic politics is to demonstrate that the Party of God is the

¹⁸⁴ Alagha (b), 9.

¹⁸⁵ Alagha (a), 196.

most dominant political force in the country.¹⁸⁶ More importantly, Hezbollah understands that in order to continue constructing the process of resistance it must remain armed. Hezbollah remains steadfast in its promise to conquer Lebanon from the bottom up through pragmatism and democratic elections. Votes are required without alienating others, such as the Sunni and Christian communities. Hezbollah's norm construction, as a result of its integration into the political sphere, shifted from *moqawama Islamiyya* (Islamic resistance) to *moqawama Lebananiyya* (Lebanese resistance). Consequently, Hezbollah is applying its policy of Lebanonization and is reconstructing *jihad*. The movement is reconstructing *jihad* as inclusive and "Lebanese." *Jihad* has become a national project.

To summarize, *jihad's* operational changes, Hezbollah has shifted from Greater *Jihad* in 2001 following Israel's unconditional withdrawal from Lebanon to Lesser *Jihad* during the 34 day war with Israel in 2006. Shortly after, Hezbollah shifted again to unarmed struggle staging protests in the hopes of placing pressure on the Siniora government. Next, the movement employed armed *jihad*, which resulted in the death of 100 people, to contest Siniora's plan to shut down the group's network. Beginning in 2013, Hezbollah employed lesser armed *jihad* once again when it intervened in the Syrian conflict. This event illustrates not only a change in *jihad*, but also a shift in Hezbollah's policy of Lebanonization. It reverted back to before 2005, when Hezbollah was constructed as a transnational non-state actor, serving the Syrian leadership. However, during this period *jihad* also reverted back to Greater *Jihad*. That is, following Siniora's decision to grant Hezbollah's demands, the movement swiftly shifted back to Greater

¹⁸⁶ Alagha (a), 197.

Jihad, although currently Hezbollah practices lesser armed *jihad* in Syria. In 2006 the movement reached its peak as the region's steadfast resistance movement par excellence. However, waging armed *jihad* in Lebanon and in Syria has quickly proved to be harmful to Hezbollah's legitimacy as a resistance movement. Since 2013, Hezbollah has struggled to symbolize resistance in the region. Indeed, *jihad* in all its various forms is one the most important constructions in Hezbollah's ideology.

Martyrdom

Martyrdom is an essential element of Hezbollah's ideology. Despite the movement's pragmatism, martyrdom remains one of the most important ways Hezbollah physically expresses its norm of resistance. The question of why Imam Hussein continued his journey despite the warnings, to Hezbollah, emphasizes his sacrifice made for the *umma*, as it was clear what his fate would be if he continued on to Kufa. The idea of the Karbala Drama¹⁸⁷ is so prolific that without it, Hezbollah claims, there would have not been an Islamic Resistance in Lebanon.¹⁸⁸ As constructed by Hezbollah, the Karbala Drama signifies resistance to oppression, humiliation, and living a life in disgrace. Hussein, through the use of *jihad*, embraced the virtue of martyrdom illustrating that life is not

¹⁸⁷ The Karbala Drama refers to the reconstruction of Imam Hussein Ibn Ali's martyrdom in Karbala. He travelled with a caravan of 70 people to challenge the legitimacy of Umayyad Caliph Yazid who was accused of despotism. Hezbollah have canonized Hussein as the embodiment of *jihad*, martyrdom, and resistance. Today, the self-sacrifice of Imam Hussein is commemorated annually on the tenth day of the Islamic month of Muharrem, known as Ashura.

¹⁸⁸ Saad-Ghorayeb, 125.

worth living if one does not live with honour.¹⁸⁹ The idea of martyrdom is only seen through the social construct of the Karbala Drama. Hezbollah, as a norm entrepreneur, uses the construction of Shi'a history to justify its norm of resistance. In other words, Imam Hussein's martyrdom is a social construct, helping to construct a reality of martyrdom for Hezbollah to follow.

For a comprehensive understanding of martyrdom, I combine Momen's and Moussalli's definitions. According to Momen, “the ultimate in [self]-sacrifice [altruism] is martyrdom, in which a person sacrifices his or her own life itself for religion’.”¹⁹⁰ The highest and most decorated type of *jihad* in Islam is martyrdom. Moussalli explains that a martyr has a special place in Islam, as he or she is not judged for past transgressions, but instead is reserved a spot in paradise. Muslims historically and theoretically used martyrdom as a means of defending themselves and their property often against non-Muslims.¹⁹¹ Notably, martyrdom operations, or suicide missions as they are named in the West are not exclusive to Islam. Historically, martyrdom operations have also been nationalistic in nature, aimed at ending imperial occupation. Examples include Chinese communists during the revolt in Shanghai, China in 1927, the Japanese Kamikaze during World War II, the Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka and India, the Kurdistan Worker's Party (PKK) in Turkey, and the Indian Babbar Khalsa International (BKI).¹⁹²

¹⁸⁹ Saad-Ghorayeb, 125.

¹⁹⁰ Momen and Moussalli qtd. in Alagha, Joseph (c), *Hezbollah's Identity Construction*, (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2011), 95-6.

¹⁹¹ Momen and Moussalli qtd. in Alagha (c), 95-6.

¹⁹² Alagha (c), 108.

Hezbollah has constructed four senses of martyrdom as *thawabit*. *Thawabit* refers to “immutable principles” or a set of recognized rules and norms.¹⁹³ Discussing all four are out of the scope of this thesis, and thus, only the first two will be discussed.

The first element of martyrdom deployed is *al-shahid al-mujahid* (martyr fighter). This is a Muslim engaging in Lesser *Jihad* who, while battling the enemy, dies on the battlefield but does not die by exploding himself. Instead, he is killed through conventional warfare, such as Hadi Nasrallah, son of Sayyed Nasrallah, who died in 1997 while fighting an Israeli contingent. Hezbollah asserts that *al-shahid al-mujahid* is pious and performed an “altruistic and supererogatory act.”¹⁹⁴ *Al-shahid al-mujahid* is neither washed or wrapped in traditional burial shroud, as per Islamic tradition, but is washed by the angels.¹⁹⁵

The second is *al-istishhadi al-mujahid* (the martyred fighter). This refers to a martyr engaging in Lesser *Jihad* by intentionally becoming a human grenade or by inflicting the most damage or deaths possible against the enemy on the battlefield until he dies. Hezbollah constructs *al-istishhadi al-mujahid* as a “hardcore altruist” who, similar to *al-shahid al-mujahid*, committed a “supererogatory act.”¹⁹⁶ For Hezbollah, the martyred fighter sacrificed him or herself for the *maslaha* or benefit of his or her community and the *umma*. His or her sacrifice is constructed by Hezbollah as an action that is beyond the “call of duty,” as it is not incumbent on Muslims to engage in the act of martyrdom. Hezbollah affirms that the Prophet Muhammed enjoined that *al-istishhadi al-*

¹⁹³ Alagha (c), 299.

¹⁹⁴ Alagha (a), 108.

¹⁹⁵ Alagha (a), 108.

¹⁹⁶ Alagha (a), 108.

mujahid is also not washed or wrapped in burial shroud, as the *hadith* reveals that the angels will wash him or her.¹⁹⁷ Ayatollah Muhammed Hussein Fadlallah¹⁹⁸ posits that a martyred fighter “differs little from that of a soldier who fights and knows that in the end he will be killed. The two situations lead to death; except that one fits in with the conventional procedures of war, and the other does not’.” Fadlallah continues, “the Muslims believe that you struggle by transforming yourself into a living bomb like you struggle with a gun in your hand. There is no difference between dying with a gun in your hand or exploding yourself’.” He adds, “What is the difference between setting out for battle knowing you will die after killing ten [enemy soldiers], and setting out to the field to kill ten and knowing you will die while killing them’?”¹⁹⁹ Fadlallah was not the architect behind martyrdom operations. They were first sanctioned for men and women by the Supreme Leader Khomeini who exploited their usefulness during the Iran-Iraq War enjoining that they signified the highest level of altruism for the sake of Islam. “[A]s Shi‘ites we welcome any opportunity for sacrificing our blood. Our nation looks forward to an opportunity for self-sacrifice and martyrdom’.” He added, “red death is better than a black life’.”²⁰⁰ Thus, the difference between the two is that *al-shahid al-mujahid* is a fighter “who falls on the battlefield while facing the enemy.”²⁰¹ *Al-istishhadi al-mujahid* is the willingness of a fighter to explode him or herself in an effort to inflict maximum damage on the enemy.

¹⁹⁷ Alagha (a), 108.

¹⁹⁸ Ayatollah Fadlallah was the leading cleric in Lebanon respected by Hezbollah. He was not affiliated with the movement officially, but unofficially he influenced many of Hezbollah’s ideas. He insisted that he is independent of any Islamist movement in Lebanon.

¹⁹⁹ Alagha (a), 111.

²⁰⁰ Alagha (c), 101.

²⁰¹ Alagha (c), 108.

Hezbollah stresses that martyrdom is a selfless act, characterized by freewill and the preference of paradise over life. Hezbollah succeeded in stimulating this feeling of self-sacrifice through Greater *Jihad*, and as a result, there was no shortage of martyrs willing to die for Hezbollah. Through the social construction of the Karbala narrative and the fervor of religious discipline and devotion, Hezbollah is able to continuously construct the idea of martyrdom. By constructing martyrdom as a religious act of self-sacrifice, in line with Greater *Jihad*, would-be martyrs are willing to sacrifice themselves, similarly to how Imam Hussein sacrificed himself for Islam. In addition, each martyrdom operation conducted by the Islamic Resistance must be accorded a *fatwa*, a religious edict, granted by the *faqih* or jurist in order for it to be considered martyrdom not suicide.²⁰² Indeed, Hezbollah enjoys popular support by understanding that identity and perception are important elements in global politics. It is important for Hezbollah to be perceived as good Muslims by the Lebanese citizenry, dedicated to the preservation of the *umma* and Lebanon rather than as sinners who commit suicide. After all, who would be willing to die for an organization known for being heretical. Fadlallah justified martyrdom missions as legitimate, conducted under the umbrella of *jihad*. Martyrdom operations were designed to end the occupation of South Lebanon against the usurper of Arab lands by any means necessary. He further asserted that ““a person must face power with equal or superior power. If it is legitimate to protect one’s life, land, and destiny, then all means of self-defence become legitimate’.”²⁰³ Fadlallah is legitimizing the norm of resistance and constructing a reality that martyrdom is religiously sanctioned under the

²⁰² Alagha (c), 113-4.

²⁰³ Alagha (a), 101.

conditions of occupation by a superior military power. Resistance is made a political norm, by being made a religious norm.

As a preconstruction, Hezbollah has reconstructed martyrdom as an honourable act conducted as a means to self-determination in times of war. Martyrdom is defined and deployed as an act that cleanses one's soul, a choice of the afterlife over worldly desires, and a choice to die with honour rather than live in shame perpetuated by occupation. Nasrallah reminds his supporters of a saying by Imam Ali: “one thousand strikes of the sword are easier than one death on the mattress’.”²⁰⁴ Unique to Hezbollah's reconstruction of resistance is its use of Shi'a history, more specifically the self-sacrifice of Imam Hussein to free the *umma* from Caliph Yazid's tyranny. This deviates away from the common understanding of martyrdom in Sunni Islam. Again, Nasrallah is reconstructing the norm of resistance by using religious symbolism to sanction the act of self-sacrifice. Hezbollah's religious symbolism is not given, but rather its meanings are constructed and reconstructed continuously through narratives, edicts, and proverbs of religious leaders revered in Islam. By invoking the teachings of Imam Ali, Sayyed Nasrallah is constructing the norm of resistance as something divinely-willed. This is part of Hezbollah's attempt to internalize the norm of resistance. If the act of self-sacrifice is religiously sanctioned, then politically it becomes a legal method of war in combating occupation, imperialism, and oppression. This is one way Hezbollah (re)constructs resistance as a norm.

In November 1982, in the Southern city of Tyre, a white Mercedes strapped with explosives drove into an Israeli headquarters and intelligence center destroying the eight-

²⁰⁴ Imam Ali Ibn Abu Taleb qtd. in Saad-Ghorayeb, 128-9.

storey building and killing 141 Israeli personnel. This would be Hezbollah's first martyrdom operation. Hezbollah's first contemporary martyr, Ahmed Qasir, shocked the Israelis who did not anticipate such an attack and did not understand what had happened. Israeli authorities continued for years to insist that the explosion was caused by a gas leak. In 1982, Hezbollah was not formally established and instead was composed of several factions that were clandestine, but the Party of God claims this operation as its own.²⁰⁵ This was part of Hezbollah attempting to construct itself. This would be the first of many martyrdom operations conducted by the Islamic Resistance until the final Israeli withdrawal in 2000. It is interesting to note that during Hezbollah's early years (1978-1984/5) a martyred fighter had to be able to kill at least 30 people for an operation to be categorized a religious martyrdom.²⁰⁶ Beginning in 1985 this was no longer a prerequisite for martyrdom operations. However, Sayyed Nasrallah asserts that martyrdom operations are not indiscriminate despite the eagerness of many young would-be martyrs. He contends that if the operation is not fruitful and does not inflict as much damage as possible against the enemy, then the operation is unsanctioned because it would be inhumane, legally and religiously. By extension, there are restrictions placed on martyrdom. Nasrallah concludes, "even when we perform *jihad* and seek martyrdom, we do so only in order to achieve victory," which is a reward for Lebanon and the people.²⁰⁷ For Hezbollah and Lebanese Shi'a, Israel signified oppression and represented the role of Caliph Yazid in the Karbala Drama and Hezbollah, as the symbol of resistance and mobilization, is the contemporary of Imam Hussein's resistance to Umayyad rule.

²⁰⁵ Hala Jaber, *Hezbollah: Born with a Vengeance*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 75.

²⁰⁶ Alagha (a), 111.

²⁰⁷ Blanford and Khouri (a), 157.

According to Hamzeh, militant operations conducted by the Islamic Resistance reached almost 5,000 (4,928 to be exact) for the period between 1996-2000. Militant operations dramatically decreased from 2001-2004 where the number of operations hardly reached 20.²⁰⁸ In fact, the last martyrdom operation conducted by the Islamic Resistance was in 1999 and not in 2006 as many claimed.²⁰⁹ Obviously, there are changes in Hezbollah's martyrdom. The first change is in Hezbollah's religious construction. Martyrdom is no longer couched in religiosity as it once was in the early 1980s. Beginning in 1991, Hezbollah began to include nationalism as part of its policy of *infithah* and Lebanonization, justifying martyrdom as a national duty in contrast to exclusively relying on Islamic symbolism or the Karbala Drama. Hezbollah no longer uses religion as a justification for martyrdom. Instead, it is a national duty in the preservation of Lebanon's borders initially from Israeli aggression, but now from Sunni extremists, such as the Islamic State. The *umma* has been replaced with protecting the honour and pride of the "nation." Changing Hezbollah's religious tone was a political strategy that was implemented prior to the parliamentary elections in 1992. Indeed, the Party of God felt that ideas closely associated with Shi'ism might alienate voters, notably Christian and even Sunni voters, therefore, they had to be quieted. Notably, this does not mean that Hezbollah dismissed religion completely, but it was commonly understood among all Lebanese factions, secular or Islamist, that the Israeli occupation of South Lebanon was scurrilous and humiliating.²¹⁰

²⁰⁸ Hamzeh, 89.

²⁰⁹ Alagha (a), 87.

²¹⁰ Alagha (a), 199.

The most important change following Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon was the typology of martyrdom. *Al-istishhadi al-mujahid* is no longer used by the Islamic Resistance as the conventional weapon of war. Instead, Hezbollah emphasizes *al-shahid al-mujahid* as the contemporary method of warfare. Another important change involved the construction of the enemy. Following 2006, Hezbollah no longer battled what it called the "Zionist entity." Instead, the resistance or the battle became more internalized and less regional. The shift occurred even before 2006. Following Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon in May 2000, Hezbollah began to focus on domestic politics and Greater *Jihad*. This policy also included abandoning martyrdom and attempting to adapt and integrate into the Lebanese polity. Hezbollah was able to construct itself as a party able to adapt to an ever-changing environment. However, this changed in 2013 when Hezbollah actively involved itself in the Syrian crisis. Hezbollah's focus shifted from resisting the alien entity in the Arab world, known as Israel, to resisting "terrorist" cells operating in Syria which Hezbollah constructs as proxies working to remove Bashar Al Assad from power. In line with the shift in martyrdom, Hezbollah's fighters are no longer human grenades, but are battling the enemy as soldiers and dying on the battlefield from wounds and gunfire. This is in contrast to Ahmed Qasir who drove his Mercedes into an Israeli intelligence building, hoping to inflict as much damage as possible, while sacrificing himself in the process. The ultimate sacrifice the Party is making now is being involved in the Syrian crisis. Hezbollah initially constructed martyrdom as a purely religious duty. From 1985 to 1991, the Party of God changed its religious stance, while maintaining that self-sacrifice will lead to paradise. During this period, Hezbollah became more politicized, constructing the norms of pan-Arabism, pan-Islamism, fighting oppression,

anti-Zionism, and anti-imperialism. From 1992 on, Hezbollah began advocating secularism and constructing a nationalistic agenda. Martyrdom is now constructed as a purely national duty, framed in the context of preserving the “nation’s” integrity and dignity (*‘izzat wa karamat al umma*). Fighting occupation through martyrdom was reconstructed as a nationalistic and religious duty. That is, martyrdom was constructed as a norm legitimized by preserving the dignity and honour of the nation that has been hindered by the shame of occupation.²¹¹ Hezbollah has continued constructing martyrdom in the context of nationalism, as evidenced in the Syrian crisis. Indeed, Hezbollah is not the first nor is it unique in framing martyrdom in nationalistic terms. Other Islamist movements who have constructed martyrdom as a national duty include Egypt’s Muslim Brotherhood and Palestine’s HAMAS. Sayyed Nasrallah has repeatedly claimed that the Syrian crisis is a proxy war designed to destroy the country, its army, and its people.²¹² Against this backdrop, Hezbollah has intervened to help resist such a project from being realized. Hezbollah is constructing its involvement in Syria as an effort to protect Lebanon’s eastern border. Hezbollah contends that its intervention in Syria is intended to deter *takfiri* groups from crossing over into Lebanon. Accordingly, Hezbollah has stationed its fighters along the Lebanese-Syrian border. There are no shortages of Hezbollah fighters in Syria willing to sacrifice themselves for the social construction of Lebanese sovereignty. That is, and despite objections from some fighters unwilling to be deployed to Syria, Hezbollah continues to deploy fighters to Syria in a continued effort to rescue the resistance bloc and protect Lebanon’s border with Syria.

²¹¹ Alagha (a), 199.

²¹² “Nasrallah: What is Happening in Syria Aims to Destroy It and Its People, Society and Army,” Syrian Radio & TV, last modified, April 30, 2013, <http://www.syriaonline.sy/?f=Details&catid=12&pageid=5681>.

Martyrdom, as a social construct, is one of the most important ideas in Hezbollah's ideology. The Party of God sought to escape from its grassroots as a clandestine organization and express its pragmatism. To express its pragmatism, it was required for martyrdom to change, but it was never abandoned and remains a normative idea intimately involved with Hezbollah. By the same token, martyrdom is used until today, but is practiced differently from the days of the Israeli occupation of Lebanon. Presently, *al-istishhadi al-mujahid* has been abandoned in favour of a more contemporary style of warfare exhibited in *al-shahid al-mujahid*. Despite Hezbollah applying its policies of *infatih* and Lebanonization to martyrdom, the idea was never and will likely never be abandoned; like *jihad*, martyrdom was differently constructed according to the Lebanese political climate. *Al-shahid al-mujahid*, is, however, practiced currently in Syria against Islamic State (IS) and other "Sunni extremists." Fuller and Francke offer an insightful argument that Shi'ism is inherently more rebellious than Sunnism. The authors note Shi'ism's history of challenging Umayyad authority and power as proof that Shi'ism is predisposed to suffering and even coveting martyrdom as recourse to the Karbala Drama.²¹³ Nevertheless, martyrdom is celebrated annually on November 11th, the date Ahmed Qasir took his own life. Similar to the West's commemoration of war veterans, Martyrdom Day serves as a reminder of the sacrifices made by the Resistance, but equally important it is the continuous reconstruction of Hezbollah's ideas that have been physically expressed.²¹⁴

²¹³ Graham E. Fuller and Rend Rahim Francke, *The Arab Shi'a: The Forgotten Muslims*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), 254.

²¹⁴ Alagha (c), 251.

The Oppressed/Opressors Dichotomy

Hezbollah has constructed a social structure of occupation by identifying itself as a resistance movement. As a resistance movement, it is attempting to challenge the Israeli occupation by any means. Hezbollah adopted the role of the oppressed while Israel had been, and continues to be, constructed as the oppressor. Adopted from Khomeini's ideology, Hezbollah's resistance is grounded in the dichotomy of the oppressed versus the oppressor. The dichotomy of oppression is reflective of the Karbala Drama, whereby Caliph Yazid symbolizes oppression and Imam Hussein signifies the oppressed.²¹⁵ At one time or another, the Shah, the United States, Israel, and Iraq during the Iran-Iraq war have all been constructed to be Yazid, and Khomeini and his allies as the embodiment of Imam Hussein Ibn Ali.²¹⁶ It is a reference to the Quranic theme of good versus evil locked in a zero-sum game of epic proportions whereby the oppressed defeat the oppressors. This division of the world was first articulated by Khomeini who constructed the identity of oppressed (*mustad'fin*) and the oppressors (*mustakbirin*). The dichotomy of oppression has been mentioned by Hezbollah in several speeches and the 1985 Open Letter and its 1992 political campaign were addressed to the oppressed."²¹⁷ The construction of oppression in the 1985 Open Letter and Hezbollah's 1992 political campaign were the same. In the 1985 Open Letter and in the 1992 political campaign, Hezbollah constructed itself as the champion of the peasant farmers, the labourers and the poor, the oppressed and deprived, the workers and homeless. The homeless Hezbollah are referring to are

²¹⁵ Rola El Hussein, "Hezbollah and the Axis of Refusal: Hamas, Iran, and Syria," *Third World Quarterly* 31, no. 5 (2010): 805.

²¹⁶ El Hussein, 805.

²¹⁷ Saad-Ghorayeb, 16-7.

those who have no homes as a consequence of Israeli bombardment.²¹⁸ Hezbollah became known as the “voice of the downtrodden.” Hussein Al-Mussawi explains that oppression refers to the refusal of the downtrodden to be oppressed any further. Ironically, it was the Israeli invasion, occupation, and subjugation of the Shi’a citizenry that mobilized and even radicalized the sect, paving the way for the establishment of Hezbollah.²¹⁹

Hezbollah, Palestinian and pan-Arab liberation movements, and Islamists construct the Zionists as the ultimate oppressors. Hezbollah also constructs any rule that is unjust despite religion, race, or creed as oppressive. The same applies to the oppressed. Despite Khomeini’s dichotomy of oppression having its roots in the Quran, Muslims and non-Muslims who are socially and economically disadvantaged, politically oppressed and culturally deprived are considered oppressed, irrespective of their identity or culture.²²⁰ Certainly, the Quran does not specify any religion or culture concerning oppression. The oppressed are also not exclusive to the Global South, but include the Global North as well. By extension, Iran was active in the 1990s aiding “oppressed” movements such as the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) in Algeria, the National Islamic Movement in Sudan, HAMAS and Islamic Jihad of Palestine, the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan, Al-Nahda in Tunis, and the *Jihad* group in Egypt.²²¹ In the past, Iran has aided and supported South Africa’s Nelson Mandela, the Irish Republican Army (IRA), Daniel Ortega, and Fidel

²¹⁸ Saad-Ghorayeb, 17-8.

²¹⁹ Saad-Ghorayeb, 8.

²²⁰ Saad-Ghorayeb, 17.

²²¹ Anoushiravan Ehteshami and Raymond A. Hinnebusch, *Syria and Iran Middle Powers in a Penetrated Regional System*, (London: Routledge, 1997), 30.

Castro who in the eyes of Iran were being oppressed.²²² Iran is not only challenging the geopolitical order of the region by leading the Shi'a revival, but it has in the past bolstered support for non-Muslim social and even revolutionary movements. However, Khomeini and Hezbollah have constructed Israel as the first and ultimate oppressor, the cancerous growth that must be excised by all means. The second order oppressors are those who occupy land of the oppressed, but again the oppressors are not comparable to Israel whose very existence is believed to be illegal and illegitimate. The third order oppressors are dictatorships in the Global South who govern the oppressed with an iron-fist and are Western-backed.²²³

The invasion and occupation of South Lebanon by the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) and the South Lebanese Army (SLA) radicalized the Shi'a. As mentioned earlier, the norm of resistance is rooted in the construction of oppression and in the case of Hezbollah, resistance is also grounded in occupation. Hezbollah is constructing resistance within the context of occupation and imperialism. For instance, Hezbollah constructs the Shebaa Farms as Lebanese territory still under occupation. Consequently, Hezbollah must continue constructing resistance and remain armed in defense of Lebanese sovereignty. Another example is Hezbollah's construction of the Syrian crisis as an imperial project designed to dismantle the Syrian state. Israel's aggressive actions against the Shi'a in the South indeed demonstrated the dichotomy of oppression. In 1982, in an effort to keep the Shi'a obedient, Israeli forces imposed curfews, conducted wholesale arrests, house searches, and roadblocks. Economically, the Lebanese market was flooded with Israeli

²²² Judith Harik, *Hezbollah: The Changing Face of Terrorism*, (London: I.B. Tauris, 2004), 20-1.

²²³ Saad-Ghorayeb, 21.

commodities for the local population to consume.²²⁴ The most striking example of oppression came during the civil war between September 16 and 18, 1982 when Christian partisans under the tutelage of the IDF entered the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps in a Southern suburb of Beirut that housed Palestinians and nearly a quarter of Lebanese Shia. Many residents of the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps were shot, including women and children. In total 1,500 people died in what became known as the Sabra and Shatila massacre. This spurred the creation of radical forces, including Hezbollah, and reconstructed the Shi'a identity which initially welcomed the Israeli invasion, as they believed the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) brought only more problems to Lebanon, especially the south. *Afwaj al-Muqawmat al-Lubnaniyya* (AMAL) was one of the forces that was displeased with the Palestinian Liberation Organization using South Lebanon as a launching pad to commit attacks against Israel. The misery of the Shi'a was chronic, as refugee camps meant for Palestinians swelled with Shi'a refugees escaping Israeli bombardment in the south, coupled with an economic blockade and the obliteration of southern agriculture. Currently a museum, Al-Khiam prison serves as a constant reminder of Israel's and the South Lebanon Army's oppression. This only further contributes to Hezbollah's norm of resistance. Hezbollah continuously constructs the Al-Khiam museum as a place to remember oppression and occupation. The Al-Khiam prison could have been left as an abandoned site, for example, or converted back into a chemical plant following Israel's withdrawal in May 2000. Instead, Hezbollah and the Lebanese government chose to convert it into a museum. Al-Khiam prison helps Hezbollah's case as a norm entrepreneur attempting to legitimize the norm of resistance.

²²⁴ Ehteshami and Hinnebusch, 121-2.

According to Finnemore and Sikkink, one of the ways a new norm may be accepted is if it has intrinsic qualities.²²⁵ Al-Khiam prison, as a detention center designed to destroy the morale of the resistance through torture, violated all universal norms of behaviour, including human rights. Norms which have intrinsic characteristics, such as human rights, are more likely to be adopted or recognized. Through Al-Khiam prison, Hezbollah is legitimizing its norm construction by illustrating how the detention center symbolized oppression. To resist torture as a tactic of war is widely accepted. Al-Khiam prison constructs what Hezbollah has been resisting. Oppression is constructed as the backbone of Hezbollah's resistance.

Hezbollah's construction of oppressed and oppressor has shifted. In Hezbollah's construction, oppressors are often the colonizers or despotic rulers and the oppressed are referred to as the occupied or those who are economically and socially disadvantaged, and culturally deprived. According to Hezbollah, however, Israel is the embodiment of oppression, and therefore, Hezbollah's construction of Israel as the ultimate oppressor is unchanged. Between the years of 1978 and 1984/5, Hezbollah constructed the Maronites, the United States, France, and Israel as the oppressors and the periphery states or the Global South as the oppressed. The French historically favoured the Christians, and thus, drafted Lebanon's confessional system to allocate the majority of the political power to the Maronites. The Christian Maronites occupied the position of the presidency while their Sunni counterparts occupied the role of prime minister and the Shi'as were assigned the figurative role of speaker of the house. In a national consensus conducted in 1932, France as the colonial power at the time, included the Shi'as who resided in mainly

²²⁵ Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink, "International Norm Dynamics and Political Change, *International Organization* 52, No.4: 907.

Christian areas of Lebanon as Christian. In other parts of the country, the Shi'as were counted as either Sunni or Christians. The results, indeed manipulated, illustrated that the Shi'as were the third largest confessional group. The Shi'as held some power, but it was not an accurate representation of the community.²²⁶ The Shi'a community constructed an identity of the downtrodden as they were politically underrepresented, and as a result, third-class citizens. Hezbollah constructed the U.S. and France as oppressors because they were considered occupying forces under the pretext of peace-keeping during the civil war. The Global South was composed of colonial states formerly under British or French rule. It was also made up of states that were victims of U.S. aggression, such as Grenada, Nicaragua, and Iran. This changed in the years between 1984/5 and 1990 where Quranic expressions took precedence and terminology such as Great and Little Satan became metaphors. Great and Little Satan refers to the United States and Israel respectively.²²⁷ Hezbollah's construction of oppression changed to be less political and more grounded in religiosity. Some verses from the Holy Quran (34:31-33) help to decipher between the oppressed and oppressor.²²⁸ From 1991 onwards, Hezbollah's notion of oppressed did not change. However, the idea of oppressor shifted. During the civil war, Hezbollah constructed the Lebanese state, including political Maronism as illegitimate. Initially, Hezbollah condemned the Lebanese confessional system as oppressive, serving the interests of the Christian Maronites. Despite this, and with the encouragement of Fadlallah and permission from Khamenei, Hezbollah participated in parliamentary elections for the first time in 1992 and municipal elections in 2005.

²²⁶ Alagha (a), 22.

²²⁷ Alagha (a), 195.

²²⁸ Alagha (a), 194.

Hezbollah is currently a member of the national multi-confessional cabinet with veto power. Internationally, France is no longer regarded as an oppressor or Great Satan, notably due to Iran's recent nuclear deal and the warming of relations between the two states.²²⁹ This change reveals that a part of Hezbollah's norm entrepreneurship relates to Iranian foreign policy. Since 2013, Hezbollah has constructed the Syrian people and the Syrian Arab Army as being oppressed by the GCC, the United States, and Israel. As the Lebanese once were, the Syrian people are now being oppressed by a civil war that is devastating the country with far-reaching implications. Syrians are not the only ones being oppressed. On April 17, 2015, Sayyed Nasrallah proclaimed Hezbollah's unflagging support for the "oppressed" Yemeni people who are victims of Saudi-US aggression.²³⁰ The Yemeni people, according to Sayyed Nasrallah, are currently being bombarded by a Saudi-led campaign known as Operation Decisive Storm aimed at reinstating the President, Abdel Rabbah Mansour Hadi, who was forced into exile by Shi'a Houthi rebels backed by the former President of Yemen, Ali Abdullah Saleh. As a norm entrepreneur, the narrative of oppression is continuously being reconstructed according to Hezbollah's changing domestic, regional, and international environments.

Hezbollah has socially constructed a reality that the Syrian President and Yemen's Houthis are victims of a wider project to overhaul the regional order of the Middle East. It is not necessarily important to determine who lies where in Hezbollah's dichotomy of oppression, but to understand that oppression continues to be made a central theme in Hezbollah's ideology. Until today, the region remains a target of

²²⁹ Alagha (a), 195.

²³⁰ "Nasrallah Reassure Hezbollah Full Support to the Oppressed Yemeni People," Al Alam English, last modified, April 17, 2015, <http://en.alalam.ir/news/1695747>.

penetration through military bases, treaties, arms deals, and military intervention, such as the invasion of Iraq in 2003.²³¹

As a norm entrepreneur, the identity and norms of Hezbollah help to construct the normative idea of oppression. Fadlallah elucidates this point by positing that “oppressed people cannot always behave in a reasonable manner...the weak will fight to defend their interests, even if they have to use knives and stones to spread chaos throughout the world’.”²³² As an agent once in a social structure of Israeli occupation, Hezbollah’s desire to construct its identity as the “party of the oppressed” and the “voice of the downtrodden” is intentional and appealing not only to the party’s local constituency, but to the Arab world that advocates for resistance as the only response to oppression, subjugation, and occupation. The social construction of oppression is demonstrated continuously through speeches conducted by Hezbollah, statements from the Quran, the annual commemoration of Martyrdom Day, and Al-Khiam museum. By socially reconstructing an identity of oppression, Hezbollah is reaching into the heart of Arab grievances as former victims of European imperialism and currently victims of Israel’s expansionist policies. Effectively, Hezbollah is reconstructing a reality of oppression in order to justify its resistance norm. Hezbollah is attempting to legitimize its norm of resistance by appealing to the oppressed of the world. Hezbollah is constructing resistance as a universally accepted response to oppression and occupation. As a norm entrepreneur, Hezbollah is claiming its resistance norm as universal.

²³¹ Ehteshami and Hinnebusch, 9-10.

²³² Fadlallah qtd. in Ehteshami and Hinnebusch, 127.

Anti-imperialism

Hezbollah's normative idea of anti-imperialism has its roots in the Israeli occupation of Lebanon. The social structure of oppression and occupation created resentment and hostility and demonized Israel as the ultimate oppressor that needs to be stopped. More importantly, it is an entity that cannot and will not be recognized, as Israel is the usurper of Arab lands, including Palestine, the Golan Heights, and the Shebaa Farms. Tripp explains that resistance in any form is a means of trying to gain recognition of one's dignity.²³³ The grievances held by Hezbollah do not only extend to the state of Israel, but to the Western powers, most notably the United States whose unequivocal aid and support has made Israel the most powerful state in the region. Hezbollah is determined to challenge the power of the United States and its ally Israel by countering their influence in the region. As previously mentioned in chapter one, the Party of God can be understood as being anti-globalization, anti-imperialist, anti-Western, and anti-Zionist. Due to its history as a resistance movement, Hezbollah has continuously reconstructed the identity of being the Vietcong of the Litani, in honour of Vietnam's guerilla's resistance movement during the Vietnam War (1965-1973) and in reference to South Lebanon's river, the Litani River. The Party of God also lambastes Arab states that have had relations or peace negotiations with Israel, including Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states who are often accused of being America's collaborators in the region. The plundering of Arab resources, namely oil and water, by the United States and Israel only exacerbates matters further.

²³³ Charles Tripp, *The Power and the People: Paths of Resistance in the Middle East*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 9 and 5.

Hezbollah's animosity to imperialism was made public in the 1985 Open Letter which was presented first as a public speech on February 16, 1985. In a section titled "Our History with the Imperialists," Hezbollah began by stating "O humble and honorable oppressed" Hezbollah condemns the "crimes" committed by the United States in Vietnam, Iran, Nicaragua, Grenada, Palestine, Lebanon and we also condemn Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, its interference with Iran's affairs, its backing of the conflict with Iraq, and so forth.²³⁴ In regards to Israel, Hezbollah considers it the American foothold in the Muslim World. Israel, the master of Zionism poses the greatest risk to the Arab world, as the occupation of Palestine is only stage one of a grand expansionist strategy of establishing a Greater Israel which would include the Euphrates River in Iraq to the Nile of Egypt.²³⁵ The Party of God has an ideological battle with Israel as it is the party's adversary since its inception, as it was established on stolen land at the expense of the Muslim *umma*. Hezbollah's confrontation, therefore, with the Zionist entity can only cease to exist when Israel ceases to exist. By extension, the Party of God reserves the right to reject any cease-fire, peace talks, truce, and reject any communication with Israel.²³⁶ As an agent, Hezbollah must continuously reconstruct the social structure of occupation in order for the Party of God to remain armed and constructed as a resistance movement. Since Israel's occupation of Lebanon, in large part, has ceased to exist as a social structure, the movement is in need of fresh conflicts to legitimize its norm of resistance. Its confrontation with Israel is ideological, but Hezbollah understands that the

²³⁴ Dominique Avon, and Anais Khatchadourian, trans. Jane Marie Todd, *Hezbollah: a History of the Party of God* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2012), 119.

²³⁵ Avon and Khatchadourian, 119.

²³⁶ Avon, and Khatchadourian, 118-19.

existence of Israel provides legitimacy to its norm construction. In chapter one of the party's Political Manifesto published in 2009 titled "Hegemony and the Awakening" Hezbollah explains that the United States sees the world as a marketplace in need of exploitation. Moreover, American hegemony is unique to the world because of its inherent belief that it owns the world and that Americans are naturally superior beings. Therefore, the Western and especially the American expansionist strategy conjoined with their capitalist economic plan is global in scale and is a strategy of unlimited exploitation and greed.²³⁷ Hezbollah is not only constructing a reality of political resistance, but there is also an economic dimension to its resistance. Sayyed Qassem unequivocally characterizes anti-imperialism as a dichotomy: the United States and Israel as engineers of an imperial project on one side and on the other the Islamic Resistance.²³⁸ Qassem explains that the US is able to spread chaos and destruction in the Middle East, extorting the region's resources while attacking Arab regimes, political parties, and citizens. In response, Qassem enjoins that Hezbollah is steadfast in its decision to resist American exploitation. "Our legitimate right is in itself a source of power, and our logic is sound."²³⁹ In response to the imperial-Zionist project or occupation by any force, Hezbollah insists that it is the right and duty of all peoples to resist occupation and exploitation, politically, culturally, and through education.²⁴⁰ As a norm entrepreneur, Hezbollah is constructing the norm of resistance by juxtaposing those who are occupying against those who are fighting occupation. Qassem is constructing a reality whereby resistance is a requirement meant to prevent American exploitation of the region and its

²³⁷ Avon and Khatchadourian, 133-4.

²³⁸ Naim Qassem, *Hizbullah: The Story from Within*, (London: Saqi Books, 2005), 269.

²³⁹ Qassem, 269.

²⁴⁰ Saad-Ghorayeb, 126.

resources. Resistance, as it is being constructed, must be the response to more than just Zionist ambitions. Hezbollah is continuously constructing resistance as the logical response to safeguarding the Middle East from any form of exploitation. As a norm entrepreneur, Hezbollah is attempting to construct a reality of U.S. and Israeli imperialism. Kidnapping of Westerners, for example, during the civil war was Hezbollah's way of constructing resistance to any Western presence in the country. Hezbollah also kidnapped Israeli soldiers, a strategy that proved fruitful in Hezbollah's campaign of psychological warfare. Indeed, it caused an emotional burden on Israeli politicians and Hezbollah hoped that a backlash from the Israeli citizenry would eventually occur, calling into question the Israeli occupation of Lebanon. Through kidnappings, Hezbollah manifested the norm of resistance to occupation.

Hezbollah constructs Israeli occupation of Arab lands as humiliating and oppressive. Hezbollah constructs a reality that through armed military *jihad* and martyrdom, the threat of imperialism can be resisted. This position extends to Palestine and the duty to protect and preserve the third holiest site in Islam, Al Aqsa Mosque. One of the constructions in Hezbollah's idea of anti-imperialism has been made to be combating Israel in an effort to liberate Jerusalem. Nasrallah has previously suggested that Hezbollah would be willing to send reinforcements, if necessary, to support its Palestinian brethren. When Sayyed Nasrallah was asked about the 1993 Oslo Accords, he rebuffed stating that "the land is our land and the holy sites belong to our nation; we want to live with our honour and freedom in our region of the world. We do not want to beg for peace and security... We want to forge our nation's peace with our own blood, guns,

body parts, and bones; this is the peace we believe in and seek.”²⁴¹ The idea Hezbollah mobilizes is that not one Arab state has managed to liberate an inch of Palestine since 1948, which illustrates the ineffectiveness of negotiations. It also makes resistance the only feasible option when dealing with Israel.²⁴² Hezbollah highlights Jerusalem’s religious significance to proffer representations that once Jerusalem is free, the *umma* is free. In a show of solidarity with Palestine’s claim to Jerusalem as its future capital, Ayatollah Khomeini created Jerusalem Day, and like Martyrs Day, it is a celebrated yearly in Iran and by Hezbollah in Lebanon.

Imperialism is not a phenomenon exclusive to the West. Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states’ Operation Decisive Storm is constructed to be yet another ploy by imperial powers aimed at partitioning Arab lands. Hezbollah is constructing a reality whereby Yemen is part of a wider US experiment: “We are confronting a new American scheme, a plan of occupation of unknown duration. The Americans are looking to establish permanent military bases-this means that we are facing not only occupation, but a further consolidation of the US presence.”²⁴³ Freeing Palestine is constructed to mean liberating Iraq, Syria, and Yemen from the vice grip of imperial powers.

Thomas Homer-Dixon published an article in 1994 titled “Environmental Scarcities and Violent Conflict: Evidence from Cases.” His thesis was that future conflicts will erupt over natural resources, which over time become increasingly scarce. Homer-Dixon enjoins that depletion and pollution of water supplies may consequently cause “resource wars.” The author goes on to argue that out of the major environmental

²⁴¹ Nicholas Blanford and Ellen Khouri (a), *Voice of Hezbollah the Statements of Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah*, edited by Nicholas Noe, (London: Verso, 2007 (a), 174.

²⁴² Saad-Ghorayeb, 120.

²⁴³ Blanford and Khouri (a), 297.

changes facing the world, degradation and reduction in water supply, among other resources, will most likely contribute more to social upheaval than climate change or the depletion of the ozone layer.²⁴⁴ Homer-Dixon's thesis of resource wars has not proven to be the norm; however, the depletion of water supply has been historically one of the underlying tensions between Lebanon and Israel. This, Hezbollah argues, is again part of Israel's plan, to usurp not only Arab lands, but also Lebanon's water supply. Again, Hezbollah is constructing a reality of an imperial Zionist plot to steal Lebanon's water supply. This social construction allows Hezbollah to remain armed in an effort to resist Israel's plan to usurp Lebanon's water, even if land is not occupied. Thus, Hezbollah is constructing a social structure of continuous conflict, implicit or explicit, with Israel. As mentioned above, once Israel ceases to exist the confrontation with Zionism will cease to exist. However, Hezbollah, it seems, desires to reconstruct Zionism as a continuous threat to Lebanon, despite Israel's unconditional withdrawal from Lebanon in 2000.

Israel has been enduring a water crisis since its inception. Even before the establishment of Israel in 1948, the Zionist movement was well aware that the future of a Jewish state would be in danger without a reliable water source. The reason for Israel's sustained water crisis is Israel's geography of semi-dry to complete desert coupled with high water demand. The Sea of Galilee provides over one-third of water and another one-third comes from two aquifers, substantial geographical areas of underground catchments where water accrues. These lie beneath the Gaza Strip and the West Bank,²⁴⁵ which were seized in 1967. In 2005, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon "disengaged" from Gaza because

²⁴⁴ Thomas Homer-Dixon, "Environmental Scarcities and Violent Conflict: Evidence from Cases," *International Security* 19, no. 1 (1994): 7 and 6.

²⁴⁵ Cathy Sultan, *Tragedy in South Lebanon: the Israeli-Hezbollah War of 2006*, (Minneapolis: Scarletta Press, 2008), 77.

Israel could no longer siphon the amount of water for its demand. Gaza's water quality was adversely affected by an increase in salt levels and pollutants, and therefore was rendered undrinkable and given back to the Palestinians.²⁴⁶ Despite seizing the Shebaa Farms in 1967, Israel's solution remained a "well-watered" Lebanon to its north which in 2006 would increase water supply by up to eight hundred million cubic meters (MCM) or roughly forty percent of its water consumption.²⁴⁷ The Israelis ultimately failed to capture the Litani River in 2006. Israel managed to pump Lebanese water to Haifa during the occupation of Lebanon. Water was why the occupation line was the Litani.

The Shebaa Farms borders Lebanon and Syria from the side of the Golan Heights from the east and Israel from the southeast. Israel considered the Shebaa Farms as a part of the Golan Heights, and thus, part of the Syrian territory occupied in 1967. Hezbollah and the Lebanese and Syrian authorities have for decades disputed Israel's claim that the Shebaa Farms is Syrian. They argue that the Shebaa Farms is Lebanese and Israel must withdraw from all Lebanese territory immediately, citing UNSC Resolution 425 which called on Israel to withdraw its forces from all Lebanese territory. The Shebaa Farms is 22 square kilometers, comprising 2% of Lebanese territory. Israel refused to withdraw from the Shebaa Farms following May 25, 2000 arguing that it is Syrian territory and is part of the Golan Heights which was officially annexed in 1981. In a rebuttal, Syria sent a letter to the UN stating explicitly that the Shebaa Farms does not belong to Syria, but to Lebanon. In 2001, Sayyed Nasrallah asserted that it is Lebanese land and will be liberated by any means. Hezbollah, as a norm entrepreneur, is constructing Lebanon as a certain space that must be liberated through resistance. Moreover, it was through *jihad* and

²⁴⁶ Sultan, 78.

²⁴⁷ Sultan, 79.

martyrdom, Nasrallah explains, that the Islamic Resistance was able to force Israel to withdraw from Lebanese territory, not UNSC Resolution 425. Hezbollah is reconstructing the norm of resistance through the context of occupation and imperialism. Sayyed Nasrallah is reconstructing a social structure of occupation; that is, that Lebanon was never completely liberated in May 2000. Until the Shebaa Farms is liberated, the norm of resistance must continuously be constructed. According to Hezbollah, negotiations or land-for-peace deals are ineffective methods of diplomacy.

The question remains why does Israel refuse to relinquish the Shebaa Farms? Despite its size, the Shebaa Farms is rich in water due to high levels of precipitation mainly accumulated from melting snow corollaries in major underground basins. The melted snow provides the ground with a number of springs and streams at lower elevations.²⁴⁸ Hermon Mountain provides much of the water for the Hasbani River, south of the Shebaa Farms where Israeli engineers have embedded pipes used to siphon hundreds of cubic meters of water directly into Israel. The Director-General of the Litani River Authority, Nassar Nasrallah explains that Israel moves two hundred million cubic meters (MCM) from Lebanon and from those two hundred, one hundred and thirteen million cubic meters (MCM) comes directly from the Shebaa Farms, Hasbani River, and Wazani Springs.²⁴⁹ Hezbollah refuses to dismiss Lebanon's claim to the Shebaa Farms, although the UN has drawn a blue line effectively leaving the Shebaa Farms to Israel. Hezbollah continues to construct the Shebaa Farms as part of Lebanon. This construction allows for Hezbollah to remain armed and allows for ongoing *jihad*. Sayyed Qassem states that it is not acceptable to Lebanon or Hezbollah that Lebanon remains occupied.

²⁴⁸ Sultan, 84-5.

²⁴⁹ Sultan, 85.

From Hezbollah's perspective, relinquishing any territory is non-negotiable, despite where it is located and how valuable the land may be. Occupation must end.²⁵⁰

The Shebaa Farms remains a point of contention for all parties involved, especially Hezbollah which constructs the reality that it has not completely liberated Lebanon from Israeli occupation. The Party of God asserts that it will remain armed until the Shebaa Farms returns to Lebanon. Critics accuse the pan-Shi'a party of using the Shebaa Farms as a pretext to remain armed. Indeed, Hezbollah as a norm entrepreneur understands that without arms the party can no longer construct the norm of resistance and to keep its arms, some part of Lebanon must be occupied. A movement cannot be "resistant" without an arsenal of weapons at its disposal. Following Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon on May 25, 2000, Hezbollah continued to conduct operations in the Shebaa Farms area stating that it will not stop until Israeli forces withdraw from the Shebaa Farms. As a norm entrepreneur, the continued occupation of the Shebaa Farms is offering the legitimacy needed for Hezbollah's continuous norm construction. Resistance by way of *jihad* and martyrdom are constructed as the only options when responding to Israel's intransigent imperialism.

Certainly Hezbollah's position on imperialism has shifted over the years. From 1985 until 1991 the party implemented "Westoxification," however, from 1991 and on the Party of God adopted a policy of less Westoxification regarding France and the United Kingdom and the implementation of *infitah* regarding imperialism and Western Europe. As forces involved in the civil war began to withdraw their troops, Hezbollah quieted its construction of Westoxification. Westoxification referred to the spread of

²⁵⁰ Qassem, 132, 134, and 135.

Western cultural ideals. Hezbollah constructs the idea that the influence of Western culture is determinantal or toxic to Islamic values and to the livelihood of Islam. The United Kingdom was constructed as an experienced imperial power that exploited “defeatist Arab regimes” in the Gulf in an effort to usurp the regions resources.²⁵¹ Hezbollah’s construction of Westoxification as a normative idea is based upon the French and American troops that were stationed in Lebanon as a part of the UN peace-keeping mission, United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). Hezbollah’s animosity to the West extended to non-governmental organizations as well which were once constructed as agents of Great and Little Satan.²⁵² That is, NGOs that operated in Lebanon during the period of Westoxification were constructed as extensions of U.S. and Israeli foreign policy. Consequently, Hezbollah arbitrarily rejected NGOs operating in Lebanon. Instead, Hezbollah offered similar services offered by Western NGOs. In 1992, however, Hezbollah, in an effort to construct itself as a pragmatic resistance movement, began “opening up” and began integrating into Lebanon’s political landscape. The integration into the Lebanese polity meant that Hezbollah accepted the state’s institutions, confessional system, the Taif agreement, and the state’s civil institutions. The use of religious metaphors such as Great and Little Satan emphasizes what Hezbollah constructs as a battle between the forces of good and evil, where the oppressed are blessed with a divine victory (*Nasrallah*). It is important to recognize that the hostility towards the United States is directed at the administration not the American people. Hezbollah’s Deputy Chairman of the Executive Council, Sheikh Nabil Qaouk, avers that the United States is a myriad of nations that hold various opinions regarding U.S. foreign policy. For

²⁵¹ Alagha (a), 223.

²⁵² Alagha (a), 195.

instance, there are millions who sympathize with the Palestinian cause and there are many who reject America's policy of interventionism. Therefore, Sheikh Qaouk asserts, Hezbollah cannot judge America as a whole.²⁵³ However, the animosity towards Israel is directed at the government and at society. Hezbollah perceives that anyone living in Israel is willingly and willfully living on stolen land, and is therefore, complacent in contributing to the continued despair of the Palestinian people. Hezbollah's construction of the United States and Israel remains unchanged.

In Hezbollah's Open Letter, the party constructed the UN as faithfully serving the interests of the West, the United States, and Israel at the expense of the oppressed. As a result, Hezbollah discarded the UN Charter. When the Open Letter was released, Hezbollah's identity was clandestine. Presently, however, and concomitant with its commitment to pragmatism, Hezbollah openly expresses its commitment to the International Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and the UN Charter.²⁵⁴ The United Nations is an organizational platform which Hezbollah may use to promulgate its norm of resistance. One of the functions of the United Nations is to recognize and uphold universal norms, such as sovereignty and the responsibility to protect. It is in the interest of Hezbollah to construct the UN as a legitimate organization. Its commitment to the UDHR and the UN Charter helps construct the Party of God as a legitimate political actor not only in Lebanon, but in the region and in global politics. If it did not uphold the UN Charter, Hezbollah would be further alienating itself from international society. If it wishes to conquer Lebanon from the bottom up and continue constructing the norm of

²⁵³ Ted Dekker and Carl Medearis, *Tea with Hezbollah: Sitting at the Enemies' Table: Our Journey through the Middle East*, (New York: Doubleday Religion, 2010), 127.

²⁵⁴ Alagha (a), 196.

resistance, then Hezbollah must construct itself as legitimate political actor. If not, Hezbollah would be reduced again to a clandestine militia, and like other militias from the civil war, the pan-Shi'a party would be forcibly stripped of its weapons.

Unsurprisingly, Hezbollah asserts that Israel is in constant violation of the UDHR and the UN Charter. In a form of norm contestation, Israel also constructs Hezbollah as a violator of human rights. Hezbollah understands that identity and norms are critical in global politics, and therefore, as a part of its policy of *infitah* and pragmatism, it was critical for Hezbollah to abide by universal norms. The Party of God also willfully cooperates with local and international aid agencies, such as the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) which were previously considered instruments of Western exploitation.²⁵⁵

Hezbollah's continued campaign of anti-imperialism has become regional and is manifested in its involvement in Syria. Hezbollah fighters cannot battle Israel and simultaneously be involved in Syria. Consequently, it has concentrated its forces in Syria where the situation is pressing. There, Nasrallah constructs Hezbollah as resisting an imperial project orchestrated by Great and Little Satan and their imperial stooges, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states. According to Hezbollah, the GCC's intervention in Yemen entrenched Arab states for the first time as contemporary imperialists. To this end, Hezbollah's politico-ideological concept of anti-imperialism has shifted to include Arab states. Again, the shifts in Hezbollah's ideology are largely reflective of dynamic changes in Hezbollah's regional relations, such as the Syrian conflict and the Houthis' attempt to

²⁵⁵ Alagha (a), 196.

oust President Hadi from power. The changes witnessed are examples of Hezbollah's ability to adapt and contribute to an ever-changing environment.

In sum, Hezbollah constructs itself as a pan-Islamic and pan-Arab movement determined to challenge the dominance of Israel and the United States and their allies in the region, including the GCC. Sayyed Qassem asserts that the "project of hegemony" led by the United States is designed to subdue Lebanon and the region, enforce the recognition of the "Zionist entity," impose normalization of relations with the Zionists, dilute our (Arab) identity and rich civilizations, conjoining our (Arab) fate with the Western economies and industries, ensuring expropriation of our (Arab and Muslim) nation's wealth and resources, replacing heads of states and implementation of programmes.²⁵⁶ Indeed, Lebanon and other Arab states remain targets of imperialism for the exploitation of the region's natural resources, such as water and oil.

Hezbollah has a legitimate claim that as long as the Shebaa Farms is occupied then the norm of resistance must continuously be reconstructed. Today there are still Lebanese detainees in Israeli prisons, there are virtually daily violations of Lebanese airspace by Israeli drones, and the Shebaa Farms remains occupied.²⁵⁷ These are all reasons why Hezbollah's resistance must continuously be under construction. In essence, as long as Hezbollah is able to continually construct a reality of occupation and construct Israel as the usurper of Arab lands and a threat to the region's water supply then it will be able to continue constructing its resistance norm. Hezbollah's social construction of occupation of the Shebaa Farms enables the Party of God to remain armed as a legitimate resistance movement. Consequently, Hezbollah remains the most dominant political force

²⁵⁶ Qassem, 272.

²⁵⁷ Qassem, 266.

in Lebanon. That being said, Hezbollah constructs the complete liberation of Arab lands, including Palestine, Yemen, Syria, and Iraq as pivotal to its norm of resistance. This ensures that the anti-imperial struggle is far from over. As Tripp explained in chapter 1, where power goes, resistance must follow. The two are dialectically related. In all, Hezbollah is a product of imperialism and Hezbollah needs imperialism.

Conclusion

Hezbollah is no longer directly resisting Israel, but instead claims to be resisting the Israeli-American project of balkanizing the Middle East. The dichotomy of oppression has also changed. The oppressors, often constructed to be the United States and Israel remain unchanged, but Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states have recently been represented as oppressors as a consequence of their involvement in Yemen. The oppressed are not necessarily Lebanese, as was the case during Israel's occupation of Lebanon, but the Syrian and Yemeni people. The oppressed, therefore, have also changed. Again, the shift in oppression is clearly a result of the changes in Hezbollah's environment. As mentioned above, Hezbollah has survived and will likely continue to survive due to its innate ability to reconstruct itself and its ideology concomitantly with its changing environment.

The US, Israel, and Canada have listed Hezbollah as a terrorist organization. Hezbollah is constructing Al Assad and the Yemeni people as the latest victims of an American-Israeli plan to partition the Middle East into mini-protectorates. The idea of anti-imperialism also shifted. The Party of God remains steadfast in constructing the United States and Israel as manifestations of Satan (Great Satan and Little Satan) primarily due to their imperial ambitions in the Middle East. In the 1985 Open Letter, Hezbollah proclaimed its

refusal to recognize inter-governmental organizations (IGOs), but its tone swiftly changed and came into line with Lebanonization and *infitah*. Hezbollah openly expresses its commitment to the UDHR and the UN Charter and to working closely with aid agencies. In chapter 4, Hezbollah's norm of resistance is physically expressed in the 2006 war with Israel and the ongoing Syrian conflict.

The Contestation of Norms in the 34-Day War

On July 12, 2006, Hezbollah fired rockets into northern Israel as a diversion. Next, fighters of the Islamic Resistance crossed the “Blue Line” and entered Israel. (The Blue Line is the demarcation along the border between northern Israel and southern Lebanon.) The resistance fighters ambushed an Israeli patrol car in an uninhabited area of northern Israel, killing three soldiers and arresting two others. The IDF was alerted that the Blue Line had been violated and a rescue chase ensued into Lebanon where another five Israeli soldiers were killed and a Merkava tank destroyed. Tactically, the operation was a success.²⁵⁸ The operation illustrated how daring Hezbollah can be, but also exhibited the group’s offensive abilities. Israel, too, wanted to illustrate its offensive capabilities and did so with disproportionate force. Immediately following Hezbollah’s daring mission, Israel imposed an air, land, and sea blockade effectively isolating Lebanon from the rest of the world. Israel then began carpet bombing Lebanon’s infrastructure. A European Union (EU) assessment revealed that in the South the “IDF destroyed or damaged 1,489 buildings; 21 out of 29 bridges over the Litani River; 535 sections of road and 545 cultivated fields.”²⁵⁹ All of the runways of Beirut’s Rafiq El Hariri international airport were bombed and six essential highways were damaged.²⁶⁰ Organizational platforms such as Al-Manar TV and fifty-one publishing houses associated with Hezbollah were also destroyed. Schools, universities, and other institutions of higher learning affiliated with

²⁵⁸ Augustus R. Norton, *Hezbollah: A Short History*, (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2007), 135.

²⁵⁹ Alagha (b), 15.

²⁶⁰ Alagha (b), 15.

Hezbollah were also bombed.²⁶¹ By destroying centers of learning, Israel is contesting the construction of norms by attempting to disturb norm emergence in the norm lifecycle.

Israel's blockade and the deployment of ground troops was not enough to curtail Hezbollah's resistance. To strengthen its ally, Iran's Revolutionary Guards bypassed Israel's blockade and delivered hundreds of rockets to Hezbollah. Hezbollah's norm of resistance was manifested, as fighters fired 4,000 rockets into northern Israel over the course of the war. Consequently, and as part of its campaign of psychological warfare, Hezbollah effectively instilled fear into the Israeli psyche, forcing more than two million to flee their homes to places of refuge and/or underground bunkers. In fact, according to a BBC documentary, in 2006, Israel suffered the heaviest aerial offensive since its inception in 1948.²⁶² Despite this, Lebanon incurred more than \$15 billion in damages and lost revenues from tourism and sluggish economic activity.²⁶³ 1,109 civilians lost their lives and 4,339 were wounded. The official death toll for Hezbollah fighters cannot be confirmed, but it is estimated by the number of funerals for fighters that approximately 184 fighters died as a result of the war.²⁶⁴

By kidnapping two Israeli soldiers, Sayyed Nasrallah was hoping to pressure Israel into a prisoner exchange, hoping that all Lebanese resistance fighters left in Israeli prisons would be released. Furthermore, Nasrallah stated that his decision to commit such a bold act was partly done to express solidarity with the Palestinians in Gaza who were attacked by the IDF on June 25, 2006.²⁶⁵ More importantly, however, Hezbollah

²⁶¹ Alagha (b), 4.

²⁶² Alagha (b), 7.

²⁶³ Alagha (b), 3.

²⁶⁴ Sultan, 46-7.

²⁶⁵ Alagha (b), 1.

committed a bold act to revive the norm of resistance which had lost power since May 2000. Hezbollah's dangerous mission was also intended to revive other norms, such as pan-Arabism and pan-Islamism. A bold action was required to regain respect from supporters and allies and to reconstruct its norms and identity as the premier resistance movement, national, regionally, and internationally.²⁶⁶ Alagha avers that "Hizbullah's identity and *raison d'être* as an Islamic *jihadi* movement warrants such a precept of practice."²⁶⁷ Nonetheless, Hezbollah never anticipated such a level of aggression from Israel. Indeed, Nasrallah hinted that a similar operation was forthcoming on April 24, 2006, in an effort to secure the release of Samir Quntar, a senior member of the Islamic Resistance, from Israeli prison. It is not the first time Hezbollah has kidnapped Israeli soldiers. Colonel Elhanan Tennenbaum, for instance, was abducted in 2000 and only released in 2004.²⁶⁸ If kidnapping is a customary occurrence, what made Israel react in such a disproportionate manner in 2006? Similar to Hezbollah's attempt to revive its norms, Israel, too, attempted to maintain the status quo as the most powerful state in the region. To do so, it must constantly reconstruct its identity and combat Hezbollah. Israel's unconditional withdrawal from Lebanon six years earlier hindered its identity as a military power in the region and reversed its identity of "fighting Jew,"²⁶⁹ to a national identity of vulnerability in a hostile environment.²⁷⁰ An alien entity in the Middle East, Israel sought to reconstruct its identity and re-establish itself as a military force in the region by swiftly defeating the only enemy that has forced it to withdraw from occupied

²⁶⁶ Alagha (b), 2.

²⁶⁷ Alagha (b), 2.

²⁶⁸ Joanna Tidy, "The Social Construction of Identity: Israeli Foreign Policy and the 2006 War in Lebanon," (master's thesis, University of Bristol, Bristol, 2007), 2.

²⁶⁹ An identity Israel began constructing for itself after its victory in the 1967 war.

²⁷⁰ Tidy, 6.

territory without a land-for-peace deal. Thus, it was critical for its identity construction to illustrate its military might and forcibly disarm the Party of God. The Israeli-Lebanese war was not only a contestation of norms, but also a contestation of identities.

Israel constructed Hezbollah as terrorists attempting to provoke and terrorize Israelis by kidnapping two of its soldiers in a pre-emptive attack. Both, however, cannot construct the Other or contest each other's norms without having meaningful interaction. In this case, it is warfare that is the meaningful interaction. In response to "terrorism," the 2006 war was the most destructive war Israel has waged against Hezbollah and Lebanon since first invading the country in 1978. Prime Minister Ehud Olmert understood that it was his last chance to destroy Hezbollah and reconstruct Israel's identity as fighter of terror. Hezbollah provided this pretext by acting first. In September 2006, Prime Minister Olmert ordered an "objective" investigation into the war to review any wrongdoings, known as the Winograd Commission. Olmert's testimony during the Winograd Commission revealed that his administration had been planning to go to war with Hezbollah as early as March 2006, four months before the war actually took place.²⁷¹ Israel constructed the war as being provoked, but instead Israel's goal was to exterminate Hezbollah by any means necessary. By constructing Hezbollah as terrorists, Israel is absolving itself from any wrongdoing. Thus, basic norms such as human rights or sovereignty can be violated in the name of combating terrorism. For Israel, the war was constructed as fighting terrorism and bringing home Israel's "children," but Olmert's revelation and Israel's disproportionate response, illustrates that Israel was seeking to

²⁷¹ Alagha (b), 3.

contest Hezbollah's norm of resistance physically. Israel constructs its own norm of resistance, which is resisting Hezbollah's terrorism.

Hezbollah constructed the war as a battle between the oppressed and oppressors and between the Muslim *umma* and the “Zionist invaders,” the “corrupters of the land and the killers of the prophets’.”²⁷² By doing so, Hezbollah validated the use of lesser *jihad* and martyrdom in order to defend the *umma* which is under attack. Again, Hezbollah was attempting to construct itself as defender of the *umma* against invaders, but also to garner support for its cause from Muslims across the world. It was through intersubjective meanings that Hezbollah constructed the Other. If Hezbollah constructs Israel as Zionist invaders, Hezbollah's reconstruction of *jihad*, martyrdom, oppression, and anti-imperialism have helped reconstruct Hezbollah's norm of resistance. However, its policies of Lebanonization and *infithah* and its position in the Lebanese government have elevated the Party of God from a clandestine movement to legitimate political party. By extension, Hezbollah is now able to exchange the “terrorist” charge with Israel, in a form of norm contestation. The label of terrorist is constructed by those who exercise disproportionate political power, not by those who are subjected to it. Hezbollah's use of terrorism is illustrative of its renewed political power that is reinforced by its arsenal of weapons. Throughout the war, Israel and Hezbollah accused the other of terrorism. Hezbollah constructed Israel as an aggressor who violates basic norms, targeting civilians and infrastructure, while exploiting the use of American-made cluster bombs to attack the enemy. By attacking Lebanese infrastructure, even in Christian neighbourhoods, and attacking Hezbollah's bastions, Israel was attempting to systematically deconstruct

²⁷² Alagha (b), 8.

Hezbollah's legitimacy. By bombing Shi'a and Christian neighbourhoods and state infrastructure, Israel was attempting to rally supporters and detractors of the movement to rebel against Hezbollah's *raison d'être*. It is similar to Hezbollah's tactic of utilizing psychological warfare to terrorize and provoke the IDF into unilaterally withdrawing from Lebanon. Israel, too, is attempting to terrorize the Lebanese citizenry by sowing discord between the citizenry and the Islamic Resistance. The contestation of norms are not only characterized by competing ideas, but are also manifested on the battlefield.

Despite Israel's response, the international community, including the United States and Canada, was firmly behind Olmert. In an attempt to strictly police Hezbollah, the status quo powers in the region, such as Egypt, Jordan, and the GCC states also voiced their opposition to what was constructed as a provocation.²⁷³ However, Nasrallah made a "Faithful Promise" in 2001: "We are people who don't leave our prisoners behind'." Therefore, once the opportunity presented itself, Nasrallah seized it.²⁷⁴ On August 5, 2006, in an attempt to resolve the crisis, former Prime Minister Fouad Siniora proposed the Seven Point Plan. Siniora's plan called for the deployment of 15,000 Lebanese troops to monitor the Blue Line between Israel and Lebanon. The Lebanese Cabinet unanimously accepted Siniora's plan. Historically, the party consistently vetoed any proposal involving the deployment of Lebanese troops along the southern border. Hezbollah argued that the army's presence along the border only served to protect Israel from rocket attacks fired by the Islamic Resistance.²⁷⁵

²⁷³ Alagha (b), 3.

²⁷⁴ Alagha (b), 3.

²⁷⁵ Alagha (b), 5-6.

The war finally concluded with the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1701 on August 11, 2006. UNSC Resolution 1701, among other things, called for a cessation of violence and for a UNIFIL force of up to 15,000 soldiers to be deployed to the Blue Line. One of Israel's objectives for going to war was to forcibly implement UNSC Resolution 1559 (September 2, 2004), which, among other things, called for Hezbollah to disarm. During the Cabinet meeting two of Hezbollah's ministers voted 'yes' for UNSC Resolution 1559 and UNSC Resolution 1701. One of Hezbollah's goals was to survive the war and remain intact. Nasrallah argued that Hezbollah's acceptance of Lebanese troops to be deployed to the south, as previously demanded by Israel, and its acceptance of UNSC Resolution 1701 "serves the national interest since the strength of Lebanon is in its resistance and national unity".²⁷⁶ This position is reflective of Hezbollah's policies of Lebanonization and *infitah*.²⁷⁷ Hezbollah is reconstructing itself as a pragmatic political party that is seeking to serve the interests of the state over its own.

Hezbollah constructed Israel as the aggressor, contending that as long as the Shebaa Farms remains occupied, resistance fighters remain in Israeli jails, and Israel withholds the landmines maps, then the resistance must continue and the Party of God will remain armed.²⁷⁸ For Hezbollah, the provocateur in the war was Israel. Hezbollah stresses that Israel's war was planned in advance. Nevertheless, Israel and Hezbollah miscalculated each other's capabilities and Nasrallah confirmed that if he had understood the magnitude of Israel's response, Hezbollah would have not committed such a bold

²⁷⁶ Alagha (b), 6.

²⁷⁷ Alagha (b), 6.

²⁷⁸ Alagha (b), 8.

act.²⁷⁹ Nonetheless, the Party of God constructed the war as a “Divine Victory” for the Resistance, emphasizing the victory not only for Hezbollah, but also the Muslim *umma*. Nasrallah stated that the conflict “surpass[ed] Lebanon . . . it [was] the conflict of the *umma*’.” Hezbollah’s Divine Victory provided a new lease on life for its norm construction. Its resilience and its will to survive Israeli bellicosity helped revive Hezbollah’s norm of resistance which had been losing power since Israel withdrew its forces in May 2000. Its resistance appealed to the Palestinians, while the party’s popularity exploded in the West Bank and Gaza and across the region. Hezbollah re-symbolized resistance in the region.²⁸⁰ The 2006 war disseminated Hezbollah’s norm of resistance across the Middle East. Its willingness to accept Siniora’s Seven Point Plan and UNSC Resolution 1701 reflects the party’s commitment to its policies of *infitah*, integration and Lebanonization.²⁸¹ Ultimately, Israel failed to achieve its objective of disarming Hezbollah and subsequently eradicating the party’s norm of resistance. The majority of Lebanon (87% of Lebanese, including 89% Sunni and 80% Christian)²⁸² favoured Hezbollah’s response to the Israeli aggression. The contestation of norms between Hezbollah and Israel proved beneficial to Hezbollah’s resistance. The Party of God emerged intact and armed with increased normative ammunition. Despite Israeli efforts, Hezbollah’s reconstruction of resistance, if anything, was strengthened by the war. Once again, Hezbollah rekindled and re-symbolized resistance in the Middle East.

²⁷⁹ Alagha (b), 3.

²⁸⁰ Rola El Hussein, “Hezbollah and the Axis of Refusal: Hamas, Iran and Syria,” *Third World Quarterly* 31, no.5 (2010), 809.

²⁸¹ Alagha (b), 6.

²⁸² El Hussein, 808.

Rescuing the Resistance Bloc from the Syrian Crisis

Anti-government protests began in the southern city of Deraa, Syria in March 2011.²⁸³ The ripple effect of the so-called Arab Spring had reached Syria as it had reached Tunisia and Egypt before it. The protests swiftly gained momentum and within a few months the protests were widespread and violent. Nasrallah stood by the protesters in Tunisia and Egypt, voicing his support for the will of the people. However, once the protests reached Syria, Nasrallah quickly changed his message and summarily condemned the protests. The Party of God began constructing the conflict as an imperial project, engineered by the United States and its allies in the region. Nasrallah accused Saudi Arabia of waging proxy wars across the Middle East, including in Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, and Syria by materially and militarily supporting armed Islamist movements.²⁸⁴ Currently, Saudi Arabia's "proxy" war has manifested itself in Yemen, which is actively being bombed by the GCC, led by Saudi Arabia. No longer was Hezbollah's norm construction directed solely at Israel, but now at the "imperial project" designed to remove Al Assad from power. Hezbollah constructed Israel, Turkey, and the GCC states as principal culprits in the imperial project.²⁸⁵ As early as May 2011, Hezbollah pledged its unwavering support for Al Assad.²⁸⁶

The geo-political relationship between Hezbollah and Syria is based upon mutual identities and norms. Following several failed attempts to reclaim the Golan Heights, Al

²⁸³ Marius Deeb, *Syria, Iran, and Hezbollah the Unholy Alliance and Its War on Lebanon*, (Stanford, Calif.: Hoover Institution Press, 2013), 44.

²⁸⁴ Joseph Alagha (d), "Hezbollah and the Arab Spring," *Contemporary Review of the Middle East* 1, no.2 (2014): 198.

²⁸⁵ Randa Slim, "Hezbollah and Syria: From Regime Proxy to Regime Savior," *Insight Turkey* 16, no. 2 (2014): 61.

²⁸⁶ Marisa Sullivan, "Hezbollah in Syria," *Institute for the Study of War*, (2014): 11.

Assad closely aligned Syria with Iran and Hezbollah. “For strategic and ideological motives, Syria is more pro-Hizballah than Hizballah is pro-Syria.”²⁸⁷ By aligning itself with Hezbollah, Syria hoped to remain relevant in the regional order of the Middle East and reclaim its spot as a regional player, especially following Hezbollah’s Divine Victory in 2006.²⁸⁸ Hezbollah receives substantial ammunition from Iran, while Syria serves as the conduit between the two parties, helping to deliver weapon shipments to Lebanon. What defines their relationship is not Shi’ism. Rather, what defines their relationship is the norm of resistance. Another member of the bloc is HAMAS. However, military cooperation with HAMAS ceased, its funds were reduced, and HAMAS was temporarily removed from the resistance bloc for its opposition to Al Assad and its support and alleged training of opposition fighters in Syria.²⁸⁹

Similar to Hezbollah, the resistance bloc resists oppression, anti-imperialism, and Zionism. By extension, Iran and Hezbollah’s eagerness to bolster Al Assad in Syria’s protracted conflict is not an attempt to further sow sectarian discord in the region, but rather to rescue the resistance bloc which is categorically at risk if Al Assad is removed from power. Syria remains one of the few Arab states in the region allied with Iran. As norm entrepreneurs, Iran and Hezbollah must ensure that Al Assad remains in power, at least for the time being, if the resistance bloc wishes to continuously reconstruct the norm of resistance and continue challenging the status quo powers. The conflict is not only a crisis for Syria, but also for Iran and Hezbollah.

²⁸⁷ Emile El-Hokayem, “Hizballah and Syria: Outgrowing the Proxy Relationship,” *The Washington Quarterly* 30, no. 2 (2007): 36.

²⁸⁸ El-Hokayem, 35.

²⁸⁹ Sullivan, 25.

Hezbollah's reconstruction of the enemy has changed. Since its inception, its norm of resistance has been directed at Israel. Following Israel's withdrawal in 2000 and Hezbollah's Divine Victory in 2006, the party has struggled to construct a threat which would require its norm of resistance.²⁹⁰ Syria's conflict provided this pretext and the Syrian government and Hezbollah began constructing the Syrian opposition as "terrorists" and *takfiris*. Only those in positions of power with relative legitimacy can accuse the Other of being a terrorist. The idea that Hezbollah is able to deploy the label of terrorism as a political tool, attests to its empowerment and position as being part of the Lebanese established order. With the addition of IS and al-Nusra Front forming another element of the Syrian opposition, Hezbollah's construction of the enemy as being "terrorist" has gained some legitimacy. Hezbollah has compared the Free Syrian Army (FSA), one of the principal opposition groups to Al Assad, to the defunct South Lebanese Army (SLA), averring that that they have collaborated and conspired with the "enemy" against the Syrian state.²⁹¹

Nasrallah constructed Hezbollah's intervention in the Syrian conflict as a necessity, invoking the party's Divine Victory in 2006, promising that the same would happen in Syria.²⁹² The Syrian government welcomed the intervention, as Al Assad needed to bolster his offensive against the opposition which had been constructed as "armed gangs."²⁹³ In line with its policy of Lebanonization, Hezbollah constructed its involvement as a defensive measure to protect Lebanon's eastern border with Syria. The Party of God also argued that it was entering the war to offer refuge to those Lebanese

²⁹⁰ El-Husseini, 808.

²⁹¹ Alagha (d), 198.

²⁹² Alagha (d), 197.

²⁹³ Alagha (d), 198.

citizens, who are mostly Shi'a, who reside in Syria. Hezbollah also argued that it had to enter Syria's conflict in order to protect Shi'a holy sites, such as the Sayyida Zeineb shrine from being desecrated by *takfiris*. Not coincidentally, the Sayyida Zeineb mosque is strategically located in southeastern Damascus.²⁹⁴ Most Hezbollah attacks in and around Damascus originated from the location of Sayyida Zeineb.²⁹⁵

Hezbollah's objectives in Syria are twofold: 1.) Hezbollah seeks to rescue Al Assad from being removed from power; and 2.) Hezbollah hopes to continue receiving material support from Iran and Syria by regaining access to its support lines connecting Damascus to Beirut. Support lines connecting the two capitals were overrun by rebels. Hezbollah's resistance depends upon these routes to carry weapons and other ammunitions which help construct the party's norm of resistance.²⁹⁶ In a speech delivered on May 25, 2013, Nasrallah lucidly explained why Hezbollah's involvement in Syria is necessary: "Syria is the rear guard of the resistance, its backbone, and the resistance cannot stay with its arms folded when its rear guard is exposed".²⁹⁷ Nasrallah continued by stating that Hezbollah is entering a new phase in the war: "the phase of fortifying the resistance and protecting its backbone".²⁹⁸

Hezbollah has confined itself mostly to Al Qalamoun Mountains and Damascus. Strategically, it has stationed all of its fighters on the western side of the Syrian-Lebanese border. Hezbollah has no active military presence in the north or northeast Syria, where IS has a strong presence. Hezbollah's involvement was immediately felt on the

²⁹⁴ Sullivan, 18.

²⁹⁵ Sullivan, 20.

²⁹⁶ Sullivan, 5.

²⁹⁷ Sullivan, 16.

²⁹⁸ Sullivan, 16.

battlefield, scoring a string of victories in rebel-held territories in central Syria, and proving to be an asset to Al Assad, who, up to 2013, was slowly losing his grip on power. The Islamic Resistance has operated openly with Syrian armed forces, Iraqi fighters, pro-government militias, and the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps.²⁹⁹

To date, Al Qusayr represents Hezbollah's "Divine Victory" in Syria since its intervention in 2013. Al Qusayr is a small town in Homs governorate which, until 2013, had been held by rebel forces. The besieged town served as a smuggling route for rebels, importing arms, ammunition, and fighters. Some of the fighters smuggled into Al Qusayr were Lebanese nationals. Thus, recapturing Al Qusayr was as important to Al Assad, as it was to Hezbollah, especially since it borders Lebanon. Protecting the border with Lebanon and its Shi'a villages in Syria is one of Hezbollah's stated objectives.³⁰⁰ The battle of Al Qusayr, led by Hezbollah, inflicted maximum psychological damage on the rebels who also suffered heavy losses. It was a significant victory for Al Assad, whose forces, in 2012, attempted to regain the town, but were unable to completely recapture it. According to Sullivan, Hezbollah fighters are often better trained, disciplined in *jihad*, and experienced than their allies in the war.³⁰¹ However, this is the first conflict in which the Islamic Resistance is using military style equipment, such as tanks. The Party of God has assisted the Syrian forces in Halab, Homs, Deraa, Damascus, and has conducted "anti-insurgency" operations in Al-Qalamoun Mountains.³⁰² Hezbollah also offers light

²⁹⁹ Sullivan, 4.

³⁰⁰ Sullivan, 15.

³⁰¹ Sullivan, 4.

³⁰² Sullivan, 23.

infantry, conducts reconnaissance missions, and undertakes sniper fire. Hezbollah also trains Syrian soldiers and provides reinforcements to regime forces.³⁰³

The war has taken its toll on Hezbollah's fighters and on its identity construction. In a 2014 interview with Assafir, Nasrallah admitted that the war has been a "double-edged sword;" on one side the Islamic Resistance has gained valuable experience in military theatres, and the other Hezbollah's credibility as a resistance movement has been tarnished in the Arab world,³⁰⁴ especially in Sunni states. The gains made from the 2006 war have been sacrificed by its engagement in Syria which has proven to be divisive. Consequently, Hezbollah's legitimacy is at risk if it chooses to continue its involvement in Syria. It is worth noting that the majority of Lebanon's Shi'a, which make up Hezbollah's rank-and-file, favour the party's involvement in Syria. This initially was not the case. Incidents of car bombings in 2014, in Beirut's suburb of Haret Hreik, a Hezbollah stronghold, give legitimacy to Nasrallah's claims that if Hezbollah does not take the fight to Syria, the fight will come to Lebanon. This has helped to construct the *takfiris* as an existential threat, similar to how the Zionists are a threat to Hezbollah.³⁰⁵ The question worth asking is: would *takfiris* be a threat to Lebanon if Hezbollah did not intervene in Syria? The question is especially relevant, when examining the series of car bombings which have occurred in southern Beirut since the start of its military campaign in Syria. Official figures of Hezbollah fighters or Iranian Revolutionary Guards "martyred" in Syria cannot be confirmed, but funerals held in Lebanon provide an indication of how many have died so far. According to reports, approximately 1,263

³⁰³ Sullivan, 4.

³⁰⁴ Slim, 65.

³⁰⁵ Slim, 67.

to 1,280 “martyrs” had died as of October 2015.³⁰⁶ On December 15, 2015, Israel estimated the death toll to be estimated around 1,300 to 1,500 and the number of injured to be 5,000. When numbers are tallied they reveal that a third of all Hezbollah fighters are either dead or injured as a result of Hezbollah’s involvement in the war. In the hope of rescuing the “backbone” of the resistance bloc, Hezbollah is willing to sacrifice its norm of resistance and its fighters.

As a result of its controversial involvement in Syria, Hezbollah’s resistance bloc has also been adversely affected. The majority of Palestinian movements, including HAMAS, the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), and Jihadi Salafis vehemently oppose the Al Assad regime. For example, on December 4, 2012, Ansar Allah, a Palestinian jihadi salafi movement, distanced itself from Hezbollah and sent “would-be martyrs” to battle government forces. Constant clashes with HAMAS, the PLO, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command (PFLP-GC), and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) are indications of cooling relations between Hezbollah and its allies in Palestine.³⁰⁷ During the siege of Al Qusayr, Hezbollah fighters suspected that HAMAS had provided training to rebel fighters. Many of the rebel’s defensive tactics used in the battle were familiar tactics used by HAMAS, which HAMAS itself adopted from Hezbollah. Despite HAMAS being a part of the resistance bloc, in May 2013, Iran subsequently slashed a portion of its funding (15 million pounds) in response to HAMAS’ aid and material support of rebel forces in

³⁰⁶ “Hezbollah’s Death toll in Syrian civil war tops 1263,” Ya Libnan, accessed December 27, 2015, <http://yalibnan.com/2015/10/28/hezbollahs-death-toll-in-syrian-civil-war-tops-1263/>.

³⁰⁷ Alagha (d), 201.

Syria.³⁰⁸ Thus, a dilemma has ensued: Hezbollah and Iran are attempting to rescue the resistance bloc, but risk alienating HAMAS and other Palestinian factions that hope to topple Al Assad's regime. The resistance bloc will be affected, and consequently, Hezbollah's norm of resistance and identity construction as the defender of the *umma* (defensive *jihad*) and of Jerusalem is in jeopardy, especially across the Sunni world.

Quantum Communications and Sofres Liban polling agency conducted two surveys across Lebanon between the months of February and May 2014. Respondents were asked one question: "Are you for Hezbollah's intervention in Syria?"³⁰⁹ The sample population used was 1,500 across all demographics. Overall, 56% of respondents oppose Hezbollah's intervention in Syria. Twenty-eight percent of respondents support Hezbollah's involvement. In regards to the party's constituency, 61% of Shi'as support the party's intervention. In the first round of polling, 22% of Shi'as opposed the party's intervention, but that number increased in March to 25%. Southern Lebanon was more inclined to favour intervention (71%) than the Beqaa (44%), another Hezbollah stronghold. In the first round, 82% of the Sunni demographic opposed Hezbollah's decision to enter the war, while the Christians and the Druze also opposed the war, 61% and 63% respectively. In the second round, 86% of Sunnis disapproved, 53% of Christians, and 64% of Druze also disagreed with Hezbollah's war in Syria.³¹⁰ Hezbollah's intervention in Syria was never a popular decision, even among its own constituents, but the party has constructed its involvement in Syria as a mechanism of

³⁰⁸ Sullivan, 25.

³⁰⁹ "A State of Mind: Lebanon in Numbers," NOW Media, accessed December 26, 2015, <https://now.mmedia.me/lb/en/reportsfeatures/554835-views-on-hezbollahs-involvement-in-syria>.

³¹⁰ "A State of Minds: Lebanon in Numbers."

deterrence against a threat posed by the status quo powers and *takfiris* that will eventually reach Lebanon. Nasrallah contends that “only stupid people wouldn’t” defend themselves.³¹¹ In a speech in 2013, Nasrallah enjoined that *takfiris* were a threat to all Muslims, Sunni or Shi’a. For Hezbollah, it is the norm of resistance which is at risk. Nasrallah has constructed the conflict in non-sectarian terms: “The dispute in Syria is between two sides, two axes, two projects, it is not between Sunnis and Shia[s], it is not between sects.”³¹²

Being a member of the resistance bloc has complicated Hezbollah’s norm construction. It is also apparent that Hezbollah is facing difficulties in constructing the norm of pan-Arabism and pan-Islamism or state sovereignty. Hezbollah’s intervention in Syria has compromised its norm of resistance and has undermined its dichotomy of oppression. By involving itself in the war, Hezbollah has assisted in fomenting sectarian discord in the region, categorically undermining its norm of pan-Islamism and “buttressing the state sovereignty of the regime.”³¹³ Hezbollah has placed itself in a difficult position with no end in sight. By entering the war, Hezbollah has done little to stop the war or reduce the number of deaths as a result of the conflict. The perception is that Hezbollah is no longer a symbol of resistance in the region, but rather shifted from resistance to being a puppet of the Al Assad regime. For many, resistance is defined as challenging tyranny and oppression. Hezbollah is reconstructing resistance as means of rescuing a dictatorship from an American-Israeli plot to dismantle Syria. The wide appeal Hezbollah enjoyed in 2006 has since waned due to its alternative definition of resistance.

³¹¹ Slim, 64.

³¹² Slim, 64.

³¹³ Alagha (d), 201-2.

Despite Hezbollah fatalities, Nasrallah reaffirmed in November 2013 that Hezbollah would stay in Syria “as long as the reasons [to fight in Syria] remain’.”³¹⁴ Indeed, the resistance bloc has proved to be an asset to regime forces. Al Assad began 2014 in a stronger position than the previous year because of battles won in Damascus and Qalamoun in March 2014 which have helped to solidify the regime’s control of the strip stretching from Damascus to Homs and coastal cities.³¹⁵ It seems that sacrificing its norm construction, its alliance with Sunni and Palestinian factions across the Middle East, its symbolism as a resistance movement, and over a 1000 “martyrs” is worth it as long as Syria remains intact. Hezbollah has continued reconstructing its norm of resistance through the social structure of the Syrian war, but its involvement has ultimately damaged its legitimacy as the voice of the downtrodden.

Conclusion

Ideas matter when they are exercised socially. However, ideas may have strong appeal, but are not realized or exercised until circumstances permit. Martyrdom in Islam, for example, remains a significant idea even if it is not materially expressed by every Muslim. For the continuous reconstruction of resistance, it is imperative for Hezbollah to construct an enemy, such as Israel, the United States, *takfiris*, Turkey, and the GCC. By constructing an enemy, the Party of God is justifying its physical resistance. In Hezbollah’s war with Israel in 2006, it constructed the war as retaliation for past

³¹⁴ Sullivan, 26.

³¹⁵ Sullivan, 26.

aggressions and land still occupied by the “Zionists.” In Syria, the Party of God is attempting to rescue Al Assad from being toppled. In both wars, there have been numerous martyrs willing to sacrifice themselves for what is constructed as a legitimate cause. Hezbollah’s involvement in Syria and its support of the regime have adversely affected its legitimacy in the Arab world, sacrificing its norms and identity construction, while alienating its Sunni allies, such as HAMAS. By alienating HAMAS and other Palestinian factions, Hezbollah is alienating the Palestinians in Gaza. In doing so, it undermines the continuous construction of Hezbollah as a defender of Jerusalem and a staunch advocate for the Palestinian cause. Hezbollah’s popularity in Palestine has dwindled since 2006, primarily due to its military involvement in Syria. By involving itself in Syria, Hezbollah has helped foment sectarian tensions in the region, sacrificing its norms of pan-Arabism and pan-Islamism. Consequently, legitimacy gained by resisting Israeli bellicosity in 2006 has been sacrificed to rescue Syria from a plot engineered by the United States, Israel, IS, the GCC states, among others, to attack Syria first and once their objectives have been achieved Hezbollah will be next.³¹⁶ In 2006, Hezbollah managed to reconstruct and re-kindle its norm of resistance successfully, and as a result, its popularity soared across the Middle East. However, the Syrian crisis has only alienated Hezbollah from its Sunni allies, and more importantly from the Sunni community in Lebanon with many of its fighters returning in coffins, it does not seem long before the party must re-evaluate its involvement in the Syrian conflict. Syria’s conflict challenges the party’s legitimacy as a political party. For the first time it seems contradictory that Hezbollah would be a member of the Lebanese cabinet and be military

³¹⁶ Slim, 64.

involved in a war. It is because resistance is constructed to be a defensive measure manifested in defensive *jihad*. Hezbollah's involvement is not defensive, but rather preemptive under the pretext of deterrence. This calls into question Hezbollah's credibility as a resistance movement and its idea of anti-imperialism. Syria's war is causing Hezbollah's norm of resistance to conflict with its other norms. There is a contradiction between Hezbollah managing its policy of Lebanonization and politicization and its regional military involvements. Both cannot be realized without risking the movement's norm construction and legitimacy.

Chapter 5-Conclusion

I have analyzed Hezbollah as a norm entrepreneur in the Middle East. My research question was: how does Hezbollah function as a norm entrepreneur in the Middle East? Phrased differently, how does Hezbollah create the norm of resistance? The Party of God constructs and reconstructs its norm of resistance through institutionalized ideas. Ideas are then physically expressed. Ideas analyzed included *jihad*, martyrdom, the oppressed/oppressor dichotomy, and anti-imperialism. The party physically expressed its norm of resistance during the Hezbollah-Israel war in 2006 and currently in Syria where the party is battling what it has constructed as *takfiris* or “terrorists,” also known as the Syrian opposition. Hezbollah’s ability to construct its enemies as terrorists attests to its power and position as a part of the Lebanese established order.

I used social constructivism to examine Hezbollah as a norm entrepreneur. It helps fill the lacuna in the corpus already published on Hezbollah. Most published works on Hezbollah are neoliberal because of how broad and encompassing neoliberalism is, in contrast to neorealism’s narrow and state-centric analysis of global politics. Neoliberalism and social constructivism recognize non-state actors in global politics, but constructivism’s ontology analyzes ideas, norms, and identity, which are pertinent to my study on Hezbollah. The construction of ideas, norms, and identity have been ignored in mainstream analyses of Hezbollah.

It is difficult to discuss the regional order of the Middle East without examining Hezbollah. It has proved to be, if anything, the most powerful political force in Lebanon and a critical member of the resistance bloc. To adapt to its ever-changing environment,

Hezbollah had to reconstruct its identity and emphasize its commitment to *infithah*, Lebanonization, and pragmatism. It has managed to reconstruct its clandestine identity and become a mainstream political actor. Its ability to adapt to a dynamic environment is one of the reasons it has survived more than thirty years. Despite its changes, its resistance to Israel and the United States has remained largely unchanged. By the same token, its norm of resistance has shifted several times over the course of its history. The party has signaled a shift in its norm of Islamism, from *moqawama Islamiyya* (Islamic resistance) to *moqawama Lebananiyya* (Lebanese resistance). Shifts in Hezbollah's ideology can be attributed to Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon, which shifted the norm of resistance from a regional or external struggle for independence to an internal one, seeking more political power. It can also be explained by its desire to attain greater legitimacy by pursuing the bottom-up approach and conquering Lebanon through the ballot box rather than by force.

Introduced in 1991, Hezbollah's policies of *infithah* and Lebanonization have been instrumental in shaping and evolving Hezbollah's norm of resistance. Simultaneously, Hezbollah contends that its pan-Shi'a identity is in line with Lebanonization and that one does not contradict the other.³¹⁷ As a norm entrepreneur, the policies of *infithah* and Lebanonization signaled a change in the party's norm of resistance. If the party remained steadfast in its ideology and resistant to change then the Party of God would have been unable to adapt and remained a militia. One of its true successes is the party's ability to maintain a regional alliance with Syria and Iran, while simultaneously appealing to

³¹⁷ Joseph Alagha (a), *The Shifts in Hezbollah's Ideology: Religious, ideology, Political Ideology, and Political Program*, (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2002), 170.

voters. Hezbollah eventually became a member of the cabinet, reserving the right to veto legislation. Being able to evolve and implement change is critical and remains an integral element of the party's continued success.

Hezbollah exercised Greater *Jihad* from 2001 to 2006. In 2006, Hezbollah engaged in Lesser *Jihad* during its war with Israel. In 2008, Hezbollah's resistance shifted to the domestic sphere, taking the form of protests against the Siniora government. From 2009 on, Hezbollah practiced Greater *Jihad* in the domestic sphere. In 2011, Hezbollah's constructed the uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt as legitimate revolutions seeking to uproot tyranny and corruption. However, once protests began in Syria, Hezbollah's support shifted from the people to the government. Once it involved itself in Syria, Hezbollah shifted its resistance construction, from domestic to regional. Hezbollah has engaged in Lesser *Jihad* in an effort to protect its borders with Syria, rescue the resistance bloc, and disrupt what it constructs as a U.S.-Israeli engineered project to dismantle Syria and then attack Hezbollah.

Hezbollah's normative idea of martyrdom also shifted. The most important change was in the typology of martyrdom. *Al-istishhadi al-mujahid* has been replaced with *al-shahid al-mujahid* as the appropriate method of warfare. Hezbollah's principal enemy is no longer Israel, but now includes "terrorists" or *takfiris*. Hezbollah's ability to label the Other as terrorist or *takfiri* is illustrative of its power as a part of the Lebanese established order. This power manifested itself in the 2006 war which comprised a contestation of norms between Israel and Hezbollah. The GCC has also become a principal enemy because of its support of the Syrian opposition and its current military campaign in Yemen. For the first time, Hezbollah's construction of anti-imperialism

includes Arab states. Initially, the social construction of sacrifice was constructed as an act of religious conviction. From 1985 to 1991, Hezbollah, emphasized that the act of self-sacrifice would be rewarded with paradise. The social construction of Imam Hussein's role in the Karbala Drama was used by Hezbollah to religiously sanction the act of martyrdom or self-sacrifice. From 1992 on, Hezbollah applied *infitah* and Lebanonization to martyrdom, constructing it as a national duty to preserve the nation's borders, integrity, and dignity (*'izzat wa karamat al umma*). Similar to *jihad*, martyrdom remains an integral element in Hezbollah's ideology and norm entrepreneurship.

The Party of God has continued to construct the *umma* as oppressed. Currently, Hezbollah constructs the Syrian, Palestinian, and Yemeni people as oppressed. Hezbollah has constructed the status quo powers as the oppressors, including the GCC, Turkey, Israel, and the United States. Israel remains the embodiment of oppression. The dichotomy of oppression has provided the necessary pretext for Hezbollah's norm of resistance. As the voice of the downtrodden, the Party of God must resist what it has constructed as oppression by the powerful. Again, where there is power, there is resistance. Hezbollah continues to resist the continued occupation of the Shebaa Farms which Syria, Lebanon, and Hezbollah claim to be Lebanese territory. Israel's continued occupation of the Shebaa Farms provides the legitimacy needed for Hezbollah's construction of resistance. Hezbollah's idea of anti-imperialism has changed from resisting the Israeli occupation of Lebanon to resisting what it has constructed as a U.S.-Israeli project designed to balkanize the Middle East.

The norm of resistance reached its peak following Hezbollah's so-called Divine Victory in 2006. On 25 May 2013, Hezbollah officially announced its military

involvement in Syria in an effort to rescue the resistance bloc, protect Shi'a shrines, deter "terrorists" from committing an attack on Lebanon, and protect Lebanese citizens in Syria. Syria has proved to be a divisive issue in Lebanon, with the 56% of Lebanese opposing the party's intervention. As a result, and with swiftness, its norm of resistance has begun to wane. The momentum gained by its Divine Victory in 2006 is lost and it has alienated itself from its Sunni allies, including HAMAS. Syria's conflict has undermined Hezbollah's norm construction and has contradicted its dichotomy of oppression. By involving itself in the war, Hezbollah is fueling sectarian discord in the region and undermining its norms of pan-Islamism and pan-Arabism. The rescue mission has proved to be a costly endeavour for the resistance bloc, with Hezbollah carrying much of the burden.

Future research trajectories may examine how the continued occupation of the Shebaa Farms has impacted Hezbollah's norm of resistance. Other areas of future research may analyze Hezbollah's norm construction and how the Syrian war has caused the norm of resistance to conflict with other norms, such as the norm of pan-Islamism and pan-Arabism. The norm of pan-Islamism invokes the unity of the Muslim *umma*, whereas the norm of pan-Arabism advocates for the unity of Arabs. Another future research trajectory may analyze Hezbollah's construction of the enemy. Hezbollah has historically constructed the enemy to be Israel or the United States, however, Hezbollah has recently constructed new enemies, such as the GCC states and Sunni extremism. How does Hezbollah construct new enemies and why? How does it affect its norm of resistance? Future research is required on Hezbollah's continued involvement in Syria. By battling on the side of the Syrian regime, how does Hezbollah's continued involvement in Syria

contradict its norm of resistance? As a norm entrepreneur, how will Hezbollah strengthen its norm of resistance which has waned since 2013? More importantly, are norms being redefined by other groups? That is, are other groups successfully redefining resistance better than Hezbollah? Are other ideas or norms supplanting the idea of resistance, such as democratization? Does Israel remain the principal enemy in the region or has it been replaced with resisting domestic governance and corruption in the Arab world? An example of resistance to domestic governance was the Arab Spring uprisings in 2011. Another example may include resistance to the Lebanese confessional system which is constructed as being outdated.

Hezbollah's policies of *infitah*, Lebanonization, and pragmatism have proved to be critical to the party's success as a norm entrepreneur. Through the implementation of these policies, the Party of God has been able to construct and reconstruct its normative ideology. All three ideas are indispensable to Hezbollah and will continue to be reconstructed according to the party's political environment. However, its victories in the Lebanese political arena and on the battlefield are at risk and if more fighters continue to return in coffins Hezbollah may have to rethink its commitments to the resistance bloc, but more importantly to its constituency, which has helped to legitimize the party. The party needs to regain the trust of its constituents and unify its rank-and-file which has suffered a schism over the Syrian crisis. The construction and realization of ideas will only be successful if they are perceived as legitimate. Without the perception of being legitimate, the Party of God is reduced to being a militia once again. Without legitimacy and political support, Hezbollah will be perceived as a terrorist organization. Something

the party has always challenged and detested. Indeed, the Syrian conflict is the Resistance's Achilles heel.

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