The Conflict between Lebanon and Israel (1992-2006)

What are the Origins, Character and Significance of Hezbollah?

Supervisor: Dr Drew Cottle
Course: Master Hon 8010

Jamal El Hindi
16230965
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Statement of Authentication
The work presented in this thesis is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, original except as acknowledged in the text. I hereby declare that I have not submitted this material, either in full or in part, for a degree at this or any other institution.

Jamal El Hindi
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Abstract

The focus of my thesis is on the rise of Hezbollah as a military and political group and its significance in Lebanon and the Middle East. Many scholars consider the emergence of Hezbollah as essentially a resistance to the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon. Critical interpretivist approach has been adopted in this study, making use of a detailed history of the Lebanese resistance. Hezbollah’s political, social and ideological character, domestic alliances and the historical governmental neglect of the Shia, the bottom class since 1943 are often subordinated when studying the rise of the organisation. The emergence of young and educated leaders and the military and financial support from Syria and Iran were also significant for Hezbollah. The main topic of the thesis is that there are many historical, social, political, ideological, economic and military reasons behind the formation of the organisation.

The purpose of this research is to carry out a broad analysis of the organisation from diverse perspectives to add a new dimension to previous studies conducted in this field. The author is taking a critical interpretivist approach, making use of a detailed history of the Lebanese resistance. The growing influence provided Hezbollah with an opportunity to fill the vacuum of power within the political system in Lebanon to pose as a state within a failing Lebanese state. This project also aims to show that Hezbollah managed to develop its character from purely Islamic to a hybrid of Lebanese national and Islamic identity. The intention includes examining three major wars against Israel that changed the nature of the Arab Israeli conflict.

This study will also analyse the impact of Hezbollah’s Alliance with the Christian group the Free Patriotic Movement on the politics of Lebanon.
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The History of Shia in Lebanon, 1943-1982

The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles.


Chapter 1 in this study aims to examine the History of Shia in Lebanon, 1943-1982. The main purpose is to conclude how this era has contributed to the current events through the sectarian unjust ruling system of Lebanon. The history of the Shia in Lebanon accumulated many unanswered questions of belonging to the Land where they had lived for centuries. The quest was to achieve acceptance of the Shia by the Lebanese system and by other Lebanese as equal citizens. In addition to military and political growth, Hezbollah developed ideologically its new charter that adopted a Lebanese national-Islamic identity. It is unprecedented in the history of Islamic organisations to shift ideologies in such short period of time from focusing on belonging to the Ummah to focusing on the identity of their own county without abounding its Islamic-political character. Hezbollah had finally come to terms with its Lebanese identity by becoming part of the Lebanese government and Parliament in 1992.

Hezbollah is a Lebanese military and political organisation that incorporates both Islamic character and Lebanese identity. It is a purely Lebanese party, from its leadership throughout its whole membership (Qassim, 2010, p.88). Hezbollah, which Israel and a number of western countries proclaim as a terrorist organisation, was initially formed in reaction to the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon; the latter led to the fall of the Lebanese
capital, Beirut. This invasion was the climax of continuous Israeli aggression and invasions of Lebanon from 1948 onwards, especially in the border areas in southern Lebanon. These Israeli offensives caused tens of thousands of civilian casualties and mass destruction in the villages and towns in southern Lebanon and elsewhere. Israel used any attacks on its soldiers or citizen as an excuse to attack Lebanon, and those who lived in the south suffered the most.

Many scholars who specialise in studies of Hezbollah refer to the year 1982 as the year in which Hezbollah came into being. However, since 1943, political, social and historical circumstances in Lebanon have played a significant role in creating Hezbollah. The 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon ignited the cumulative unrest that had beset the poor of Lebanon since Lebanese independence on November 23, 1943. The political sectarian system implemented in Lebanon by the French colonial power planted the seeds of the social instability that has been a feature of Lebanon ever since. The fundamental justification for Hezbollah’s existence lies, in addition to Israeli aggression, in the Lebanese political and social system that neglected the poor, who were mainly represented by the Shia of Lebanon at the time.

Was the emergence of Hezbollah in 1982 purely a reaction to the Israeli invasion of Lebanon? Were there any other factors that paved the way for the rise of one of the most capable non-government organisations in the world? The main topic of the thesis is that there are many social, political, ideological, economic and military reasons behind the emergence and the rise of Hezbollah as a key player in the politics of the Middle East. Ever since 1982, Hezbollah has been exponentially growing and becoming more involved in the events of the Middle East. In 36 years, Hezbollah managed to take roles that are meant to be conducted by the state of Lebanon. Many Lebanese politicians mainly from The 14th of March Coalition assume the political and military powers of Hezbollah are more significant than those of the Lebanese state. Many factors contributed enormously to the existence and the growth of Hezbollah. Social injustice and political inequality which the Shia of Lebanon had
experienced since 1943 -the year of independence of Lebanon -were the main seeds for Hezbollah’s existence. Other factors contributed to the emergence and its timing in early 1980s. The 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon and the dramatic fall of the Beirut in the hand of the invading Israeli forces sparked the almost formed body of the Hezbollah organisation into existence. The two reason, the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon together with the magnetisation of the Shia group the peripherals by stripping them from their political and social rights formed a perfect platform for the dynamic creation and emergence of Hezbollah. The vacuum of power left behind by the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) and the Lebanese State gave way for the emergence of Hezbollah as well. PLO was defeated by the invading Israeli forces and can no longer pose as a dominant player in the politics of Lebanon. Many individual

Many scholars assume that the formation of the organisation was purely a reaction to the Israeli invasion of Lebanon. The Israeli invasion was the trigger for Hezbollah’s emergence. The seeds that were planted in the modern history of Lebanon were ripened in 1982 for a revolt against the Lebanese regime and the Israeli invasion.

A major turning point for Hezbollah took place when Sayed Hassan Nasrallah was elected as its new secretary general in 1992. Chapter 2 “A Young Leader Emerges” explores the effect of Nasrallah on the course of events in Lebanon and the region. The young leader managed to shift Hezbollah in a different Lebanese national direction and taking the Shia to a higher level within the Lebanese system. At the same time, Hezbollah was involved in a defensive war with Israel. The change in leadership is one of the main reasons that brought Hezbollah to its current position.

The quest for Hezbollah’s origins were not purely religious, questions of social and political justice shaped the ideology of the Hezbollah which represented the neglected in a country that tends to turn a blind eye to a class that was meant to always stay as the bottom. Hezbollah built a complex network of social services bodies to provide services to the poor. These services have been neglected by the Lebanese state for decades. This left a huge impact on the hearts and minds of people in Lebanon and gave Hezbollah a moral authority over the Lebanese consecutive governments. Chapter 3 “Is Hezbollah a Socialist Party?” examines the link between the issues of social and political justice within Hezbollah’s ideologies and practices.
Hezbollah and Israel fought three major wars in 1993, 1996 and 2006. Israel could not destroy the organisation as planned in each of the wars. By contrast, the organisation accumulated significant military experience and developed a wide range of arms that poses a substantial threat to Israel. Hezbollah took advantage of its military power gained over the years to acquire more political gain in the vacuum of power within the political Lebanese system. Chapter 4 “Hezbollah and Israel: Did Hezbollah Change the Nature of the Arab-Israeli Conflict? A Brief History of the Arab-Israeli Conflict” examines the contribution of the Arab-Israeli conflict to the formation of Hezbollah as well as the impact of Hezbollah on the nature of this conflict. Chapter 5 “Is Lebanon a Failing State?” offers a study on the weak performance of the state of Lebanon and its failures since 1943. The successive governments in Lebanon failed to provide security for its people. Lebanese security and armed forces have been weak and divided and did not resolve the internal and external challenges and threats confronting Lebanon since its formation. Providing services to the citizens in Lebanon was a major failure. From this weakness, many Lebanese and Palestinian organisations namely The Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) and Hezbollah tried to fill the vacuum of power. Has Lebanon been a failing state ever since it came to existence? Chapter 6 “Is Hezbollah a State within a Failing State?” examines the claims that Hezbollah aim to build its own state in Lebanon.

Chapter 7 “A Reading of the 2006 Memorandum of Understanding between Hezbollah and the Free Patriotic Movement (FPM)” A reading in the 2006 memorandum of understanding between Hezbollah and the Free Patriotic Movement (FTP) -Christian Maronite-. Nasrallah signed the document in Mar Mikhael church. Was the memorandum a response to the failed 17 May agreement with Israel in 1983? Did Hezbollah win the majority of Christians through this agreement? Chapter 8 “Conclusion” re-states and confirms main arguments.

This thesis aims to develop a critical approach to theories and studies of the rising influence of Hezbollah since 1992. It is necessary to carry out a broad analysis of the organisation from diverse perspectives and issues which include Realism, Liberalism, Communism and class
analysis, Socialism and social justice, Political Islam, political Shiaism the methods of the political ruling system, Political Judaism and the State of Israel and Zionism as a political theory, The study will concentrate on politics of Lebanon with brief background of the Lebanese civil war (1975-1990). Unsolved problems of the Lebanese civil war will also be addressed. A wide variety of sources especially Arabic sources have been critically analysed in order to ensure that a balanced but critical analysis is achieved.

**Social reasons for Hezbollah’s formation, 1943-1982**

Throughout the period of the Ottoman rule of Lebanon, which lasted for more than four hundred years, the Shia in Lebanon lived on the margins of a society dominated by Christians and Sunni Muslims. The Shia in Lebanon shared the same beliefs as the Safawi (Safavid) State rulers in Persia, who ruled between 1501 and 1736. Safawis were a major opposition power in the Ottoman Empire and followed the Shia school of thought. The Shia were labelled at the time as ‘dirty’, ‘ignorant’, ‘vulgar,’ tasteless’, and, most importantly, ‘illiterate’. An expression that still circulates among some different right-wing communities in Lebanon – “Quality is what matters, not quantity” – carries a negative and discriminating message aimed at the Shia, who have always represented a larger group within the population (Mackey, 2008, p.160). Even today, many Shiites recall an interview with the right-wing Christian Al-Kataeb party that Pierre Gemayel gave to a Christian-owned television station in spring, 2005, in which he was dismissive of the Shia standing as Lebanon's largest group, stating, "They threaten with (the) quantity of (their) people … we have the quality” (Shadid, 2006).

In 1919, the Shia in Lebanon comprised of just below 20 percent of the population of the newly forming state. Still a minority at the time, they had little effect in the political system, and were prevented from having any real political or economic power. They were attached to the land in south Lebanon known as Jabal-Amil, and to Beqaa-Hermel, in which
they had lived for centuries by dint of tradition and economics. The Shia lacked an educated elite or business class that was able to provide them with any effective representation. Instead, a group of landlords was allowed to participate in the Lebanese political system under the condition of keeping the Shia community inactive (Mackey, 2008, p.160). Thus, the Shia were forced at that time to live on the margins of the political and economic system. They stayed passive and harboured a deep and long-lasting sense of injustice.

In the 1920s, during the period of the French mandate that followed Ottoman rule in Lebanon, the Shia represented around only eighteen percent of the population. Other studies suggested that the population of Lebanese Shia was 19.6% in 1932 then declining to 17.8% in 1956% (Hazran, 2009). The group remained politically isolated, as they had always been (Mackey, 2008, p.49). The growth in the number of Shia was still not significant enough to grant them any fair share of political power. The French offered the Shia recognition for the first time as a separate group or sect within the system; the country’s previous rulers, the Sunni Ottoman, had denied the Shia this right, even though it was granted to Christians and Jews (Cobban, 1987. P.63). The Shia were, for sectarian reasons, seen by the Ottomans as unfit for this privilege. However, in spite of the French concession, the Shia remained at the bottom of the economic ladder, with high unemployment and low literacy rates (Marxist-Leninist Alliance, 2006). The Shia—also known as Shiite—demographic revolution started to become visible at the dawn of the 1975 Lebanese Civil War and according to demographic studies Shia population reached 40% of the total population in Lebanon in 2005. (Hazran, 2009, P2)

Although no census has been taken in Lebanon since 1932, it is commonly believed that the Shiites have become the single largest religious community in Lebanon, constituting approximately 40 percent of the entire population (or 1.6 million out of a total population of 4 million). ...the birth rate of the Shiite community is the highest among all Lebanese communities; as a result, the Shiite community has doubled its demographic presence in the country over the seven decades from 1932 (19.6 percent of the total population) to 2005 (approximately 40 percent) (Hazran, 2009, P2)
A feudal style landlord system in southern Lebanon exercised its power over the residents of whole villages in the south; in the Beqaa Valley, a tribal system existed. The two Shia areas of Jabal Amil and the Beqaa valley were not incorporated into the Lebanese political system until the 1920’s. Other communities in this region had already started the process of urbanization supported by economic growth in Beirut. In the 1940’s, the Shia still did not have any significant presence in either Beirut or central Mount Lebanon. They stayed isolated in their villages, not participating in the Lebanese political system (Cobban, 1987, p.63).

Jabal-Amil and Balabak-Hermel, which were mainly inhabited by poor Shia, were neglected areas before and after the independence of Lebanon. In 1943, for instance, a request note declared that there was not even one hospital for three hundred villages in southern Lebanon. Furthermore, there was no medical centre in three major cities: Sida, Tyre and Nabatieh. There were no supplies of water to the houses, so people had to collect water for drinking (Mustapha, 2003, p.371). After the creation of the state of Lebanon, the Shia were counted as second-class citizens. They mainly worked in agriculture and low-level jobs. The feudal system comprised Shia landlords, who cared only for their own interests.

In the 1960’s, the Shia were easily the poorest and least privileged of the Lebanese sects and the one to bear the brunt of the Israeli reprisal raised in the South. University graduates were rare among the Shia in the sixties (Qassim, 2010, p.30). They worked in low-level jobs, the only available option for them. Thus, they started a great migration to Beirut due to continuous abandonment by consecutive Lebanese governments and ongoing Israeli aggression. The new arrivals to Beirut started to compete for space and jobs with other communities that had already moved there many years before them. Many areas surrounding Beirut were transformed into vast Shia-dominated suburban slums (Cobban, 1987, p.21).
However, towards 1969, the Shia began to experience something of a political awakening under the leadership of imam, *Mussa Al Sadr* (Gordon, 1980, p.69). In the early seventies, *Imam Moussa Al Sadr*, a Shia religious leader, established the Deprived Movement as a social-political movement that aimed to put an end to the government’s neglect of poor areas, especially in South Lebanon, the *Beqaa Valley* and in the belts of misery surrounding Beirut (Qassim, 2010, p.31).

In 1972, a study showed that the average Shia family income was equal to 4532 Lebanese lira (LL), while the average person’s income was 6247LL. The Shia had the highest percentage of families earning less than 1500LL. More than fifty percent of Shia were illiterate, compared to the average of thirty percent in the rest of the country. They had the lowest percentage in technical, commercial, industrial, and administrative jobs. They also had the highest percentage of agricultural workers and door-to-door sellers. Surprisingly, Southern Lebanon received only 0.7% of the national budget, despite the fact that twenty percent of the total population lived there (Mustapha, 2003, p.372).

The only official census in Lebanon took place in 1932. Nowadays, the Lebanese Individual Civil Registraration Record and the Family Civil Registration Record data state that the data registered is extracted from from The 1932 Residents Census Records. It is clear that sectarian reasons have stood behind the lack of any official census ever since. In 1972, the Shia were estimated to form 27% of the total population (Cobban, 1987, p.16). A significant growth in the number of Shia in Lebanon caused instability in the political power balance. By the early 1980’s, the Lebanese Shia were thought to number about 1 million, or around one third of the population (p.19). Thus, at this stage, the size of the Shia population had the potential to grant them political power in proportion to their numbers. However, they were denied this right mainly by right-wing Christian parties, with significant support from Israel.
Social Structure of the Lebanese Society (1943-1982)

The first *Hezbollah* charter or manifesto was announced in 1984 from the *Chiyah* mosque in a poor and neglected area within the ‘belts of misery’ surrounding Beirut from the south; these ‘belts’, which also incorporated a few suburbs in Eastern Beirut, were called the ‘Southern Suburbs’ or *Dahia Janoubeye*. Poverty, unemployment, low literacy rates, invasions, incursions and the bombing raids of the Israeli invasions of 1978 and 1982 drove thousands of farmers and villagers from their homes before and during the Lebanese civil war. Little was available in Beirut for housing for the northward migration of the Shia population (Raschka, 1997).

At the beginning of the Lebanese civil war in 1975, Beirut contained a double ‘belt of misery’ made up of the slums of small tin houses. The first inner belt contained a number of neighbourhoods of small tin houses. The second ‘belt of misery’ containing the slums was located close to the inner suburbs of the city. At the time, the eastern part of both the first and the second ‘belts of misery’ surrounding Beirut were totally destroyed; the eight slums built before the war were forcibly evacuated of their residents and totally demolished. The latter were: *Qarantina, Medawar, Tel el-Zaater, Jisr el-Bacha, Camp Syriaque, Horsh Rahal, Bourj Hammoud,* and *Karem el-Zaytoun*. The southern part of the ‘belts of misery’ survived total destruction despite the fierce fighting during the civil war, and the 1982 Israeli invasion. The southern suburbs of Beirut consisted of: *Sabra and Shatila, Ghobeiri, Jnah, Borj El Barajneh, Laylaki, Hay el Sullum* and *Ouzai* (Khalaf & Khoury, 1993). Large parts of these southern suburbs of Beirut, which are now the stronghold of *Hezbollah*, were destroyed or severely damaged by Israel in the 2006 July war.

The social identity of *Hezbollah*’s followers at this stage is clearly visible through the first manifesto. The quest for *Hezbollah*’s origins was not purely religious; social and political justice shaped the ideology of the *Hezbollah*, which has always represented the
neglected in a country that tends to turn a blind eye to a class that was meant to always stay at the bottom. This social and political aspect is ignored by most scholars who study Hezbollah. The importance of the place and time of Hezbollah’s first manifesto is crucial to any analysis of its Islamic identity, policies and practices. Nasrallah, the current Hezbollah leader, was born and raised in Al Karanitina neighborhood, one of the poorest and most neglected areas in the eastern suburbs of Beirut (Hezbollah’s Secretary General’s CV, 2011). Likewise, the vast majority of Hezbollah’s leaders, fighters and supporters were born in either the ‘belts of misery’, or other neglected areas in southern Lebanon and the Beqaa Valley. This was a group that witnessed practices of social inequality imposed on them, their fathers and grandfathers. Thus, a central socialist ideology is deeply implanted in the beliefs and practices of Hezbollah and explains Hezbollah’s attempt to build relations with socialist and leftist groups around the world. Hezbollah thus combines Islamist and socialist theory in one ideology and it can be justifiably claimed that Hezbollah is an Islamist-Socialist party that adopts a politics of liberation.

**Israeli aggressions on Lebanon, 1948-1982**

The second major reason for the formation of Hezbollah was the continuous Israeli aggression waged against Lebanon since 1948. This aggression was supported and concealed by western imperial powers and ignored by the United Nations. Israel planned to expand its territories to gain more land and to control water sources in Lebanon. In 1918, the Zionist leader, Ben-Gourion described the Litani River in Lebanon as the future of the northern frontiers of the Jewish state (Masalha, 1992, p.87). In 1919, the Zionists unsuccessfully claimed the right to settle the area they considered as Eretz Israel (the Land of Israel), extending beyond Palestine as delimited by Britain and confirmed by the League of Nations. This claim was purportedly based on their Biblical beliefs, yet the main aim was to control
the rich water sources of southern Lebanon, especially of the Litani River (McDowall, 1990, p.19).

In 1948, the creation of Israel as a Jewish homeland in Palestine became official. A war between the Arabs and Israel broke out and was considered by the Israelis as the war of independence, while the Arabs declared it as the war of the liberation of Palestine. In the period between 1948 and 1965, Israel conducted many aggressive incursions against Lebanon, causing high numbers of casualties, and destruction and damage to infrastructure and private property. It became clear at this stage that Lebanon was vulnerable to the Israeli attacks, and that there was a lack of care on the part of the international community, evidenced in considerable support for Israel from the West.

On October 31, 1948, the Zionist gang, Hagana, led by Menachem Begin, killed 80 people in Houla-Marjeyoun in Lebanon. The victims were buried in a mass grave, and those who survived fled to Beirut, where the Lebanese government built a small slum settlement of tin houses for them in Alkarentina-Beirut. The survivors returned after six months to Houla in 1949. The people of Jabal-Amil felt that they were defenceless against a great power that was starting to take shape in neighbouring Palestine. All that their government could do for them was to build them a slum in Beirut (Alarabiya.net, 2006). In addition, during the Lebanon-Israel wars that followed, 120 people from Houla were also killed in the fighting with Israel, and 400 men and women were taken prisoner by Israel (Jabal-Amal Villages, 2011). In late November the same year, the Israelis killed 105 civilians, including women and children, in Solha-Bent-Jbeil. Solha is one of seven villages that were later taken by force from Lebanon in 1967 and added to the land of Israel to become the Afmem settlement (Saad, 2011).
The 1949 Armistice Agreements ended the 1948 fighting and, at this time, Israel, with strong support from the West and legal support from the United Nations, had a strong hold over the seized land. Despite the 1949 Armistice Agreements, Israel continued its aggression against neighbouring countries, especially Lebanon, since Lebanon was considered to be the weakest link in the chain. On November 26, 1967, the Israeli forces committed a massacre in Hanin- Bent-Jbil after a three-month siege. After the killings, all the houses in the village were demolished by the invading forces (Saad, 2011).

Lebanon did not participate in the 1967 war, yet Israel invaded parts of Shebaa Farms in the Al Arkoub province in southern Lebanon, destroying its housed and displacing its people. These farms are still occupied today, despite Lebanon’s continuing claim to the farms (Al-Jayesh, 2006). Even before the 1969 Cairo Agreement, the Israelis firmly demonstrated to the Lebanese government and civilian population the high cost of hosting the Palestinian commandos (Khalidi, 1984, p.91). On December 27, 1968, Israeli Special Forces raided Beirut International Airport, destroying thirteen civilian passenger airplanes belonging to Middle East Airlines. Israel claimed that the operation was a response to the Palestinian attack on an El Al Flight in Athens one day earlier (MacLeod, 2006). In June 1968, Israel bombed Meis Al-Jabal in Marjeoun province in Southern Lebanon and in the summer of 1969, Israel conducted a series of military attacks against southern Lebanon (Al-Jayesh, 2006).

In the early 1970s, tens of thousands of southern Lebanese – mostly poor Shia – fled the border area, which in any case had long been neglected by successive Lebanese governments who were clearly unwilling to provide basic education, health or economic development services. For the most part, these people moved into poor suburbs where many Palestinians also lived in poverty. Leftist organisations succeeded in radicalizing the Shia in Beirut and in the south, scaring the right-wing Maronite leaders and prodding the Christians
to take up arms (Randal, 1984, pp.198-199). In October 1973, the Israeli air force destroyed the Al-Barouk radar station in the mountains in western Lebanon. After the 1973 War ended, Israel continued its aggressions against southern Lebanon. In 1974, Israel killed nine people in Yarin-Bent Jbeil and destroyed 17 houses (Alarabiya.net, 2006)

At the beginning of the civil war in Lebanon in 1975, the central Lebanese government lost control over many areas, including southern Lebanon. Israel formed a local militia called the Southern Lebanon Army, which later controlled the border area known as the Security Zone. The Southern Lebanon Army was a group of Lebanese recruits who fought on Israel’s side. In 1977, the Israeli Knesset formed a committee for Southern Lebanon. The Lebanese government tried to regain control over southern Lebanon, sending a military force to work with the United Nations Interim Forces in Lebanon (UNIFL), but Israel conducted artillery attacks against this force in Kokaba-Marjeyoun and the attempt failed. It was in Israel’s favour to keep the puppet Southern Lebanon Army in control of Southern Lebanon (Al-Jayesh, 2006). On May 17, 1975, Israel killed nine children in Aytaroun Bent-Jbeil (Alarabiya, 2006). On May 25, 1975, Israel tried to invade a border village called Aita-Alshaeb, which sits exactly on the Israeli border. The invading force clashed with the Lebanese army, and in the same year, Tyre city was bombarded and there was a failed attempt to place Israeli checkpoints in Marjeyoun (Al-Jayesh, 2006).

South Lebanon found itself hemmed in by hostile forces from June, 1976, until the end of the civil war. To the east was Syria, to the south Israel, and to the west a coast whose ports were blockaded by the Israeli navy. The villagers of southern Lebanon suffered the most from this siege, as basic food supplies, fuel oil and medical supplies were limited. The farmers and merchants were cut off from the traditional markets for their citrus and tobacco crops (Cobban, 1987, p.135).
In 1976, Israel bombarded the Thursday Marketplace in *Bent-Jbeil*, killing 23 civilians and injuring thirty others. In 1978, in *Alowzai*, one of Beirut’s ‘misery belt’ suburbs, the Israeli air force attacked a block of units, killing 26 civilians and injuring a score of others, and completely destroying 30 units. In the same year, Israel bombarded a church in *Rashya* in *Alarqoub* province in south Lebanon, killing 15 civilians who were seeking refuge in the church. In 1978, Israeli forces attacked *Konin* in *Bentjbeil* province, killing 29 civilians, mainly children. and twenty civilians were killed when Israeli commandos stationed on the shores of *Adlon* near *Saida* attacked two civilian cars. In the same year, the South Lebanon Army attacked *Al-Khiam* village in *Marjeoun*, killing around 100 people, mainly elderly men. On March 15, 1978, the Israeli air force attacked a mosque in *Alabasyieh-Tyre*, killing 112 civilians, mainly women and children who sought refuge in the mosque (Alarabiya, 2006).

On March 14, 1978, Israeli planes and warships hammered the bases and supply routes used by the PLO in southern Lebanon. Israeli ground forces pushed steadily northwards towards the Litany River. By the 21st of March, the Israelis occupied nearly all the area south of the *Litani River* (Cobban, 1987, p.161). Total civilian casualties from the March 21st Israeli invasion of south Lebanon were estimated by western sources at 2000. Hundreds of thousands of southern villagers fled northwards to escape the fighting. Many then found they had no homes to return to. A UN commission which visited south Lebanon shortly after the fighting found that in 100 southern villages, a total of 2500 houses had been completely destroyed, where twice that number were partially damaged. During the Litani invasion, Haddad forces massacred more than a hundred Shia men, women and children (Randal, 1984, p.218).

On 19 January, 1979, the UN issued the 444 Resolution to urge the Lebanese government to gain control over southern Lebanon. Israel rejected the 444 Resolution and
insisted that the local militia, which became known at this time as the Southern Lebanon Army led by Saad Hadad, cease their control of the border areas. On 19 April, 1979, Haddad declared the formation of the free Lebanon State over the land that his army controlled. This move was orchestrated and supported by Israel. In 1979, a large number of casualties fell after Israel intensified its attacks on Lebanon. In the same year, Israel started taking fixed military positions inside Lebanon (Al-Jayesh, 2006).

In 1980, Israel continued taking over Lebanese land from the border villages of Adayseh, Alma-Alshaeb, Aita Alshab, Aytaroun, Rmeish, Houla and Mies Aljabal (Al-Jayesh, 2006). In 1982, the right-wing Christian parties supported by Israel killed around 800 Palestinian and Lebanese civilians in Sabra and Shatila refugee camps in a horrific massacre that lasted for three days. At this stage, Lebanese civilians, especially in southern Lebanon, realised that no government, whether Lebanese, Arabic, Islamic or international, would provide protection from Israel for them. They came to the conclusion that they should carry arms to defend themselves. The Palestinian forces in Lebanon became entangled in Lebanese political and social problems and embroiled in the Lebanese civil war, and were thus distracted from fighting Israel. There was a major belief in Southern Lebanon that the Palestinian resistance was not serious in achieving its goals, and their sufferings were meaningless.

Hezbollah emerged from all this centuries-old social neglect and the continuous Israeli aggression that had begun in 1948. It is out of such squalid slums and dereliction that Hezbollah was born during the Israeli invasion of 1982 (Khalaf, 2002. p.11), and their first adopted slogan was “the rise of the oppressed”. There are three major reasons for Hezbollah’s success: military achievements in fighting the Israeli occupation of Lebanon played a significant role in Hezbollah’s success; social and economic services to the poor gave the organisation a wide base of supporters, who experienced basic services for the first
time; and, the emergence of a charismatic young leader of *Hezbollah* in 1992, Sayed Hassan Nasrallah, was a major factor in the success and achievements of *Hezbollah*.

In the early 1980’s, the *Amal Movement* was the only Muslim-Shia military group in Lebanon. *Amal* was established in 1975 by Shia cleric, *Imam Moussa Assader*. ‘Amal’, which means ‘hope’ in Arabic, is the acronym for Lebanese Resistance Detachments. This organisation was established as a vehicle to promote the Shia case in Lebanon (Rolland, 2003). Many *Amal* fighters joined *Hezbollah* because of their Islamic orientation, rather than remain with *Amal*, which was a secular nationalist movement, despite its claims that it possessed an Islamic identity.

Nasrallah, the current *Hezbollah* leader, was appointed as *Amal’s* person in in the *Beqaa* region in 1979. Nasrallah was also a member of the political council of *Amal* in *Beqaa* until joining the *Hezbollah* in the early 1980’s (*Hezbollah’s Secretary-General’s CV*, 2011). *Hezbollah’s* ideology appealed to many Shia who had previously fought for the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO), the Lebanese Communist Party (LCP), and other nationalist parties. They did not hesitate to join *Hezbollah*, adding strength to the organisation through their previous military and political experience.

In 1992, the conflict between Lebanon and Israel took a sharp and critical twist when Sayed Hassan Nasrallah was elected as Secretary-General of *Hezbollah*. Nasrallah emerged as the new young leader of *Hezbollah* after Israel assassinated the movement's leader, Sayed *Abbas Al Musawi*. Nasrallah managed to shift the organisation from a purely Islamic to an Islamic-nationalist movement. *Hezbollah* became deeply involved in the Lebanese government and parliamentary political activities, while still waging guerrilla warfare against the Israeli occupation forces in Southern Lebanon.
Beginning as a terrorist cat’s paw of Iran, *Hezbollah* has since transformed itself into an impressive political party with an admiring Lebanese constituency, but it has also insisted on maintaining the potent militia that forced Israel to withdraw from Lebanon in 2000 after almost two decades of occupation.


All these Israeli aggressions against Lebanon since 1948 contributed significantly to the emergence of *Hezbollah* after a long historical incubating period. Despite the fact that the link between these two factors is ignored by many scholars, the seeds of this formation were planted in 1943. There was a major belief between the ordinary people in southern Lebanon that their misery was caused, variously, by the support of Israel by the West, as well as by the social neglect from central Lebanese governments and their carelessness in stopping the Israeli attacks (Al-Jayesh, 2006). Lebanese Shia were also neglected from the time of the declaration of independence of Lebanon in 1943 until their rise in our contemporary time, which finally guaranteed them a real share in the political power. The struggle of the Shia in Lebanon was conducted on two fronts – both against the neglect of Lebanese governments and against Israeli aggression. Both challenges were countered by the local organisation, *Hezbollah*. This struggle can be strongly framed within the theory of class struggle – that is, it was a struggle that took place between two parties, the rich and the poor.

The internal reasons for the rise of Hezbollah are as significant as the Iranian financial, political, ideological, religious and most importantly military support. Iran has been supporting Hezbollah since its formation in 1982. Military support included training, arms supply and building a significant arsenal of missiles. Hezbollah kept building up the number of its missiles and improving its accuracy. The Iranian support for Hezbollah contributed significantly to Hezbollah’s successes and could be seen as significant as all internal factors the facilitated this rise combined.
Chapter 2

A Young Leader Emerges

On the Arab street, Hezbollah rapidly ascended as a new phenomenon in the Arab world – a guerrilla army in possession of sophisticated weapons and remarkable discipline in the battle. Gone were the empty threats of Gamal Abdul Nasser. Gone was Saddam Hussein’s hollow vow to “burn half of Israel”. Gone was Yasser Arafat’s promise to lead the Palestinians back to Jerusalem. In their place was Hassan Nasrallah, who combined the leadership of a cleric with the resolve of a general. (Mackey, 2008, p.249)

For many years, the Shia in Lebanon lacked leaders who can drive them to achieve their goals. Besides Sayed Abd al-Husayn Sharaf al-Din in the early to mid-1900s and Sayed Moussa Al-Sader in the 1960s and 1970s, The Shia in Lebanon relied of landlords who were appointed by the Othman Empire to assume their rights. In most cases, the landlords work solely for their own interest and disregarded the interest of the people they represented. Sharaf al-Din and Al-Sader were religious Shia clerks who practised political leadership rule in addition to their religious rule. Notably, the two religious leaders were born outside Lebanon and have had lived abroad for many years before moving to Lebanon Sayed Hassan Nasrallah can be considered as a continuation to this line of leadership within the Shia in Lebanon. Since the religious leadership managed to obtain many rights for their people, then many Shia in Lebanon shifted their trust to them rather than the untrusted landlords who represented the group for a long time with barely any notable achievements.

On the other hand, The Maronite and the Sunnis were producing great political leaders who are not clerks. Those leaders managed to obtain and maintain many political rights for the people they represented. At the same time, Israel was living its peak time in producing skilful military and political leaders who aimed mainly to serve Israel. Those
leaders managed to achieve great victories and achievements for Israel. It was a matter of waiting time for the Shia to produce a leader who they can rely on. The main aim of this chapter is to investigate how did the shift in Shia leadership in Lebanon played a major role in achieving unprecedented right for them in Lebanon.

Sayed Hassan Nasrallah, The Secretary General of Hezbollah, was born in the Alsharshabok neighbourhood in Alnabaa in August, 1960. Alsharshabok was one of the poorest areas in Lebanon. It consisted of small tin houses, normally of one small bedroom each, jammed tightly together. Alsharshabok was inhabited by poor Shia immigrants who came from southern Lebanon and the Hermel Begaa region. From an early age, Nasrallah experienced and realized the neglect and the oppression falling on his people, and how marginalised they were. This personal experience shaped Nasrallah’s ideology later on in life when he became the Secretary General of the Hezbollah organization in 1992. Abbas Almousai, a former Hezbollah leader, paved the way for this ideology, which combines socialism with Islamic ideology. Al Musawi and Nasrallah were among the clerics who led Hezbollah away from Amal in the early 1980s (Mackey, 2008, p.234).

In an air strike on February 16, 1992, Israel assassinated the Hezbollah leader, Abbas Almusawi, along with his wife and his young son. At this stage, instead of previous ineffective plans that aimed to destroy the organization from the bottom, a new military plan to destroy Hezbollah from the top was implemented by the strategic planners within the Israeli military. On this day, Israeli political and military leaders believed that the plan had finally worked. It was not long before they started to doubt and regret the assassination of Almusawi due to the emergence of a new young leader, who started to slowly make dramatic changes to the organization, thus attracting more support worldwide. Shortly after the assassination of Almusawi, Sayed Hassan Nasrallah, who was thirty-two years old at the time, was elected by the Executive Council of Hezbollah – known as the Shura – as the new
Secretary General of Hezbollah. Many political and military analysts doubted the leadership skills of the new young elected leader and assumed that Hezbollah had just suffered a fatal hit that would diminish the rising power of Hezbollah.

It was not long before observers realized that Israel had just missed a very rare opportunity to destroy Hezbollah once again. Immediately after the assassination of its leader, Hezbollah started to retaliate. Katyusha rockets started to land on Israeli settlements in northern Israel. This critical weapon started to diminish the safety of Israelis in northern Israel; consequently, this area is no longer safe from Hezbollah’s threats. The threat expanded gradually, like an oil spill, until it covered the vast majority of Israeli territory. Recently, Nasrallah declared that Hezbollah is capable of targeting large areas of the Mediterranean Sea, which would cut off all Israeli military sea support, in addition to all military and non-military airports and seaports in Israel (Nasrallah, 2010). He connected the use of the Katyusha rockets to the political decisions made by the Shura in order to achieve political gain in any indirect negotiation in future wars with Israel. The Israeli leaders realized that Nasrallah was a fierce and smart enemy who knew how to play a new game with Israel by his own rules.

The role played by Hezbollah’s Secretary General, Sayed Hassan Nasrallah, in the success of Hezbollah’s venture is more than central. Nasrallah’s exceptional charismatic qualities and uniquely proficient leadership have been vital to the rise of the movement. He has dexterously and eloquently articulated the movement’s central themes, ideas, and goals. Rarely can one individual embody a movement or even a nation, but Nasrallah’s leadership was the most significant surprise that Israel faced in the 2006 war, a war shaped by Hezbollah’s surprises. (Khoury & Da’na 2009, p.146)

Nasrallah shifted the Hezbollah organization to a new level and managed to avert the danger of the dismantling of Hezbollah during several critical periods, such as the 1996, 1996, and 2006 wars. Nasrallah survived those dangerous times and started to establish a new
era of leadership. A young leader had just proven himself in the ongoing conflict with Israel. Israel had to take his charismatic character into account in any future war – a factor that would be considered by Israel in future wars against Lebanon.

The new leader also paid special attention to the poor Shia in Lebanon. Nasrallah concentrated on incorporating socialist ideologies into Hezbollah’s practices. He started a wide variety of social bodies (Salim, 2006a, pp.45-52) within Hezbollah to provide social services to followers and supporters (Qassim, 2010, p.127). Nasrallah also gave his instruction to expand and improve the existing services. Nasrallah personally observed these bodies and gave directions on how they should operate. Social services provided by Hezbollah to the followers, supporters and the poor Shia of Lebanon will be examined in a separate chapter in this study. Notably, a museum for the military history of Hezbollah’s struggle, which aims to display Hezbollah’s victories against both the state of Israel in general and the Israeli Defence Force (IDF) in particular, was also established. Thus, the image of the undefeatable opposing army started to fall apart (Haider, 2006. P.106). In the words of Hezbollah chief, Hassan Nasrallah, this museum was given the epithet ‘earth speaks to heaven’ and the leader stated that “armies that emerge glorious from war display their exploits in museums” (in Larkin, 2012, p.123).

Nasrallah adopted a newly Islamic-socialist ideology that concentrated on the poor and the neglected within the Shia sect. A new political theory needs to be introduced when examining the significant shift in the social services provided by Hezbollah. Political Islamist theories regarding ruling power structures are concentrated nowadays on two major foci. The first method of ruling is Salafist-Islam, which gives huge authority to the ruler and denies the ruled any right of objection. The subjects in this political system are mainly the poor who are stripped of any rights to question the rulers, in particular regarding political power and social services. The second political Islamist ruling theory is liberal Islam, which emerged in
countries like the United Arab Emirates, Malaysia and Indonesia. The new liberal Islamists are connected with the liberal imperial West (Salim, 2006a, p.93) and primarily concentrate on the interests of the rich. In both cases, the poor are politically and socially oppressed and neglected, which has led to the introduction of the new Islamic-political theory of Socialist Islam. Despite the fact that Nasrallah is a Muslim cleric, he has managed to introduce socialism with an Islamic character to the poor of Lebanon. Mackey (2008, p.245) refers to the “Shia faithful who through the history of the Arab world and the Lebanese state remained chained to the bottom of the social and political order.” She opines that “now Hezbollah was providing the vehicle of the Shia cultural and political ambition”.

The social status and character of Hezbollah’s followers in the early stages of Nasrallah’s leadership played a huge role in driving the attention of Islamists within the Shia sect towards socialism (Mustapha, 2003, p. 375). It is also important to note that a large number of Shia in the 1960s and 1970s followed communist and socialist ideologies and participated enthusiastically in activities driven by these ideologies. These followers were always stuck between their personal Islamic beliefs and general socialist and communist ideologies. Hezbollah gave them the satisfaction that both ideologies could be practiced at once.

Thus, the quest to establish Hezbollah’s origins cannot be confined to purely religious factors. Social and political justice shaped the ideology of the Hezbollah and Nasrallah. This ideology represents the neglected in a country that tends to turn a blind eye to a class that was meant to always stay as the bottom. It is an ideology that is now believed to combine the teachings of Islam and the concepts of socialism in one belief, an aspect that is ignored by most scholars who study Hezbollah. The importance of the place and time for Hezbollah’s first manifesto is crucial to any analysis of its Islamic identity, policies and practices. Nasrallah was born and raised in ‘Alkaranitina neighbourhood,’ one of the poorest and most
neglected areas in the eastern suburbs of Beirut. Likewise, the vast majority of Hezbollah’s leaders, fighters and supporters were born in either the ‘belts of misery’, or other neglected areas in southern Lebanon and Bekaa Valley. They were a group that witnessed social inequality practices imposed on them, their fathers and grandfathers. A socialist ideology within Hezbollah underscores its attempts to build relations with socialist and leftist groups around the world. This new movement within Hezbollah flourished under the leadership of Nasrallah. (Khoury and Da’na, 2009, p.146) highlight the dichotomy in Western perceptions of Islamic ideology by stating that “Hezbollah’s success in reinventing Islam, as well as in employing Islam as a tool to construct the ‘new Arab nationalism’ contradicts this inherent assumption of modern Western thought.”

Islamists from the Shia sect started their activities in Lebanon in the early seventies in political, ideological and cultural domains. Despite the fact that Sayyed Moussa Alsader prompted the new ideology into existence, he declared his movement to be for the oppressed and neglected from all religions and sects in Lebanon. The main concentration was purely on poverty and the poor from all seventeen different sects in Lebanon. However, AMAL supporters were mainly Muslim Shia, and the sectarian taboo in Lebanon proved to withstand any challenges to the status quo. Alsader was kidnapped and subsequently assassinated by the Libyan leader, Moamar Alqadafi, in 1978 (Qassim, 2010, p.32).

The emerging Islamist group concentrated on the poverty within the Shia sect in Lebanon, who formed the majority of the poor at the time. The new group can be described as the first Shia political organisation that sought political and military power for the oppressed Shia. The Shia leaders at that time were the landlords, who first and foremost represented only themselves and their interests; the interests of their poor followers, who believed in them, were not a central concern. The new emerging Islamic group consisted of young men in their late teens. Sayed Hassan Nasrallah was one of them.
Shia religious authorities have traditionally maintained a high theological wall between the spiritual and the secular that leaves politics to others. That was until Musa al Sadr in Lebanon in the 1960s, Ayatollah Khomeini in Persian Iran in the 1970s, and Hassan Nasrallah in Lebanon in the 1990s joined together the spiritual and secular in the political arena. (Mackey, 2008, p.27)

**Nasrallah’s charismatic character.**

Nasrallah’s charismatic character and credibility played a significant role in attracting supporters for the *Hezbollah* organization. Part of Nasrallah’s charisma among the Shia comes from his own story. Born in Beirut in the 1960, he grew up in *Karintina*, an east Beirut neighbourhood of impoverished Christians, Druze, Palestinians, and Shia. Unlike the sons of the elite, he attended public school until the age of fifteen (Mackey, 2008, p.235)

Ironically, the Progressive Socialist Party in Lebanon (PSP) is led by a landlord called *Walid Jumblatt*. *Jumblatt* holds an Ottoman title (*Beek*), which was inherited from his grandfathers. *Beek* was a title given to important landlords in Lebanon and elsewhere in the Ottoman Empire. The PSP supposedly represents the poor socialists in Lebanon, yet its leader is a landlord. The followers of the party were mainly Monotheistic Druze faith in addition to followers from other sects, Shiite and Sunni Muslims. This can be observed in the history of PSP and its current leadership apparatus.

Sayed Hassan Nasrallah was regarded as one of the most influential people of the year in ‘The 2011 Time 100’ (Ghosh, 2011). Despite some unrealistic descriptions of Nasrallah, Time magazine listed Nasrallah as one of the chosen hundred whose ideas spark dialogue and dissent and sometimes even revolution. Nasrallah’s credibility and honesty were even highlighted by his Israeli enemies as well as his Lebanese and Arab political allies and rivals. *Dr Udi Lebel* is an Israeli expert on issues of strategic press, political psychology, and army-
media relations. Lebel conducted a survey in 2006 in Israel to learn who gave the Israeli people a sense of certainty regarding the continuance of the 2006 July war, and who was most authentic. “The results were unequivocal: The Israeli public chose Nasrallah’s speeches as giving it both”. The study also found that “Nasrallah contradicted the Israeli spokespeople and was more authentic” (udi).

Taking over the leadership of Hezbollah in 1992 at the age of thirty-two, Nasrallah promoted the guerrilla war against the Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon. It was to this cause that he sacrificed his son, Hadi, who was killed in September, 1997 (in Salim, 2006a, p.82). This personal and profound loss added another layer to his mystique. In the Arab world, the children of leaders do not suffer for a cause pursued by the state and certainly not by one embraced by the masses. For the Shia, Nasrallah’s sorrow, combined with his modest lifestyle and reputation for incorruptibility, served, in the minds of his supporters, to further separate his image from that of the Lebanese elite” (Mackey, 2008, p.236).

**Nasrallah builds unprecedented bridges with socialists**

Nasrallah managed to shift the Hezbollah organisation from a purely Islamic group to an organisation that incorporates socialism in its ideology and practices within the borders of Islamic teachings. This practice was appreciated by many socialists and communists in Lebanon and worldwide, who spoke highly of Nasrallah on many occasions. It is not usual in Lebanon for communists to honour and praise a religious figure in order to emphasise the secular nature of their movement. Nasrallah was an exception, and was regarded by many Marxists in Lebanon as a socialist rather than as a purely Islamic figure, in spite of the turban on his head that highlights his religious position and status. This does not mean the religious aspect of Nasrallah and the group he leads was fully ignored. There are many ideological differences between Hezbollah and the left-wing politics supporters in Lebanon. The aim is to
focus on the overlap and intersection of shifting political views between two contrasting ideologies. This created an unprecedented phenomenon in the politics of Lebanon where each group firmly stick to its hardline ideology whether its religious or secular.

*Ziad Alrahibani* is a communist activist, musician and theatre and songwriter. *Alrahibani* is the son of the enormously famous national singer of Lebanese and Arabic songs, *Fayrouz*. *Alrahibani* is well known for his deep commitment to the Lebanese Communist Party. He strives to form a secular state in Lebanon and to abolish the current sectarian political system. In an interview, *Alrahibani* declared that:

I am not *Hezbollah*, I am a communist. Nasrallah is not about religion from top to bottom. On the contrary, Nasrallah is the least of all speakers to use religious sayings and Quranic versus in his long speeches…Nasrallah gave me a dose of comfort and abolished the mentality that we cannot defeat Israel. *(Jido, Tayyar.org)*

Khoury and Seif (2009, p.137), emphasizing the significance of *Hezbollah*’s victories in the formation of its new self-image, states that “the consequent achievements of *Hezbollah*, beginning with the liberation of southern Lebanon in 2000, challenged the image of Israel’s undefeatable army, and the new notion became significantly hegemonic following the 2006 war.”

Khaled Al-Haber is another clear example of the acceptance of a religious Islamic figure by a prominent Lebanese communist. Al-Haber was formerly a communist fighter in the Lebanese civil war (1975-1990). Al-Haber, who mainly sings for the communist and socialist cause, became a famous singer after the 1975 civil war. The emerging singer has praised Nasrallah and the Islamic resistance of *Hezbollah* on many occasions. In an interview with *Hayda Zamank* on Al-Jazeera television in 2010, Al-Haber declared:

I am with *Hezbollah*’s resistance, with any resistance against Israel, because *Hezbollah* has conducted a resistance of national and international proportions … a resistance that is clear and honest yet secretive.
Hezbollah’s way of resistance has reminded us (Communists) of the resistance of the people of Vietnam. (Zamank, 2010)

Al-Haber insisted that it is an obligation to salute Hezbollah, so Hassan’s ‘Returning to Haifa’ – a famous song written and performed by Al-Haber – demonstrates the desire to portray Nasrallah “as a man not as a god, as a man who is a nationalist resistance leader”. This trend away from a purely religious perception of Hezbollah is underscored as:

Hezbollah’s triumphs signified and significantly contributed to the formation of a new age in the Middle East, characterized mainly by the rise of a new Arab-national consciousness that was most eloquently captured by Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah’s memorable phrase “Israel is weaker than a spider’s web”. The Arabs were reinventing themselves – and, by implication, reinventing Israel. (Khoury & Seif (2009, p.136)

Socialists and communists understood that Nasrallah grew up in a tin house in a poor area in Alkaranitina-Beirut, unlike the majority of the Lebanese political leaders who inherited titles from their fathers and grandfathers. These titles were given to landlords during the Ottoman rule of Lebanon. Nasrallah’s childhood and personal experiences shaped his understanding of social justice and political equity and drove his attention to the importance of fighting for civil rights and political equality for the poor. This led, importantly, to his efforts to connect with socialists and communists, in Lebanon and globally, and with their struggles for the masses.

Prior to the formation of Hezbollah, the Lebanese Shia were regarded by other militias and outside observers, as

“politically irrelevant in Lebanon. This came as no surprise given the Shia community historical background and socially excluded, economically deprived and politically marginalised within Lebanon which disadvantaged the representation of Muslims”. (Mustapha 2003, p.375).
Hezbollah’s calls for social and economic justice are based on Islamic ideology, yet match socialist teachings. Hezbollah’s social character easily attracted supporters to its side. Socialist groups in Lebanon were not trouble and concentrated and the common call for social justice that is common between the two different ideologies. Nasrallah used political terms that have always been the backbone of communist ideology, represented by the Communist Manifesto in many of his speeches. Those terms are similarly used in the teachings of Islam, yet no connection between the two had ever been made before. Sayed Nasrallah warned in many of his speeches against the danger of Western interference (in Larkin, 2012, p.82) and intervention in Arab and Muslim countries, and constantly pointed out the danger of American interventions in particular in many other countries in the world:

Hezbollah’s victory managed to undo Israel’s achievements since 1967 and to overcome its effects on both the Arab and the Israeli consciousness. It was not a military victory in the battlefield only; it was also a victory in the war of positions. A small, rational, well-organized native movement in the smallest Arab country (aside from the island of Bahrain) managed in six years (between May 2000 and July 2006) not only to undo Israel’s military victories since 1948 but also to challenge Western hegemony. This is a revolutionary achievement by any standard. It signifies the embedded sway of native cultures and, by implication, constitutes a serious challenge not only to Israel’s colonial scheme but to Western imperialist hegemony as well. (Khoury & Seif, 2009, p.146)

In 2009 alone, Hezbollah graduated 2883 men and women in a ceremonial hall that was built in the congested southern suburbs of Beirut on the rubble of buildings destroyed by Israeli bombs in the 2006 war. The graduates ‘received certificates of achievement, rather than actual diplomas, since Hezbollah has no university of its own, and grants scholarships instead’ (Butters, 2009).
Nasrallah had always spoken in the name of the poor in Lebanon. Masses were not offended by his way of representing them, since they were conscious that his social origins were quite unlike the vast majority of political leaders in Lebanon, whose positions of leadership were inherited from their forebears.

On December 7, 2006, Hassan Nasrallah declared to the protestors “from the homes of the poor, from the shantytowns, from the tents, from the demolished buildings, from the neighbourhoods of the displaced by war, we will make sure that they hear our voice” (Larkin, 2012, p.82).

Nasrallah started a new era of alliances with Christians, especially the Free Patriotic Movement. Led by former general, Michael Aoun, the 2006 Memorandum of Understanding between Hezbollah and the Free Patriotic Movement (FTP) – a Christian Maronite movement – was signed. Nasrallah signed the document in the Mar Mikhael Church. The memorandum was surely a response to the failed 17 May agreement with Israel in 1983. Many radical and non-radical Muslim clerics refused to enter a church. It was understood that a long-lasting Islamic taboo had just been broken and a new era of relations between Muslims and Christians in Lebanon had just started. Political and social relations that were based on mutual understanding between the two large groups in Lebanon were thus set. It was a milestone agreement that put an end to a deep and long history and misunderstanding between Muslims and Christians in Lebanon and started a genuine healing of the wounds inflicted by the Lebanese civil war. The symbolism of the signing of the document by Nasrallah in a church demands attention. Another observation of this agreement is that it was signed in Al-Chiyah, a suburb in Dahiya that is also inhabited by mainly poor Shia and is on the borders of Ain Alremaneh, a poor Christian suburb of Beirut. The events that sparked the civil war that began in 1975 took place in this particular area. Nasrallah and Aoun also aimed to give a strong message of peace between Christians and Muslims from this area, instead of
fighting and destruction. The two neighborhoods suffered severe destruction during the war and the Mar Mikhael Church had only just been renovated before the meeting between the two leaders.

Nayla Tueni, a member of the Lebanese parliament and the daughter of assassinated parliament member, Joubaran Tueni, was reported in the media as saying that “Nasrallah is the most moderate Shia leader and I am worried that he might be killed.” (Tueni, Al-Akhbar, 2011). This statement was published by Wikileaks. Tueni’s statement was made in a meeting in the American embassy in Lebanon. The statement included the opinion of Tueni and three other companions that Nasrallah is a man of moderate thoughts compared to other Shia leaders and that Nasrallah is the only man in the Lebanese government. It is worth mentioning that Tueni is a member of the 14 March Movement, which is a fierce political opponent of Nasrallah and Hezbollah.

Eisam Darwish, the bishop of Zahle and Beqaa, declared after meeting with Nasrallah for three hours that “the Secretary General of Hezbollah, Hassan Nasrallah, is mindful of the state of Christians in Iraq and Syria and other parts of the Arabic world” and “is convinced that Christians are part of the Arab world.” Darwish described the meeting with Nasrallah as outstanding and very normal and they agreed upon all topics discussed. It is actually strange in the Arab and Islamic world for Muslim religious and political leaders to meet with other leaders, especially Christian and socialist leaders, where both parties speak highly of each other. In the Arab world, Christians have no rights and are generally assumed to be outsiders. In Saudi Arabia and other monarchies in the Arab gulf, Christians have no rights, and in Egypt, Coptic Christians have been oppressed for decades, even under Mobarak’s regime. They struggle to build new churches in Egypt, or to even expand current ones due to demographic growth. They have no political power and Islamists have stripped them of any
rights, especially after the latter assumed power across the region. In Iraq and Syria, the case is very similar. In Indonesia, Indonesian Islamists have refused to allow Christians to use the word ‘Allah’, claiming that only Muslims can use it. The practice of tolerance introduced by Sayed Mousa Alsader and continued by other Shia leaders in Lebanon, especially Nasrallah, is highly appreciated by many Christian believers in Lebanon.

Nasrallah and the politics of Lebanon

In 1992, a decision of great political consequence in Lebanon was made by the Hezbollah Executive Council (Shura). Nasrallah pushed for the participation of Hezbollah in the 1992 parliamentary election (Qassim, 2010, p.337), and in all other political activities in Lebanon, including representatives in any future governments (p.349). The Shura approved Hezbollah’s participation, despite the objections of the former Hezbollah Secretary General, Sobhe Al-Tofayle. Hezbollah managed to secure twelve seats in the parliament and the group was led by Sayed Ibrahim Ameen Alsayed, a cleric from the Beqaa Valley and one of the leaders who was instrumental in forming the Hezbollah organization. It is clear that Hezbollah was never satisfied with the current sectarian political system in Lebanon. The new ideological stand to become politically active in Lebanon was a consequence of a series of political evaluation steps that led to this crucial decision, influenced primarily by Nasrallah. According to Berti (2010, p. 97), Hezbollah started to see itself as a major political player in the Lebanese political arena.

Thus, a new era of political and social activities started for Hezbollah and the Lebanese Shia in Lebanon. Nasrallah managed to shift the Hezbollah organization’s ideology to adopt a greater sense of belonging to the state of Lebanon. The main belief of most of the Shia in Lebanon was that it is not religiously acceptable to participate in any government or parliamentary positions, or even within the army and police force. This was due to the injustice of successive Lebanese governments towards them before and since independence.
Now the road was paved for the emerging political and military organization to participate with much greater confidence in the council elections in 1998. Most of the political Lebanese parties participated in this election. The local council elections are considered as an exercise for measuring political power in Lebanon, with a margin given to the families to nominate their representatives to the local council seats. The year 1998 saw the first local council election for decades. Hezbollah showed extreme interest in this election because it believed it would give the organization a stronger bond with the people and the families through the social services that could be provided. It was also seen as a way of leading Hezbollah to participate in future governments. Nasrallah’s plan to shift the Shia in Lebanon towards taking part in political activities was proven successful. Hezbollah won many seats in many areas, especially in Aldahia, where the organization broke the singular hold on power of the Amal Movement, represented by its leader, Nabih Berri.

In 2005, Hezbollah participated in the government formed by Prime Minister Najib Miqati through supporting the minister-ship of Trad Hamadeh. That government formed after the assassination of former Prime Minsiter Rafic Hariri in 2005 and its mission was to prepare for the parliamentary election in that year. As a result of that election, Hezbollah joined directly the government of Fouad Alsanyora by two ministers Trad Hamadeh and Mohammad Fneish. At this stage, Nasrallah managed to push the Islamic organization to participate in all possible political and social activities in Lebanon. The Shia in Lebanon started to develop further and stronger ties and a stronger sense of belonging to Lebanon (Kassir, 2011) – a sense that was developed through the stronger growing political power they were gaining.
In conclusion, Nasrallah played a significant role in making dramatic changes to the *Hezbollah* organization in Lebanon. The emerging force of *Hezbollah* guaranteed *Hezbollah* and its followers and supporters greater political and social power in Lebanon. Nasrallah’s political and military tactics forced the occupying Israeli forces to withdraw from Lebanon without imposing any unfair conditions on Lebanon (Hamadeh, 2004, p.106). This withdrawal was the first by Israel from an Arab land since 1948. Nasrallah’s charismatic character attracted growing numbers of supporters in the Arab and Muslim world and worldwide. His credibility was even acknowledged by Israeli politicians, military leaders and the Israeli press and people. The people in Israel believed his words more than they believed their own leaders. Nasrallah shifted *Hezbollah* from being a group of guerrilla fighters to an organization with enormous political, military and social power. His social ideology was visible through the services provided by *Hezbollah* to the historically poor, the Shia of Lebanon. His negotiation skills forced the Israeli leaders to accept his conditions in many indirect negotiations between Israel and *Hezbollah*. Nasrallah is not only a cleric who holds a religious rank, but also a military, political and social leader who has managed to achieve victories for the Arabs and Muslims where everyone else has failed.
Chapter 3

What is the Significance of Hezbollah’s Social Character?

*Hezbollah’s postwar reconstruction efforts were judged better than the U.S. government’s response to Hurricane Katrina – not by Al-Jazeera, but by an American TV journalist. (Norton, 2007)*

The main aim in this chapter is to explore the significance of Hezbollah’s social character. This will be conducted by examining Hezbollah’s ideologies and practices that overlap with those of social parties and draw a connection between these social polices on Hezbollah’s achievements within the Shia community in Lebanon.

*Hezbollah* started providing social services to its followers and supporters in 1982. A large number of bodies and associations were formed to provide a variety of educational, health, construction, agricultural, and financial services, as well as support for widows, orphans and elders. The people of Southern Lebanon, *Beqaa Valley* and poor suburbs surrounding Beirut (*Dahiya*) experienced new types of services for the first time in their history. These types of services were provided with great enthusiasm and played a significant role in gaining supporters to the organization. *Hezbollah* is the only non-governmental political and military organization that has structured social service agencies within its organization. This structure is very similar to a state services system and it is by far more effective and efficient than all official Lebanese agencies.
Social and economic services to the poor gave the organisation a wide base of supporters, who experienced basic services for the first time. Lebanese Shia had been neglected for the duration of the Ottoman rule of Lebanon for over four hundred years, neglect which continued during the French mandate period and after Lebanon’s declaration of independence in 1943. The Shia have long been at the bottom of the economic ladder, with high unemployment and low literacy rates (Marxist-Leninist Alliance, 2006). The first Hezbollah charter was announced in 1984 from the poorest and most neglected areas in Lebanon (Kassir, 2011b). Hezbollah forced its way in becoming a representative of the poor within the feudal Lebanese political system. (Raschka, 1997).

Hezbollah’s calls for social and economic justice are based on Islamic ideology, yet match the teachings of Socialism and Communism to a large extent. Hezbollah’s social character drew supporters to its side – namely those who followed Lebanese national, Socialist and Communist parties, in addition to Lebanese activists who had served in a variety of different Palestinian movements. In 2009 alone, Hezbollah graduated 2883 men and women in a ceremonial hall in the congested southern suburbs of Beirut that was built on the rubble of buildings destroyed by Israeli bombs in the 2006 war. Time magazine reported that the “graduates received certificates of achievement, rather than actual diplomas, since Hezbollah has no university of its own, and grants scholarships instead” (Butters, 2009).

For instance, Al-Imdad is one of Hezbollah’s social services associations that provide a wide variety of services to mainly poor Shia. These services target families that do not have a provider, regardless of whether the provider is dead, disabled or a criminal prisoner. Services also include special support for divorced or immigrant parents. Sayed Nasrallah personally supervises these associations through weekly meetings with the people in charge, providing them with direction and guidance (Yagi, 2011). It is important to analyse the type of services that Hezbollah provides in order to reveal the social face of an organization that has long been labelled as a terrorist organization. Worth (New York Times, 2006) reported that
“Hezbollah has been the fastest and, without a doubt, the most effective organization doling out aid to the shattered towns and villages of southern Lebanon.”

**Hezbollah’s social services bodies**

**Infrastructure and Development**

_Jihad Al-Binaa Development Association._

_Jihad Al-Binaa Development Association (JADA) was established in 1988 by a group of engineers and technicians. The Arabic term, ‘Jihad Al-Binaa’, means the ‘struggle for reconstruction’. JADA’s major aim was to reconstruct buildings and infrastructure damaged or destroyed by Israeli air strikes. JADA extended its services to cover agriculture, bee farming, and veterinary services that include the provision of specialised courses in cattle care and agriculture. The association also provides services in drilling and funding freshwater horizontal wells. It provides this service to those who need potable water and water for agriculture, yet cannot get the essential substance from government sources (Kassir, 2011b). In 2006, JADA played a major role in reconstructing the damage caused to houses by the 2006 July war. It also provided a choice of temporary housing for the reconstruction period or twelve thousand American dollars as a rent subsidy. The association also ran gardening and tree planting workshops and agriculture courses (Who We Are, 2013). The aims of JADA are stated as follows:

In general, to present a civilized pattern which reflects the vision of the resisting society out of its humanistic, social, and cultural perspicacity in a world of constructed and organized civilizations; and, in particular, to reconvert what was destroyed by the Israeli’s aggression during July 2006 war, through challenging the tyranny, constraint, and deprivation. The organization is based on this vision, and acts in such a way to constantly improve the situation. (Waed Rebuilds, 2013)
**Waed Project for Reconstruction**

The **Waed Project for Reconstruction (WPR)** is a massive project launched by JADA in 2006 after the July war between Israel and Hezbollah. ‘Waed’ means ‘promise’ in Arabic and it refers to a promise made by Hezbollah to reconstruct all destroyed and damaged buildings and infrastructure. The WPR was responsible for reconstructing 296 buildings destroyed by Israel in the southern suburbs of Beirut and in southern Lebanon at a cost of US$400 million (Waed Rebuilds, 2013)

Beirut’s southern suburbs are known as Dahiya Al-Janoubeyeh, the stronghold of Hezbollah, which was severely damaged by Israeli air strikes. The WPR managed to rebuild the 296 buildings, including 1000 car park spaces, sidewalks with access for disabled people, and small parks and gardens within the construction area. Redecorating old buildings in the area was also part of the project in order to match the newly rebuilt area with existing old ones to give the suburbs a modern appearance. (Together We Resist, 2013)

**Health Services**

**Islamic Health Society**

The Islamic Health Society (IHS) was formed in 1984 during the civil war and amid the Israeli invasion of Lebanon. The main aim of this body is to provide ambulances services, first aid and civil defence services to cover the shortage or non-existent governmental services in this area of Lebanon. IHS extended its services to building hospitals and medical centres and clinics that provide free or low-cost medical services to the needy. It also provides funds for those who need urgent medical care in other hospitals when the service is
not available in its centres. IHS has forty-seven branches in Beirut, Beqaa and southern Lebanon (Our Message and Objectives, 2013).

Financial Services

Al-Qard Al-Hassan Association Interest-Free Loan Association

The Interest-Free Loan Association (IFLA) was established in 1982 and registered in 1987. The association claims that its aim is to provide interest-free loans to the poor across Lebanon, regardless of their religion, sect or background. The loans are normally short-term and are granted for private purposes or small business loans. The application process is simple and the loan is arranged in a very short period of time. There are twenty-three branches in Lebanon. Nine of the branches are located in Dahiyeh Beirut, four in Beqaa and Baalbak and eight in southern Lebanon, covering all major cities in the south. IFLA also provides a special loan for small merchants where the association pays the supplier for the needed product and the merchant repays the loan to the association in small instalments. (General Overview, 2013)

Islamic Charitable Emdad Committee

The Islamic Charitable Emdad Committee (ICEC) was established in 1987 to help needy families achieve a sustainable income and to care for orphans, widows and elders in addition to disabled people. The association provides financial aid, donations in kind, health care, education and recreation, emergencies, income generating programs, and donation services to the poor. ICEC relies on donations (Arabic: sadakat), orphan sponsorship program, Islamic legal rights (zakat or alms) and the contribution funds of private agencies (ICEC, 2103); zakat expenditures are only for the poor and for the needy and for those employed to collect [zakat] (Qur’an IX: 60)

Social Services
Al Shahid Foundation (The Martyr Foundation)

Al Shahid Foundation was established in 1982 to support the families of those who died fighting for the organization (Kassir, 2011). The aim of the Al Shahid Foundation is to provide financial, educational, and health assistance and housing services to those families. University scholarships are also granted to those who are interested in gaining higher education (Al-Shahid Foundation, 2013).

The Islamic Institution for Education and Teaching – Al-Mahdi Schools

The Islamic Institution for Education and Teaching (IETT) was established in 1993. The educational foundation aims to build schools and technical institutes in addition to training teachers (Kassir, 2011). The IIET started its activities by building three schools in Beirut, southern Lebanon and Beqaa, respectively. Nowadays, IIET has fourteen schools spread across the above-mentioned areas to provide quality education. The shortage in the number of government schools in the neglected areas, and the lack of quality education provided by few government schools, urged Hezbollah to establish its own school. Hezbollah paid significant attention to providing quality and modern education to its supporters and followers, in addition to other neglected people living in these areas (Definition and Objectives, 2013).

Islamic Resistance Support Organization

Islamic Resistance Support Organization (IRSO) is a charity fund organization that aim to raise funds for the Islamic Resistance – the military arm of Hezbollah – to cover a part of its military cost and also the social services it provides. IRSO collects donations and raises funds through different types of charity programs like The Monthly Donation Program, Support a Fighter Program or simply by receiving small donations from ordinary people who are normally not rich (IRSO, 2013).
**Al-Ahed Newspaper**

*Al-Ahed* newspaper was first issued by *Hezbollah* in 1984 as a weekly newspaper. An electronic version of the newspaper started in 1999 (Kassir, 2011). Since Al-Ahed was not a licensed newspaper in Lebanon, a previously obtained licence under the name of Al_Intiqad was used. A small Al-Ahed logo was placed right on top of large Al-Intiqad logo. The electronic versions have English, French, Spanish editions, in addition to one in Arabic. *Al-Intiqad* (criticism) was later replaced by Al-Ahed as an electronics news website instead of the paper version. The new online version of Al-Ahed is specialised in analysing the conflict between Lebanon and Israel and in internal Israeli affairs (Al-Ahed, 2013).

**Al-Noor Radio Station**

Al-Noor radio station was established by *Hezbollah* in 1988 to cover the news of the ongoing war between Israel and *Hezbollah*. ‘Al-Noor’ means ‘illumination’ in Arabic. Al-Noor radio station introduced a variety of programs – political, economic, social, educational, cultural, historical, scientific, health, agriculture, entertainment and sport – in addition to special programs for families, youth and children (Kassir, 2011). Al-Noor introduced programs that correspond with the teachings of Islam. It also broadcasts recitations of the Quran and Azan (call for prayer) for each daily prayer. Al Noor pays special attention to Islamic celebrations like *Eid-AlDulha* and the month of Ramadan, which has its own special program, in addition to the ten days of *Ashoraa*. This commemoration marks the death of the great son of the prophet Mohamed on the battlefield, where he chose to die with his 73 followers rather than submit to the will of the tyrant ruler at the time, *Yazid Bin Maaoyat*. *Al-Noor* produces ninety-five percent of its programs in its well-equipped modern studios (Al-Noor, 2013).
There are diverse media outlets operated by Hezbollah in Lebanon. Hezbollah invested significantly in the media to assure that its voice and news are widely spread and reached. Hezbollah media include Al-Mujahid (The Struggler) and Al-Intiqad (The Critique) Newspapers, Al-Bilad (The Country), As-Sabil (The Road), Al-Wahda Al-Islamiyya (The Islamic Unity), Al-Montalaq (The Basis) and Baqiatullah (Allah' Remainder which denotes the twelfth Muslim Shiite's Imam Al-Mahdi) Magazines. In addition, the organisation runs www.moqawama.org and www.mediarelations-lb.org Websites. Hezbollah also issues Al-Maokif (The Opinion) Newsletter and Ahl-al-thugour (The People of the Outposts) Leaflet. (El Zein, 2015, p. 77).

**Al-Manar TV Station**

*Al-Manar TV Station* started broadcasting in Lebanon in 1991 and on satellite internationally in 2000. It was established to be the former TV station of *Hezbollah*. ‘*Al-Manar*’ means ‘lighthouse’ or the ‘guide post’ in Arabic. *Al-Manar* covers the news of *Hezbollah* and the Islamic Resistance, in addition to a wide variety of TV programs similar to those of Al-Noor radio station in a televised form. *Al-Manar TV*’s main building in Dahiya was completely destroyed by an Israeli airstrike in the 2006 July war. Five minutes later, *Al-Manar TV* continued its broadcast from a secret location to cover the ongoing war and to broadcast the speeches of the Secretary General of *Hezbollah*, Sayed Hassan Nassralh. It played a significant role in the 2006 July war and was widely watched in Lebanon and Israel and around the world. Ordinary Israeli citizens relied on Al-Manar to receive news from the front line after Israeli military intelligence services filtered all news published by the Israeli media. *Al-Manar TV*’s building was rebuilt after the 2006 July war in Al-Dahiya and it has its own technologically advanced studios (Al-Manar, 2013).
**Hezbollah Educational Mobilization**

In addition, *Hezbollah* formed a type of student union called *Hezbollah Educational Mobilization* (HEM). The aim of this body is to look after all *Hezbollah* members in schools and in universities (HEM, 2013).

**Mleeta Resistance Tourist Landmark**

*Hezbollah* built a museum called *Mleeta Resistance Tourist Landmark* (MRTL) in southern Lebanon in 2010. MRTL is a natural, historical and military museum that commemorates the memories of *Hezbollah*’s fighters and leaders in their fight against Israel from 1982 till 2000. It was the first of its kind in Lebanon and the Middle East, surrounded by the captivating nature and mountains. The aim of MRTL is to preserve, for coming generations, the memories of those who fought the Israeli occupation in Lebanon. The MRTL contributes to the boosting of the tourist movement in south Lebanon, providing close acquaintance with the villages and towns of the south, which were shunned from the political map due to both chronic negligence and occupation. It was designed to serve as an advanced strategic and military position of the *Hezbollah* against Israel and to hail the bravery of its fighters in their struggle. MRTL plays a role in introducing educational programs to schools and university students. These programs include a brief history of the struggle between Lebanon and Israel and promote the faith of fighting the occupation and oppressors. The planning of MRTL involved conducting a number of scientific research studies on wildlife in the area and the preservation of forests, animals, birds, and plants (MRTL, 2013).

**Imam Khomeini Cultural Center**

Imam Khomeini Cultural Center (IKCC) was established in Beirut in 1991 to provide educational and cultural services. IKCC has fourteen branches in Beirut, Beqaa and southern
Lebanon. In addition, the centre equips public libraries established by *Hezbollah* with books, electronics resources, educational software and other equipment through a special program called *Medad* (IKCC, 2013).

*Al-Mahdi Scout Association (ASA)*

Al-Mahdi Scout Association (ASA) was established by *Hezbollah* in 1985. *Hezbollah* paid attention to the youth sector and worked on attracting them to support the organization from an early age. ASA is a member of the International Scouts Organization, The Arabic Scouts Organization and the Lebanese Scouts Union. Al-Mahdi magazine is a monthly cartoon magazine that targets youth of both sexes between the ages of nine and sixteen. Al-Mahdi magazine introduces stories from Islamic history and educational content in a cartoon form (ASA, 2013).

All these bodies and associations formed by *Hezbollah* show social ideologies in practice. With regard to theories and beliefs, the second *Hezbollah* charter issued in 2009 contained significant social justice beliefs (*Hezbollah Organization*, 2009), thus reflecting the socialist tendencies and focus on social justice in *Hezbollah*’s ideology and beliefs. In the introduction of the charter, *Hezbollah* urged the Lebanese government to adopt balanced development strategies between all areas in Lebanon. The charter demanded that the Lebanese government bridge the huge economic and social gap between these different areas in Lebanon. Some areas are considered to be very rich, yet still enjoy enormous services from the government. Article 11 of the charter looked forward to a state that takes care of all its citizens, and works on providing suitable medical and housing and other services in order to grant all Lebanese citizens a decent life. The Lebanese government was also asked to solve the long-lasting poverty and unemployment problems. Article 12 demanded that the Lebanese government pay special attention to Lebanese youth and help them with developing skills and
talents and also protect them from slipping into the criminal world. Article 13 calls for further advancing of the roles given to Lebanese women on all aspects in order to benefit the society from women’s skills. Article 13 of the *Hezbollah* 2009 Charter called on the Lebanese State to respect the status of all women. This means that the Lebanese parliament should issue new laws that eliminate any discrimination against women. For instance, a Lebanese man’s children will be automatically be granted Lebanese citizenship. The same privilege is not given to the women in Lebanon when married to a foreigner.

Through the wide varieties of the abovementioned bodies within *Hezbollah*, the organization pays special attention to the education of males and females equally. In the 2009 *Hezbollah* charter, Article 14 pleads with the Lebanese state to pay special and suitable attention to education, especially in government schools and the Lebanese University. The latter is owned and administrated by the Lebanese government, yet the university has, since its formation, been known for ongoing neglect. This situation also applies to government schools, where many citizens in Lebanon send their children to private schools despite their hardship so they can avoid sending them to government schools. Article 14 also called for free school and tertiary education for all citizens in Lebanon (The Political Charter of *Hezbollah*, 2009).

*Hezbollah* is not a customary socialist party. The organization derives its ideology from Islamic teachings, namely from the Qur’an. As the name indicates, *Hezbollah* means the ‘party of God’ or the ‘Party of Allah’. This is a *Qur’anic* concept which divides opposing powers into two parts – the Party of God, which represents the forces of good, and the Party of Satan, which essentially represents the forces of evil.

*Hezbollah* was formed with a purely Islamic identity. The leaders of the organization insist on the Islamic character of the group and made no link or reference to socialism or
communism, yet profess concepts of social and political justice similar to those in socialist and communist ideology.

… those are the party of Allah. Unquestionably, the party of Allah - they are the successful.

Opposing the party of god is the party of Satan. (Qu’ran, Sura 58:22)

According to the Qu’ran, the party of Satan is in continuous battle with the party of God. The party of Satan was declared by the Qu’ran as the losing party. Thus, these concepts could be seen as purely Islamic. However, similar political concepts are mentioned in the Communist Manifesto where there are two main classes or parties, the oppressed and the oppressor. The same concept with exact wording is also mentioned in the Qur’an, Sura 34:33: “Those who were oppressed will say to those who were arrogant, ‘Rather, it was your conspiracy of night and day.”

Article 2 of the 2009 Hezbollah Charter examines the American-Israeli oppression and domination of Lebanon for over two and a half decades. Hezbollah called, through the 2009 charter to resist the direct and indirect imperial American-Israeli aggressions against Lebanon and stated that the military branch of Hezbollah, The Islamic Resistance, was one of the first groups to break the era of imperial American domination. Article 2 urged the Lebanese government to eliminate all American allies and ‘tools’ in Lebanon (Hezbollah Organisation, 2009).

Hezbollah declared at the beginning of the struggle that the organization’s activities are broadly entitled the ‘Rise of the Oppressed’. In the early 1980s, Hezbollah produced a documentary that examined the rising up of the poor against the Lebanese government in general and the Lebanese Army in particular. The group insisted on classifying the civil war in Lebanon as a fight between the oppressed and the oppressor, the rich and the poor. Yet
*Hezbollah* did not refer to these concepts as communist, despite the fact that the great wave of fighters who joined *Hezbollah* came from the communist, socialist and national parties in Lebanon. These groups left a great impact on the way of thinking within *Hezbollah*. The effect could be seen as Islamic-Socialist ideology.

And what is [the matter] with you that you fight not in the cause of Allah and [for] the oppressed among men, women, and children who say, "Our Lord, take us out of this city of oppressive people and appoint for us from Yourself a protector and appoint for us from Yourself a helper? (Qu’ran, Sura 4:75)

Similarly, the Communist Manifesto examines the nature of all struggles in the history of mankind and labels all participating parties in this struggle with similar labels as those adopted by *Hezbollah* – for example, the oppressed and the oppressor.

The whole history of mankind (since the dissolution of primitive tribal society, holding land in common ownership) has been a history of class struggles, contests between exploiting and exploited, ruling and oppressed classes; That the history of these class struggles forms a series of evolutions in which, nowadays, a stage has been reached where the exploited and oppressed class – the proletariat – cannot attain its emancipation from the sway of the exploiting and ruling class – the bourgeoisie – without, at the same time, and once and for all, emancipating society at large from all exploitation, oppression, class distinction, and class struggles. (Marx & Engels, 1969)

All the social services and charity bodies formed by *Hezbollah* adopted a verse from the Qur’an as their motto. Many verses in the Qur’an speak about the poor, orphans, widows, needy people and the neglected classes in general. These concepts demand that a share of the rich people’s money and assets to be directed to the poor. Alms or zakat is a major concept adopted by all Muslims. However, the Shia also concentrate on a concept called *khmous*, which means one-fifth. It means that an amount of one-fifth of any luxury belongings have to be paid to the poor. This *khmous* is paid only once for the same item in a lifetime. Zakat or alms also aim to bridge the gap between the rich and the poor in order to minimize or eliminate the financial
differences between people. The Qur’an clearly orders that social differences are to be demolished. The concept of one class of brothers and sisters was introduced.

…And they ask you about orphans. Say, "Improvement for them is best. And if you mix your affairs with their's - they are your brothers. (Qu’ran, Sura 2:220)

And [also for] those who were settled in al-Madinah and [adopted] the faith before them. They love those who emigrated to them and find not any want in their breasts of what the emigrants were given but give [them] preference over themselves, even though they are in privation. And whoever is protected from the stinginess of his soul - it is those who will be the successful. (Qu’ran, Sura 59: 9)

According to the Communist Manifesto, an ideal society is the one that contains one class, the working class. A similar pattern of philosophy is clearly visible in the Second Hezbollah Manifesto. The main conclusion is that Hezbollah has a significant socialist ideology incorporated in its beliefs and practices. In addition, many communist beliefs also match those of Hezbollah. Communist thinkers believe that class migration only takes place from the higher class to the lower class. Hezbollah worked on lifting the poor class in Lebanon to rise and start pushing boundaries into the middle and upper classes in Lebanon. An elite wealthy Shia class formed after the 1980s. An educated elite emerged from the bottom class to form a strong representative of the poor in all fields of high-level jobs in Lebanon. Hezbollah social services led to the rise of the Shia lower class to break all the set rules of class migration. Well-educated elite groups were formed from the Shia in order to fight for the political and social rights for the group. It was a group effort that all directed at the same goal. Newly rich businessmen merged efforts with the rising educated elite and pushed for gaining political power in Lebanon. Thus, it can be concluded that Hezbollah, to all intents and purposes, is an Islamic-Socialist party.
Chapter 4

Hezbollah and Israel: How Did Hezbollah Change the Nature of the Arab-Israeli Conflict?

The aim of this chapter is to investigate the impact of Hezbollah on the Arab Israeli conflict. It is clear that the wars between Israel and Hezbollah in the years 1982, 1992, 1996 and 2006 differ in their nature from all previous Arab Israeli wars. A shift from tradition armies’ warfare to a guerrilla fighting style was the major change that is observed. Other factors including the geography of the battlefields, religious ideologies instead of nationalism, duration of the wars, and the outcomes of each war where Israel was unable to achieve a clear victory against its Arabs enemy. As a result, Israel was unable to retain land from the Arabs as previously achieved in mainly 1948 and 1967 wars. Leadership qualities on both sides were also transformed. Other factors will also be examined and analysed.

A Brief History of the Arab-Israeli Conflict

Most dramatic changes in history took place, to a certain extent, either by using military power or by threatening to use it. This has clearly happened throughout the Arab-Israeli conflict. Despite the historical tension between the then Muslims and the Jews, there were also times when the followers of the two religious worked together for reconciliation and agreements. The Jews and the Christians are considered by Islam and the teachings of the Quran as the People of the Book.

“Say, "O People of the Scripture, come to a word that is equitable between us and you - that we will not worship except Allah and not associate anything with Him and not take one another as lords instead of Allah." But if they turn away, then say, "Bear witness that we are Muslims [submitting to Him].” (Qu’ran, Sura 3:64)
Muslims and Jews lived peacefully in many countries in the Arab world and they practiced freely their religious rights. Furthermore, Jews faced as Muslims the same oppression from Spanish rulers after the fall of Andalusia and thus many of them fled to the Arab world and they found safe havens. Despite all alternating relationships between the Arabs and the Jews throughout their common history, 1948 was the year of crossroad where a new intensified conflict took place over a rivalry claim of the ownership of the land of Palestine. All historical tensions and differences combined have surfaced again this year. The Arab-Israeli conflict was not purely a military struggle. It was indeed a multi-dimensional conflict that included political, religious, cultural, historical, economical and ideological aspects. Religious and historical sensitivity had been building up between Muslims and Jews since the dawn of Islam through the struggle between Jewish tribes in Medina in the Arabic Peninsula, 1400 years ago. Political disputes and cultural differences together with social tensions added fuel to the ongoing conflict. Moreover, economic competition and international alliances pushed the two sides to the brink of explosion. Historical Jewish claims to the land of Palestine and illegal Jewish immigration to the ‘Promised Land’ during and after World War II accelerated and exacerbated the situation to a point where Arabs and Jews stood face to face in a fierce conflict. All these aspects came to a head in military conflict.

The Arabs and Israel fought five major wars – in 1948, 1956, 1967, 1973 and 1982. In addition, Israel and Lebanon fought three major wars in 1993, 1996, and 2006. Hundreds of thousands of casualties and the loss of billions of dollars were the clear outcomes of these wars. In addition, the hidden losses were more significant than the obvious ones. These wars led to dramatic changes in the region. Borders between the countries involved in the conflict had changed forever. The internal policies of the Arab nations had to alter to adapt to the new situation and to try to cope with the flood of refugees fleeing the war from occupied
Palestine. Palestinian refugees had to settle in refugee camps in neighbouring countries. Morris (2009, p.19) states that “apart from the birth of the State of Israel, the major political outcome of the 1948 war was the creation of the Palestinian refugee problem.” In consequence, the economies of those Arab countries came under severe strain, which led to social conflict within.

1948 War

In 1948, Israel launched the War of Independence, also known by the Arabs as the ‘Catastrophe’ or ‘Al-Nakbah’. Israel established a colonial settler state in order to form a beachhead for imperialism in the Middle East. Its creation in 1948 was secured through a war of removal and occupation, either supported or unopposed by the major powers. Its exclusivist and expansionist nature had no place for the Palestinian people: “Lydda’s inhabitants were forced to walk eastward toward the Arab Legion lines, and many of Ramle’s inhabitants were ferried in trucks or buses. Clogging the road, the tens of thousands of refugees marched, gradually shedding possessions along the way” (Morris, 2010, p.12).

The creation of the State of Israel on Palestinian soil in certain aspects matches the European-American methods of expansion and state-making in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The main aim of such expansion was to “settle new inhabitants among other people to dominate them economically and politically” (Pappe, ed. 2007, p.54). Settler-colonial states, like the United States and Israel, were determined to conquer new land to build settlements. Israel systematised and legalised the act of stealing Palestinian land to build settlements that were owned, controlled and inhabited exclusively by Jewish immigrants (p.65). This eventually led to an ongoing conflict that negatively affected all surrounding Arab countries, yet Israel flourished and grew stronger in military and economic terms due to political, economic and military support by Western powers, principally the United States of
America. For sure USA supported the new Israeli state since its existance in 1948, however, the significant support intense by the end of 1960s and early 1970s. It is worth mentioning that, in 1956, the British, French and Israeli forces attacked Egypt, and USA was not in the coalition, at least in avoiding direct military involvement in the 1956 War. The military planes used by the Israeli air force in the 1967 War were French. Yet, since 1948, successive American administrations have supported Israel despite its actions regarding the ethics of self-determination and human rights for Palestinians (Davidson, 2001, p.222).

The words of former president, Barack Obama – “No ally more important than Israel” (Dwyer, 2011) echo the American policy in practice since the creation of the state of Israel in 1948. Israeli independence was announced one day before the British Mandate of Palestine ended. The United States of America was the first country to recognise the new state of Israel minutes after the Israeli declaration was announced. American support for the Zionist aim to establish a Jewish homeland in Palestine preceded Israeli independence. Since the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, the Palestinian people have been forced to live in refugee camps either inside Palestine, in neighbouring Arab countries, or elsewhere around the world. A minority of Palestinians who remained within the 1948 borders now subsumed by Israel have become a special category of second-class citizens with few rights (Peleg & Waxman, 2011). The unconditional support of western powers played a major role in complicating the Arab-Israeli conflict, since Israel refused to accept any agreement with the Arabs despite all the compromises made by the Arabs. The 4th Prime Minister of Israel and one of the founding leaders of the state of Israel, Golda Meir, was firm on this point:

Meir viewed the Palestinians as Israel’s staunchest enemy, with whom it would be impossible to reach agreement. She refused to consider the Palestinians as a nation or even as a people and clearly stated, “It is not as thought there was a Palestinian people and we came and threw them out and took their country away from them. They did not exist (Amit, 2001, pp. 82-83).
Control over oil concentrated in countries beyond Israel’s borders was a primary American motive. The American economy has become dependent, as is Europe, on oil from the Middle East. As a colonial settler state, Israel is an advanced imperial post in the heart of the Middle East that safeguards America’s interests in the region. It also benefits sales of American weapons to client regimes in the Middle East, which has fuelled many conflicts between the Arabs themselves. The most important goal for Zionists was achieved in the 1948 War of Independence by establishing a foothold for further expansions of the Israeli territories when the opportunity arises. In 1948, all Arab and Islamic states proved powerless compared to Israel.

1956 Triple Agression against Egypt

During the Suez Crisis in 1956, Britain, France and Israel invaded Egypt after the Egyptian leader, Gamal Abdul Nasser, nationalised the Suez Canal. On the October 29, 1956, Israeli forces launched a combined air and ground assault into Egypt's Sinai Peninsula. Early Israeli successes were reinforced by an Anglo-French invasion along the canal. Cease-fire took place on November 26 of that same year. Israel managed to capture several key areas, including the Gaza strip and Sharm El Sheikh. Israel withdrew from these positions in 1957 after it was given access to the Gulf of Aqaba, without which Israel was cut off from the Indian Ocean.

1967 War the Six-Days War

The Six Day War took place in June, 1967, between Israel and the combined forces of Egypt, Syria and Jordan. In its victory, Israel was tripled in size after the 1967 War and gained territorial control of the Sinai, Gaza, the West Bank, parts of Jerusalem and the Golan Heights, as well as approximately one million unwanted Palestinians (Six Day War, 2008). The air forces of Egypt, Jordan, Syria and Iraq were all destroyed on June 5. By June 7, many
Egyptian tanks had been destroyed in the Sinai Desert and Israeli forces reached the Suez Canal. On the same day, the whole of the West Bank of the Jordan River had been cleared of Jordanian forces. The Golan Heights were captured from Syria and Israeli forces moved 30 miles into Syria itself.

The war ended with a massive expansion of Israeli borders while the Arab forces suffered high casualty rates, huge losses of military equipment and territorial annexation.

During the Six Day War, Israel assumed control of territories conquered from its neighbours, Egypt, Syria and Jordan. Israel gained control of the entire area west of the Jordan River, which was all of Mandatory Palestine. It also conquered the entire Sinai Peninsula from Egypt and the Golan Heights from Syria. This June war permanently changed the Middle East and the Arab Israeli conflict (Amit, 2001, p.70).

In addition, the Israeli army also occupied Lebanese Shebaa Farms in 1967. Shebaa Farms are located in a significant geographical strategic position between Lebanon, Syria and Israel. Its heights also play a major role in its significance. The Israeli military achievement would not have been so decisive had it not received significant military, economic and political support from the Johnson administration. Johnson’s policies constructed the foundations of the American-Israeli strategic relations that continue to exist into the present (Johnson, 2008).

**1973 October War or the Yom Kippur War**

On October 6, 1973, a coalition of Arab states led by Egypt and Syria launched a surprise attack on Israeli forces in order to take back Arab land captured by Israel in the 1967 War. At the beginning of the war, Israel appeared to face a great defeat. However; a major factor that turned the tide of the war in Israel’s favour was the “massive airlift of military equipment and supplies to Israel by the United States (Kamrava, p.129). The Israelis managed to conduct a multidivisional counterattack through the gap between the Egyptian
2nd and 3rd Armies. Israeli forces pushed back the Egyptian military and crossed the Suez Canal south of Ismailia. They used the Suez-Cairo road to advance towards the Egyptian capital, Cairo, and got to within 65 miles of it. The Syrian Vice-President at the time, *Abd al-Halim Khaddam*, observed in his memoir that

the offensive the Arabs launched on 6th October, 1973 gave them one moment of joy and hope, but after only a few days this was replaced by worry and frustration. Thus, the hope of victory turned to a fear of defeat, which did indeed materialize, not because of the losses the Arabs suffered on the battlefield, but because of the collapse of the alliance between Egypt and Syria. This gave Israel self-assurance and confidence, and increased its aggressiveness towards the Arabs, and especially toward Syria, Lebanon and Palestine (Siniver, 2013, p.67).

Despite Soviet assistance, the Arab military positions could not be maintained because of the overwhelming American military support offered to Israel. When Anwar Al Sadat, the Egyptian President, requested direct Soviet military intervention to stop the potential massacre of Egyptian troops, the US threatened to launch nuclear weapons to defend Israel. It forced the Soviet Union to refuse Sadat’s request and laid the grounds for Egypt to conclude a separate peace with Israel and to abandon the Palestinian cause (Rabinovich, 2004, p.484).

Despite the initial successes of the Egyptian and Syrian forces, the war proved once again how effective the Israeli military could be. The initial Arab success was just a temporary achievement. Israel managed to turn the tables and retaliate and advance even further into Arab land, namely in Egypt and Syria. The early Arab success can only be considered as a physiological and symbolic victory. Israel survived the attack and managed to avoid a disastrous defeat.

**1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon or Operation ‘Peace for Galilee’** 1978, Israel conducted Operation Litani River to push back Palestinian militants beyond the Litani River. Israel managed to achieve its goal, but the threat was not fully eliminated. Thus, in
1982, Israel invaded Lebanon aiming to destroy the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO). The hidden plan was to capture more land in order to gain more territory and to find new water resources (Salim, 2006, p.10). Searching for new resources, especially water, had been one of the ultimate goals of Israel since 1948 due to their limited supply of this resource; large areas of Israel, especially in the south, are desert.

The conflict over the control of the Jordan River and its northern sources in Syria was a sensitive issue affecting the problematic border between Israel and Syria. In 1964 Israel completed a plan to divert the Jordan River to its southern Negev territory, and Syria supported by other Arab states, responded by diverting the source of the Jordan, which were located inside Syrian territory (Amit, 2001, p.65).

Twenty thousand civilians were killed in the Israeli invasion and, until 2000, Israel occupied a large strip of land to act as a security buffer zone in southern Lebanon. The 1982 Israeli invasion reached the Lebanese capital, Beirut, without any serious resistance. This invasion was the climax of continuous Israeli aggression and invasions of Lebanon that had been ongoing since 1948, especially in the areas bordering southern Lebanon. These Israeli offensives caused tens of thousands of civilian causalities and mass destruction in the villages and towns in southern Lebanon and elsewhere. Arab and Islamic states were once again proved powerless. As a direct reaction to the Israeli invasion, Hezbollah, a new Lebanese Islamic organisation emerged.

Three major wars under the leadership of Nasrallah.

After the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon, Israel and Hezbollah fought three major wars. In July 1993, Israel conducted Operation Accountability against Lebanon and in April 1996, Israel launched Operation Grapes of Wrath against Lebanon for 16 days. In both conflicts, the Israeli military campaign failed to achieve its purpose. In the latter conflict, a ceasefire was reached through an informal written agreement known as the April Ceasefire Understanding. The most fierce and destructive war since 1982 took place in July, 2006. A
few thousand *Hezbollah* fighters managed to prevent Israel from achieving the declared aims of the campaign and the hidden one of imposing Israeli policies on Lebanon in order to make it an orbit state for Israel. This conflict demonstrated that Israel and its superior army were no longer able to achieve swift victories. A new military organisation had managed to change the nature of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The image of the undefeatable Israeli Army was significantly damaged. *Hezbollah* used new military tactics and managed to achieve victories that forced Israel to withdraw from Lebanon unconditionally in the year 2000. *Hezbollah* also used new technologies and filmed its military operations against Israel, which they used successfully in their propaganda campaign. The charismatic character of *Hezbollah*’s leader, Sayed Hassan Nasrallah, also played a major role in *Hezbollah*’s achievements. Nasrallah directly spoke to the citizens of Israel in his speeches, driving their attention to the failures of their political and military leaders (*Hezbollah*’s Secretary-General’s CV, 2008). Nasrallah’s credibility was acknowledged by both Israeli political and military leaders and ordinary Israeli citizens.

1993 War – Operation Accountability

In 1993, the conflict between Lebanon and Israel took a sharp and critical twist when Sayed Hassan Nasrallah was elected as Secretary General of *Hezbollah*. Nasrallah emerged as the new young leader of *Hezbollah* after Israel assassinated the movement’s leader, Sayed *Abbas Al Musawi*. Nasrallah managed to shift the organisation from a purely Islamic to an Islamic-nationalist movement. *Hezbollah* became deeply involved in the Lebanese government and parliamentary political activities, while still waging guerrilla warfare against the Israeli occupation forces in Southern Lebanon. For the first time, a resistance group was fighting Israel while working on becoming a political and parliamentary power.

Beginning as a terrorist cat’s-paw of Iran, *Hezbollah* has since transformed itself into an impressive political party with an admiring Lebanese constituency, but it has also insisted on maintaining the potent
militia that forced Israel to withdraw from Lebanon in 2000 after almost two decades of occupation.

(Norton, 2007, )

The Israeli military operation lasted for seven days of severe bombardment, yet failed to achieve its declared aims.

1996 War – Operation Grapes of Wrath

In April, 1996, Israel launched Operation Grapes of Wrath against Lebanon for 16 days. The Israeli military campaign once again failed to achieve its purposes, agreeing to a ceasefire through an informal written agreement known as April Ceasefire Understanding.

The 2006 July War

The 2006 July War lasted for 33 days of vicious fighting between Hezbollah and Israel. The Israeli interior front was threatened by missiles launched by Hezbollah. Rockets reached Haifa and the outskirts of Tel-Aviv. The Israeli capital city was under serious threats issued by Sayed Nasrallah in a number of televised statements. A new equation was signalled by Nasrallah to be in use, where the citizens of Israel would need to reside in underground shelters. It was a statement declaring that Israeli people could no longer live a normal life during Israel’s wars. Nasrallah declared that if Israel bombarded the Lebanese capital city, Beirut, Hezbollah would bombard the Israeli capital city, Tel Aviv. He added that if the Lebanese airport was targeted, then Hezbollah would target Israeli airports. In addition, if Lebanese seaports were hit, then Hezbollah would hit Israeli seaports (Haidar, 2006).

Nasrallah delivered his threat by bombarding the seaport of Haifa where chemical materials were stored. As a result, Israel called a halt on targeting the Lebanese capital, Beirut, in the 2006 July war. This was seen by many military and political observers as a sign of weakness. Eventually the Israeli leaders took Nasrallah’s threats seriously due to his long history of credibility in delivering his promises and threats. Such credibility had not been given before by any Israeli leaders or citizens to any Arab leader, including Nasser of Egypt, the
Palestinian leader Yassir Arafat, or even to close allies like Sadat, Mobarak and King Hussein of Jordan.

From 1948 till 1982, Israel gained land and strategic geographical positions in all Arab-Israeli wars. Until the year 2000, no Arab land was given back unconditionally to allow full Arab sovereignty. Even the Sinai desert was handed back to Egypt under strict conditions set by Israel on the quantity and quality of Egyptian military forces and weapons allowed to enter the desert. In every war, Israel managed to expand its territories gained from the Arabs by military force and with the political support of western powers. After the fall of Beirut to the Israeli invading forces in 1982, the tables were turned and Israel was forced to withdraw from an occupied land due to the pressure of resistance. Neither military might nor political support could help Israel keep the land that was occupied in Lebanon. Phase one of withdrawing Israeli forces from Lebanon reached Saida in Southern Lebanon on the borders of the strategic Litani River. Phase Two took the Israeli forces back to a strip of Lebanese villages close to the Israeli border where many mountains and hills were used by Israel as strategic military bases to monitor the whole of southern Lebanon. The final and most embarrassing phase took place in the year 2000, known by supporters of Hezbollah as the “Year of Victory”. Israel asked Hezbollah for a ceasefire for three days in order to arrange the withdrawal of its forces and military equipment. Hezbollah refused and insisted on the concept of withdrawal under fire in a symbolic way in order to humiliate the Israeli Army and to further break the myth of Israeli superiority (Mustapha, 2003, pp. 514-515). Israel was forced to withdraw unconditionally from an occupied land. No expansion of territory was achieved and no settlements were built in the occupied land due to the resistance of the national, communist and socialist resistance in Lebanon in the early 1980s (Salim, 2006b, p.150); Hezbollah had played a major role since 1982 to the realization of this victory.
The move to plan and build settlements in the West Bank and the Golan Heights began within days of the war. On June 14, the Mugraby neighbourhood adjacent to the Wailing Wall was evacuated, and in a proposal to cabinet on the same day, Alon recommended the immediate rebuilding and settlement of the Jewish quarter in East Jerusalem. He suggested surrounding Jerusalem with Jewish neighborhoods so Jerusalem could never be separated from Israel. (Amit, 2001, pp.71-72)

The duration of wars between Arab nations and Israel varied from a few days to several months. The War of 1948 was a series of battles that lasted for many months from 1947 till 1948. However, every single battle was going in the right direction for the Israelis. The aim of this initial war was to set a foothold in Palestine. The ratio of Israeli soldiers to the Arab soldiers was 1 to 2. The ratio of weapons used in the battlefield was 1 to 3 in favour of the Israelis as well. The Arab armies lacked military experience as much as their leaders lacked political skills. On the other hand, the Israeli gangs had already accumulated enormous military experience from fighting in World War I and World War II. Morris (2010, p.18) states that “one of the most tenacious myths relating to the 1948 War is that of ‘David and Goliath’ – that the Arabs were overwhelmingly stronger militarily than the Yishuv. The simple truth is that the stronger side won."

What really matters in examining the duration of the wars between the Arabs and Israel is to determine who was in full control during each battle and each war. It is also important to ascertain who chose the timing and the duration of the war; in most cases, it was Israel. The 1948 War, or Nakbah as the Arabic name indicates, show that Israel was in total control of the course of events for the duration of that war. As the outcome of the war shows, an ultimate goal was achieved by the Zionists in creating the State of Israel on the ruins of a vanishing country, Palestine.

The 1956 aggression on Egypt lasted for a few months, where Israel, Britain and France launched a surprise attack on Egypt. It seems that the Egyptian army played the role of a third
party in participating in this war in which several great powers decided to start and end the war.

The 1967 Six Day War is a great example of how Israel could choose the timing and the duration of a swift war that was able, in a few days, to destroy a number of combined Arab armies. This conflict is termed ‘Naksa’ by the Egyptians, which means the ‘setback war’. It was a clear victory for Israel and a total defeat for the Arabs.

The 1973 October War was started by the Arabs and lasted for a few months. Despite the surprise attack, Israel managed to absorb the shock and take the initiative in fighting back. Regardless of the claim made by Arab leaders of a great military victory in this war, Israel managed to score huge political gains out of this war; this needs to be more closely examined in future studies.

On the basis of its successes, the IDF was able to prepare itself for a counterattack aimed at taking the war into Syrian territory and even in creating a ground threat to Damascus…Despite this resistance, the IDF still managed to breach the Syrians’ first line of defense on the Golan Heights and to come within 40 kms of Damascus in a move meant to apply pressure on the Syrian leadership, where the IDF artillery shelled the suburbs of Damascus (Siniver, 2013, p.77).

The 1982 conflict was started by Israel in June, 1982, and officially ended in 1985. The 1982 invasion is somehow similar to the 1948 War. Israel had been expanding its territories and water sources ever since the declaration of the independence of Israel in 1948. Israel chose the timing for this war, pre-planned by Arial Sharon (Salim, 2006b, p.76). Yet the plan did not go as desired and Israel had to unconditionally withdraw its forces gradually from Lebanon. Neither political gain nor territory expansion was achieved. More importantly, Israel failed to obtain water sources from Lebanese rivers, namely the Litani River (Salim, 2006a, p.11). In addition, Israel could not build settlements in the new occupied land as it had done following previous wars. The Golan Heights and huge parts of the West Bank are
examples of these Israeli practices of occupying then building settlements, followed by including the appropriated territory within Israel’s borders.

Instances of the latter pertain to determining borders, population growth and areal spread; land acquisition processes; rural settlements and urban expansion, modernisation of construction, agriculture, and preparation of infrastructure, change in the traditional village, and so on. These insights have enabled historical geographers to join the scholarly and public discourse on major events and qualitative issues such as the essence of Zionism and its activities in Eretz-Israel; relations between Jews and Arabs, the formation of the Jewish entity in Eretz-Israel. (Morris, 2010, p. 151)

What made Israel’s experience in Lebanon different was the emergence of a new type of fighters in Lebanon. In 1982, Hezbollah emerged to fight the Israeli invasion and was able to defuse Israel’s dream of forming what is known as Greater Israel. Henceforth, Israel was no longer in a position to set the time and duration of its conflicts. After 1982, Israel lost the element of surprise that, since 1948, had been used in most of its wars with the Arabs.

The duration of the wars has also changed gradually since 1993. Israel is no longer able to achieve swift victories. In this new era of the struggle, the enemies of Israel have proven to be stiff-necked opponents that can handle the superior power of the Israeli army and do not bow to the enormous political pressure from the United States, Europeans countries and even Arab and Islamic countries. Saudi Arabia, for instance, declared clearly in the 2006 July War between Israel and Hezbollah that Hezbollah was the party to be held responsible for the war. Moreover, many Wahhabi Saudi religious leaders stated in an Islamic fatwa that it is forbidden to support Hezbollah in the war against Israel, even to utter a prayer seeking to grant Hezbollah’s victory over Israel.

“A prominent Saudi cleric, Abdullah ibn Jibreen, reissued a fatwa noting that Shiite groups like Hezbollah have a long history of betraying Sunnis. "It is not appropriate to support this rejectionist party and to fall under its authority, and it is not appropriate to pray for their victory and control," the fatwa read in part”. (MacFarquhar, 2006)
The elimination of traditional corrupt Arab leaders from the struggle was also a significant element in changing the nature of the conflict. Since the end of the Ottoman Empire’s rule over the Arab countries, corrupt Arab leaders were imposed on the masses by the imperial powers. Monarchies characterised by authoritarian powers were formed in Saudi Arabia and Arab nations in the Gulf. Siniver (2013, p.67) states that “this era was characterized by, or perhaps stood in the shadow of, strong and stable authoritarian regimes that ruled high-handedly for generations.”

One family was appointed in each country to rule without consulting the masses in these countries. The same authoritarian, kinship-style kingdoms were also instated by the West in Jordan and Morocco. Most importantly, Egypt’s fate was no different to other Arab countries where corrupt King Farooq ruled. Syria and Iraq suffered for decades from military ousting, and political and economic instability. Lebanon was not immune to the dramatic changes taking place in the region and was ruled by leaders who were corrupt and connected to the imperial powers. Palestine was torn apart by the wars and, as a consequence, ceased to formally exist, being replaced by the State of Israel. Arab countries in North Africa in general, and Libya in particular, were also struggling to find democratic leaders who would serve the will of their peoples. These combined factors meant that the Arabs failed to produce military and political leaders of transparent quality. In the wars with Israel, there was no Arab leader that could lead military operations or political negotiations in order to achieve a certain goal. Even when Arab armies advanced in some battles with Israel, the political leaders managed to waste these small victories. After traditional Arab armies and leaders chose to be eliminated from the Arab-Israeli conflict, the conflict became one between Lebanon and Israel, and an internal Israeli affair materialised as a battle against so-called Palestinian terrorism in Palestine. Hezbollah has managed to introduce new leaders who are neither
corrupt nor secretly connected to western imperial powers. These leaders have refused to fall for Western pressure when Israel needs support from the West. Nasrallah has managed to introduce himself to all those who suffered defeats against Israel as an Arab and Muslim leader who can achieve victory. In the new Lebanon-Israel conflict, one leader can make a decision and Israel can no longer raise the pressure on some Arab leaders in order to divide their opinions on a certain matter. The nature of leadership in the Arab-Israeli conflict has changed forever.

Traditional army warfare tactics are no longer in use. Weak Arab armies have been replaced by Hezbollah and Hams guerrilla fighters who can sometimes hold the initiative in attacking Israeli army bases in Southern Lebanon and the Gaza strip. After every military attack on the Israeli army, Hezbollah fighters have managed to disappear, leaving the Israelis confused and unable to directly attack those fighters. Superior Israeli Army theory has been placed in jeopardy. Moreover, Hezbollah has dragged Israel into indirect prisoner-exchange negotiations in order to force Israel to release Lebanese, Palestinian and other fighters from Israeli prisons (Salim, 2006a, p.142). Such occurrences constitute unprecedented events where Israel has come under pressure to release resistance fighters from its prisons.

Hezbollah has also passed on its military experience to Palestinian organisations engaged in fighting Israel. Hamas and Islamic Jihad Movement in Palestine have benefited from the new tactics, in addition to military, financial and political support from Hezbollah and Iran. At this point in time, Israel has to face an emerging threat from within Palestine initiated by Hezbollah. War against the Palestinian territories in Gaza and the West Bank is no longer an easy journey. The traditional armies’ warfare that gave Israel a significant edge over the Arabs armies is no longer available. The military face of the Arab-Israeli conflict has shifted to an uncomfortable dimension that does not suit Israel. Hezbollah has managed to change the military nature of the Arab-Israeli conflict.
Israeli intelligence services used to have the upper hand in war and peace times. *Hezbollah* has fought an invisible warfare of intelligence with Israel in a silent conflict called the ‘war of brains’ (Mustapha, 2003, p.478). The organisation has proven to be a match for the Israeli intelligence services. In many cases, the Israeli intelligence services have failed to predict *Hezbollah*’s military activities and the strategic new weapons acquired by the group. For instance, *Hanit*, an Israeli warship, was hit by a Saar anti-ship missile in 2006. Israeli intelligence failed to gather such important information about a weapon that is deadly for the Israeli sea forces (Haidar, 2006,p.235).

The raised awareness within the Arab and Muslim masses of the conflict and the role of their leaders in every defeat since 1948 was another indication of the changing nature of the conflict. Huge demonstrations across the Arab and Islamic world have taken place during every aggression against Lebanon or Gaza. The modern forms of technology also played a role in streaming images of innocent civilians killed by the superior Israeli army. These images have damaged the credibility of Israel and western countries with regard to human rights and fighting terrorism. The influence of the media is one of the elements that has dramatically changed the nature of the Arab-Israeli conflict, since Israel can no longer play the victim and its crimes are able to be broadcast live to the whole world. *Hezbollah* formed a military media unit to film its surprising attacks on Israeli bases. The unit also orchestrates propaganda campaigns against Israel. Thus, the image of the undefeatable Israeli army has been severely damaged. In addition, the heroism of the resistance fighters has been highlighted, which has encouraged new generations of fighters to join *Hezbollah*. A new ideological campaign using the media was launched by *Hezbollah* to build up support for its cause. As importantly, TV and radio stations were formed by *Hezbollah* to direct its programs to the Israeli people, especially during the 1993, 1996 and 2006 wars (Qassim, 2010, p.437). Al-Manar TV and Al-Noor radio stations used programs in the Hebrew
language to deliver messages, including Nasrallah’s speeches, to the Israeli people. In similar vein, Israel used media programs throughout the Arab-Israeli conflict using the Arabic language to gain the hearts and minds of ordinary Arab people (Salim, 2006c, p.163). This tactic was used to explain the point of view of Israel to the ordinary Arabs as part of psychological propaganda campaigns employed to serve its cause. Siniver (2013, p. 29) remarks on Israel’s use of the media as propaganda, stating that, “after Israel gained statehood, it continued broadcasting Arabic-Language programs aimed at audiences in the neighbouring countries. The programs gave Israel’s version of security incidents, which, in many cases, was very different from the reports in the Arab media.”

In their fight with Israel, Hezbollah used the same media tactics. For the first time in the history of the Arab-Israeli conflict, an Arab leader with significant credibility could direct his speeches to the Israeli people. The people in Israel in many cases believed Nasrallah rather than the Israeli military and political leaders. Nasrallah focused on the Israeli casualties and on sensitive information hidden by Israeli leaders. This caused many Israeli leaders to lose their positions following wars with Lebanon.

The ideological shift from Arab nationalism to Islamisation of the conflict changed the identity of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Arab nationalism is not an accurate term. Each Arab country has its own exclusive culture and traditions – even its own exclusive Islamic religious ideology and practices. There are huge differences in the ways of thinking among the Arab countries, which has been a major factor in their defeats in battles with Israel since 1948. Hezbollah has given the conflict a clear religious dimension, which expands the geographical arena of the conflict to all Islamic countries from the Middle East to Indonesia. Religious slogans and verses from the Quran that highlight the importance of the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem – one of the world’s oldest Islamic structures and a holy site of utmost significance to Muslims worldwide – were used to focus attention on the identity of the struggle against
Israel. The Arab-Israeli conflict is no longer a struggle between Israel and its surrounding Arab neighbours, but an ideological battle which could include every Muslim in the world (Qassim, 2010, p.491).

Thus, for the last forty years, the style of warfare has altered significantly. The battlefield area has also changed. The battlefield size in all Arab-Israeli wars used to be a huge area of land. Since 1993, all wars between Israel and Islamic organisations have taken place on a relatively small area of land.

It is known that Arab countries used to verbally threaten Israel, yet suffer repeated defeats. Before 1993, Israel was not known to declare any verbal threat towards Arab nations and armies. Rather, Israel used to conduct sudden, swift and successful attacks when the time was suitable to them. Political and military gains were almost guaranteed. After 1993, Israel started to adopt the same ineffective strategy of verbal threats against Lebanon and Gaza, yet little or no achievements were accomplished.

It difficult to claim that Hezbollah did change the whole nature of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Yet, it is clear that the organisation changed many of the equations within this conflict resulting in an evolution of its nature since its official naissance in 1948. It can be also argued that many other factors played a significant role in this change. The Arab countries have never fought a unified war against Israel. It is clear that many Arab countries were fighting for their own individual agenda. Some Arab leaders’ intentions were different to the declared ones.

What ensued, once Israel declared independence on 14 March 1948 and the Arab states invaded on 15 May, was a ‘general land grab’, with everyone – Israel, Transjordan, Syria, Iraq and Egypt – bent on preventing the birth of Palestine Arab state, carving out chunks of Palestine for themselves. (Morris, 2010, p.17)
Many scholars in the Arab and Islamic world go even further and declare that there had been a secret alliance between Israel and some Arab leaders since 1948. It is as important to consider the internal affairs in each Arab nation during the conflict, in addition to Arab-Arab strife relations. Wars between Arabs themselves were taking place in parallel to the Arab-Israeli conflict, such as: the 1952 Free Officers Revelation; the 1962 Civil War in Yemen; the 1963 Sand War between Algeria and Morocco; the 1975 civil war in Lebanon; the Gulf War and many other conflicts between the Arabs. It is not right to examine the conflict without taking all these factors into consideration.
Chapter 5

Is Hezbollah a State within the Lebanese Failing State?

There are hidden intentions towards Syria. We found that it is our duty to fight these intentions. We will not accept that and we will not remain silent. This is not only originated from the Arab brotherly emotions, but it is actually a national security issue. Whoever starts with Syria will continue their plans to get Egypt. (Jamal Abdul Nasser)

The main aim of this chapter is to analyse the claims of the statehood nature of Hezbollah. These claims came amid the growing structures of the organisation that match those of a state. The continuous failures of the Lebanese state in playing its role since 1943 left a vacuum of power that was filled by different powers in Lebanon including The Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO), Hezbollah, right wing Christian parties and having a variety of powers in many different areas in Lebanon. This leads to a major question of two parts about the significance of the Lebanese state since its existence and the roles played by Hezbollah which can be interpreted as aiming to build its own state.

A Brief History of the Sectarian Political System in Lebanon

Imperial France and Britain worked hard in the 1920s to divide Greater Syria into states based on sectarian and racial bases (Grynkewich, 2008, p.350). This policy of dividing the people of the land played a major role in reducing the area of Greater Syria from three hundred thousand to around only one hundred and eighty-five thousand square kilometres at the time of Syria’s gaining of independence in 1946 (Avon & Khatchadourian, 2012, p. 13).

French General Goro declared the formation of Greater Lebanon on August 31, 1920. The aim was to make Lebanon a place for the gathering in of certain minorities from the vast surrounding Muslim and Arab nations (Grynkewich, 2008, p.350). On August 3, 1920, Goro issued a declaration separating Hasbia, Rasia, Maalaka and Baalbak from Syria and adding
them to the administrative rule of Lebanon. Imperial France showed the intention of dividing Greater Syria by issuing Declaration 318 on August 30, 1920. Declaration 318 stated:

Lebanon will once again return to its natural geographical borders. The formation of a new state called Greater Lebanon is now into place. The Greater Lebanon geographical area includes Mount Lebanon, Baalbak, Beqaa, Hasbia and all parts of Beirut, and Saida, which previously followed the administrators in Palestine. Tripoli, Akar Donnyeh and Menia, which are located in the far north, are all to be added to the newly formed state, Greater Lebanon, according to the new constitution. (Grynkewich, 2008, p. 350)

On September 29, 1923, the League of Nations officially declared the start of the French mandate over Syria and Lebanon. France was given the authority to draw the borders between Lebanon and Syria, organise administrative and judicial systems until independence was issued to Syria and Lebanon as two separate states. This declaration was based and driven from the Constitution of the French Third Republic. (Grynkewich, 2008, p.350). The vast majority of Muslims in Lebanon rejected the formation of Greater Lebanon by imperial France (p.351). France and Britain strongly rejected the desire of Arabs of having a union based on Arab nationalism (p.354). Muslims in Lebanon were aware of the intentions behind these plans of dividing Greater Syria, which gave superior political and social power to the Maronites. Muslims in Lebanon sensed that they would become one of many minorities in a country that harbourne eighteen different sects, each represented in the Lebanese Parliament. Muslims in Lebanon hoped to be part of the Greater Arab State led by King Faisal, a desire that was strongly rejected by France and Britain. In addition, the whole idea of having a French mandate over Lebanon was rejected by Lebanese Muslims. The Syrian national movement and its representatives in Greater Lebanon rejected the formation of a new state within Greater Syria as well, yet were forced to accept the new plans under the condition that Christians in Lebanon would drop the demand for French protection of Christians in Lebanon. It is important to indicate that soon after the fall of Ottoman Empire in 1918,
Lebanon was ruled for just few days by the Greater Arab State led by King Faisal, the leader of the Great Arab Revolution. Faisal was defeat in the Battle of Maysalun against the French troops on the outskirts of Damascus in 1920. The king fled Syria and never returned to mark the end of kingship rule over Great Syria and declare the start of the French mandate which lasted for around three decades.

The demographic statistics of Greater Lebanon have always been controversial. The discrepancy in population figures was between eighty thousand to two hundred thousand in favour of Christians (Grynkewich, 2008, p.361). This means that at the time of the formation of Lebanon, a vast Christian majority did not exist. France did not aim at the time to give political and social equity to different groups in Lebanon based on their demographic ratios. The clear aim was to give more power to their protected group in Lebanon, the Christians, and specifically the Maronites. Demographic figures were used as the justification for the French plans. Notably, the division of political power was not based on religious differences between the two different groups – Christians and Muslims – but on six different sectarian groups including Maronites, Catholics – Roman and Orthodox – Sunni, Shia and Druze. This was arranged according to an ongoing traditional unwritten law called ‘repeated six-six’ – the practice of dividing any political, social and employment shares into six parts along sectarian lines. Social changes started to take place within each sect in Lebanon in a dramatic way in the 1930s and the 1940s. Education and migration – internal and external – moved some sects up the social ladder. The Sunnis gained more social and political power after the violent 1958 revolution, while the Shia used migration, education, high birth rates and business inside Lebanon and in North America and Africa to rise up the political and social ladder. The new circumstances pushed for a change in the structure of the whole political and social system in Lebanon. The Lebanese Shia now aspired to a better position within the Lebanese sectarian system. They demanded powers that matched their improved financial, political educational
and social status. The success of the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979 privileged the Shia by dint of their having the support of a great regional power. It is known that if one group gains more power in any political system, then another group has to lose the same amount of power. The changes within all Lebanese sects paved the way for the Lebanese civil war, 1975-1990. The Lebanese civil war produced the Al-Taif Accord in 1989. This agreement redistributed the political power in Lebanon taking the new changes into account. The extensive migration of Lebanese Christians to Europe and Canada reduced their numbers in Lebanon to around thirty-five percent of the population after 1989. Thus, at this point in time, in light of the fact that France in no longer a key power player in Lebanon and the surrounding region, Christians are no longer in a position that qualifies them to demand the biggest share in the Lebanese political system. In addition, the rise of the duel power system internationally, with the elevation of the United States and the Soviet Union and the decline of Britain, has negatively affected those who were protected by the two imperial powers in the Middle East.

**Is social equity behind the formation of Hezbollah?**

*Hezbollah* is a Lebanese military and political organisation that was formed in 1982. Many scholars refer to the formation of *Hezbollah* as a reaction to the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982. Despite the sense of reality of these claims, the assumption does not consider the social justice issues and political equity matters that have played a major role in the creation of *Hezbollah*. The political and social elements were as important as the resistance towards the occupying forces. *Hezbollah* has always introduced the identity of the organisation as purely Islamic. However, it is important to draw a connection between socialism and political Islam, as well as to identify the differences between the two ideologies.
Marxism is a religion. To the believer, it presents, firstly, a system of ultimate ends that embody the meaning of life and are absolute standards by which we judge events and actions; secondly, it is a guide to those ends, which implies a plan of salvation and indication of the evil from which mankind, or a chosen section of mankind, is to be saved. Similarly, Marxist socialism also belongs to that subgroup which promises paradise on the other side of the grave. (Schumpeter, 2018, p.5) Neither Hezbollah, nor Lebanese socialist and communist parties accept the linking of the ideology and practices of Hezbollah to socialism. Indeed, one of Hezbollah’s central concerns is to avoid being linked to atheism. (Katch, 2015, p.148) sounds a defensive note in railing against such a link.

Hezbollah failed to see a clear point of view that separates atheism from socialism and blocked the way for any discussions on this matter. In addition, since Hezbollah uses a religious ideology, there was concern over any link to Marx’s famous concept that saw religion as the ‘opium of people’; this stopped Hezbollah from drawing any similarities between its ideology and socialism.

One of Marx’s best known quotes – ‘religion is the opium of people’ – is also one of the most misunderstood because it is usually taken out of the very context that gives it beauty and depth. Religious suffering is, at one and the same time, the expression of real suffering and a protest against real suffering. Religion is the sigh of oppressed creatures, the heart of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions. In this sense, it is the opium of the people. The abolition of religion as the illusory happiness of the people is the demand for their real happiness. (Katch, 2015 p. 147)

Hezbollah emphasises its Islamic identity through the official statements and the speeches of Nasrallah and other members. Yet, the organisation presents an ideology that has strong similarities to socialism with regard to the class struggle and equality within the Lebanese political system; this also extends to include regional and international social equity issues. Hezbollah uses Islamic speech to reach out to Arabic and Muslim societies. This
Islamic speech harbours issues of social and political equity with regard to the abuse of social and political rights in the Islamic and Arab world, namely in the rich countries of the Arabian Gulf.

The organisation also uses a type of rhetoric similar to that used by socialists in addressing nations such as South America and elsewhere. In using such rhetoric, Hezbollah highlights the concept of the oppressor and the oppressed, the former being designated as colonialist powers led by the United States and its allies, and the latter being represented by the masses. Similarly, Hezbollah also preaches a very similar ideology to that propagated by communist rebels such as Che Guevara and Fidel Castro, except that the latter’s ideology resides within a secular frame. (Katch, 2015, p.147) notes the ideological opposition of some detractors to this adoption by Hezbollah of socialist and communist rhetorical techniques, stating that “socialists are denounced by some as godless heathens and by others as hucksters trying to build a new church promising workers their very own heaven. I’ll say this for the opponents: they are good at covering all their bases.”

Since Hezbollah adopts an Islamic identity and attempts to distance the organisation from being labelled as socialist or communist, it becomes important to examine the roots of socialism in the Islamic religion. Prophet Mohammad preached social and political equity in Mecca at the beginning of the Daawa for Islam. Social justice and the breakdown of the social structure in Mecca was one of the prime goals of the new religion. The leaders of the Quraysh Tribe, who were at the top of the hierarchy, represented the bourgeoisie, while the poor and the slaves in Mecca at the time represented the proletariat. The leaders of the Quraysh offered to worship the God of Prophet Mohammad for one year, on the proviso that Prophet Mohammad and his followers worship the gods of the Quraysh for one year. Abou Lahab, Abou Jahel and Abou Sifyan refused absolutely to give up their privileges; they figured that they would tolerate the new religious beliefs as long as they could keep their
social and political status and powers. On the religious side, the bourgeoisie of Mecca partially accepted the new religion, but social justice stood as a tall barrier in the way of this agreement. Prophet Mohammad rejected the offer of the Quraysh and insisted on achieving social and political equity as well as attending to the religious strictures of the Islamic ideology.

Say, "O disbelievers, I do not worship what you worship, nor are you worshippers of what I worship, nor will I be a worshipper of what you worship, nor will you be worshippers of what I worship. For you, (this) is your religion, and for me (this) is my religion." (Qu’ran, Sura 109:1:2:3:4:5:6)

It is worth mentioning that at the time of the negotiations, Quraysh was the strongest party in Mecca and Prophet Mohammad and his followers were in a weak position. The success enjoyed by the newly introduced religious ideology supports the view that social equity constitutes one of the central aspects of Islamic ideology. This paves the way for a claim of a partial socialist belief within Hezbollah’s ideology and practices.

Social and political equity within Lebanese society was absent following the formation of Greater Lebanon in 1920. It was also missing prior to that during the four hundred and fourteen years of the Ottoman rule of Greater Syria, which included present-day Lebanon. Thus, when Hezbollah formed in Lebanon in the latter part of the twentieth century, many communists and socialists were supportive of such a movement, albeit without giving up their leftist political tendencies.

Socialist ideology imagines a society where the top priority is to meet all of its people’s needs – ranging from food, shelter, and healthcare to art, culture and social communication. In contrast, the profit margin underlies the whole capitalist enterprise and thus, any of the aforementioned basic human necessities must fit within a profit-driven paradigm. (Katch, 2015)
Internationally, the dual support received from Iran and Syria by *Hezbollah* and other Islamic and secular groups – not only political, but also financial and military support – has meant that the development of programs to combat social inequity has been possible.\(^1\)

However, the historical tension between the Eastern and Western blocs during the cold war laid down a complicated pattern of allegiances; for instance, the United States supported those who believed that the Palestinian question was not their affair. Shia groups believed that the liberation of Jerusalem was their duty and were more hoping for support from the opponents of the United States.\(^2\) Furthermore, the historical and ongoing political tensions between Christians and Muslims in Lebanon have divided the country and rendered the state of Lebanon vulnerable to external intervention in its affairs.

*Hezbollah* has often been targeted by governmental counterterrorism policies that accuse the organisation of making its own state within the state. The danger in targeting the funds flowing from Iran and Syria would only increase despair and poverty and risk producing further problems for the population. *Hezbollah* has managed to gain the support of Lebanese Shia through its liberation of land and its social welfare services. Its leaders have also gained community acceptance of its wider agenda. In addition, *Hezbollah*’s resistance to the occupying Israeli forces is somehow seen by the Lebanese authorities as a challenge, and as a way of undermining the role of the Lebanese government. Fragile relationships between the citizens in Lebanon and the government have thus been further shaken. As a result, the Lebanese groups that do not support *Hezbollah* feel that they are undermining the key source of state legitimacy and creating their own state within the state.

By providing public services, an area that is mainly the responsibility of the Lebanese government, *Hezbollah* can gain three main benefits: firstly, if *Hezbollah* steps in and provides social welfare infrastructure, the state would appear to be failing to achieve its side of the social contract, thereby undermining its legacy and thus bolstering the image of
Hezbollah; secondly, Hezbollah would very probably succeed in drawing the loyalty of the population to its political agenda; finally, Hezbollah would be able to wage war against the regime if the state tries to limit or undermine Hezbollah’s power. Hence over time, when Shia groups receive services from Hezbollah, such as school funds, healthcare, housing and other services, Lebanese citizens would begin to exhibit more loyalty to Hezbollah than to the state. They would also feel that their allegiance to Hezbollah is greater than their connection to the Lebanese identity that has been failing them for decades. There is no doubt that Hezbollah has been successful in building a network that can mobilise the masses in a way that is superior to that of other political groups and to the state itself.

Hezbollah is variously described by most Western governments as a resistance movement, a political party and a terrorist organisation. Despite the fact that those countries have listed Hezbollah in their lists of terrorist organisations, they have had little success countering Hezbollah. Western governments have often attempted to eliminate all sources of funding to Hezbollah; however success in reaching this goal has been elusive.

Following the Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon, and after several wars initiated by the Israeli army, Hezbollah has played a big role in building the entire social welfare system for the Shia community. Hezbollah has also focused on supporting the needs of people fighting the Israelis. These services were extended and expanded to all civilians who needed support in areas under the party of God’s influence. Due to Iranian and Syrian financial support, Hezbollah has been able to “undermine the legitimacy of the Lebanese government by challenging the state’s monopoly of the legitimate use of force and through an extensive social welfare network”. (Grynkewich, 2008, p261).

The state of Lebanon gave Hezbollah permission to maintain its weapons and to fight Israel because the Lebanese state could not effectively counter the Israeli army.
Simultaneously, the Lebanese government believed that Syria was able to prevent *Hezbollah* from taking over the Lebanese government by force. *Hezbollah* also avoided targeting civilians and confined its operations to fighting the Israeli army. Hence, *Hezbollah’s* strategies have succeeded in increasing its legitimacy. After the 1997 war, *Hezbollah* rebuilt 5000 homes in more than 82 villages; hence *Hezbollah* was able to increase its popularity and heighten its image. Since then, *Hezbollah’s* influence and power have continued to grow. The population supports *Hezbollah*, not only because of its willingness to fight Israel, but equally because of its social welfare efforts.

**Is Hezbollah a State within a State?**

*Hezbollah* was accused of forming a state within Lebanon. The organisation has been conducting roles that has been long neglected by Lebanese consecutive governments. Nasrallah responded to these accusations by stating that:

“We do not accept to be classified as a state within a state. These acquisitions are not true. In brief I say, *Hezbollah* is a Lebanese party which has an effect in the regional matters;; however, if someone wants to classify us otherwise, then that is his problem. We are a very sensible Lebanese party and all our members are Lebanese. Due to the events taking place in our region and its timing, and due to our alliances and abilities to be present simultaneously in different battlefields and in different arenas, I can say that we have a significance in the region.” (Nasrallah Interview, Al-Manar TV, 2015)

At the beginning of its existence in the1980s, *Hezbollah* did not recognise the legitimacy of the Republic of Lebanon as stated in the 1943 declaration of its independence from France. An historical overview of the creation of the Lebanese State is crucial in order to recognise the groups that have rejected the formation of Lebanon throughout the modern history of Lebanon. Most Muslims in Lebanon, those in the Syrian Social Nationalist Party and later on those who supported *Hezbollah* did not recognise Lebanon as an independent
state. In 1916, the Sykes-Picot Agreement was signed between Britain and France (Gerolymatos, 2010, ). As the agreement states, France gained control over Lebanon. In early September 1920, French General Goro declared the formation of the state of Greater Lebanon. In this declaration, a part of Greater Syria was separated and considered as a separate entity and was placed under the French mandate. On November 8, 1943, the Lebanese government disregarded all the 1926 constitutional articles that gave unlimited powers to the French High Commissioner in Lebanon. These powers had been legalised earlier by the League of Nations. After huge demonstrations and pressure put on the French government by other super powers, France agreed to grant Lebanon independence on November 22, 1943 (Daher, 2015).

The question of an independent Lebanon was never resolved. Every critical event in Lebanon since November 1943 has been an outcome of this unresolved issue. There was a struggle to address this pressing question; however no success in reaching common grounds with regard to accepting a positive outcome in this matter was achieved. Neither the Christians were happy, nor were the Muslims satisfied. Every party accused and mistrusted the other and Lebanon was falling apart and its illusion of independence was in jeopardy. Hezbollah was no different to some other parties or groups with regard to how the organisation viewed the independence of Lebanon. Hezbollah did not acknowledge the existence of Lebanon at all. Consequently, the organisation did not recognise the shape of the ruling system as set up by imperial France. The term Hezbollah used to describe the Lebanese political power structure was the ‘Lebanese regime’, clearly indicating that they did not give legitimacy to the existence of a political system in Lebanon that was fully controlled by right-wing Christian parties. Hezbollah called for the downfall of what is known as the rule of political Maronites in Lebanon. The declaration of independence of Lebanon was rejected by most Muslims in Lebanon (Al-Nahar, 2015); however, it was widely accepted by the vast
majority of Christians – namely Maronites – because it gave them major political and military positions in the country. Many Lebanese Muslims wished to be part of the Arab State led by King Faisal. Yet, it was understood by the two sides, the Christians and the Muslims in Lebanon that a compromise has to be made. On September 21, 1943, the Lebanese Parliament elected Bechara Al-Khoury as the first president of independent Lebanon. Soon after, a government led by Riad Al Solh was formed. The new government formed a national constitution that tried to reach a halfway political stand between Muslims and Christians. The new declarations emphasised the independence of Lebanon as a free country with the right of speech guaranteed to all citizens. It also stated that Lebanon was an important part of the Arab world that would not seek protection from any foreign powers. Most importantly, Muslims were to give up their request for joining the Greater Arab State in return for the Christians promising not to ask for western protection. All the events that took place in Lebanon from 1943 till 1975 proved to be deceptive. The Muslims never gave up the dream of being a part of the Arab World and, furthermore, Christians sought protection from western powers. All these events and uncertainties led to the 1975 Lebanese Civil War. Other external factors such as growing numbers of Palestinian refugees added fuel to the civil war in Lebanon. Palestinian refugees in Lebanon became the actual rulers of the country (Mustapha, 2003, p.274). The 1969 Cairo Agreement granted the Palestinians the right to use Lebanon as a base to liberate Palestine. This caused the country to descend into an unbreakable cycle of violence and destruction (Al Nahar, 2015). The Palestinians never managed to achieve their goal and got tangled in Lebanese internal affairs. In addition, they evicted from Lebanon by Israel and Lebanon became occupied. In 1982, Beirut was the second Arabic capital to be captured and fall to the Israelis. *Hezbollah* emerged in Lebanon through this vacuum of power.
Sayed Hassan Nasrallah was regarded as one of the most influential people of the year in ‘The 2011 Time 100’. Despite some unrealistic descriptions of Nasrallah, Time magazine listed Nasrallah as one of the chosen hundred whose ideas spark dialogue and dissent and sometimes even revolution. Time noted that “Nasrallah engineered the downfall of the government in Beirut and installed a President he prefers. Nobody doubts who's really in charge” (Ghosh, 2011).

The first Hezbollah Manifesto, also known as ‘The Open Letter to the Oppressed’ was released on February 16, 1985. It was the first official document released by Hezbollah to outline its ideological stand and political views of Lebanese, regional and international politics. The opening statement of the letter started by introducing the organisation as the Nation of Hezbollah. The document indicates that the organisation is part of the Islamic Ummah or nation, rather than being simply another Lebanese Islamic party. This Ummah, according to Hezbollah, extends to include all Islamic nations from Indonesia in the Far East to Morocco in the Far West.

The concept of the Ummah or The Nation of Hezbollah was widely used among the members of Hezbollah in the 1980s. This concept faded away after the second Hezbollah Manifesto, released in 2009. In the Open Letter, Hezbollah asserted its loyalty to Ayatollah Khomeini, the leader of the Iranian Islamic Revolution, which ousted the Shah of Iran in 1979. Hezbollah also showed its loyalty to Imam Khomeini by declaring the adoption of the Wilayat Al Faqih theory. Wilayat Al Faqih or the Guardianship of the Islamic Jurist means that Ayatollah Khomeini is the authority that the organisation refers to in all its religious and political matters.

Hezbollah called for the formation of an Islamic state in Lebanon. The Lebanese Phalanges or Al Kataeb were declared as the ultimate enemy, alongside the United States,
France and Israel. *Al Kataeb* was in power in Lebanon at the time, with the President, *Amin Gemayel*, as its leader. However, *Hezbollah* stated that the Islamic state in Lebanon would not be forced upon the Lebanese people. The document called Lebanese citizens to gather significant knowledge about Islam, the ruling system in Islam and the laws of an Islamic state. It is clear that those who wrote the first document were more religiously educated than politically knowledgeable. Notably, the members of *Hezbollah* at the time had enormous religious and military experience, yet little political skill. The 2009 *Hezbollah* political document disregarded the idea of forming an Islamic state in Lebanon and was more realistic about this matter.

To conclude, it should be mentioned that one of the most important conditions for the establishment of a home of this type is having a fair state, a state which is capable and strong, as well as a political system that truly represents the will of the people and their aspirations for justice, freedom and security, stability and well-being and dignity. This is what all the Lebanese people want and work to achieve and we are a part of them. (Full text of *Hezbollah*, 2009)

In addition, the second political document indicates that the writers of the document had gathered significant experience in politics and in realising what was achievable in Lebanon and what was impossible. Moreover, the authors of the second *Hezbollah* manifesto became more aware of their true identity as being bound to their Lebanese identity. As well, they came to the conclusion that there was no contradiction between being politically Islamic and nationally Lebanese at the same time. No Islamic party in the Middle East had been able to overcome this problematic issue before. *Hezbollah* believed at its outset that it is not possible for any Islamist who believes in the Islamic Ideology and Sharia to not have the ultimate goal of forming an Islamic state, as stated in the Open Letter. According to *Hezbollah*, this goal is the natural expression of commitment to Islam, which reflects the justice aspired to by the human race.
We distinguish between the ideology of forming an Islamic state and the practicality of it. Our ideology calls for forming the Islamic state and we encourage others to accept it since it aims to satisfy people. However, forming the Islamic state requires solid grounds for accepting this state, and these solid grounds are the masses, who have the right to the ruling system they desire. (Qassim, 2010)

Qassim underlines the view that it is seen as impossible to form an Islamic state in Lebanon or to impose the concept on all other groups: “We do not accept this, neither in this case, nor in any other matters and thoughts. This applies to our ideologies and practices generated by us or others.”

To conclude this point, Hezbollah could neither deny its belonging to the Ummah or the Islamic nation nor reject its belonging to the homeland of Lebanon. A compromise needed to be reached in order to evolve the organisation’s belonging ideology. The solution was to belong to both Lebanon and the Ummah of Islam at the same time.

“The media discourse of Islamic Resistance mirrors the notion of reconciliation between Lebanese citizenship and Shiite Muslim identity as part of Ummah”. (El zein, 2015, p.324)

*Hezbollah* has been accused of being a state within the Lebanese state. These accusations normally come from Western states, Arabic and Islamic states, Lebanese and international officials and parties, Lebanese political and religious parties and groups, in addition to the international, regional and national media. These statements are orchestrated in way that sometimes echoes from the White House in Washington to reach the smallest newspaper in Lebanon in a repetitive and coordinated way. *Hezbollah* denies the accusations of designs to form its own state in Lebanon due to the lack of desire for this goal. Nasrallah (2008) has responded by describing the government in Lebanon: “This is not a state, it is a mafia controlling the people. They are so, even if the whole world supports them and even if George Bush gives them daily support. This support condemns them, not us.
Lebanon is geographically small in area, with over seventeen sectarian groups living side by side. This makes forming a state within Lebanon an unrealistic and non-viable goal. The location in Lebanon of Hezbollah’s supporters is scattered in different, uncoordinated geographical areas. Hezbollah’s strongholds include areas in Southern Lebanon, Beqaa and Dahia in the surrounding western suburbs of Beirut, in addition to a few small villages in Byblos Jebeil and northern Lebanon.

However, Hezbollah performs major functions that are meant to be conducted by the Lebanese state. These include military defence operations against Israel. We do not receive messages from the Israeli enemy even through a third party. The one responsible for this is the Lebanese government through the United Nations and some European countries. In our policies and culture, we do not care about Israel’s threatening or assuring messages because we believe that our actions protect Lebanon, not messages. (Nasrallah, A Conversation, 2016)

It is clear that Hezbollah can be seen as more than a political and military organisation due to the roles played by Hezbollah in regional political and military affairs, in addition to social, educational, financial, medical services. Hezbollah builds infrastructure, residential units, schools, hospitals, parks and entertainment areas in the southern suburbs of Beirut, Beqaa Valley and southern Lebanon.

Hezbollah, as an organisation, meets most of the criteria set for qualifying to be considered as a state; however some specifications prevent Hezbollah from being fully classified as a state. There is no doubt that Hezbollah plays a role which is more appropriate for military and political organisations to play.

International law provided a comprehensive (re)definition of statehood in the Montevideo Convention which is generally accepted as the authoritative legal source for defining statehood. Its first article has obtained canonical status in its ostensibly clear enumeration of the traditional empirical criteria for statehood:
The State as a person of international law should pose the following qualifications: (a) a permanent population; (b) a defined territory; (c) government; and (d) capacity to enter into relations with other states. (Aalberts, 2012, p.18)

Thus, Hezbollah meets the first condition of the criteria seen as necessary to be considered as a state. The organisation does possess a permanent population. This population inhabits areas in southern Lebanon, Dahia (also known as the western suburbs of Beirut), Beqaa Valley (namely Baalbak and Hermel province – as well as some villages in Byblous Jbeil), in addition to other Shia minorities who live in northern Lebanon. In fact, the Shia population on the northern shores of Al-Maten in Mount Lebanon province has exploded to an unprecedented degree. The residents of Dahia Al Janoubieyeh have expanded to neighbouring areas populated by Christian and Druze in Shwayfat and Saint Therese, Doahah, Aramon and all the way to Rmayleh at the outskirts of Saida, a stronghold Sunni area. Saida is the gate of southern Lebanon where a majority of Shia in Lebanon reside.

Despite meeting the population condition set by the Montevideo Convention, Hezbollah does not have geographical connection between its support bases across Lebanon. The areas inhabited by the Shia in Lebanon are geographically separated by areas inhabited by other sectarian groups, who are in most cases against Hezbollah’s ideologies in Lebanon. Also, Hezbollah does not have a ruling government in its territories in the form of traditional governments, but certainly has a power structure similar to those of a government.

We did not want to be part of the political power when we became part of the 2005 Lebanese government. The aim was not to have a share in the political power. We never asked to have a share but to protect the resistance and protect its back, so the 2005 government does not take any wrong actions against the resistance, we had these suspicions. (Nasrallah, Interviews with Julian Assange, 2012)

The organisation provides its own services where consecutive Lebanese governments and local councils fail to provide these services. This specifically applies to interior security.
A ruling political government is not the only body that is obligated to provide services. However, providing services in Lebanon is the key to loyalty, especially after a long history of neglect. *Hezbollah* accuses successive Lebanese governments of being puppets in the hands of America and of nurturing its own interests in Lebanon, rather than serving the citizens of Lebanon. Nasrallah declared:

> We do not compete for power, government, ministry or any political position. All what the Islamic and Arab world hears about us conducting a coup in Lebanon is a talk with no value at all. The truth about what is happening in Lebanon is that there is a side following and serving America in Lebanon. This side is implementing America’s plans to disarm the resistance in Lebanon when the United States and Israel fail to do so directly. This side made a commitment and a promise America in 2005 and failed to deliver. (Nasrallah, Press Conference, 2008)

*Hezbollah*’s supporters and sympathisers inhabit a reasonably large geographical area of Lebanon. However, the obstacles to qualifying as an independent state on the previously specified condition of ‘population’ also apply to the condition of ‘defined territory’. These were obstacles *Hezbollah* tried to overcome. A large number of residential apartment projects started to expand outside the imaginary line that separates different sects in Lebanon. This line came into effect after the end of the Lebanese Civil War in 1990. Several years went past before the Shia population started to expand outside its traditional territories. This is due to the fact that there was still a significant area of uninhabited land in *Dahiha*. The expansion to other sectarian groups’ territories started to occur when the empty land in *Dahiha*, which was valid for residential building projects, started to become scarce so expanding as a natural growth factor was only a matter of time. New residential projects conducted by Shia developers reached *Burges, Qatrani* and *Ahmadeiah* in *Hasbiyah* province. *Hasbiyah* has always been inhabited solely by Druze. Many buildings scattered along the *Dalafeh* main road started to attract Shia residents from outside the area. This raised a demographic alarm with the Druze community, which considered the spread of Shia, who are mainly supporters
of Hezbollah, as a threat to their existence in the area. For Druze, being a minority of around five per cent made the situation more pressing and complicated. In Marj Ayon in southern Lebanon, a similar story was taking place in Christian neighbourhoods. However, in addition to the Christian community, a community of Lebanese Shia were local to this area. At this time, it was clear that the number of Shia was climbing, while the numbers of Druze and Christian were in decline. Druze and Christian saw this natural population growth as a systematic attempt by Shia to connect geographically separated Shia areas in the Beka Valley, southern Lebanon and Dahya, where the majority of the Shia population live (Yagi, 2011). This was seen as preparing the geographical arena into building a Shia state over their land – a state that would eventually be controlled by the militarily capable organisation, Hezbollah. If these concerns materialised, then Hezbollah would then meet the condition of having a state. However, Hezbollah constantly denies the acquisition of being a state within a state and always questions the existence of the state of Lebanon.

We are not a state within a state, in Mar Mikael, seven people were shot dead, we never judged or retaliated towards anyone. All what we did that we were patient and said we wanted an official investigation conducted by the juridical system. Who is the state and who is the mafia in this country? Who is state minded and who is mafia minded? (Nasrallah, Press Conference, 2008)

After the year 2000, Hezbollah’s military powers significantly increased. It was one of the factors that indicated a change in the regional system. This non-state power started to take roles that exceeded the roles of many regional states with regard to regional balances. Islamic Resistance in Lebanon, the military branch of Hezbollah, increased its powers to a higher level than the military powers of the state of Lebanon. The emerging power of Hezbollah in Lebanon made Lebanon present in all regional decision-making negotiations. This guaranteed that there would be no solution against the Lebanese national interest compared to what had happened from the time of Lebanese independence to the Lebanese
Civil War in 1975. Regional and super powers used to exclude Lebanon from the decision-making process that related to Lebanon on the political grounds that Lebanon’s strength is materialised through its weaknesses.

The resistance in Lebanon is a right that we cannot give up as indicated by the Lebanese constitution. We stand for a major concept vital for the existence of a state. A state cannot withstand without land. If the state cannot exist without people and government, then it cannot exist without land and the ability to defend the land. A state cannot exist without sovereignty, which is one of the main elements in a state’s existence (Nasrallah, 2014, Al-Alam TV)

Hezbollah’s political approach has changed with time taking into account internal, regional and international political changes. However, some strategic plans have remained unchanged since the formation of Hezbollah. The idea of resisting occupation has remained untouched since 1982.

The major matter to us is to set our Goals. Our goal is human, moral, national and religious. Our aim is to liberate our land from occupation and this is not up for discussion. This is the true goal of Hezbollah since it was established. This aim is accepted by all Lebanese (Nasrallah, Interviews with Julian Assange, 2012)

The political evolution of Hezbollah has undergone through different changes. This can be seen through the differences between the political ideology represented in the First Hezbollah Charter in 1985 and the 2009 Political Document or the Second Hezbollah Charter. The political ideology has clearly changed, yet the point of view with regard to the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Lebanese-Israeli conflict remains unchanged.

Many political views changed in 1995 with regard to relations with some European countries. Hezbollah claims that the necessary positive change towards some western European countries was based on a positive change conducted by those countries. The changes in the European role toward the struggle in the Middle East played a role in Hezbollah’s decision.
Hezbollah aimed to influence European policy makers to take a more moderate stand in relation to the crisis in the Middle East; this was a call to divert European policies to match the fair cases presented by occupied countries in the Middle East.

In 1982, the resistance in Lebanon started with two simple factors – fighters and arms. The guerrilla fighters had little experience, being equipped with simple arms like AK-47s and RB-Gs, but Hezbollah accumulated enormous experience in the course of one year. The organisation managed to amass a huge range of weapons, mainly rockets. Hezbollah also managed to form specialised military units, including commandos, special forces, sea seals, a drones unit, communication units and units specialised in coordinating fire on the battlefield. These are skills that are normally limited to organised state armies.

After 2012, Hezbollah has no longer been considered as a militia or guerrilla force. The huge range of arms and highly trained members, supported by tactical and strategic planners, has shifted the organisation towards having a combination of traditional, army style skills mixed with rebel guerrilla style skills. Hezbollah has paid special attention to its Special Forces Units. These highly trained forces have gathered significant real-life battlefield experience in southern Lebanon and in Syria, which puts Hezbollah military power ahead of the power of the official Lebanese forces and many other armies in the Middle East (El-Nashra, 2015).

Why can’t we as Hezbollah take precautions? What have the consecutive Lebanese governments done followings threats besides siting aside? Hiding its head in the sand. The security of Lebanon is initially the responsibility of the Lebanese military forces in the country. Hezbollah has believed since 1982 till today that this is the responsibility of the government. We used to say we are partners in resisting occupation, and when the government can take responsibility we will move aside. (Nasrallah, Al-Alam TV, 2014)

Hezbollah has evolved since its formation in 1982 with regard to its identity, ideology and practices. In addition, the organisation adapted to suit its new understanding of its
affiliations. This emerging understanding focuses on having, at the same time, a national Lebanese and an Islamic identity. This is outlined in the 2009 *Hezbollah*’s political charter that avoided any mention of forming an Islamic state in Lebanon or elsewhere (*Hezbollah Organisation*, 2009):

> Lebanon is our homeland and the homeland of our fathers, ancestors. It’s also the homeland of our children, grandchildren, and the coming generations. It is the country to which we have given our most precious sacrifices for its sovereignty and pride, dignity and liberation. We want Lebanon for all Lebanese alike, and we want it unified. We reject any kind of segregation or federalism, whether explicit or disguised. We want Lebanon to be sovereign, free, independent, strong and capable. We want it also to be strong, active, and present in the geopolitics of the region. We want it also to be a key contributor in making the present and the future. (Chapter 2, Section 1 – The Homeland, 2009)

*Hezbollah* is no longer concentrating on being a part of the Islamic nation or *Ummah*, but an Islamic Lebanese party which is more concerned, involved and tangled in the Lebanese and national politics in addition to regional military actions. Between 1982 and 1991, *Hezbollah* enhanced its political and cultural views, religious priorities and its organisational structure (Kassir, 2011a) to suit the major roles that the organisation started to play after significant successes in forcing the Israeli occupation out of Lebanon unconditionally. The organisation managed to fill the vacuum of power left by the state of Lebanon. *Hezbollah* started practicing roles that had been neglected for many decades in the territories that the organisation controls – social and educational service, and medical, cultural and financial services. Yet, the most important role played by *Hezbollah* – one that was meant to be conducted by the state in Lebanon – was that of protecting Lebanese sovereignty against Israeli aggressions.

The Israeli drones invade our air space day and night and take detailed footage of small details. Which country on earth would accept that? The aggressions have been treated with silence since 1948. It is the
Lebanese government and Lebanese state that is obligated to deal with this issue because it poses a threat to our national security. (Al-Mayadadeen TV, 2016)

**Overview of the Islamic roots of Hezbollah**

In the early 1970s, an energetic and scholarly Shia movement started to become active among the Shia masses in Lebanon. This was due to the return of scholars from religious schools in Najaf and Qom Shia. It was known at this time that there was no vibrant religious commitment in these areas. Sayed Moussa Alsader, Sayed Mohamad Hussein Faddlolah, Sheikh Mohamad Mehdi Shams Elddine and many others formed Islamic associations to teach Islamic thought to the people. The new ideas were widely accepted and a new generation of religiously committed youth started to emerge. Young people started to shift their political views from largely communist, socialist, nationalist and even right-wing beliefs to Islamic ideology. *Amal Movement* was a natural consequence of this shift in ideology (Mustapha, 2003). It was formed by Sayed Moussa Alsader in 1974. *Al Sader* was a Shia cleric who returned from Iran after spending most of his life there studying in Qom. The *Amal Movement* was called the Movement of the Deprived to highlight their social orientation and its representation of the poor at that time. The new atmosphere amongst the Shia in Lebanon was also affected by the support provided by *Hezb Al Dawaa of Iraq*, represented by Sayed Mohamad Bager AlSader. Later on, *Hezb Al Dawa* formed a Lebanese branch that later became part of *Hezbollah* alongside Islamic *Amal*; the latter was led by Hussein Mussawi. *Mussaw*, who broke away from the *Amal Movement* led by Nabih Berry to form the Islamic *Amal Movement*. Islamic *Amal* was mainly active in *Baalbak and the Beqaa Valley* areas. Another important group that played a major role in forming *Hezbollah* was The Union of Muslim Students in Lebanon. This organisation was the backbone of *Hezbollah*. It was a covert organisation that had to work secretly for a few years due to security and political concerns at the time.
The success of the Islamic Revolution led by Imam Khomeini in Iran in 1979 gave a substantial boost to Shia Islamic movements in Lebanon, namely Hezbollah. The emerging movement now had a regional sponsor which could provide political cover, funds and arms supplies. This element is a major factor in most of the achievements of Hezbollah.

Hezbollah announced its first charter on February 16, 1985. Before this date, the organisation was anonymously fighting the Israeli invasion of Lebanon and working against the right-wing Christian parties that were ruling Lebanon at the time. Al-Kataeb, led by President Amin Gemayel, represented a political ruling system that replicated the ruling system in Israel. The Christian right-wing parties controlled Lebanon by using the Lebanese army with a heavy hand, especially against the western Beirut area and its suburbs. These areas were inhabited by Muslim Lebanese and Palestinian refugees. A long siege over these areas was imposed by the Israeli Army as well as the Lebanese Army. Hezbollah outlined its political and religious ideology in a 19-page document called the Open Letter to the Oppressed, also known as the First Charter of Hezbollah. The language used in this charter with regard to the ruling system in Lebanon, indicates a deep and long lasting anger towards the ‘regime’. This anger reflects decades of neglect of the Shia in Lebanon and how they were viewed in the society as lower class. The marginalising of the Shia started during the Ottoman Empire’s rule of Lebanon and continued during the French mandate over Lebanon intensifying after 1943, the year that Lebanon attained independence.

The most significant shift in Hezbollah’s views of the Lebanese state took place in 1988 during the local council elections. This election was taking place for the first time in 30 years. Most of the parties in Lebanon decided to participate in this election as a show of power and as a preparation for the coming parliamentary election. Hezbollah unexpectedly showed an interest in participating for the first time in this election. Success in the outcome
of this election would guarantee *Hezbollah* a share in the political power quota in Lebanon, hence giving the organisation much-needed international recognition. It would also give *Hezbollah* significant political, social and economic influence within the Shia population. This would lead to growing political power and a say in the legislative and executive level of government in Lebanon. *Hezbollah* did participate in the 1998 local council’s election and succumbed in achieving its desired goal. Notably, just before this year in 1996, Hezbollah changes its motto from Hezbollah- Islamic Revolution in Lebanon into Hezbollah-Islamic Resistance in Lebanon.

*Hezbollah*’s organisational structure matches a state structure. Every aspect needed for the formation of a state exists in the organisational structure of *Hezbollah*. Yet, *Hezbollah* emphasises its belief in the legitimacy of the state of Lebanon and the political order set down by the *Taaef Accords* that took place in 1989 and ended the Lebanese civil war. Christians, namely Maronites, lost significant political and social privileges granted to them in 1943 by imperial France. *Hezbollah* had no intention of abolishing the *Taaef Accords* and consequently a new political system was established in Lebanon.

We do not call for changing the political structure in Lebanon. Some people accuse us of doing so. We are with the Taaef Accords and we support implanting those accords. At the end, if it was the general public opinion in support of change, then it is up to the public, we will not force our opinion upon the Lebanese people. We do not aspire to change any political structure including the positions of the president, prime minister or any other position. (Nasrallah, Press Conference, 2008)

At first, for seven years from 1982 till 1989, *Hezbollah* chose a collective leadership. This imitated a form of leadership employed by the communist party. The leadership body was called the *Shura* or Council. The number of members within the *Shura* varied until it was set as nine members by the internal regulations of *Hezbollah*. The nine members elected a Secretary-General (El Zein, 2015). In 1989, the members of *Shura* were reduced to seven in number and a new deputy for the Secretary-General position was added. The organisation
thus consists of five different councils: the Jihad Council; the Political Council; the Executive Council; the Parliamentary Council; and, the Judicial Council. Each council is led by a Shura member. In this sense, Hezbollah has shown it is capable of forming a state if the condition of having a geographically connected area is achieved (Kassir, 2011b).

Despite the legal criteria that defines statehood, some conditions of which Hezbollah does not meet, Hezbollah still plays a major role in the politics of Lebanon and the region. The services provided by Hezbollah to a fairly large number of the population, namely Shia, demands a significance that is normally given only to states, not groups or organisation (Salim, 2006). Hezbollah provides services that the Lebanese government cannot provide. The organisation has its own schools, technical institutes, hospitals, medical centres, ambulance services, scouts and has recently opened a university.

The military branch of the organisation is more capable than the Lebanese Army. Hezbollah fought Israel and forced the Israeli occupation out of Lebanon while the Lebanese Army was watching. This gave Hezbollah a greater influence in Lebanon. Hezbollah also negotiated with Israel for the release of Lebanese and Arab prisoners in Israeli prisons. The indirect negotiation was successful and Hezbollah managed to close this file between Lebanon and Israel (Haidar, 2006). No government in Lebanon succeeded in releasing any Lebanese citizens from Israeli prisons. Hezbollah does not have international relations as a state, but the organisation surely plays the role of a state within the Lebanese state. This role is sometime more significant than that played by the State of Lebanon. On some levels, Hezbollah can be seen as a state within a state but, at the present time, the organisation lacks vital conditions that could qualify it to be recognised as a state. Hezbollah explains and justifies its role by emphasising on legitimacy of the organisation’s activities.
‘Emerging from the 1989 Ta’if Accord in the privileged position of the only sectarian militia permitted to retain arms, Hizbullah’s autonomy of coercion has provided the means for its external expression of statehood’. (Davis, 2007, p30)
Chapter 6

A Reading of the 2006 Memorandum of Understanding between

Hezbollah and the Free Patriotic Movement (FPM)

The importance of this document is that it took place at a very critical time and in the middle of dangerous circumstances. It enforced our Lebanese national unity and opened regions within Lebanon up to each other. This is very important, because the understanding prevented civil hostility. The agreement will continue to prevent any civil disorder and to support stability until today.

MP Pier Rafoul, (FPM)

The aim of this chapter is to conduct a reading an unpresented agreement between an Islamic party and a Maronite movement in Lebanon. The 2006 Memorandum of Understanding between Hezbollah and the Free Patriotic Movement (FPM) gave the two sides significant political gain in Lebanon. However, the main question that keeps surfacing amid every crisis in Lebanon if the agreement will stand the test of time.

To understand Hezbollah’s relations with Christian parties in Lebanon it is important to consider that the Shia were historically neglected, and the Christians mainly the Maronites were privileged by the Lebanese political system. This historical point explains the hostile relationship between the Muslim and Christian political groups within an unfair pollical system as considered by many Muslims in Lebanon. Notably, many sectarian and socialist political groups in Lebanon represent one sect a that aims to serve the group it represents as a contrast to what has been proclaimed. Christian parties in Lebanon tried to persevere the political powers granted to them by France in 1943 yet came to accept the fact that this was not achievable due to the demographical changes, the decline in the number of Christians namely Maronites and the rise in the number of Lebanese Muslims namely the Shia. Sunnis did not have to get involved in this political strife because the 1989 Taif Accords gave them political powers that reflect their growing numbers. Many Christians considered the redistribution of political powers through the Taif Accord as a defeat and some Christians continuously call for modifying the agreement. In 1998, Hezbollah decided to participate in Lebanese council elections and later on the parliamentary election and to have ministers to represent the organisation in the Lebanese government. The growing military powers added to the attempt to gain political powers within the system in Lebanon raised many flags with Christian groups who sensed the move as a sign of losing more powers and added to their apprehensions about the rapid decline of the number of Christians in Lebanon and the east. Hezbollah’s agreement with the Free Patriotic Movement aimed to defuse this political tension and address all their concerns. The agreement also
worked on improving inter-community cooperation between the Shia and the Maronite. Both sides had to reach out and accept the other as part of the state with equal rights and duties. This gave Hezbollah a more nationalist character and is no longer purely Islamic.

Hezbollah’s alliance with the Free Patriotic Movement (FPM), the second largest party in the Lebanese parliament and the largest Christian (Maronite) party, changed the course of events in Lebanon. The alliance came at a critical time in an area surrounded by great and growing hostility. On February 6, 2006, Hezbollah and the FPM signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) at Mar Michael church in Chiyah. The FPM can be considered as a right-wing Christian Maronite group; thus, it was not expected to sign an agreement with a Lebanese Islamic group. The document was signed in the presence of Ziad Abs, Gebran Basil and Fouad Al-Ashkar representing the FPM and Galeb Abou Zainab and Mohamed Komati representing Hezbollah. A meeting was held between the two parties under high security measures due to security concerns that would normally be of a high level in Lebanon during any political event. The MOU has ten essential inscriptions that outline the common beliefs and goal setting rights and duties of the two parties within the Lebanese political system to maximise the chances of gaining more political power as one large allied group rather than as individual movements. Each inscription served a political goal for one of the groups. These gains were to be introduced to the supporters of the parties as political gains to serve their supporters’ long unaccomplished expectations from the Lebanese political system.

National dialogue was one of the most important inscriptions in the agreement. It was considered essential to solve the Lebanese crisis in the social, political and economic field. The dialogue was set to be unconditional and to place the interests of the nation above any other interest. This was a general opening inscription aimed to highlight the assumed method of solving political problems through negotiation rather than military power. This inscription was intended to comfort the supporters of FPM with regard to Hezbollah’s enormous military power. There has been a concern within Christian groups in Lebanon that Hezbollah’s
weapons could be turned against them as occurred with weapons of the Palestinian Liberation Movement in the 1960s, 70s and 80s. The Christian Lebanese have been cautious ever since of any growing military power of any Muslim group in Lebanon. The national dialogue was set by the 2006 Memorandum of Understanding document to take place at a round table where every political power, Christian and Muslim, was given the same status.

Consensual democracy was considered as the central tenet for governance in Lebanon, because it is an essential part of the constitution and gives each party the right to coexist. The declining numbers of Christians in the east in general and in Lebanon in particular raised many concerns within the Christian political power structures in Lebanon. The declining numbers of Christians was due to the migration of young people to Europe, Canada and America, as well as to Brazil. This meant the loss of many political privileges given to Lebanese Christians by imperial France in 1943. The document asserted that the declining numbers of Christians in Lebanon did not necessarily means losing political power or even losing their share of half the members of parliament. Nasrallah followed this in one of his speeches, stating that, despite any decline of the numbers of Christians in Lebanon, their political power should stay intact.

The Electoral Law has always been problematic in Lebanon. The MOU considered the modern electoral law as highly important because it can guarantee the equity and accuracy of political representation. It can also develop and ensure the role of the political parties in achieving civil society and reducing the power of money in Lebanese politics. It is also expected to provide equal opportunities to all citizens by using different media channels and enabling the expatriate Lebanese parties to practice their voting rights.

Building a modern state in Lebanon was one of the important points in the documents; building a modern state on the ruins of the failed state in Lebanon should meet the needs and
aspirations of Lebanese citizens. According to the MOU, building a modern state requires adherence to the standard of modern political parties, and integrity between different groups and religions within the political Lebanese system. This was seen as being able to be achieved by creating political parties that had members of different religions and sects. As importantly, modern political parties are meant to base their judgments on merit, justice and a system of equality. Similarly, building an impartial and equitable judiciary system is a fundamental part of creating a state comprising institutions, rights and laws, rather than allowing sectarian groups to wield influence, thereby guaranteeing the survival of corrupt politicians. The 2006 MOU aimed for a judicial system based on the judiciary system’s independence from the influence of political powers, as well as respect for the actions of the constitutional institutions. The two parties also called for fighting corruption at the root and addressing the stealing of the resources of the citizens and the state by political groups and individual. According to the understanding, this requires enforcing the administrative and financial control and inspection boards and institutions, addressing corruption and ensuring open judicial investigations that can guarantee the prosecution of those responsible for corruption and empowering the civil service council.

Attention to the matter of the people who went missing during the Lebanese civil war was a move aimed to close this humanitarian file. The file of the missing in the war is be followed and closed. This requires investigations to find the fate of those who were missing during the war and requires cooperation from all parties and forces that participated in the war to uncover the fate of the missing. Hezbollah is required to use its connections with Syria to reveal the fate of the Lebanese citizens who went missing in areas controlled by the Syrian Army during the Lebanese civil war. Those missing Lebanese citizens were mainly Christian. The FPM is required to use its power and connections with the right-wing Christian parties to
reveal the fate of Lebanese citizens, mainly Muslims, who went missing in areas controlled by right-wing Christian Lebanese forces.

The Lebanese citizens who fled to Israel in the year 2000 after the sudden Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon have always been a concern for the FPM and General Michael Aoun. Their families have been fighting for securing their return to southern Lebanon. It has been complicated because those Lebanese citizens used to work for the Israeli forces. Hezbollah was seen an obstacle to their return. Addressing this issue in the memorandum of agreement was quite surprising to the followers of Hezbollah and a wish that came true for FPM supporters. Both leaders, Aoun and Nasrallah, were convinced that the Lebanese citizens should reside in their own homeland and not in their enemy’s territory in Israel. They agreed that speedy judicial actions should be taken to return the Lebanese citizens in Israel to Lebanon.

The security question has always been a major concern for everyone in Lebanon. Political assassinations are rejected and condemned in the document. Both sides condemned the assassination of former Prime Minister, Rafik Al Hariri and all other assassinations that took place in Lebanon. Both parties emphasised the importance of uncovering those responsible for these assassinations and bringing them to stand before the Lebanese judicial system. The memorandum called for security reforms by stating that the Lebanese security services are responsible to defend and protect the country against any political influence. However, security must not mean the limitation of the basic right to freedom of individuals and groups, a tenet that is guaranteed by the Lebanese constitution.

Lebanese-Syrian relations were a major concern for the FPM, yet a much-needed and strategic goal for Hezbollah, since most of its weapons and political support come from Syria. Maintaining sound and mutual Lebanese-Syrian relations is essential. It requires a revision of
past experience to avoid the accumulated mistakes. These relations should be based on mutual respect for the independence and sovereignty of both states. Therefore, the Lebanese government is required to take all legal procedures and measures to preserve the Lebanese identity of the Shebaa Farms; additionally, the Syrian state needs to declare that the Shebaa Farms belong fully to Lebanon. Therefore, there was a need for delineating the borders between Syria and Lebanon, which had not been clearly defined since the independence of the two countries. The understanding also emphasised the importance of asking the Syrian state to cooperate with the Lebanese state to know the fate of Lebanese detainees in Syrian jails. Hezbollah added to this article the importance of maintaining excellent diplomatic relations between Syria and Lebanon.

The issue of Lebanese-Palestinian relations is another critical point that was addressed in the 2006 Memorandum of Understanding. Lebanese-Palestinian relations have been dramatic since 1948. The huge Palestinian populations stationed in large refugee camps across Lebanon created social imbalance within Lebanese society. In addition, the Palestinians were heavily armed and used Lebanon as a starting point for fighting Israel. This caused significant Lebanese casualties and destruction and damage to property. This relationship needed to be reorganised. Addressing the Palestinian file requires global cooperation with the Lebanese government; on one hand, the Palestinians are expected to respect the authority of Lebanese laws and state, and on the other hand, the Lebanese state should support their humanitarian rights and their cases. Successive Lebanese government were expected to improve the Palestinian refugees’ social condition including living conditions and facilitate their movement into and out of Lebanese territory. The Lebanese authorities highlighted the importance of keeping alive the right to return to the Palestinian homeland. Thus, the relationship between the Palestinians and the Lebanese state needed to put an end to the existence of Palestinian arms outside the refugee camps; arrangements were
made for improving the security situation inside the camps as a starting point for completely disarming Palestinians internees. This is a goal that is far from being achieved in the near future.

The protection of Lebanon and the preserving of its independence and sovereignty is supposed to be the responsibility of the state of Lebanon, mainly the armed forces. This includes the protecting of Lebanon from invading forces and maintaining its independence and sovereignty from the interference of regional and international powers. The understanding confirmed that the state of Lebanon has the right and the responsibility to confront any dangers or threats. Obtaining military arms to confront these threats is a sacred means; in this context, Hezbollah’s weapons should be seen as a legal right that falls under two strict conditions. The first is that the weapons should remain as a source of strength for Lebanon. This strong card is to be used during any future negotiations with Israel. This condition takes into consideration a national consensus for keeping Hezbollah’s weapons. The second “is the definition of objective conditions that would lead to a cessation of the reasons and justification for keeping those weapons” Since Israel imprisons Lebanese citizens and still occupies the Shebaa Farms, the Lebanese people should have the right to protect their land and safeguard the independence and sovereignty of their state by liberating Shebaa Farms. As important is the need to liberate Lebanese prisoners from Israeli prisons and protect Lebanon from Israel’s threats (MOU, 2006).

The Memorandum of Understanding was apparently signed to build a communal Lebanese democracy on the basis of equity, transparency and justice (Kashan, 2012, p.79). Many observers in Lebanon believe that the agreement attempted to preserve Maronite and Shiite power against Sunni threats. The outcome of this document has brought Hezbollah more into Lebanese politics, while it has limited connections with Maronites more than ever before. Notably, the alliance between FPM and Hezbollah led to a strong coalition in the
election of 2009. The MOU gave the two sides a stronger political position in Lebanon and surely a better outcome in all the local municipality and parliamentary elections that followed.

After the withdrawal of the Syrian army from Lebanon and Harriri’s assassination in 2005, Hezbollah was forced into national politics. Nasrallah started to search for a convenient Maronite ally. The two leaders, Nasrallah and Aoun, may not have known each other; however, they believed that such an alliance could be convenient in terms of making a stand against the Sunni Arab population of Lebanon (Kashan, 2012, p.80). Nasrallah once described Aoun as a man who only cares about his sect and himself. He believed that Aoun views members who don’t belong to his sects from the perspective of Maronite prejudice. Aoun also declared six months before the memorandum that he had two reasons that made him reluctant to collaborate with Nasrallah – namely, the latter’s relations with Iran and Syria and his intolerable preconditions for dialogue. However the emergence of common enemies made the two leaders able to overcome these perceptions and to collaborate together (p.79).

Maintaining the Maronite-Shia alliance requires concessions from both leaders. Hezbollah, for example, once had an ideological orientation towards building an Islamic state in Lebanon. However, Nasrallah believes that it is necessary to emphasize his ideology in the name of long-term strategy and politics. Hence, Hezbollah and the FPM needed to develop their political views to match the modern times in Lebanon. Both parties have realized that their previous political goals cannot be achieved. So the alliance not only serves Nasrallah’s long-term plan but also aims to shift the position of Lebanese Christians Maronite on forming alliances with Israel (Kashan, 2012, p. 82). A disappointment for Hezbollah took place when Fayez Karam, a member of the FPM, was arrested for leaking information to Israel in 2009 and was given a lenient sentence by the military court (General Fayez Karam trial, 2011).
Aoun simultaneously feels that his alliance with Hezbollah would secure the presidency for him. He tolerates Hezbollah’s religious ideology as long as it can help to maintain his position as the principal Maronite politician (Kashan, 2012, p. 82).

Furthermore, the power struggle between Samir Geagea, the leader of the Lebanese Forces and Aoun makes the latter feel that such an alliance can strengthen his position; this is especially so, given that Geagea, following the assassination of Rafik Al Hariri, is supported by the powerful Sunni Future Movement that is led by Saad Al Hariri. The assassination of Rafik Al Hariri in 2005 divided Lebanon into two sectors – the 8th and the 14th of March Movements. The 14th of March Movement organised many protests against Syria and its interference in Lebanon’s internal affairs. In return, the 8th of March Movement protested against the 14th of March Movement. When Syria withdrew all its forces from Lebanon, Aoun joined the 8th of March Movement. Aoun was embraced by Hezbollah as “the undisputed leader of the Christian parties of the 8th of March Movement” (Marwan, 2014, p.186).

The historical understanding between the Free Patriotic Movement and Hezbollah not only aimed to create an alliance to confront their enemies but has also turned into a social approach. The alliance creates an atmosphere of hope and trust between two deep-rooted popular movements to build a prosperous Lebanon that cannot be occupied, divided or ruled single-handedly. Despite all the criticism about Hezbollah and its religious ideologies, in which Hezbollah is attacked for its intolerable preconditions for dialogue and its dominant power, in their first anniversary of agreement, the two parties emphasised the importance of true participation and democratic agreement that can enhance a culture of dialogue that veers away from the idea of relying on foreign countries and power monopolies. This understanding proves that Lebanese people can live in unity; it has also provided a new national model of voluntary agreement and unity within the project of developing a truly civil
society and a capable, strong and fair state for free citizens (Lebanese National News Agency, 2007).

Hezbollah’s chief official in South Lebanon, Sheikh Nabil Qauk, manifests that the alliance with the Free Patriotic Movement is strong and states that “the opposition should not be (focused) on returning to power” (The Daily Star, 2012). Hezbollah views his cooperation with Aoun as an effective strategy to confront the dictatorship of the United States which has been supporting the 14th of March coalition’s constant attack against Hezbollah.

The coalition with Aoun has also given Hezbollah domestic support in relation to the intervention in the war in Syria, namely Aoun’s defense of the resistance group’s intervention in Syria. Aoun declared that Hezbollah aimed to protect and control the border and to enable rebels in Syria to move freely in and out Lebanon. Aoun announced that Hezbollah’s intervention has prevented a civil war in Lebanon’s Bekaa Valley (The Daily Star, 2013).

The understanding has also given Nasrallah support in the war with Israel. When Israel attacked Lebanon in 2006 as retaliation for the capture of three Israeli soldiers by the resistance, Aoun described Hezbollah’s action as “a pure military action” (The Daily Star, 2013), while Israel and the United State described it as a terrorist attack. In return, the 14th of March Movement considered the operation as an adventure. Aoun backed the resistance socially and politically, and Aoun’s supporters shared their clothes, food and houses with their displaced compatriots from Dhiyah (Beirut’s southern suburb) and South Lebanon. The FPM was against the interests of the United States and Israel and, consequently, Aoun was a main target for Israel.

The understanding is not only seen as an agreement between the two major parties in Lebanon, but it has become an ideal model to build similar agreements with other political parties in Lebanon. This would build confidence among the Lebanese. The understanding
ended years of hostility between Muslims and Christians as the Memorandum of
Understanding was signed “at Saint Michael’s church, a symbol for the civil war era (1975-
1990) when the church and the adjacent ‘Green line’ used to separate between Muslims and
Christians in western and eastern Beirut” (Al-Manar TV, 2010).

Nassrallah assured the media that the cooperation with the FPM is based on an
understanding approach and vision. He insisted that Hezbollah consider Aoun as a serious and
genuine candidate for the presidency and that he is qualified and has major popular support.
Despite the fact that both leaders have different points of view on some issues, particularly
regarding Hezbollah’s relations with Iran and Syria, they hold constant meetings to solve the
points of disagreement through dialogue. So the two leaders have affirmed to the media that
the cooperation is in the interests of Lebanon, and not in the interests of any foreign
countries. Nassrallah and Aoun explained the terms of cooperation not as an alliance against
any parties in Lebanon; in contrast, they affirmed that this cooperation aims to support
mutual interests based on exchange, opinion and dialogue. However, these declaration did not
prevent Aoun’s opponents from accusing him of joining the Iranian-Syrian alliance. Aoun’s
opponents describe the understanding as a Shia-Christian alliance against the Druze-Suni
alliance (Al-Manar TV, 2006).
Chapter 7

Conclusion

While the terror organization doesn’t own planes and tanks, in every other way, its improved capabilities match those of a medium-level army. If war breaks out on Israel's northern front, air force airstrikes won't be enough.

(Harel & Cohen, Haaretz, 2016)

Hezbollah emerged in 1982 as a resistance movement aiming to fight the Israeli occupation (Qassim, 2010). Many scholars viewed the emergence of the organisation as merely a reaction to the Israeli occupation. This approach disregards the social factor that has played a major role in forming Hezbollah. In addition, a deep history of neglect and marginalisation of a particular group in Lebanon was ignored (Mackey, 2008). It can be claimed that the seeds for Hezbollah had been planted gradually over the past five hundred years of the history of Lebanon. During the Ottoman rule over Lebanon, the Shia were pushed to the edge of the society. Their relationship with the ruling Othman Sultans in Turkey was far from good. The Othmans used a heavy-handed approach with the peasants in southern Lebanon and other parts of Lebanon. The word ‘Osmelli’ was used as a phrase to describe the oppressive Othman rulers and soldiers. In many of the stories that are told by the elders in the villages, the Othmenli are described as the mean soldiers that take the harvest of the land by force and enforce conscription on the young men who will then never return to their villages. Since 1943, the year of Lebanon’s independence, the Shia have had to deal with two major struggles in Lebanon. Firstly, they had to fight for internal acceptance by other groups in Lebanon as a group that should have equal rights in the social and political system in Lebanon. The Shia were seen as a lower uneducated class that did not qualify for rights in Lebanon (Mackey, 2008). The other factor was that the Shia lacked any regional or international sponsor for their case in Lebanon. France did not grant them the rights that they aspired to in accordance with the significant increase in their numbers in Lebanon. This
situation changed in 1979, when the Islamic revolution in Iran succeeded in overthrowing the Shah of Iran. The Shia in Lebanon thus had a regional power that could support them financially, politically and militarily. In addition, Imam Khomeini sponsored the organisation and provided it with unlimited support.

_Hezbollah’s_ emergence also took place in an environment where many elements facilitated the formation of the most capable and organised militant group in the Middle East and probably the world. A vacuum of power was in place for the organisation to emerge. The areas inhabited by the Shia had been severely neglected by consecutive Lebanese governments since 1943 (Cobban, 1987). In addition, the political power supposedly given to the Shia masses in Lebanon was based on a two-class system – the landlords and the peasants. The landlords were appointed as the leaders of the masses in southern Lebanon by the government or by a title granted by the Othman rulers. A combination of landlords and tribal system was practiced in the _Beqaa Valley_ area. The Shia in Lebanon felt the lack of acceptance as an equal group in Lebanon. In return, they did not hesitate to profess the belief of simply not belonging to this country. All these factors combined to pave the way for _Hezbollah_’s emergence and rise. If one of the elements had been missing, then _Hezbollah_ would not have been where the organisation is at today as one of the most capable organisations in the world.

Another element that was crucial in aiding _Hezbollah_ to rise in a short period of time was the war taking place in Lebanon between the Israeli invading forces and the Palestinian Liberation organisation (PLO). The ongoing war between Israel and the Palestinians shifted to Lebanon after the 1969 Cairo Agreement gave the PLO the right to use Lebanon as a military starting point and base to liberate Palestine. The PLO did not achieve any of its declared goals against Israel. The Palestinian organisation got comfortable in Lebanon, namely in the south, and got tangled in the internal affairs of Lebanon. This disrupted the
PLO organisation from its main goal and created a significant lack of acceptance of their rule by the residents of southern Lebanon. The need for a local group that could fill the vacuum left behind by the eviction of the PLO from Lebanon in 1982 became urgent – a group that would be formed from local residents rather than individuals who were foreign to the people and the land. This element granted the organisation a much-needed supportive environment within the masses and gave Hezbollah a boost in getting accepted within the Shia community in Lebanon. This was the most important factor that subsequently contributed to all Hezbollah’s achievements.

Hezbollah is an Islamic party that bases its ideology on the Shia school of thought. The adopted ideology of the vast majority of Islamic parties across the Arab and the Islamic world is based on the Sunni school of thought. For the first time in the modern history of Islam, a strong and capable Shia party emerged. Hezbollah placed an immense emphasis on the Battle of Karabala, which took place in the year 680 AD. This was an emphasis that is completely absent from any other Islamic party in the world. The moral of the battle of Karabala is to have the willingness to die for the cause, despite any lack of arms and men to deliver a message to a tyrant. Hezbollah emphasises its Islamic character and refuses to accept any argument about having any ideologies or practices similar to those professed by socialism. The main conclusion is that Hezbollah is not a socialist party, despite similar patterns in some ideologies and practices. These common practices are not limited to Hezbollah alone. The argument could be further extended to declare common ground between Islam and socialism. Yet, neither can Islamist ideology be considered socialist nor can socialist ideology be assumed to be Islamic. Hezbollah, together with socialists, lefties and communists in Lebanon reject the argument that Hezbollah incorporates socialism in its beliefs and practices. Providing services to the poor does not qualify the organisation to be considered socialist. Also, the fact the organisation was founded by mainly poor neglected
Shia in Lebanon does not grant *Hezbollah* a socialist identity. In Lebanon, socialist parties are normally socialist by name only. For instance, a landlord leads a socialist party called The Progressive Socialist Party. *Hezbollah* is no longer representing only the poor as much as it did in the 1980s and 1990s. The organisation has a suitable budget and runs many branches successfully. Many members within the organisation became financially capable. This is a double-edged sword that can simultaneously play a contradictory role. On the one hand, financially capable members can help the organisation with money. However, one of the most important factors that attracted members to *Hezbollah* was its practices that are considered common ground between socialism and Islam. Dropping these practices and ideologies from its manifesto due to more pressing priorities puts the credibility of the organisation at stake.

Social circumstances have changed since the formation of *Hezbollah* in 1982. In the early 1980s, the organisation belonged to a sectarian group that was considered to be the lowest class in Lebanon. The Shia in Lebanon were the poorest and the least educated. *Hezbollah* started to provide services to this marginalised class. Many schools were built to produce an educated generation after decades where there were high numbers of illiterate people within the group. In addition, *Hezbollah* attracted those Shia youth who belonged to the PLO, The Lebanese Communist Party, The Baath Party and the National Syrian Socialist party. This group of Shia was more educated and many of them had high levels of military training. A momentum effect took place when more Shia started to gain tertiary education. Nowadays, a large number of Shia in Lebanon is educated. The emigration of Shia peasants to Africa and the United States produced financially capable members in the community. These members did not waste any time in providing their children with high levels of education. This desire was influenced by the will of providing their children with what they could not have in the past times. Currently, the Shia in Lebanon are not considered as the
poor, uneducated, demoted group. They are seen as a group backed up by a very capable, well organised organisation called Hezbollah. Hezbollah’s weapons played a role in securing an advanced political position for the Shia in Lebanon, despite the fact that the weapons were rarely used in this manner. The fact that Hezbollah’s weapons were on show was enough to achieve this goal, without the need to use their arms internally.

It is also important to conclude that the notion of political Islam materialising in Islamic parties is still to develop in a clear form. In fact the aim of any Islamic party worldwide, including Hezbollah in its early stages of existence, is primarily to form an Islamic state within the operating country, then expand the desired state to go internationally. The idea of a state under Islamic law is neither clear nor adequately understood. Moreover, the concept of forming an Islamic state as aimed at by Hezbollah once is an unattainable goal in Lebanon and elsewhere worldwide. There are significant obstacles that stand strongly in the way of forming such a state. Even the proclaimed Islamic states in Saudi Arabia and Iran are not truly based on political Islam. Prophet Mohammad did not form an Islamic state in the way the concept of statehood is practised nowadays. The misunderstanding of the concept by mainly Muslims and also non-Muslims defuses the aim and makes it unachievable. In Saudi Arabia, the Islamic state is simply based on the concept of kinghood, which contradicts the teachings of Prophet Mohammad and the political concepts of Islam. While the Islamic State in Iran is partially dependent on the Supreme Leader, who is elected by a council, the president of Iran is elected by the people after the candidates have gone through the net of the Expediency Discernment Council. It can be stated that the political system in Iran does not fully qualify it to be considered as an Islamic State, but as a hybrid political system. Hezbollah later rectified its ideology and gave up the idea of forming an Islamic state in Lebanon modelled on the Islamic State of Iran. The composers of Hezbollah’s political ideology came to the conclusion that an Islamic state in Lebanon was unachievable.
Hezbollah’s identity evolved dramatically between 1985 and 2009. Hezbollah released its first charter, known as the Open Letter to the Oppressed, which, currently, is no longer suitable. In this letter, Hezbollah defined its identity as Islamic and set it to belonging to the Ummah of Islam rather than belonging to the state of Lebanon. Hezbollah emphasised the aim of forming an Islamic state in Lebanon. The goal was described by the Open Letter as the ultimate goal for any Islamist. It is clear in this charter that Hezbollah had chosen a purely Islamic identity and did not accept the legitimacy of the state of Lebanon. Neither Lebanese nationalism was acknowledged, nor was an Arabic identity adopted. In 2009, Hezbollah released a new charter, in which it outlined its developed identity. The organisation was no longer calling for forming an Islamic state in Lebanon or elsewhere. Lebanese nationalism was adopted as part of the organisation’s identity. Hezbollah did not give up its Islamic identity, but had to give itself a multi-dimensional identity. Hezbollah is now introducing itself as a Lebanese Islamic party, where more emphasis is given to the homeland of Lebanon rather than the Ummah. Hezbollah is still evolving and its identity is dynamic rather than static. The organisation can be seen as an adaptive party that is capable of adapting to the changes to suit rapid changes in the Middle East. It would not be surprising if Hezbollah further developed its identity to suit the stepped up roles the organisation is trying to play in the regional arena. Hezbollah would add a regional element to its identity, since the organisation is now more involved in regional events. In addition, the new factor in the Middle East shows that current events are not limited in consequences to one country but have a domino effect on all Arab countries in the Levant and the region.

It can be argued that Hezbollah succeeded in changing the nature of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Classic armed warfare is no longer effective for the Israeli army in fighting Hezbollah. This stripped the Israeli Army of a significant and vital element that formerly granted Israel superiority over the Arabs. A state that depended on its army for survival
started to doubt the capability of the Israeli Army to protect the existence of Israel. Nasrallah attacks the state of Israel as being weaker than the house of a spider after the Israeli army failed to achieve any of its goals in the 2006 July War (Salim, 2006a). In fighting Hezbollah, the Israeli Army is neither equipped nor adequately trained to fight a guerrilla warfare. The image of the Israeli Army portrayed in the Arab world as superior and undefeatable has come into jeopardy. The undefeatable army looks fragile which encouraged other organisations to attack Israel. Spreading the knowledge and experience in fighting Israel created unprecedented challenges for the Israeli Army, which is still struggling to deal with this development in the state of affairs.

These changes also include the clear outcome of the war. Israel is no longer able to guarantee a clear and certain victory against many combined Arab armies, as happened in 1948, 1956, 1967 and 1973. Israel managed to defeat all combined Arab forces in these wars. Despite the illusionary victory that the Arabs claimed in 1972, Israel still managed to turn the tables and make the final outcome of the war to be in its favour. The geographical arena of the war when fighting Hezbollah has significantly shrunk in area, yet for the first time, the war started to take place within Israel’s territory. Israeli citizens and settlers are forced to take shelter in most parts of Israel during conflict with Hezbollah. The internal front in Israel has become the weakest front since the creation of Israel. The normal life enjoyed by Israeli citizens and settlers is no longer in place and, for the first time, both Arab and Israeli citizen are suffering the consequences of the war. This factor pressing on Israel has made the Israeli leaders make rushed and unsuccessful decisions, which have made the situation worse. After 1982, Israel failed to capture and maintain any new Arab land as they had done since 1948. For instance, in the 1967 War, Israel managed to double the size of its land. The new fact in place now is that Israel is no longer capable of expanding, and thus needs to set its geographical borders in order to survive. Israel also failed to build settlements in Lebanon.
during the invasions that have occurred since 1982. This is unusual, since Israel has built settlements in the West Bank and Golan Heights. The duration of the 2006 July War with *Hezbollah* lasted for 33 days unlike the swift 6-Day War in 1967. Israel realises now that there will be no more swift victories for the Israeli army when fighting *Hezbollah*. Leadership issues turned the tables around from corrupt Arab leaders to corrupt Israeli leaders. Israel is no longer able to produce great political and military leaders as it used to do after 1948. It is clear that the Israeli people are no longer in favour of war, but would rather have peace within defined borders. The Arabs suffered from corrupt leaders after 1948, while Israel enjoyed the leadership of talented politicians who were capable of dealing with any situation, despite how hard it would be. After 1982, Israel has no longer been capable of producing quality leaders. Corrupt leaders in Israel stripped a very strong card from Israel and made them equal to Arab states. On the other hand, the leader of *Hezbollah* possesses significant leadership skills. Nasrallah is charismatic and honest and widely respected. The citizens of Israel tend to believe Nasrallah over their military and political leaders.

In 2006, and just before the July War with Israel, *Hezbollah* formed an alliance with the Free Patriotic Movement, FTP. FPM is a right-wing *Maronite* Christian movement. The unprecedented alliance in the history of Lebanon changed the course of events in the small sectarian country. The alliance came at a critical time in an area surrounded by great and growing hostility. On February 6, 2006, *Hezbollah* and the Free Patriotic Movement signed the Memorandum of Understanding (MOF) at Mar Michael Church in *Chiyah*. As any political agreement, the aim was to have political gain for each party. Despite the positive spirits that were spread to followers by Sayed Nasrallah and General *Aoun*, the agreement was primarily based on mutual political gain (Kashan, 2012). Yet, the agreement stood the test of time and hostility during the 2006 July War between *Hezbollah* and Israel. General *Aoun* refused to give up the agreement despite generous offers from the west. *Aoun* had long
aspired to become the president of Lebanon. This always looked like an unachievable dream. Despite his great ambitions, Aoun kept his promise with Hezbollah. On the other hand, Hezbollah managed to insist on Aoun as the only acceptable candidate for the presidency. Aoun became the president of Lebanon in October 2016, ten years after the memorandum was signed. It is also noted the sectarian tensions between Christian and Shia have declined in Lebanon since 2006. The followers of the two movements have come closer in political views and practices than ever before.

Hezbollah understands the need to change its ideology and practices as rapidly as events are unfolding in Lebanon. The organisation in its current form cannot rely on Iran for support forever. Common ideological beliefs are not enough for long-lasting relationships. Hezbollah needs to stretch its relationships to other super regional and international powers in order to continue playing its significant role in the Middle East. The rise of China and the return of Russia to the international arena render them possible candidates for building bridges on the basis of common interest. Russia with its great military superpower has been fighting in Syria alongside of Hezbollah’s fighters. It can not be declared at this stage that the two are allies but purely as two parties working on the same goal in the same area. It has to be noted that Russia tries to maintain good relationships with Israel and balanced relations with many opposite sides of the alliances in Syria. The intersection of interests in Syria between Russia and Hezbollah might pave the way for further cooperation in the future or perhaps an alliance or sponsorship similar to Iran’s relationship with Hezbollah. Russia and Hezbollah’s support for the Syrian government during the Syrian War tipped the balance in fever of president Asad and the Syrian Regime. This indicates a need for further research to investigate this point in the near future. Nowadays, Hezbollah has common goals with many previous enemies in fighting Salafi-Jihadist terrorist organisations in the Middle East. The emerging hardliner organisations are starting to pose a threat to the security of every country
in the world. Relationships in politics are based mainly on interests rather than ideological beliefs. It is not going to be long before it’s time again for another revised charter. The threat posed by supposedly Islamic organisations in the Middle East is presenting an enormous threat to Hezbollah. Thus, Hezbollah is starting to rearrange its priorities. In addition to fighting Israel, now the organisation is required to fight on a number of battlefields in Syria and Iraq simultaneously. These tasks are more significant than one Lebanese party can take on alone.

Hezbollah has often been accused of being a state within a state in Lebanon. Despite the fact that Hezbollah does not theoretically qualify to be considered a state, it is clear that the organisation takes on many tasks that are meant to be conducted by the state of Lebanon. Consecutive Lebanese government have been weak since 1943, the year of the independence of Lebanon. There has always been a vacuum in power in many areas in Lebanon mainly in the peripheral areas. It is not the first time that a group acts as a substitute for the state in Lebanon. For instance, the PLO acted as a state within a state in Lebanon for many years. It can also be argued that the right-wing Christian parties that ruled Lebanon before 1982 have incarnated the state of Lebanon. Many people, mainly the poor, who inhabited neglected areas in southern Lebanon and the Beqaa Valley lacked the sense of belonging to a state that had long been pushing them to the edge of the Lebanese society. Their areas have always been neglected and their status was never recognised by the state of Lebanon as citizens who had basic rights. This neglected class connected the idea of belonging to the services provided to them and to the care shown towards their status in Lebanon. Hezbollah gave this group services that were never provided to them by the appropriate Lebanese entity whose responsibility it was. It was the first time that a sense of belonging and self-worth had been felt among them. An educated elite started to rise from the miseries of the poor to form a significant capable, educated, well-armed group called Hezbollah. In this sense, Hezbollah
was seen as a state within a state. After the shift in the perception of its identity and affiliation in *Hezbollah*’s understanding of its ideology materialised in the 1991 Charter, a sense of belonging to the state of Lebanon was stronger than ever. The Shia in Lebanon are still slightly cautious in expressing this belonging, due to the long history of neglect and denial of basic rights by the state of Lebanon. As importantly, the Shia in Lebanon viewed the Lebanese Army as an enemy due to the harsh treatment they received during the previous ruling era of the Christian right-wing parties. *Hezbollah* can be seen as a state within a state because Lebanon is refusing to act as a state with full sovereignty. Therefore, whenever there is a vacuum of power, some group must and will fill the vacuum.

This research spectacles the need for further investigation of the significance of Hezbollah’s involvement in the Syrian War to study the impact of this war on Hezbollah’s military and political character after fighting in a variety of unfamiliar geographical and environmental conditions against an unprecedented enemy. This complicated the situation and raised many concerns and challenges for Israel and its allies.
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