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The Survival of Proto-State Armed Groups in the Middle East

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Abstract

The survival of proto-state armed groups has perplexed researchers and practitioners, as most of the groups do not last more than one wave. Another issue is that the description of these groups is ambiguous and is subject to various connotations.

This dissertation defines the concept of proto-state armed groups and investigates the factors that lead to their survival. In addition, it develops the victory theory that these groups – consciously or not – follow during their conflict with their host state.

The concept of the proto-state armed group is that it has a hybrid nature, projects hybrid threats and relies on hybrid warfare; it has an enemy-state; it pursues internal and external legitimacy and has at least implicit legitimacy with state actors; has apparent physical existence in a defined part within the state.

The first hypothesis states that the survival of these groups is not dependent in and of itself on the group's resilience but on external factors that surround the groups: the host state, the region circle, the international system, the group's interaction with the other armed groups within or outside the host state, and its engagement with the enemy state.

The second hypothesis states that during the conflict, the strategic center of gravity (CoG) of both the groups and of the state is their legitimacy, which depends on the public and the external support.

The third hypothesis defines the victory theory for both the proto-state armed group and the state. The victory theory states that victory can be achieved by depriving the group of its internal and external support, launching military operations that either destroy the group's armed capabilities or affect its will to fight, and lastly, victory is not objective or total if the group is not prevented from recovering from defeat and regaining its original strength. If the group and the state are deterred from attacking each other than the state of mutual deterrence will be sufficient for the group to remain intact.

Victory = (internal support+ external support) + (armed capabilities * morale) + prevention from recovery.

The fourth and last hypothesis explains the causes of proliferation of terrorism and violence in the Middle East.

The research methodology is a mixed methodology that used survey and case studies. It focused on groups that are usually described as 'states within states.' Among these groups Hamas and Hezbollah provide clear examples of the role of proto-armed groups and served to deduce the parameters that apply to both groups and are generally conducive to the survival of proto-state armed groups.

The main conclusions of this dissertation are:

- The proto-state armed groups evolve – they first splinter from a mother group in protest against its more peaceful character, afterward they adopt terrorism to strengthen their posture, attract recruits, then attract state-sponsorship and change into a hybrid group.
- Population growth (especially in the 15-35 cohort) that does not match the country's economic growth can lead to social disturbances. If subject to political disenfranchisement and lack of freedoms, youth start thinking about taking matters into their own hands.
- The proto-state armed groups need significant public support to survive. This 'significant public support threshold' is 15 % of the population. The fact that this is surpassed by these groups explains their resilience in the host state.
- The future of the proto-state armed groups is assured. They are part and parcel of the Middle East because of the legitimacy deficit of the host states and the endemic conflicts like the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The scientific findings are:

- The development of an analytical framework for studying the survival of armed groups.
- The existence of the 'enemy-state calculations' in the analysis of the survival of the armed groups.
- The strategic CoG of both the host state and the proto-state armed groups is legitimacy. Their operational CoG is the product of the group's military power multiplied by the morale of its leadership and fighters.
- Development of the victory theory in the war between the state and the proto-state armed groups.

The recommendations that this dissertation proposes are to focus on the state fragility that is embodied in its legitimacy deficiency, rather than focusing on the armed groups. Furthermore,

the state has to follow carefully the rise of legitimacy of these groups: when they get over the ‘significant public support threshold’ then it might become too late for acting.

The practical applicability of this dissertation is for strategists and statesmen who have to observe the decline of their state into proliferation of violence, terrorism, and internecine war with armed groups. Military planners will also find the dissertation useful when they have to confront proto-state armed groups. The third potential audience is the academics and researchers that can benefit from the suggested methodologies to analyze the survival of armed groups.

Introduction

The subject of this research is the survival of proto-state armed groups in the Middle East. Its importance stems from these groups' influence upon international security and their role in the Middle East[1].

The reasons that motivated the research of this topic are: the central role proto-state armed groups play in the Middle East, the new threats that proto-state groups represent for the established international system, their survival against the state, and the concept of 'resistance' as a source of legitimacy.

Some of the groups that can be described as proto-state armed groups are Fatah in Jordan (1969-1971),[2] Fatah in Lebanon (1972-1982),[3] Amal in Lebanon (1975-1988, Taliban in Afghanistan (2001-2021),[4] Houthis in Yemen (from 2013 until today),[5] Hamas (from 2006 until today),[6] Hezbollah (from 1990 until today).[7] One group that does not fit this definition is the Islamic State (IS)[8] in Syria and Iraq (2013-2019)[9]

Although the Taliban is beyond the scope of this dissertation, its recent victory in Afghanistan and ascent from proto-state to sovereign government is used to explain the victory equation. The IS was also left out of the analysis because it does not pursue legitimacy and relies excessively on terrorism to achieve its goals. However, it satisfies all the other conditions to be identified as a proto-state armed group.

[1] The Middle East is a geopolitical term. It has no strict definition. It originated in the British East India Office in the 1850s. The American geopolitical scientist Alfred T. Mahan in an article in 1902, designated the area 'Arabia to India' as the Middle East, and named the area inland from the western Levant coast as the Near East. So, it is at the crossroads of Asia, Africa, and Europe. Today the term usually refers to the region that includes Egypt, Palestine, Israel, Turkey, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, Oman, UAE, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Iran. Afghanistan and Cyprus are technically included. So, it is commonly referring to the region spanning the Levant, the Arabian Peninsula, Anatolia, Egypt; it is now replacing the old term the "Near East."

[2] Fatah was the most influential PLO group inside Jordan, taking control of the PLO after the battle of Karama (March 21, 1968) and was expelled from Jordan in 1971.

[3] Under pressure from Syria and Egypt, Lebanon permitted Fatah to use part of the South as a base to attack Israel (Cairo agreement, 1969). That part of the Lebanese territory was called 'Fatah Land.'

[4] After its defeat in the battle against the US forces in 2001, the Taliban commenced an insurgency against the government and the foreign forces in Afghanistan.

[5] After killing Ali abed Allah Saleh, ex-president of Yemen, Ansarullah started to control large swaths of Yemen and occupied Sanaa. They are called mainly Houthis because of their founder's family name Baderaladin al - Houthi; they primarily live in the Saada governance of Yemen, which has a rugged mountainous terrain.

[6] Hamas became the dominant non-state armed group in Gaza after its political victory over Fatah in the legislative elections in 2006 and militarily in 2007.

[7] Hezbollah increased its influence after the Israeli withdrawal from South Lebanon and its victory over Amal.

[8] Since June 2014, ISIS has been called the Islamic State (IS)

[9] The IS survived in shrinking enclaves in its core territories in Syria and Iraq until early 2019, and its last desert pockets were not eliminated until 2020

Clarifications of Key Terms

Armed Group

There is no universally agreed-upon definition of non-state armed groups in international treaties, according to the website of the international humanitarian NGO Médecins Sans Frontières (Médecins Sans Frontières, 2022). However, Ora Szekely (2017) defines armed groups as:

> *"… a wide range of similar—but not identical—groups, including 'rebels,' 'guerrillas,' 'insurgents,' 'militias,' and 'terrorists.' There is some overlap between these labels, and not all of them describe comparable categories. 'Terrorist' and 'guerrilla' refer to groups who use particular tactics. 'Rebel' and 'insurgent' define the group by its enemy rather than its choice of tactic. 'Militia' is the broadest of the above categories, though it carries particular connotations in American and Lebanese contexts. Non-state military groups as a whole can and do use conventional guerrilla and terrorist tactics" (p. 7).*

In a similar vein, "The term of non-state armed groups tends to be reserved to clusters of individuals who comprise rebel opposition groups, guerrillas, localized militia, or civil defence and paramilitary forces"(Rodgers & Muggah, 2009, p. 301).

Armed groups have grown in status and importance. They are viewed as groups working outside the state's laws and defying its 'authority, power, and legitimacy' (Petrasek, 2000, pp. 5-7). Also, they rely upon a wide range of measures to achieve their objectives (Shultz, Farah, & Lochard, 2004, p. 51).

A group's objectives can be less easily defined, its structure includes at least a level of command, control, and coordination, with apparent identity (Hoffman, 2006, pp.271-272).

The definition that this dissertation uses for armed groups is *"a non-state actor that uses violence as well as other means to achieve political ends".*

Survival of Armed Groups

The survival of non-state armed groups perplexed scholars and policymakers; some of these groups have survived conventional and unconventional military campaigns by state armed forces, as well as internal conflict with competitors that sought to undermine their existence.

Ora Szekely (2017) defines survival as "*retaining the capacity to operate against enemy forces from/ or in the territory from /or in which the militant movement wishes to operate*," (p. 10)*;* while Philips Brian (2015) claims that survival is the first necessity for a group's effectiveness.

Other researchers like Young and Dougan linked survival to the ability to endure longer (Young, J & Dougan, 2014). Likewise, Bloomberg Brook identified survival as the group's longevity (Blomberg, Gallbulov, & Sandler, 2011; Gaibulloev & Sandler, 2013).

From the above discussion, survival is not only longevity but the ability of the group to withstand the various attacks by the host state and other states. So, survival is *the ability of the armed group to withstand its internal and external adversaries and remain active within its territories*.

Proto-state Armed Group

Proto-state Armed Groups are armed groups that start as non-state armed groups, then develop to a level above non-state groups, but remain below a state level. They have apparent physical control of portions of territories in which they raise their symbols, i.e., flags. Their activities are not limited to practicing violence: they perform some government functions in the territories under their control and participate in politics. Some prominent examples are Hezbollah, Hamas, and Fatah during its presence in Jordan (1969-1971) and Lebanon (1972-1982), the Taliban in Afghanistan during the period (2001-2021), and the Houthis (Ansarullah) in Yemen; they are often described as a state within a state[10].

Ideology

Destutt de Tracy introduced idéologie as a 'science of ideas.' While Karl Marx initial belief that ideology is "a set of beliefs with which people deceive themselves: it is a theory that expresses what they are led to think, in contrast to that which is true; it is false consciousness" (Cranston, 2020). Similarly, Michael Freeman claims that ideology "identifies the problem, who the enemy is, the solutions, and the legitimate means" (Freeman, 2014, p. 3).

Destutt de Tracy's original conception identifies several essential characteristics (Cranston, 2020):

(1) it includes an explanatory theory about the external world;

(2) it sets out a program of social and political organization; and conceives the execution of the program;

(3) it means to persuade and recruit adherents, and requires commitment;

[10] This concept is discussed in more detail in chapter two.

(4) it addresses a broad public.

In my understanding, a group's ideology is *a system of ideas and ideals that form the basis of the thinking of armed groups; it plays the role of the theory that tells them what is right and what is wrong.*

Legitimacy

Legitimacy is a classic topic of political philosophy; it is defined as "popular acceptance of government, political regime, or system of governance" (Blatter, 2018).

Gaining legitimacy is an essential requirement for any regime; without minimum legitimacy, the regime faces a deadlock, so every political regime must justify its existence by relying on different kinds of legitimacy that justify their mere ruling.

Traditional legitimacy is the oldest type based on divine rule; later, Max Weber defined the typology of legitimacy, he stated that legitimacy moves from a traditional to a transitory phase, which is the charismatic leadership, to the legal-rational legitimacy.

Regarding the armed groups, the source of legitimacy for armed groups depends on their military strength, their adoption of an appealing cause depends on the resistance.

However, they strive to get public support for recruitment and financial support, and in their struggle against the host state and the enemy state, they stream to secure minimum external support, which mostly comes as an implicit recognition of their existence on the ground.

US DoD (2014) affirms that "the struggle for legitimacy with the host state is typically a central issue of an insurgency. The insurgency will attack the legitimacy of the host state while attempting to develop its own credibility with the population. The host state should reduce the credibility of the armed group while strengthening its own legitimacy" (p. 1.9), the key is that legitimacy is ultimately decided in the minds of the population. The group's military powers force the external states to give it an implicit recognition through indirect negotiations.

To sum up, legitimacy can be reduced to the ability to secure public and external support, or legitimacy equals public support and external support.

The Research Problem

Israel fought several wars against its neighbors in 1948, 1967, 1973, 1982, and 2006, besides several military campaigns against the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), and signed

peace treaties with Egypt, Jordan, and the PLO.[11] In 2020, it normalized its relations with the UAE, Bahrain, and Morocco, but it could not subdue Hamas or Hezbollah. In a similar vein, the US spent two trillion US dollars and 20 years fighting the Taliban, and the installed Afghan government could not withstand a week after the US and NATO withdrawal from Afghanistan. Similarly, the Saudi financial and military might have no hope of victory over Ansarullah in Yemen. The academic problem is the survival of proto-state armed groups in the Middle East despite the presumed effective counter measures. The research aims to understand the factors that contribute to the survival of proto-state armed groups in the Middle East. One difficulty the literature review identified was the lack of a convenient common concept for these groups. Some practitioners insist on describing them as terrorist groups while these groups themselves prefer to be described as resistance groups. and so, this dissertation takes the lead in finding the compromise between these two extremes.

Research Justification

The Justification of my research is that the presence of proto-state armed groups in the Middle East has changed the Westphalian state tenets endorsed by state actors.

This Westphalian model has been alien to these states which evolved from tribal systems to nation-states; however, Rozsa Erzsebet (2018) stated that "under the European 'modernization' efforts and the manifold impacts of globalization, Middle Eastern states followed the European model" (p.16). However, she asserted that in the Middle East it is more appropriate to describe the states as 'territorial states' which means a state with fixed borders.

This model is increasingly exposed to challenges presented by sub-state and trans-state adversary forces (Szenes, 2018, p. 70), Their assumed role became no less important than state actors in the Middle East. In the "21st century's conflicts, the most likely opponents of nation-states will be non-state actors', like Hezbollah" (Resperger & Somkuti, 2016, p. 74).

The first strategic objective for these groups is their physical survival against internal and external adversaries.

[11] The PLO consists mostly of Palestinian groups like the Popular Front 'PFLP', the Democratic Front; nevertheless, it is dominated by Fatah, which also rules the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) in Ramallah. A few organizations (e.g., Fatah Intifada, PFLP-GC, and al-Saiqa) belong to the PLO but reject the Oslo Agreement and call themselves "rejectionists." They are mainly pro-Syrian regime.

A survey of the available literature shows that the limited research on the survival of armed groups is inclined to use the positivism paradigm,[12] It relies on quantitative methodology to address group survival and primarily focuses on terrorist incidents to draw on the future perspective. One of the advantages of the research conducted for this dissertation is that it introduces a holistic approach as an analytical framework.[13] It also enhances terrorism analysis by broadening survival analysis to survivability analysis. Hamas and Hezbollah were selected as case studies because of their success in surviving several wars with their declared enemy state, while other groups have not, they also managed to survive conflicts with internal rivals. Later they managed to get into governing positions: Hamas has governed the Gaza strip since it won the first Palestinian elections in 2006. Hezbollah's parliament members (MPs) have been elected to the Lebanese parliament and served in several Lebanese governments.

Other reasons are the following:

- Their relative importance in the Arab-Israeli conflict;
- There are many similarities in their development, activities, and perceptions;
- Hezbollah was officially inaugurated in 1983 while Hamas in 1987, which means they passed any longevity thresholds;
- They are deeply embedded in their societies;
- They are challenged not only by an enemy state (Israel), but also by rivals within their communities,
- They have a religious character, yet, they differ in several issues like ideology, and attacks against the foreign targets.
- They have received external support (currently from Iran) with different extents.
- They are undisputed examples of the proto-state armed groups.

A further reason that motivated the research is its significance to academia and for practitioners in the Middle East and other parts of the world.

In academia, the ability of armed groups to survive, their methods, and the transformation of their violent character into an established political participant are issues gaining momentum in security research. Also, the concept of proto-state armed groups is still narrowly used in research and is often ambiguously mixed with terrorism and insurgencies. One of the aims of

[12] This concept is going to be explained in the research methodology section.
[13] A holistic approach looks upon group survival from various angles and does not focus solely on the factors about the groups per se.

this research is to develop this concept and investigate those characteristics that distinguish them from other types of armed groups.

A mixed approach is applied to provide a more comprehensive explanation in this research. For example, in the case of Hamas and Hezbollah, there is a plethora of research that compares the two organizations, which is another advantage of this research as both groups gained fame by their actions oscillating from violent armed groups to political pragmatism.

Yet another reason is the significance of proto-state armed groups in the Middle East. They are key players in the Arab-Israeli conflict and the US-Iranian, or the Saudi-Iranian conflicts and the peace process between Israel and the PNA. Events of violence in the Gaza Strip, Jerusalem, Israel, and the West Bank in May 2021, or Lebanon 2006, concluded that the importance of these players matches that of influential state actors in the Middle East.

Regarding the EU, as it is known, EU security is highly interwoven with Middle Eastern security in many areas, such as refugees from the Middle East. Also, the EU is a significant financial contributor to the PNA in the West Bank and Gaza Strip; its contributions are at both the state level and the non-state level. Additionally, the EU is interested in Lebanon's stability; this is especially true for France due to historical bonds since the Ottoman Empire era. The French mandate over Syria entrenched this unique relationship, at that time, France separated Lebanon from Syria to create the 'Great *Leban*.' Needless to say, the contemporary Middle East was contrived by colonial European powers.

One of the EU concerns in regard to the Middle East is limiting the waves of migration from the turbulent south to the north and its assumed connection to terrorism. As yet no direct relationship has been established between migration and terorism (Kis Benedek, 2016). However, this view has been challenged by Ambassador Béla Jungbert who maintains that mass migration toward Europe can constitute a fertile channel for spreading over terrorism, in addition to the failure of the multicultural integration, and the creation of parallel societies in Europe (Personal communication, 11 July 2022).

With regard to Hungary, the security of the country is closely related to that of the Middle East, where proto-state armed groups conduct operations. Hungary is one of the main gateways to other EU states like Germany and Austria. It has had a solid historical connection with the Middle East, especially during its socialist era. Its relationship with Israel and the PNA is not characterized by stability. From 2000 until 2004, Hungary had a balanced relationship with Ramallah and Tel Aviv parties. After it acceded to the EU in 2004, Hungary aligned with

Brussels to help the Palestinians build their state alongside Israel. Budapest consequently argued for the comprehensive peace negotiations and the 'two states solution.' Hungarians exchanged their experience to transform the Fatah movement to lead their people democratically and qualify them for the elections of 2006, which EU observers monitored. During the last 8-10 years, Hungary changed its balanced policy to be more favorable to Israel, especially when it transferred its economic development office from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, which upset its relationship with the PNA. Other interests for Hungary are maintaining relations with the Hungarian-speaking community in the PNA and other states within the MENA.[14] Also, Hungary is interested in supporting Christian communities that live in the Holy Land, and helping them stay in their historical lands (personal communication, Ambassador. Jungbert Bela, 10/4/2020)[15].

Research into proto-state armed groups has international security dimensions as well. A widely held opinion (especially in the Middle East) is connecting transnational terrorism and the Arab-Israeli conflict. Although it is not easy to substantiate such conviction, in their charters, most of the armed groups refer to that conflict, especially the sacred role of Jerusalem to the followers of Abrahamic religions. Steven Walt (2021, May 27) expressed a similar view:

> *"Decades of unconditional support for Israel helped create the danger the United States has faced from terrorism. Osama bin Laden and other key al Qaeda figures were crystal clear on this point: the combination of steadfast US support for Israel and Israel's harsh treatment of Palestinians was one of the main reasons they decided to attack the far enemy. It was not the only reason, but neither was it a trivial concern. As the official 9/11 Commission Report wrote regarding Khalid Sheikh Mohammed (KSM), whom it described as the principal architect of the attack: by his own account, KSM's animus toward the United States stemmed not from his experiences there as a student, but rather from his violent disagreement with US foreign policy favoring Israel. The risks of terrorism would not disappear if the United States had a normal relationship with Israel, but a more even-handed and morally defensible position would help diminish the anti-U.S. attitudes that have contributed to violent extremism in recent decades."*

[14] Many students from the MENA region attended Hungarian institutions of higher education during the socialist era. Nowadays, Hungary offers scholarships again to students from the MENA region, but they study in English in contrast to the Hungarian language education of the Socialist era.

[15] Ambassador Jungbert Bela served in Ramallah, Tel-Aviv, and Amman as a diplomat for 12 years; he is now the Lieutenant for Hungary of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulcre in Jerusalem, an entity of the Vatican, focusing on the protection of Christian communities in the Middle East.

Another view to international security consideration is that although the Middle East is now considered to be a fertile soil for such groups, other parts of the world are not immune. Theoretically the possibility exists that similar groups can emerge in any part of the world under conditions like uncontrolled population growth that is inconsistent with economic growth, the availability of a powerful motivating cause and state- sponsorship.

Hypotheses

Hypothesis (1)

A proto-state armed group survives due partly to internal factors particular to the group and partly to its interactions with the external circles surrounding the group's circle. The external circles are the host state, the region, and the international system. Besides these circles, the group interacts positively or negatively with the 'other groups' and the enemy state that targets the group's survival. The main survival elements are addressed in the "circles of survival" in Chapter Two of this dissertation.

Hypothesis (2)

Several Centers of Gravity (CoGs) need analysis during the conflict between the host state and the proto-state armed group. The strategic CoG for both the host state and the proto-state armed group is their legitimacy. The primary source of conflict between them is their competition for legitimacy. For proto-state armed groups, strategic CoG shifts with time. In the early phases of the group's establishment, it is the leadership. Later, after the group's institutionalization, it develops its ideology and cultivates public support. During a conflict with the host state, it becomes the legitimacy. The proto-state armed group's legitimacy can be reduced to internal and external support.

The second CoG is the operational CoG which is the power of resistance that equals the product of military power multiplied by the group's morale. The operational CoG is essential for winning the kinetic part of the war. Success in the kinetic sphere is conducive to success on the strategic level.

Hypothesis (3)

Countermeasures against proto-state armed groups depend upon the victory theory of the host state. The state's interaction with the group is based upon its ability to neutralize the latter's CoG.

The central equation for victory applies to either belligerent. It is:

Victory = Legitimacy + Resilience

Where:

Legitimacy is the decrease or increase of support the belligerent receives from the population of the host state and external states, and other armed groups, therefore

Legitimacy = Internal Support + External Support;

Resilience is the ability of the proto-state armed group to withstand the state's power without deformation to its bonds. If the applied force is stronger than the resistance to it, then resilience can be defined as the time it takes to recover to the original status. Resilience is similar to a metal spring: applying enough force can overcome both its resistance and elasticity, while less force might overcome its resistance, but as soon as the force decreases, the spring returns to its previous status with greater force. In the engineering field, Resilience = Stress / Strain is the amount of energy the metal can absorb without causing deformation.

In the case of proto-state armed groups, resilience is a function of the group's power to resist and its ability to recover from adversity and continue the previous action, therefore:

Resilience = Power of Resistance + Recovery;

Power of Resistance equals the belligerent's military power, multiplied by his morale in the broadest sense: that of his fighting forces, as well as that of the society he relies on, therefore

Power of Resistance = Military power * Morale.

Substituting the component factors into the central equation, we get:

*Victory = (Internal Support + External Support) + (Military Power * Morale)*

The destruction of the military means or sapping the opposing belligerent's morale (or both) will result in victory at the operational level. However, if his ability to recover is not affected, he will return to fight another day. Therefore, the state's capability to achieve victory hinges on its ability to prevent the recovery of the proto-state armed group. Therefore, the state's victory equation must be modified somewhat:

Victory = Legitimacy + Power of Resistance + Prevention of Recovery.

Prevention of recovery is achieved via the group's submission to agreements that prevent it from returning to its initial strength before the start of the conflict. Nevertheless, it does not necessarily mean that the group cannot return to its physical status but means that it will have

to observe new terms that prevent it from returning to its practice of violence. For example, after 2006, Hezbollah recovered to its status after the war, but it agreed to new terms that brought calm to the southern part of Lebanon.

In practice, prevention can be achieved by the arrest of leaderships of the group or signing an agreement that allows them to evacuate to another state.

This action applies equally to the armed group's war against the state, it can achieve significant successes in the field, but it must also overcome the state's ability to recover from reverses to achieve its goal; a good example is the Taliban war against the Afghanistan government.

Hypothesis (4)

The prevalence of terrorism in the Middle East region is a direct result of prevalent socio-economic and political factors.

The main socio-economic factor is the high population growth rate with a high unemployment rate, especially within the young generations, economic growth that does not match population growth. Also, political freedoms are low in the Middle East, the lack of freedoms turns the youth to covert means of demanding political and economic rights. Besides, it is the rate of corruption that frustrates the youth.

Research Objectives

The research objectives are the following:

- Establish an analytical framework for analyzing the survival of non-state armed groups-including proto-states armed groups. It is a framework that will encompass not just terrorist groups but also proto-state armed groups. This dissertation considers a number of variables to assess a group's survival; survival as a dependent variable has more causative factors than its internal resilience.
- Develop the concept of the 'Proto-State Armed Group.' The concept is still vague and has little meaning in academia and amongst researchers who conflate it with other labels like terrorist groups, insurgencies, or even the preferred label by these groups, 'resistance' groups.
- Analyze the effectiveness of state countermeasures against proto-state armed groups. The proto-state armed group's phenomenon needs more than hard power solutions; hard power means proved ineffective in this field.

- Investigate the center of gravity (CoG) of proto-state armed groups. CoG is an essential element in discussing the ineffectiveness of the state's countermeasures. Failure to protect its CoG can negatively impact the groups' resilience.
- Highlight the factors responsible for the proliferation of terrorism in the Middle East region. The large extent of terrorism defames the Middle East.

While the research questions are:

- What distinguishes proto-state armed groups from other non-state armed groups?
- How do proto-state armed groups survive?
- Define the strategic CoG of the proto-state armed group and the host state during a conflict between a proto-state armed group and the state. Finding the appropriate CoG is crucial to know how to deal with the analysis of proto-state armed groups.
- How does the state win or lose the conflict with the proto-state armed group?
- What factors led to the proliferation of terrorism in the Middle East region? The Middle East region is considered fertile soil for the success of terrorism; the question investigates the likely factors that facilitate the proliferation of this phenomenon.

The Structure of the Dissertation

The dissertation is built up of five chapters, table (1) shows the link between the chapters, the hypotheses, and the relevant objectives.

The Introduction

The introduction consists of the research elements: the statement of the problem, the declared objectives of the research, the research questions followed by the hypotheses, significance, and an outline of the dissertation's structure.

Chapter One

This chapter surveys the literature on the subject; it goes from general broader boundaries to narrow down on the research issue. It highlights the various issues related to terrorism, especially definitions and relationships with insurgency, and then highlights the various theoretical frameworks that deal with terrorism to conclude with the appropriate framework; also, it conceptualizes proto-state armed groups. At the end, the chapter presents the research methodology. The research design is a mixed research methodology; it explains the philosophical stances, methods, and the "circles of survival" framework used to analyze the armed groups' survival.

Chapter Two

This chapter determines the conditions needed for proto-state armed groups' survival, and presents their victory theory by demonstrating how they could win or lose against state actors. Case studies are presented from the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon, PLO in Jordan in 1970, and the Taliban victory in Afghanistan. The evaluation of hypotheses (1), (2), and (3) is covered in this chapter. Also, it investigates the factors that lead to the proliferation of terrorism in the Middle East. It highlights the socio-economic and political factors that caused the prevalence of this phenomenon and concludes by evaluating the fourth hypothesis.

Chapter Three

This chapter is the first of two case studies to validate the already established hypotheses in chapter three. The analytical framework is applied to examine Hamas's survival starting with the group's circle, continuing with the proto-state in the Palestinian territories in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, then the regional circle (mainly its relation with Egypt, Iran, Turkey, Jordan). Its relations with other groups like the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), Hezbollah, Fatah, Salafi-Jihadi movements, Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), and other Palestinian groups follows. In addition, the chapter analyses Hamas's interaction with the international system and the role of the enemy state (Israel) in Hamas's survival.

Chapter Four

This chapter is the second case study. It examines Hezbollah's survival. The analytical framework is applied to the group's circle, the Lebanese state circle, the regional circle, mainly about its relation with Syria and Iran, its relations with other groups like PIJ, Hamas, and Houthis. Hezbollah's interaction with the international system and its relationship with Israel closes the chapter.

Chapter Five

After comparing the Hamas and Hezbollah cases, the final chapter presents the hypotheses, aligns the findings with the theoretical framework, and draws conclusions. Also, it presents the new scientific findings, the contribution to the academia that can be pursued in line with this dissertation; at the end, it provides recommendations on a policy level and future studies level.

Table 1. on the next page shows the link between the chapters, the objectives and hypotheses.

Table 1. *Chapters, the objectives and hypotheses*

Chapter	Subject	Hypo-thesis	Objective	Research Question
Intro-duction	The research introductory main items		Research objectives, questions, significance, academic problem and hypotheses	
One	Literature Review Research Methodology		• Review the literature on the survival of armed groups • Present the research methodology • Conceptualize the proto-state armed groups	
Two	Proto-state Armed Groups analysis	H1, H2, H3, H4	• Establish an analytical framework for analysis of survival • Conceptualize the term of Proto-state Armed Group • Investigate the center of gravity (CoG) of proto-state armed groups • Develop the victory theory of proto-state armed groups • Identify the factors responsible for the prevalence of Terrorism in the Middle East.	• What distinguishes proto-state armed groups from other non-state armed groups? • How do proto-state armed groups survive? • What are the strategic CoGs of the conflict between proto-state armed groups and the state? • How does the state win or lose against the proto-state armed groups? • What factors lead to the prevalence of Terrorism in the Middle East?
Three	Hamas	H1, H2, H3	case study	The first case to validate the results of the research
Four	Hezbollah	H1, H2, H3	case study	The second case to validate the results of the research
Five	Conclusions			The results of the survey are displayed in this chapter, conclusion, scientific findings and recommendations.

Chapter One

Literature Review, Conceptualizing Proto-State Armed Group and Research Methodology

The primary purposes of the following narrative conceptual review of the literature are to contextualize this research within the body of knowledge of security studies, find the gaps in knowledge that need more research, and critically analyze the concept of proto-state armed groups. It groups the source materials according to the basic concepts and themes of the dissertation, identifies the contemporary comprehension of the research topic, and discusses how such understanding was reached. It is a snapshot of the current knowledge on proto-state armed groups, begins with an explanation of terrorism and insurgency, proceeds to the question of the survival of non-state armed groups, then covers the methods used to fight them, and concludes with a perspective on the main theories in the context of armed groups focusing on social constructivism. The method used for this dissertation is a narrative review. The last part of this chapter is about the methodology used in this research.

Terrorism and Insurgency

There is a growing trend in the study of terrorism, especially of why groups and individuals resort to terrorism (Hoffman, 2006; Reich, 1998; Crenshaw,1981), claiming that the study of terrorism is organized around three main topics: what reasons trigger terrorism, how the process of terrorism works, and its socio-economic effects. Crenshaw's work exemplifies the historical development of the study of terrorism since the 1980s.

Several issues obfuscate the study of terrorism. First, terrorism still does not have an internationally approved definition. Second, partly due to securitization efforts, the study of terrorism is unavoidably affected by the perception and influence of opinionated practitioners. Also, researchers are hampered by the limitation of research methodologies (such as observation or interviews) that they can use. This issue leads to the researchers relying on their subjective understanding of the phenomenon in the eyes of practitioners, who are not of an academic orientation (Hoffman, 2006). Another emotional obstacle is it is challenging to perceive some groups as terrorist organizations against their popular support within their communities, e.g., the cases of Hamas and Hezbollah within their respective communities (Cornel Law School, 1992).

After September 11, terrorism has become a highly pejorative term with intrinsically negative connotations (Sinclair, 2003). It has changed global perceptions of terrorism to a certain extent because the US was attacked in its territory for the first time since WWII. After that incident, US President George Bush declared the Global War on Terror (GWOT) by urging all nations to stand with the US: "Every nation in every region now has a decision to make; either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists" (President Bush, 2001). Undoubtedly, researchers worldwide were swayed by this position.

The crucial issue with terrorism is the absence of an internationally accepted definition. There are over 109 different definitions (Underhill, 2014, p. 2). For example, Enders and Sandler (2006) define it as "the use or threat of violence by non-state actors to obtain a political or social goal through intimidation of a wider audience than their immediate victims". While Hoffman (2006) defined it by "the deliberate creation and exploitation of fear through violence or the threat of violence in the pursuit of political change" (p. 40).

The US State Department defines terrorism as "premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against non-combatants targets by sub-national groups or clandestine agents usually to influence the audience". In contrast, the FBI defines terrorism as the "unlawful use of force or violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives" (FBI, 2001). The NATO definition of terrorism is "the unlawful use or threatened use of force or violence against individuals or property in an attempt to coerce or intimidate governments or societies to achieve political, religious or ideological objectives" (NATO, as cited in Kaiser & Talas, 2016, p. 26)[16].

The European Union (EU) has an entirely different understanding of terrorism: it is "intimidation used to force or prevent government action, or to destabilize the state" (Underhill, 2014, p. 2). Most researchers agree that the main characteristics of terrorism are political motivation to influence bigger and external audiences; the perpetrators are clandestine agents; the targets are either non-combatants or civilians, and it has a violent character, i.e., Kaiser and Talas (2016) maintain that terrorism is "a form of organized political violence, like other forms of political violence" (p. 22).

[16] The primary source is in. http://www.nato.int/ims/docu/ terrorism-annex.htm

The most general definition is: “premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against non-combatants targets by sub-national groups or clandestine agents usually to influence the audience”. This definition stresses the character of the action, the nature of the actor, and the target.

The definition for a terrorist group by Jones and Libcki (2008) is “a collection of individuals belonging to a non-state entity that uses terrorism to achieve its objectives, with a command-and-control apparatus, no matter how loose or flexible, provides an overall organizational framework and strategic direction” (p. 3). The question of how terrorism developed is extensively covered in the literature (Hoffman, 2006; Sinclair,2003).

Another terrorism issue is that many researchers and practitioners mistakenly conflate it with insurgency, which is as difficult to define as terrorism. Haviland (2008) stressed the importance of not confusing the two terms. The US Marine Corps defines insurgency as “an organized movement aimed at the overthrow of a constituted government through the use of subversion armed conflict” (Underhill, 2014, p. 14). The US Army defines it “the organized use of subversion and violence to seize, nullify, or challenge political control of a region. Insurgency can also refer to the group itself” (US DoD, 2014, p.1-2).

According to the definition of the US Department of Defense (DoD), an insurgency is “…a political-military campaign by non-state actors who seek to overthrow a government or secede from the home state through the use of conventional and unconventional strategies and tactics” (Homeland Security, 2012). A more recent definition is “an organized resistance movement that uses subversion, sabotage, and armed conflict to achieve its aims” (Underhill, 2014, p. 14). The Homeland Security guide of insurgency classifies insurgencies into five main groups. Revolutionaries strive to replace the current political regime with another one. Reformists, on the contrary, do not seek to replace the current political systems but to compel the government to change its policies. Separatists seek secession of territory from the state. Resistance insurgency aims to compel foreign occupation force to leave the state. The acquisition of wealth motivates the commercialist type of insurgency. Cronin believes that terrorism and insurgency are not the same, but are closely related societal phenomena (Cronin, 2006, pp. 31-32).

It should be noted that terrorism can serve as a means within the grand insurgency strategy; in order to claim insurgency, the movement should possess four primary characteristics (Silinsky, 2014, p.24):

- A movement that has defined command and control procedures,

- It aims to destroy and replace the current political regime,
- The struggle is not short-termed, but has a protracted character,
- Its goal is to decrease the state's legitimacy

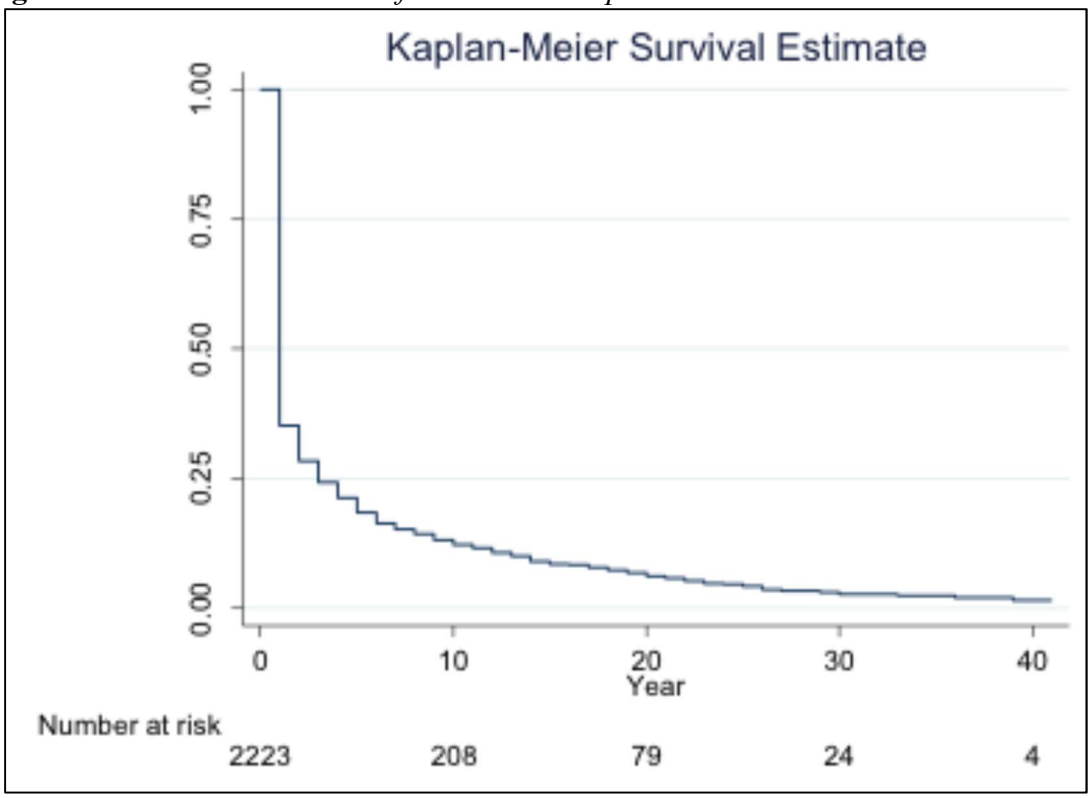
In his attempt to identify the differences between terrorism and insurgency, János Beres wrote: *"insurgency is not a struggle of an isolated group, it has a significant mass base, its goal is to create a ' counter state,' which by discharging all state functions would replace the preexisting power and would strive for a full legitimacy within a well-defined territory, [its adherents] may sometimes resort to terrorism. The purely terrorist organizations wrapped in the vortex of violence use terrorism as a logic of action, Terrorism is not a tactic but a strategy for them. These small groups, isolated from the world and the masses they want to represent, functioning deeply underground and relying on violence, have no mass base. They support a fluctuating number of sympathizers; there is no social movement behind them; driven by some ideology, they are the movement. They have no intention of creating a 'counter state'; the concept of creating a state based on a thorough analysis of realities and exercising power over it is absent from their haphazard and utopian ideas. The activities of these organizations may be considered pure terrorism because they apply violence as a goal of their existence"* (Beres, cited by Kiss, 2014, p. 21),

I disagree with. Beres's assessment of terrorism as an end-state strategy of terrorist groups. They do depend heavily on violence, but they are not just criminal gangs: they have political aspirations to achieve.

Counterterrorism Measures

Figure 1.1 on the next page shows that about 70% of armed groups do not last more than one year after their first attack, and of the remaining, about 80% do not exceed five years. Researchers like Cronin (2006, 2008, and 2009) investigated how terrorist organizations decline by comparing their behavior to previous cases, similar to Crenshaw's (2010) early work on this subject. Some scholars touched on the issue of how to counter terrorism with a focus on the use of quantitative methodology (Enders & Sandler, 2006).

Figure 1.1 *The Survival Chart of Terrorist Groups*



Note: Reprinted from "Survival of the fittest," by J. Young, I. Dougan, 2014, *Perspectives on Terrorism*, *8* (2).

Jones and Libicki (2008), examined 643 terrorist organizations from 1970 until 2007 to identify the main reason for their end. They found that 40% of these organizations ended due to police operations, 43% by politicization, 7% by the use of miliary force. Victory or achieving the terrorist organization's goals occurred in 10% of the cases (p. 19).

The use of military force is the least effective against terrorists, with success in just 7% of cases. However, it can be effective against those insurgencies in which groups are large (Jones & Libicki, 2008). Military force is necessary for such scenarios, but the military approach may be ineffective because of its blunt instrument. "Military power is a relative tool for solution in all situations where the state is trying to use it. American President George Bush, for example, was mistaken in holding that delivering a crushing military defeat to the Taliban regime or removing Saddam Hussein from power would result in a fatal blow on terrorism" (Szenes, 2018, p. 74).

Similar methodologies were adopted by Crenshaw (2012). Later on, Cronin (2006, 2008, 2009), and 20 years earlier, Ross and Gurr (1989) investigated how terrorist groups decline by classifying them into definite groups. Such studies focus on abstract numbers and suffer from a lack of normative facts; in most cases, counterterrorism efforts use various methods by

offering sticks and carrots methods and do not address the specific counterterrorism resources used, e.g., leadership targeting.

Politicization occurs when a terrorist organization joins the state's political process. Several terrorist organizations successfully transitioned, e.g., the Irish Republican Army (IRA) and the United Self-Defenses of Columbia (AUC) gave up terrorism after successful negotiations. The essence of politicization is based upon shifting the norms of the armed group from groups' norms to state norms. The constructivist theorist Wendt (1996) suggests that norms play a role in the international systems. To be part of that system, an internalization process occurs whereby both the state and non-state actors give up some of their norms and adopt internationally recognized norms. Some of these norms are terrorism to gain the edge over competitors and prefer peaceful political means.

The first condition for the negotiation's success is the willingness of the state to talk to the terrorist groups, which is contrary to the stated policies of most states. However, states like Columbia and the UK succeeded (Cronin, 2009, p. 71). Much of the success of the negotiations was due to changes in the international system and the loss of external state support (External Support), especially after the collapse of the USSR. The second reason is when the two parties reach a stalemate, 'hurting stalemate,' according to Zartman (2001); hurting stalemate occurs as both government and the terrorist group become weak and unable to continue the fight. At the same time, Jones and Libcki (2008) propose another reason for the success of politicization: success is inversely linked to the breadth of terrorist policy goals. As soon as the groups pursue narrow goals, the belligerent government begins to accept negotiations with that group. This way explains why organizations that pursue an empire or Khalifate, such as the IS or al-Qaida, have difficulties achieving their goals. Groups fighting for broad goals like fundamental social change or empire (spiritual or geographic) are less likely to reach a political agreement. In contrast, organizations with narrow goals can succeed.

Other factors that lead to negotiations with the terrorist groups are the organizational structure and public support (Cronin, 2006, pp. 25-27). Groups that rely on ambivalent public support are more likely to compromise. Also, groups with hierarchical organizational structures are more likely to compromise than networked terrorist organizations. In such cases, it is highly recommended that the state should encourage these groups to integrate into the legal-political sphere. Two examples will suffice. Amal in Lebanon dismantled its armed faction after the Taif Accord. Second, Fatah transformed its armed wing into a security organization that cooperated with Israel after the Oslo Agreement. The cases of Hamas and Hezbollah are different. They

participate in national politics following the laws and regulations (e.g., Hamas won municipal elections in 2005 and legislative elections in 2006); however, they have also retained their military wings (Warikat, 2021).

The second successful method to counter terrorism is a successful policing operation. Jones and Libcki (2008) suggest that policing is preferable when groups do not, cannot, or will not abandon violence. Policing includes multiple procedures ranging from law enforcement to intelligence operations. They also involve legal/judicial actions that drain the financial and human resources of the group. Another aspect of policing is that law enforcement officers can build relations with the community's key leaders (Hoffman, 2006, p. 169).

The issue with policing operations is that they are not limited to specific procedures and can include such measures as splintering, leadership targeting, or decapitation. In order to weaken a terrorist organization, intelligence organizations usually advocate splintering without deep insights into its dangers. Splintering occurs when the group withers away due to divisions within the original nucleus or when groups unite and form a new group, sometimes because of competition for scarce resources (Kydd & Walter, 2006). The worst aspect of splintering is that although it brings about the end of the group, it does not bring about the end of terrorism, as some remnants of the group morph into other groups. The other disadvantage of splintering is that it yields fractured groups that are hard to control. Thus, due to its adverse side effects, in my view, splintering should not be prominent among counterterrorism measures.

Another policing method is leadership targeting when intelligence and security agencies decapitate the terrorist organization by arresting or killing its top leaders. Michael Freeman, a US Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) instructor, argues that the leadership of a group has two distinct roles: inspirational and operational. Charismatic leaders relying on a powerful ideology can inspire potential recruits to join the group and risk their lives. Based on this analysis, Freeman designed a model for leadership targeting (Freeman, 2014, p. 6).

Examples of the decapitation's success are numerous. For example, in the 1980s, France experienced an uptick in terrorism incidents perpetrated by Direct Action; however, by 1986, the group ceased its activities due to the apprehension of its leaders. Cronin attributed the success to factors related to the leaders' role, level of public support, and organization size (2009, pp. 91-92).

Jordan Jenifer developed a database of 298 incidents of leadership killing from 1945 until 2004. The conclusion she reached was that the group's age, size, and type are significant factors for

the group to stand against such process. The group's resilience increases with the growth of its size and maturity (Jordan, 2009). One of Jordan's conclusions is that religious groups are more resilient than groups adhering to secular ideologies in their susceptibility to leadership targeting. At the same time, Ed Kaplan analyzed suicide bombings and found that leadership targeting increases the recruitments process; nevertheless, he also found out a reduction of suicide operations after mass detentions carried out by Israel after Operation Defensive Shield. Finally, he concluded, that "preventive arrests, as opposed to the targeted killings of suspected terrorist leaders, are responsible for the dramatic reduction in suicide bombings inside Israel since March 2002" (Kaplan et al., 2005, p. 332). In 'Fatal Choices: Israel's policy of targeted killing,' Steven David defended Israeli's right to act against various Palestinian movements (David, 2002). While, Varden James (2011) suggested that economic sanctions are more effective against Hamas.

Audrey Kurth Cronin (2009) looks at the causes of the terrorist groups. She argues that the effectiveness of leadership targeting depends upon "the structure of the organization, the degree to which it fosters a cult of personality, the availability of a suitable successor, the nature of its ideology, the political context, and whether the leaders were killed or imprisoned". Using comparative case studies, Cronin (2009) identified "several cases in which decapitation has succeeded and draws some overarching conclusions. First, arresting leaders is more damaging to a terrorist group than killing them, except when a jailed leader is cut off from communication with the organizations while being subject to humiliation. She argues, All else being equal, it is much better to arrest and jail a terrorist leader so that his fate will be demonstrated to the public. There is nothing glamorous about languishing in jail" (p. 17).

Further, it is possible to gain valuable information by interrogating arrested leaders. However, Cronin claims that "there are also disadvantages to arresting terrorist leaders. Once released, they can be freed, communicate with followers, and continue a terrorist activity. Decapitation's effectiveness depends on two variables: the degree to which a group relies upon the leader and the level of popular support. Broader popular support is usually the key to the greater average longevity of ethnic-nationalist/separatist groups in the modern era" (p. 75).

The critique of these methodologies is that combining the above methods usually brings about the end of terrorist groups. The will and capabilities of the state play a more significant role than the environment surrounding the group.

Center of Gravity

The Prussian military practitioner and theorist Clausewitz developed the Center of Gravity (CoG) theory.[17] Clausewitz was the first to provide an insightful description of the concept which still trigger contemporary militaries to research the topic. In Chapter four of book Eight, he said:

> *"In countries subject to domestic strife, the center of gravity is generally the capital; in small states that rely on larger ones, it is most of the time the army of their protector; among alliances, it is in the community of interest, in popular uprisings, it is the leader's personality and public opinion; it is against these powers that our energies should be directed"* (Clausewitz, 1976, p.75).

Clausewitz described the CoG as "the hub of all power and movement, on which everything depends" (1976, pp. 595-596); however, this definition needs some refinement to remain relevant in tackling such contemporary issues as fourth-generation warfare. The DoD dictionary of military terms defines it "The source of power that provides moral or physical strength, freedom of action, or will to act" (Joint Staff, 2021); however, the US JP 3-0, Doctrine for Joint Operations, in 1993 defined Center of Gravity as "that characteristic, capability or location from which alliances, nations, and military forces derive their will to fight, their physical strength, or freedom of action" (Echevarria, 2002). In 1996, Joseph Strange defined Center of Gravity as "primary sources of moral or physical strength, power, and resistance". Subsequently, he refined his definition as "dynamic and powerful physical and moral agents of action and influence with certain qualities and capabilities that derive their benefit from a given location or terrain" (Strange, 1996, p.27). Eikmeier was more practical by saying that CoG is "the primary doer with the capability required to achieve the objective" (Eikmeier, 2004, 2010). While, Vego took a mechanical approach and determined that it is a "source of leverage or massed strength – physical or moral – whose serious degradation, dislocation, neutralization or destruction would have a decisive impact on the Enemy state's or one's ability to accomplish a given military objective." It can be linked to the three levels of war (Vego, 2000, p.23; 2009). On the other side, Echevarria connected it with physical forces and identified it as the "centripetal force, or focal point that holds the various entities together." He claims that the CoG concept initially aimed at achieving an overwhelming collapse of the enemy's forces and

[17] In the eighteenth century, Clausewitz was a general of the Prussian army; his war theory is still dominant in classic warfare.

is only applicable for absolute war where the total destruction of the adversary's power is the main objective (Echevarria, 2003).

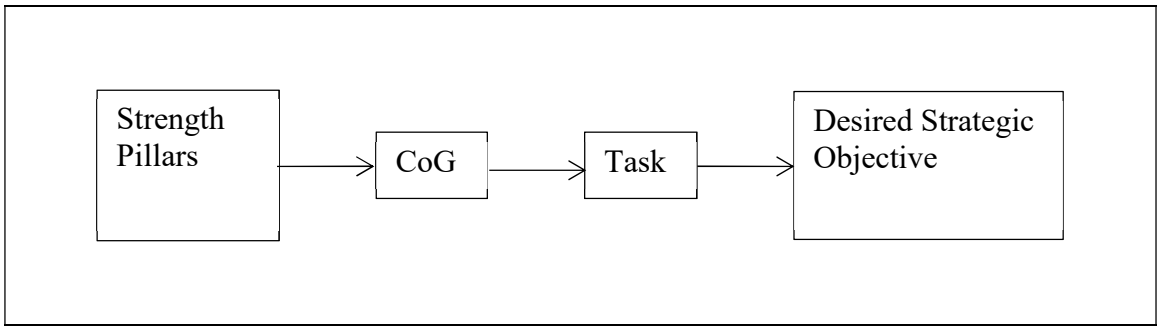
Determining the CoG is not a straightforward, linear task due to its enigmatic character. Some like to consider it more of an art than of science (Eikmeier, 2015).

This dissertation adopts the definition of CoG as "a *characteristic, capability, or location from which alliances, nations, military forces, and armed groups derive their will to fight, their physical strength, or freedom of action, the destruction of this entity causes an overwhelming collapse as it holds the various entities together."*

So, analysis of the enemy's CoG is beneficial not only for winning the war against the adversary but also for avoiding the destruction of one's own strategic CoG.

The method that I use in this research is similar to Eikmeier's method with slight differences. The start is with 'desired strategic objective' which is the hardest task. Defining the 'tasks' that are needed to achieve the 'desired objective' is next, then examining the 'strength pillars' that the entity has, and select from those 'strength pillars' the one that is capable to do the 'tasks and 'use' the other 'strength pillars' to get to 'desired objective.' (See Figure 1.2).

Figure 1.2 *Center of Gravity analysis*



Note: Compiled by the author

The assumed definition of the pillar of strength is "the *capability possessed by the non-state actor that gives it the ability to survive and influence other actors*" (Warikat, 2019).

Victory Theory

J.F.C. Fuller suggested an overall three-domain framework to study war: physical, moral and cognitive spheres of war. The physical domain is the material component that contains the systems used to fight; the cognitive domain is about generalship and their reason, imagination,

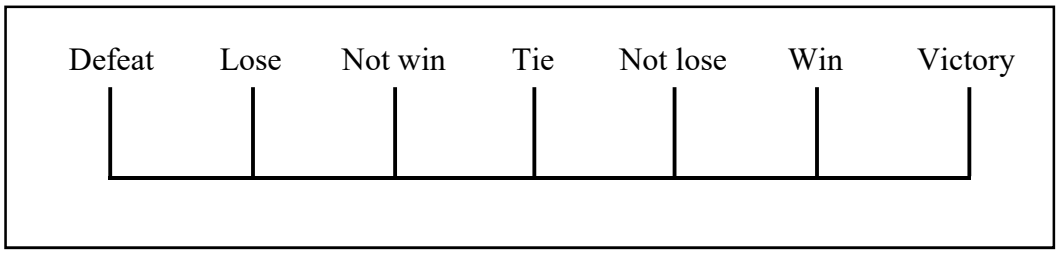
experience, which is included in the operational art and design; the moral domain is subjective and deals with the intangibles of war such as fear or courage (Fuller, 1925). The will to fight resides in the second and third domains. Clausewitz discussed moral factors and stated that they are "among the most important in war," also, he brought attention to elements of the physical domain and the cognitive domain, including discussion of military genius and plans of war, "Genius consists in a harmonious combination of elements" (Clausewitz, 1976, p.100). In a similar vein, General Vo Nguyen Giap once told Salah Khalaf.[18] that for any revolution to achieve victory, it has to have three factors: suitable and advanced weaponry, mobilizing ideology, an organization that is capable of mobilizing people (Rasheed, 2015, p. 200; Khalaf, 1989, p. 67). "Victory inadequately expresses what a nation wants from its military forces." Thomas Schelling explaining the objective of victory, "Mostly, it wants, in these times the influence that resides in latent force. It wants the bargaining power that comes from its capacity to hurt, not just the direct consequences of successful military action" (Schelling, 1966, p. 31).

Harlap emphasized the subjectivity of victory; he pointed out that it is a state of resolve; his view is to understand the existence of two kinds of victories: subjective and objective. Subjective is a judgment call and is cognitive, and that is usually the type of victory that a proto-state armed group wins over the state. The distinction between the subjective and objective is similar to the distinction between victory by points and knockout in boxing matches (Harlap, 2019, p. 1).

On the tactical level, Gray perceived strategic victory as a uniform concept describing victorious battles, while the operational ones enabled the transition towards the post-war stabilization period. (Gray, 2002). Sun Tzu focused upon knowledge for victory, his oft-quoted adage if you know thyself and thy enemy and in a hundred of battles, you will never be endangered, is relevant to the cognitive field of Victory (Sun Tzu, 2011, p.12). Bartholomees (2008) divided the victory concept into distinguished phases and emphasized that military success does not always reach strategic victory. (See Figure 1.3 on the next page).

[18] Salah Khalaf or Abu Iyad was the second man after Yasser Arafat, he was assassinated by the Abu Nidal group in Tunisia in 1991

Figure 1.3 *The scale of Victory*



Note: Reprinted from "Theory of victory," by J.B. Bartholomees, Parameters, 38(2), 25-36

Ami Ayalon appealed to Clausewitz to put his way of thinking about victory "Victory is simply the creation of a better political reality…Victory does not dictate that we must conquer Gaza, Ramallah, Nablus, or Hebron. I think my son, who served for three years in the paratroopers, participated in the conquest of Nablus at least two or three times. Did it bring us victory? I do not think so. Did it create a better political reality? The tragedy of Israel's public security debate is that we do not realize that we face a frustrating situation in which we win every battle, but we lose the war " (The Gatekeepers movie, 2018, 1.37); at the same time, Kiss (2014) puts forth that victory is attained by the success of the state on four tasks: "to defeat the group, separate them from the population, reestablish government authority, and successfully justify the government's actions in the eyes of its people and the international community" (p. 110). The IDF definition of victory seemingly is exclusively military and does not take the policy into its account; it says that victory is "*overcoming the enemy and creating a situation in which the victor in a war, campaign, or battle has fully or largely achieved its military objectives, at a cost that can be tolerated. Achieving victory is the constant and overriding aim of every soldier in every situation*" (Dictionary of IDF Terms, 1998, as cited in Barak, 2021).

Theoretical Perspectives in the Study of Terrorism

Various endeavors were made to establish a sound theoretical perspective that predicts terrorism.

The social networks theory prevailed after the 9/11 terrorist attacks (Arquilla & Ronfeldt, 2001). Social networks theory emphasizes the interactions between the individuals and the groups more than between the groups themselves, though modeling the groups as discrete entities in this theoretical framework as possible (Sinno, 2008). Some disadvantages are that researchers like Sageman (2008) claim that terrorist groups with religious ideologies became flat and decentralized after 2001; however, this is only partly true since many groups are still

highly centralized. Brian Philips (2012) was among a small number of researchers to use social network theory to investigate the survival of the violent terrorist groups, while Asal and Rethymier (2008) look at the degree of group connectivity by the use of social network analysis to explain why some groups are more lethal than others.

In his pursuit to explain the survival of terrorist groups, David Rapoport claims that "each breed of a terrorist group lasts around one generation; after that, they usually fade away: When a wave of energy cannot inspire new organizations, the wave disappears. Resistance, political concessions, and change in perceptions are critical factors in explaining the disappearance. As the terrorist group becomes older, it gets more challenging to gain recruits because the new generations do not share the same principles and ideas as the older members" (Rapoport, 2002, p. 48). As a result, the older generation loses the ability to attract the younger ones. Therefore, terrorist organizations cannot last more than a generation. He. identifies four distinct waves of terrorism. He dubbed the first wave, the anarchist terrorism, started by Russian 'Narodnaya Volya' (People's will) from the 1880s to the early twentieth century. It was followed by the anti-colonial wave that started in the 1920s to the 1960s. Then came leftist/Marxist terrorism until the end of the century. The fourth wave, which he named the religious wave, started in 1979. It will dissipate around 2025 when a new breed of terrorism starts. He defines the wave by "a cycle of activity in a given period, characterized by expansion and contraction" (Rapoport, 2004, p. 47).

Concerning his thought that religious ideologies will vanish soon, it is my understanding that generational shifts in political or ideological views have led to the demise of many organizations, but that is not valid for groups that use religion in their endeavor to mobilize recruits, religion has a long-lasting motivating power to mobilize due to its staying power.

Social Constructivism Theoretical Framework in Terrorism

Social constructivism is a competitor to such mainstream theories in international relations as realism and liberalism, an advantage that came to add the value of the non-materialistic issues in the international relations field. Constructivism started to gain the power to theorize for international security and its subfields of terrorism roles since the 1980s. Social constructivism has some relevancy to inevitable civilizations' conflict (Huntington, 1996), their differences lie in the assumptions, which are:

- Their first ontological position is that "ideational structures matter as much as, or even more than, material structures" (Agius, 2006, p. 50).

- The role of identity that hints at our interests is based on our preferences. Identities give us an idea about interests that explain and describe actions and the behavior of entities. For example, Alexander Wendt (1996, p.50) demonstrated the importance of identity by saying that a gun in the friend's hands is different from the gun in the enemy's hands, and enmity is a social relationship, not material.
- The relationship between structure and agents is mutually constructed, that is, how actors created the world and that world influenced their actions and behaviors (Giddens, 1979).
- For constructivists like Wendt (1992), "anarchy is what states make of it" (p. 395). Anarchy is not a given feature, but what actors believe makes it anarchic. If we believe that the international system is anarchist, it is a stark contrast to the neorealism theory led by Kenneth Waltz (2010).

The constructivist paradigm is divided into two main groups: conventional and critical. Both hold that identity matters. The differences are in the methodology where Wendt) used the positivist approach and shared with the realist the centrality of the state.

Critical constructivists, i.e., Derrida, Foucault, and Lyotard, used post-positivism to distinguish between the ideational and the material to produce binary distinctions like (weak/strong). They believe in the power of language and discourse, that have us to adopt cautious approaches to power relations and truth claims. When we think about the identities of Americans and Australians, we adopt the dominant interpretations because other voices were silenced, like the native citizens of those countries. This omission is dangerous because we privilege one construction of reality over possible others. Critical constructivists, especially Onuf, pay attention to language and its role in constructing realities, specifically, the use of speech acts (Onuf, 2012). Language and speech acts play a role in securitizing. For example, to describe the conflict as 'genocide' instead of 'tribal warfare' would convince ordinary citizens to support intervention.

The first pillar of constructivism in security studies emphasizes that political agents' identities, interests, and behavior are "*socially constructed by collective meaning, interpretations, and assumptions about the world*" (Adler, 1997, p.324). Identities tell us who the actors are, their interests and preferences, and inform us about their actions. "It is about shared language, shared values, intersubjective meanings, and ideas and concepts shared in common, and from there, we can understand action and behavior" (Hopf, 1998, p.173). A social process forms identity, and some believe that identity is interactive: actors form their identities when interacting. Wendt contrasted two central identities. The first is intrinsic; it exists before interactions with

others; he named it the corporate identity. The second is the social identity, which is interactive, and actors can have multiple social identities.

According to Wendt (1999, pp. 226-229), the primary identities are the type, role, and collective. Type is the self-organizing identity; for example, it is liberal or authoritarian for states. The role identity exists in the context of others, for example, the identities of an enslaved person and enslaver: one cannot be identified without the existence of the other, as much as the student and the teacher. The collective identity is a combination of the other two identities. Other main issues with identities are the beliefs and the accepted norms. According to Fredrickson et al. (2003), beliefs are "social rules that primarily make truth claims about the world; beliefs are shared understandings of the world" (pp.364-365), Collective meaning and shared knowledge determine how humans comprehend and react to the world.

Beliefs are influenced by the culture, which, according to Katzenstein (1996) "refers to both a set of evaluative standards (norms and values) and a set of cognitive standards (rules and standards) that define what actors exist in a system, how they operate and how to relate to one another" (p. 6). Culture has an excellent relationship to security, as different cultures look differently at the threats and the principled use of force. For example, what happened after the defeat of Germany and Japan in the Second World War has affected their institutionalized culture; it made them reluctant to use hard power means and focus on economic power and social welfare instead. The same can be said about the rejection of immigration in some countries in Europe, as it is considered a threat to Christian culture or even to societal security. Our inherited beliefs are entrenched in our psyche and emotions like idols. When these idols are shaken or broken in whatever form they exist, it is no minor calamity (Collins, 2010). Culture plays a role in the battlefield, "the *ability of one culture to make its organizations function more efficiently in keeping with the dominant mode of warfare of the time than the organizations of another culture can be the difference between victory and defeat*" (Pollack, 2018, p. 362).

Norms. Katzenstein (1996) defines norms as "*collective expectations about proper behavior for a given identity*" (p.5). Shared knowledge and practices yield norms, and norms themselves are an essential part of identity. We observe norms to guide our actions based on norms we choose to adhere to. Strong actors can construct new norms with desirable objectives to provide a new social guide to the community's behavior. An example is changing the view toward women's roles in society. There are two main kinds of norms: constitutive and regulative. Constitutive norms are the foundation that defines the identity and sets its interests and actions.

Regulative norms are the ones that define the rules to be followed after accepting the new identity. When ideas are norms, they constrain actors, constitute actors, and enable action (Farrell, 2002).

Amin Malouf described identity politics as "a leopard, devouring men, women, children, and the values that customarily underpin any sense of shared humanity" (Maalof, 2003; Patten, 2019). In other words, "identities and interests are shaped by norms that lead actors to follow specific socially prescribed paths of appropriate behavior -- often called the logic of appropriateness" (Collins, 2010, p. 17).

Concept of the proto-state armed group

"Calling things by the wrong name adds to the affliction of the world"

Albert Camus

To deepen the discussion of non-state actor armed groups, it is imperative to notice a distinct type of non-state actors, above the level of non-state actors and below state actors. They can be classified as proto-state armed groups. As Honig and Yahel defined them:

"Rebel groups that a) control portions of a weak state's territory, maintaining governance there; b) launch terrorist attacks against third party victim states" (2019).

To better define proto-state armed groups, this dissertation examines those groups generally accepted to be qualified for this label and extracts the definition out of their predominant characteristics, their requirements for success, and their victory theory. From a closer inspection of these groups (see Table 1.1 on the next page) it can be seen that the simplest definition of the proto-state armed group is a hybrid group that acts as a state within the state. A bit more articulated definition is:

Armed groups that have a hybrid nature pose a hybrid threat to the state-actors; they challenge the sovereignty of the host state by their hybrid nature, they control an essential part of the host state's territory to demonstrate their governance, they usually have enmity towards a selected state, and seek internal and external legitimacy. They exist in states with structural weakness in their sovereignty. These states are mostly affected by wars or having significant ethnic or religious cleavages.

So, the main conditions for a group to be named a proto-state armed group are:

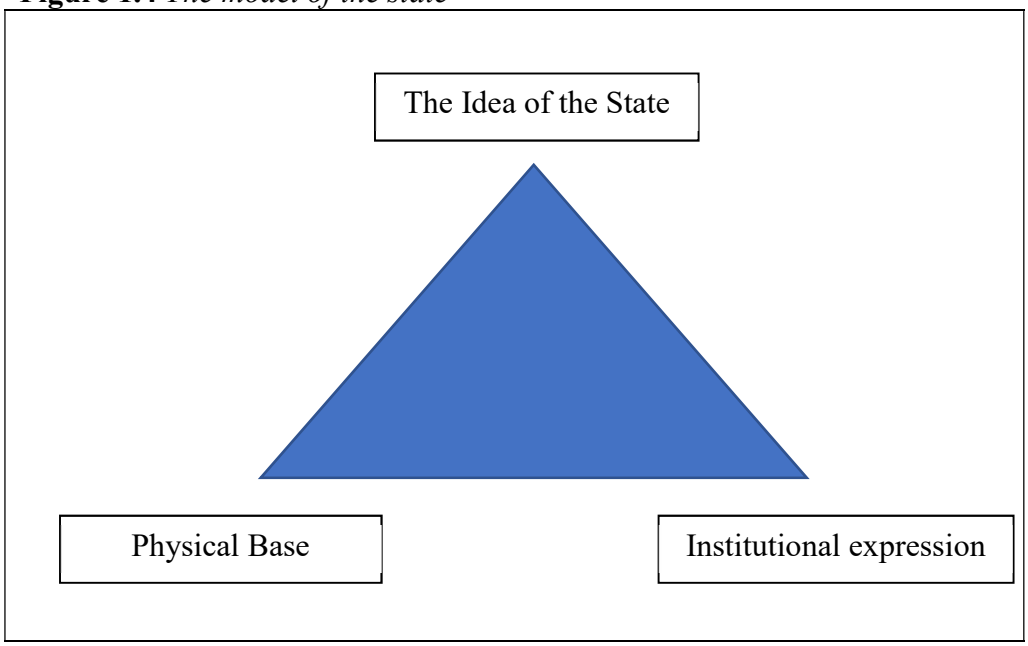
- It has a hybrid nature and poses a hybrid threat;
- Has sufficient legitimacy to negotiate with state actors;
- Has an apparent existence in a defined part of the host state;
- Claims a cause, the appropriation of national responsibility;
- Has an enemy state, claims to use ‘resistance’ as a method of struggle.
- Pursues internal and external legitimacy.
- They exist within states suffering from significant religious or ethnic cleavages; they build their causes upon this cleavage.

Table 1.1 *Characteristics of proto-state armed groups*

Proto-State Group	Time period	Host state	Ideology	Territorial control	Enemy state	Hybrid		Sponsor
						nature	threat	
Fatah in Jordan	1968-1971	Jordan	Nationalist	Large parts of Jordan	Israel	Y	Y	Arab states
Fatah in Lebanon	1971-1982	Lebanon	Nationalist	South of Lebanon	Israel	Y	Y	Arab states
Hamas	1987-Now	PNA	Religious, nationalist	Gaza Strip since 2007	Israel	Y	Y	Qatar, Iran, Turkey
Hezbollah	1983-Now	Lebanon	Religious, nationalist	S. Lebanon since 2000	Israel	Y	Y	Iran
Taliban	2001-2021	Afghanistan	Religious	rural areas of Afghanistan	USA	Y	Y	Pakistan, Iran. Russia
Ansarullah	1990-Now	Yemen	Religious, nationalist	W and N of country	KSA	Y	Y	Iran, Hezbollah
Amal	1975-1989	Lebanon	Nationalist	Contested areas with Hezbollah	none	Y	Y	Syria

According to Montevideo Convention signed in 1933 the main requirements for any political entity to be a state are “a population, a defined territory, a government, and a capacity to enter into relations with other states” (ILSA, n.d.). Proto-state armed groups attempt to partially satisfy these requirements. For example, Barry Buzan suggested that the state has a tripartite model to establish itself (see Figure 1.4). This model has to be emulated by proto-state actors aspiring to forge their existence and behave similar to states with slight differences (Buzan, 1983, p.40).

Figure 1.4 *The model of the state*



Note. Adapted from “People, State and Fear “by B. Buzan. 1983, pp. 44-62

The state territory and population embody the physical base; the institutions govern and control the physical base; in order to mimic the state, the proto-state armed group needs an ideational base (foundational idea) to maintain its linkage to the required supporters and establish its authority in people's minds. In the physical base, a territory whose control by the group undermines the state's sovereignty, sovereignty is the central driving element, which Buzan merely put as ‘self-rule.’ The territory may also be outsourced by an external state (sponsor) to have training camps for the proto-state armed groups.

The first requirement for the group to thrive is to have a failed host state or high level of fragility to establish its physical base, after that comes the population; the proto-state armed group has to compete with the state over the same pool of population.

The second base is the institutional base, especially the military and political wing; the state has administrative functions, e.g., taxation, health care, education, and justice. So, the proto-state has to build similar institutions to look similar to the state's behavior and attract population to its side.

The last component of Buzan's model is the ideational base, in which the group needs an ideology written in the context of a binding charter to square itself within the surrounding environment. To highlight their strategies and political agendas, groups need recognizable, unique symbols (a flag, an emblem, an anthem) to emphasize their distinct and defined identity. Out of this definition, the essential requirements for a group to be qualified as a proto-state armed group can be derived:

Visible control over part of the host state's territory

With visible political institutions and social services organizations and not 'underground.' Although the group's armed wing spends much of its time in hiding, its apparent existence is the first requirement for a rebellious group to become a full-fledged proto-state armed group. It has to exercise military and political control over a block of territory for a continuous time with an apparent existence of its organs despite the lack of consent of the host state.

Hybrid nature

Proto-State Armed Groups are characterized by their investment in governance and the exercise of some state functions that compel them to have organizational structures similar to a state (see Hamas' and Hezbollah's organizational structure, Figures 3.1 and 4.1, in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4, respectively). They have three main faces: political in which they practice governance, the second face is social provision which is about various services like scouts training, hospitals, and educational; the third face is the military in which it practices management of conflicts, violence, security agencies. The last façade is the administrative as these groups attempt to provide public administrative activities like cleaning the streets, managing municipalities, collecting the trash.

Such behavior enables the group to control the host state and deprive it from voting against their armed wings, especially when alliances are forged with influential political constituencies.

Seeking internal and external legitimacy from its host state and external legitimacy from foreign states and organizations.

The proto-state armed groups' policy is mainly characterized by the existence of a tension between their need to look good in the eyes of the international system to seek legitimacy and even gain some de-facto international recognition, and their desire to engage in coercive policies to show their credentials since the latter activities lower their chances of gaining international legitimacy. Moreover, the proto-state armed groups usually lack international legitimacy due to their focused use of terrorism to attain objectives in the host state and against other external states.

For example, the PLO's slogans of 'people war' and 'armed struggle as Yazid Sayigh (2004) claims "clashed with the pragmatic requirements of securing wider recognition of the PLO as a statist actor with international character" (p.147).

Moreover, the proto-state armed group's pursuit of legitimacy is motivated to consolidate its power and status within the host state. Taliban, in 2021, gained its legitimacy by negotiating with the US in Doha and signing a binding agreement with the world's superpower. Similarly, Yasser Arafat, head of the PLO managed to appeal for formal recognition of the Palestinian struggle and the PLO as a representative of the Palestinians when he spoke to the UN on November 13, 1974.

In order to gain legitimacy, these groups need a justifiable cause which differs according to their ideological foundations. The cause is formidable if it correlates with its intangible ideological asset that bases its actions accordingly. A primary cause of conflict between the group and the host state is when both of them compete for a similar cause which can lead in some cases to a Civil War. Civil War is usually the result of a reasonably triumphant – but not yet victorious insurgency (Personal communication, Kiss, 2020). A good example is the conflict between the PLO and the Jordanian government over the representation of the Palestinians in Jordan and the West Bank, and later between Hamas and Fatah. However, the effect of the cause is mainly valid in the early stages of the group's formation and the initial conflict with the host state; as the war develops, the war itself becomes paramount. Consequently, it takes the place of the actual cause.

"The best cause is the one that can attract the most significant possible number of supporters and repel the minimum number of likely opponents" (Galula, 1964, p. 13). However, nothing prevents the group from adapting and changing its original cause to more attractive causes. Table1.2 on the next page shows the causes of the proto-state armed groups. From table 1.2 all proto-state armed groups in the Middle East have an appealing cause that they defend and, in

its name, get funds and recruit from their populations; mostly, their causes have a connection to the enemy state.

Table 1.2 *Proto-State Armed Group's Causes*

Proto-State Group	The main cause
Fatah	Build a democratic Palestinian state
Hamas	Liberate Palestine
Hezbollah	Originally: liberate Lebanon. After Israeli withdrawal: deterrence of Israel
Taliban	Build a state, force the foreign troops to leave
Shabab	Build a state
Houthis	Reform the State

Enmity towards a state actor

Other than the host state, the proto-state armed group often has an external state adversary. This hostility stems from its need for a powerful enemy to maintain its cause. It bases its enmity on an ideological landscape. For example, after Israel's withdrawal from south Lebanon in 2000, Hezbollah searched for another cause to keep Israel as its main adversary, found the Shebaa farms area, and promoted a liberation cause for this part of the land.

Part of the reason for confronting another enemy state like Israel or the USA is to flaunt their commitment to a particular cause and thus gain widespread popular support among the inhabitants of the weak state. That is considered to be one of their main *raisons d'être*.

Enmity to the state entrenches the ‘resistance’ identity of the group, this identity is required for the internal and external support; usually, the group reacts to the public demands by increasing or decreasing their acts of ‘resistance.’

Table 1.3 below, based on Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research (PSCR) polls establishes the relationship between violence and public support for Hamas: the public support

leads Hamas' actions, Hamas intensifies violence when support for violence increases and vice versa (Davis, 2014).

Table 1. 3 *Relationship between Violence and Public Support*

Date	Support for Violence	Support for Hamas	Hamas Action
Sep. 1995	18.3%		
Camp David	51.6%		
Before the second Intifada	51.6%	10.3%	
July 2001, after one year	85.9%	16.7%	
March 2005	37.5	25.1	
June 2005	46.3	30.1	Mortar attack
Dec 2005	40%	28%	Three attacks
March 2006	56.6	36.7	Kidnapping PVT. Shalit
Jun 2007	50	21.9	After the governance phase
Before Cast Lead 2008	59.7	26.1	Increase of support
After Cast Lead 2009	66.7	25	The war increased support
2012 after Gaza II war	62.6	20.8	
2014, After the formation of the unity government	40.5 %	20.6%	The kidnapping of a soldier

Note. Adapted from "The making of an insurgent group: A case study of Hamas" by Davis, 2014.

The use of hybrid threats includes guerrilla tactics, terrorism, conventional warfare, and such other threats as information operations (IO).

The nature of war is fundamentally timeless, its character—ever evolving—reflects the unique conditions of each era (Casey, 2008, p. 23). Proto-state armed groups developed their characteristic way of war (hybrid war that incorporates a range of conventional and unconventional means) against state actors that are far more powerful than themselves. The concept of hybrid warfare was coined by William J. Nemeth in 2002; he described the tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs) used in the Chechen conflict against Russian armed forces. Later, it gained the due momentum in the 2006 war between Israel and Hezbollah's supposed use of hybrid warfare.

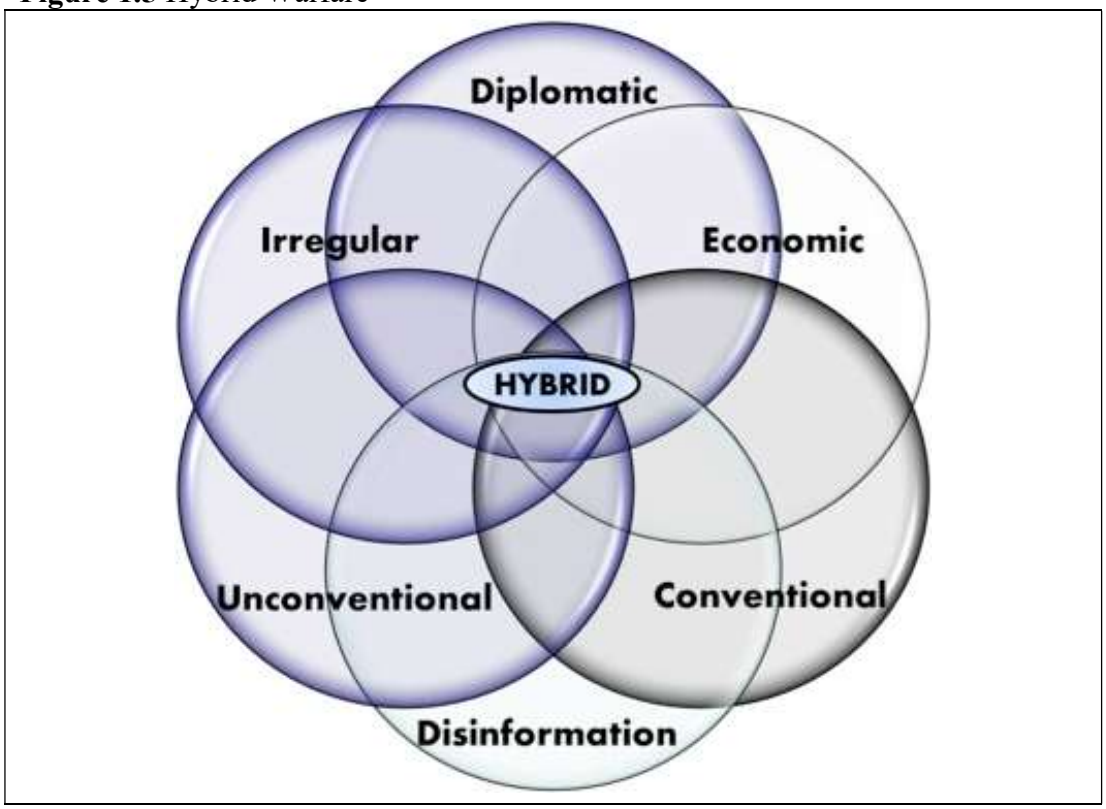
Hoffman defined this concept by a "Any adversary that simultaneously and adaptively employs a fused mix of conventional weapons, irregular tactics, terrorism and criminal behavior in the battle space to obtain their political objectives" (Hoffman, 2009).

US Gen. Mattis said, "We expect future enemies to look at the four approaches as a sort of menu and select a combination of techniques or tactics appealing to them. We do not face a range of four different challenges as much as the combination of novel approaches—a merger of different modes and means of war. This unprecedented synthesis is what we call hybrid warfare" (Gen. Mattis & Hoffman, 2005).

NATO defines it by the claim that hybrid threats are "those posed by adversaries, with the ability to simultaneously employ conventional and non-conventional means adaptively in pursuit of their objectives" (Aaronson, et al. 2011). Figure 1.5 depicts the hybrid warfare by NATO modeling and simulation.

The

Figure 1.5 Hybrid Warfare



Note. Reprinted from NATO (2016)

Russian warfare strategy considers the mind the primary battlespace, which explains their overwhelming focus on psychological and information operations, especially strategic

maskirovka (deception). Berzins maintains that the Russian hybrid warfare consists of eight distinct phases.

The first is a mix of IO, diplomatic, economic, and psychological measures to create favorable conditions; in the following phase, it invests in deception and confusion of the targeted leadership through concerted efforts, including disinformation processes. Next, it shifts to blackmailing, bribing, and intimidating key leaders to affect their leadership during the conflict. The fourth phase is about creating confusion and discontent amongst citizens and the leadership by disseminating destabilizing information in support of covert subversive activities. The fifth phase is about environment shaping through no-fly zones and supply routes interruption. The sixth phase deals a military blow; in the seventh phase, IO continues with military operations. The eighth phase includes the physical occupation and the destruction of the enemy power (Berzins, 2014). Racz (2015) argues that the Russian hybrid warfare is divided into three phases: preparation, attack, and stabilization. The preparation phase comprises political, strategic, and operational preparatory actions; the attack phase includes exploring the tensions, ousting the targeted government, and establishing alternative cooperative power; the stabilization phase consists of the political stabilization process, separation of the occupied territory, and movement restrictions (Racz, 2015). This analysis suggests the absence of a universal definition of the concept (Fabian, 2019). On the whole, guerilla warfare is a main component of hybrid warfare, i.e., for proto- state armed groups.

Mao Zedong suggested two conditions for victory regarding guerrilla warfare (a subsection of hybrid warfare): getting broad public support and eventually transforming the guerillas into regular formations.

He had a significant focus on earning the public support through propaganda and to 'explain, persuade, convince,' which is his first phase of building the group. It entails organization, consolidation, and preservation of bases in remote and difficult terrain. The second phase is the progressive expansion which focuses on direct action by the use of terrorism and sabotage against collaborators and informants to liquidate them and get ammunition and other materials from governmental forces to improve the capabilities of the still weak group. The third phase is the superiority phase, when the group becomes able to defeat its enemy. In this phase a large part of the group completes its transformation into an orthodox regular force capable of engaging the enemy in conventional battles (Zedong, pp. 21-22). The problem lies in the transition between these three phases as the group still has not become strong and the government is still in strong position. This transition took place by the Vietnamese

revolutionaries as they moved from contentions to equilibrium and reached the final counter offensive with reliance on a small backward regular army, militias and guerillas working in the rear (Giap & Stetler, 1970, p. 12).

The Cuban variation of guerillas differs in two main points: the first is that Castro did not conceive a need to thoroughly indoctrinate, politically mobilize or even get broad public support before the kickoff of the initial operations. Instead, Castro used small, rapidly moving forces to hit hard the government's security posts, in order to serve as a focus for the discontent and resentment of people. In other words, he created the 'objective conditions' rather than to wait for them. The actions themselves created the public support. The Brazilian methodology was developed by Marighella and Abraham Guillen who suggested urban insurgencies rather than rural areas because of parochialism, lack of political consciousness, and sparsely populated rural areas (Kiss, 2014, p. 35). To describe the tactics of the guerrilla, Mao Zedong said, "*guerrilla warfare, select the tactic of seeming to come from the east and attacking from the west; avoid the solid, attack the hollow; attack; withdraw; deliver a lightning blow, seek a lightning decision. When guerrillas engage a stronger enemy, they withdraw when he advances; harass him when he stops; strike him when he is weary; pursue him when he withdraws; in guerrilla strategy, the enemy's rear, flanks, and other vulnerable spots are his vital points, and there he must be harassed, attacked, dispersed, exhausted and annihilated*" (p. 46). The above discussion suggests that there is no universally agreed upon definition of hybrid warfare (Fabian, 2019). The other element of the hybrid threat is the use of propaganda. At the current time, "propaganda activities of various purpose as well as messages created as a result of such activity have a number of names: political communication, public relations, public diplomacy, public affairs, strategic communication, publicity, promotion, advertising, commercials, ─ just to mention a few" (Harnos, 2016, p. 179).

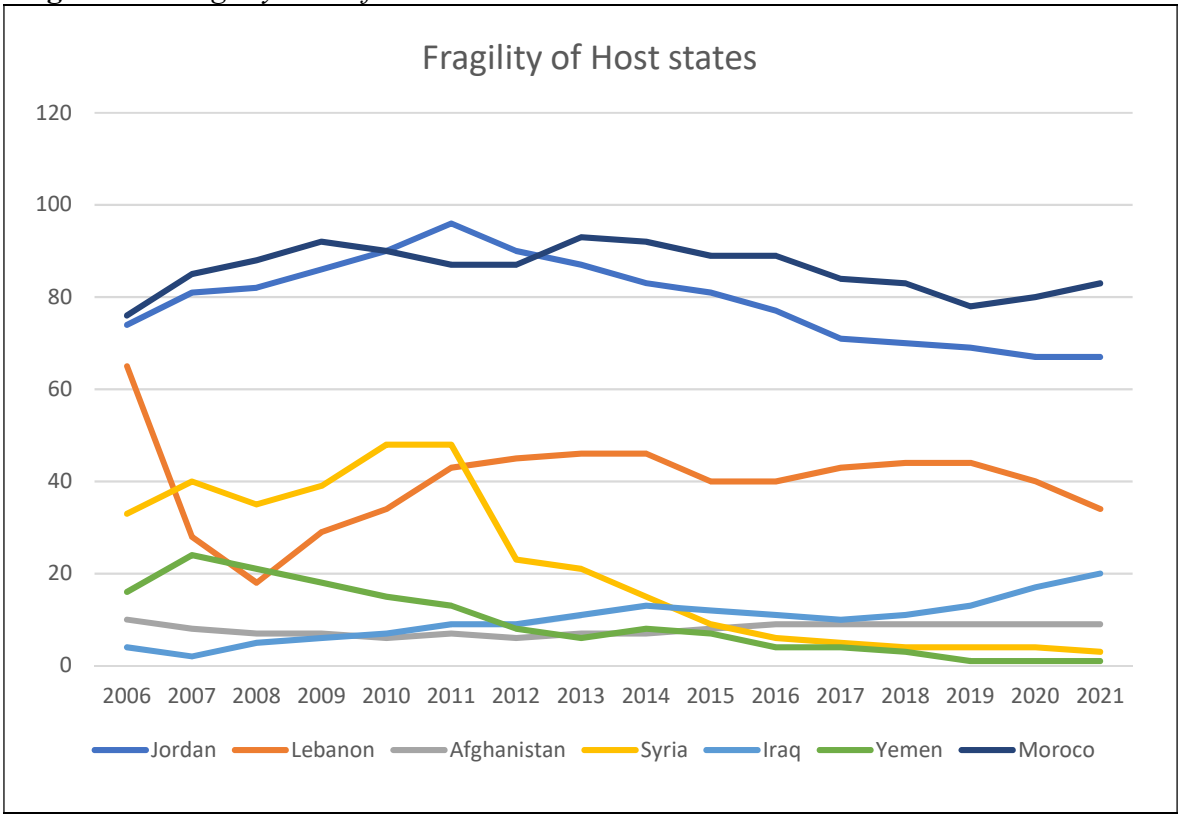
My definition of hybrid warfare is "*the use of conventional and unconventional means of threat by a state or by non-state actors in the three levels of war to destabilize its adversary*."

Host state's Problem

Proto-state armed groups cannot live within states that have full sovereignty over their territories. The state needs to be in a weak position to surrender some of its sovereignty to proto-state armed groups. This was the situation in Lebanon when it agreed to let Fatah act from its territories in 1969. Similarly, Iraq needed Popular Mobilization Units (PMU) to repulse ISIS.

The fact that proto-state armed groups need a weak host state is shown in Figure 1.6 on the next page and in Table 1.4. The figure and the table both show that the groups exist by having weak host states and do not exist in robust states.

Figure 1.6 *Fragility Index for Host states*



Note. Adapted from https://fragilestatesindex.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/fsi2021-report.pdf, by Fund for Peace, 2021.

Table 1.5 on the next page demonstrates that states that have proto-state armed groups have a high degree of state weakness: the numbers show the state's rank over a period of 15 years in the fragility index among the world states according to Fund for Peace (FFP)[19] (2021). State fragility is convenient for the thriving of armed groups, especially proto-state armed groups. Their territorial control would never have occurred if their host states had retained adequate control of their territories, mainly their borders. Therefore, efforts to deal with proto-state armed groups encroaching upon the state's sovereignty must start with reducing the state's weakness before anything else.

[19] The number ranges from 1 (the worst case) to the max number of surveyed states

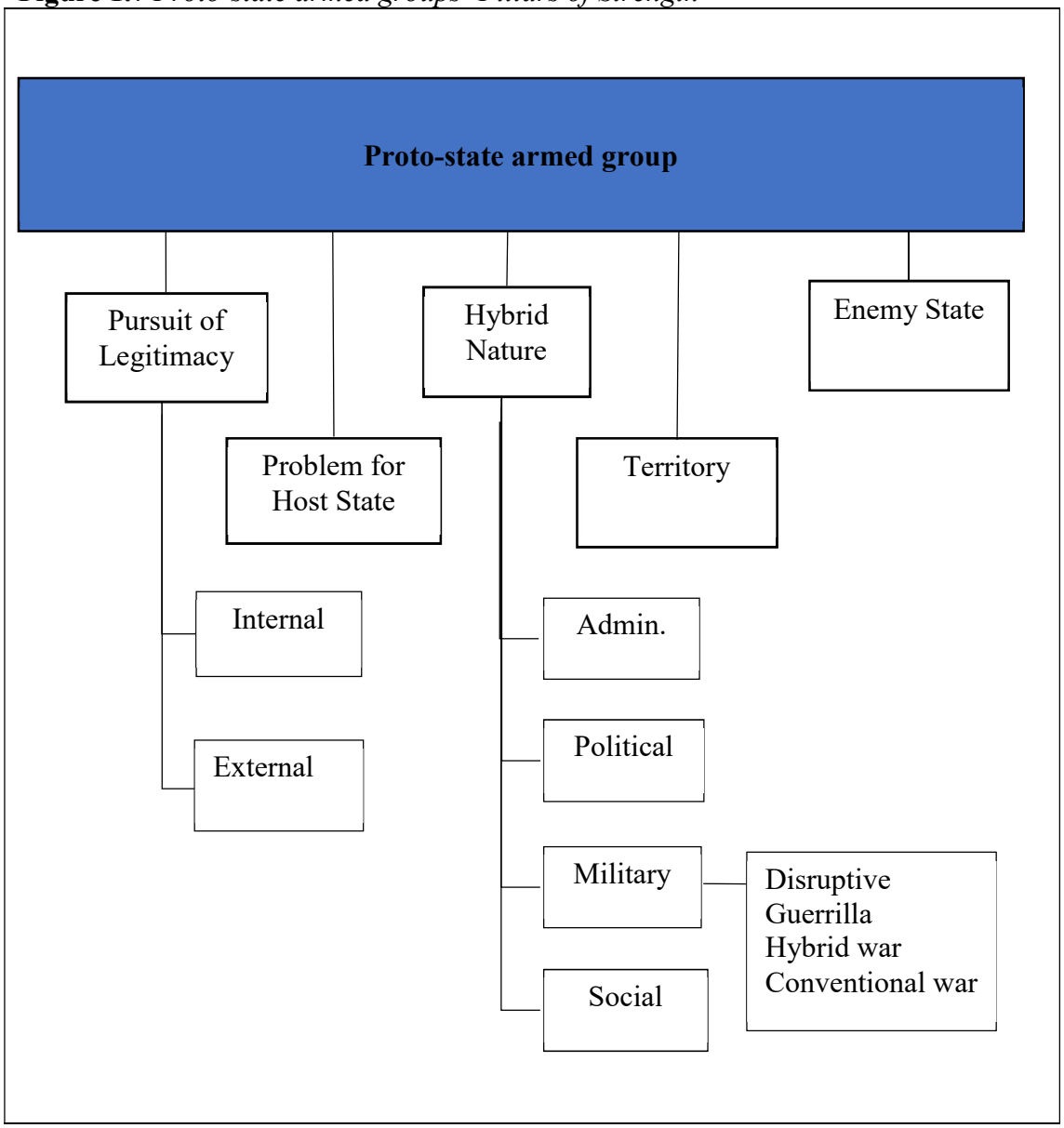
Table 1.4 State *Weakness*

State	Jor-dan	Leba-non	Afgha-nistan	Mo-roc-co	Yemen	Syria	Iraq	PNA in Gaza
2021	67	34	9	83	1	3	20	37
2020	67	40	(9)	80	1	4	17	
2019	69	44	(9)	78	1	4	13	
2018	70	44	9	83	3	4	11	
2017	71	43	9	84	4	5	10	
2016	77	40	9	89	4	6	11	
2015	81	40	8	89	4	9	12	
2014	83	46	7	92	8	15	13	
2013	87	46	7	93	6	21	11	
2012	90	45	6	87	8	23	9	
2011	96	43	7	87	13	48	9	
2010	90	34	6	90	15	48	7	
2009	86	29	7	92	18	39	6	
2008	82	18	7	88	21	35	5	
2007	81	28	8	85	24	40	2	
2006	74	65	10	76	16	33	4	

Note: Adapted from https://fragilestatesindex.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/fsi2021-report.pdf. By Fund for Peace, 2021.

Figure 1.7 below depicts the essential requirements for a group to be qualified as a proto-state armed group.

Figure 1.7 *Proto-state armed groups' Pillars of Strength*



Note: Author's compilation.

Proto-State Relationship with the Host State

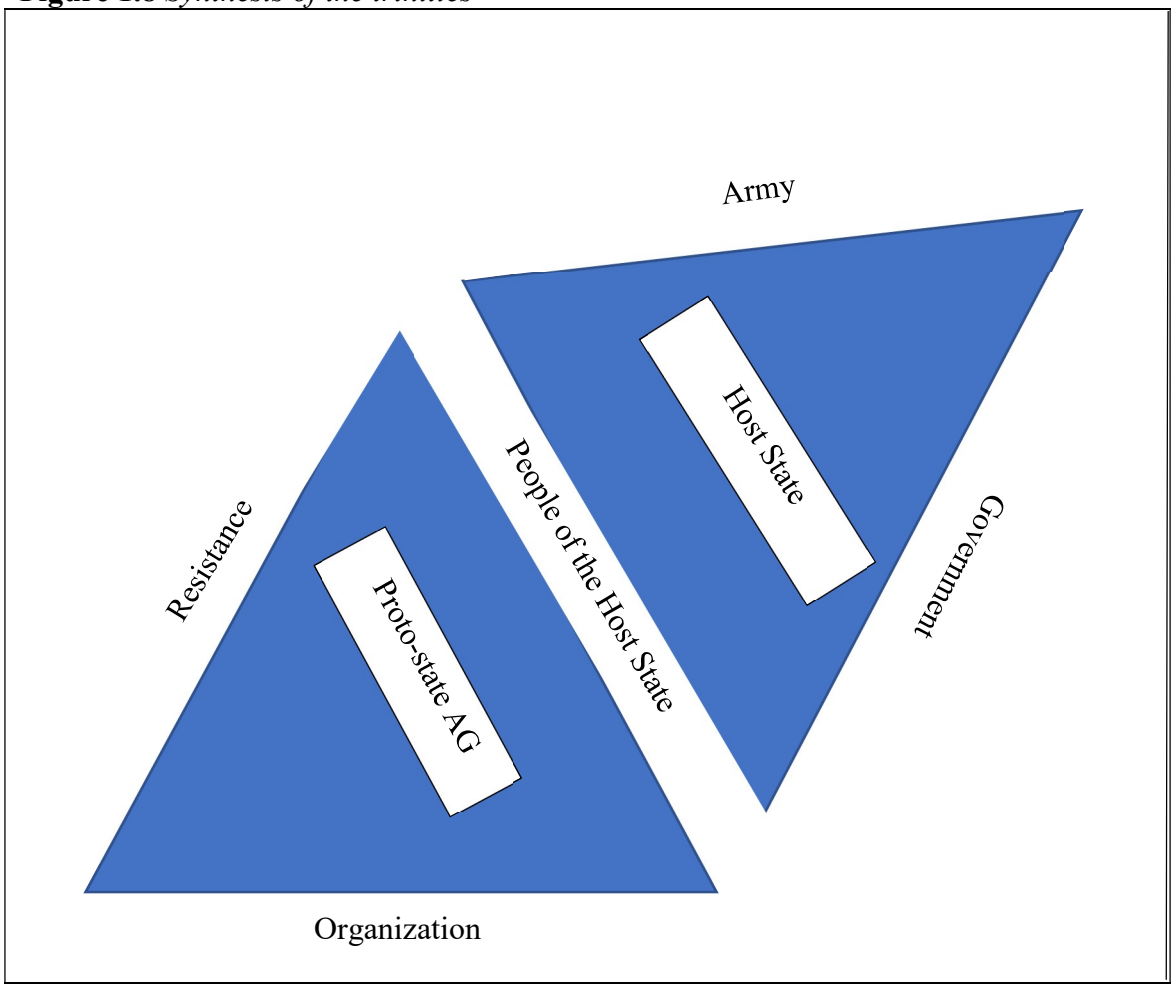
Clausewitz's classical war theory depends on the trinity of war. For a successful war a relationship of the three main elements is required; the first is the political governance of the state, the second is the army with the genius of its generalship, the third is the people with their emotions and support. Proto- State armed groups lack sovereignty, so the case is different for proto-state armed groups, the groups maintain a balanced trinity by excluding the weak government of the state in which they live and replacing it with their call for 'resistance'.

Hassan Nasrallah labeled his party's trinity by 'Golden Trinity,' which consists of 'resistance,' people, and the army. In this trinity, he ignores the role of the political system; his resistance offsets that absence.

This kind of trinity is a challenge to the State, but it provides a sort of solace to some citizens whose view is that conventional armies are not in match with external adversaries like Israel. Proto-state armed groups have proved themselves in the eyes of Middle Easterners to be competent parties to handle wars with powerful states like the US, USSR in Afghanistan, and Israel in Lebanon and inside the Gaza Strip. A stark example is the experience of Iraq's Popular Mobilization Units (PMU), the 'Hashed al-Shaa'bi'. They enjoyed an internal legitimacy because of their role in combating the IS and later they became an integral part of the Iraqi governance structures. The start of the PMU dates back to 2014 when IS controlled about a third of Iraq. As a consequence of Iraqi Army failure, Ayatollah Sistani, the widely respected Shia cleric, issued a fatwa[20] asking Iraqi citizens to join security and military forces to stand against the IS threat. This *fatwa* led to mass mobilization and the formation of the 'Hashed al-Shaa'bi' (Popular Mobilization). The PMU is estimated at 140,000 fighters from more than 40 paramilitary units (Watling, 2016). Nouri al-Malki, the Prime Minster who ruled Iraq from 2006 until 2014 admitted that he created the PMU to replicate the IRGC (Fadhil, 2022, 0:50). The case mentioned above demonstrates the success of the proto-state armed groups and the State's failure. Similarly, Hezbollah victory over Israel and forcing it to pull out from South Lebanon, and Hamas forcing Sharon to dismantle settlements in the Gaza Strip in 2005, all are examples of the success of this phenomenon. It is worth saying that a policy that overlooks any one of the three branches or pursues to fix an arbitrary relationship would be erroneous. Figure 1.8 on the next page shows that the host state's trinity and the proto-state armed group's trinity has a common element – the people, and they are in competition for its support.

[20] Fatwa means a ruling on a point of Islamic law given by a recognized religious authority; they are usually about ordinary life issue like divorce.

Figure 1.8 *Synthesis of the trinities*



Note: Author's compilation

Research Methodology

> *"Mixed methods research is the type of research in which a researcher or team of researchers combines elements of qualitative and quantitative research approaches (e. g., use of qualitative and quantitative viewpoints, data collection, analysis, inference techniques) for the general purposes of breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration"*
>
> (Johnson et al. 2007, p. 123)

This section discusses the research methodology used in this dissertation. Research in security studies is conducted for two extensive purposes: firstly, to solve real problems, which is known by applied, or policy research. Policy research is conducted to improve how security works, with the tacit understanding that we make our world safer.

Applied research is fundamental in the counterterrorism subfield of security studies. The main purpose is better understanding and making sound decisions. According to Hakim (2000) "policy research is concerned with knowledge for action. As a result, it focuses on 'actionable factors or variables.' The objective of this type of research can be expressed in the phrase, it is more important to change the world than to understand it" (p.4).

The second type of research is called basic or pure research or theoretical research which aims to advance security knowledge and better understanding of processes.

"Methods employed in theoretical research are often aimed at identifying causal processes and explaining them. Furthermore, policy research has an underlying goal of prediction. For such reason, researchers conducting policy research employ simulations, mathematical modeling, forecasting, time-series studies, and other more advanced quantitative tools" (McNabb, 2014, p. 48).

This dissertation can be categorized as a blend of the two types of research. It is theoretical research in the sense that it studies the survival of armed groups to advance the body of knowledge in this subfield. It is also policy research that discusses both Hamas and Hezbollah research problems.

The main objectives of this dissertations are to investigate the factors that lead to the survival of violent armed groups inside the Middle East and the proliferation of terrorism in the same region.

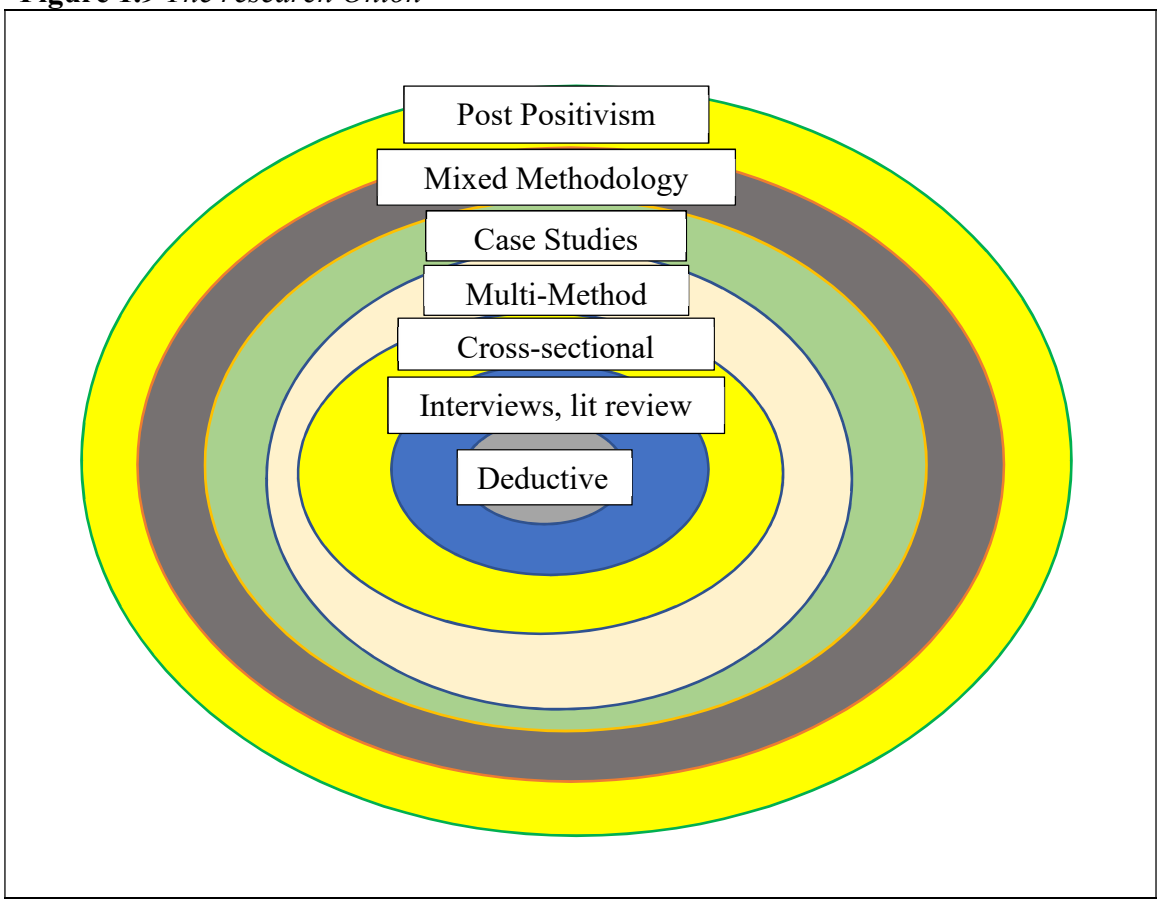
As to the philosophical approach of the investigation, a clear research problem draws to identifying which model to adopt. The objective, in turn, determines the research's purpose, and that suggests the research design (McNabb, 2014). (See Figure 1.9 on the next page).

The *ontological base* of my research is multi-layered. The question of proto-state armed groups' survival, such as Hamas and Hezbollah, their transition from violent armed resistance to political integration, most importantly, their relationship to the question of ideology and the Israeli responses cannot belong to one reality, the reality in this issue is not external; it is deeply seated internal reality because of its symbolic meanings.

The *epistemological* position in this research is informed by subjectivity. Armed resistance does not have temporal logic, leading to minor victories. In the axiological part, it is hard to separate the researcher from the context of the conflict, so more effort was needed for more objectivity and dependence on multiple sources of reliable information since ignorance of one side would lead to more biased conclusions. That would be contrary to the objective of this research seeking

for more abstract. truths. Figure 1.9 shows the research onion relying on the research philosophical stance.

Figure 1.9 *The research Onion*



Note: Author's compilation

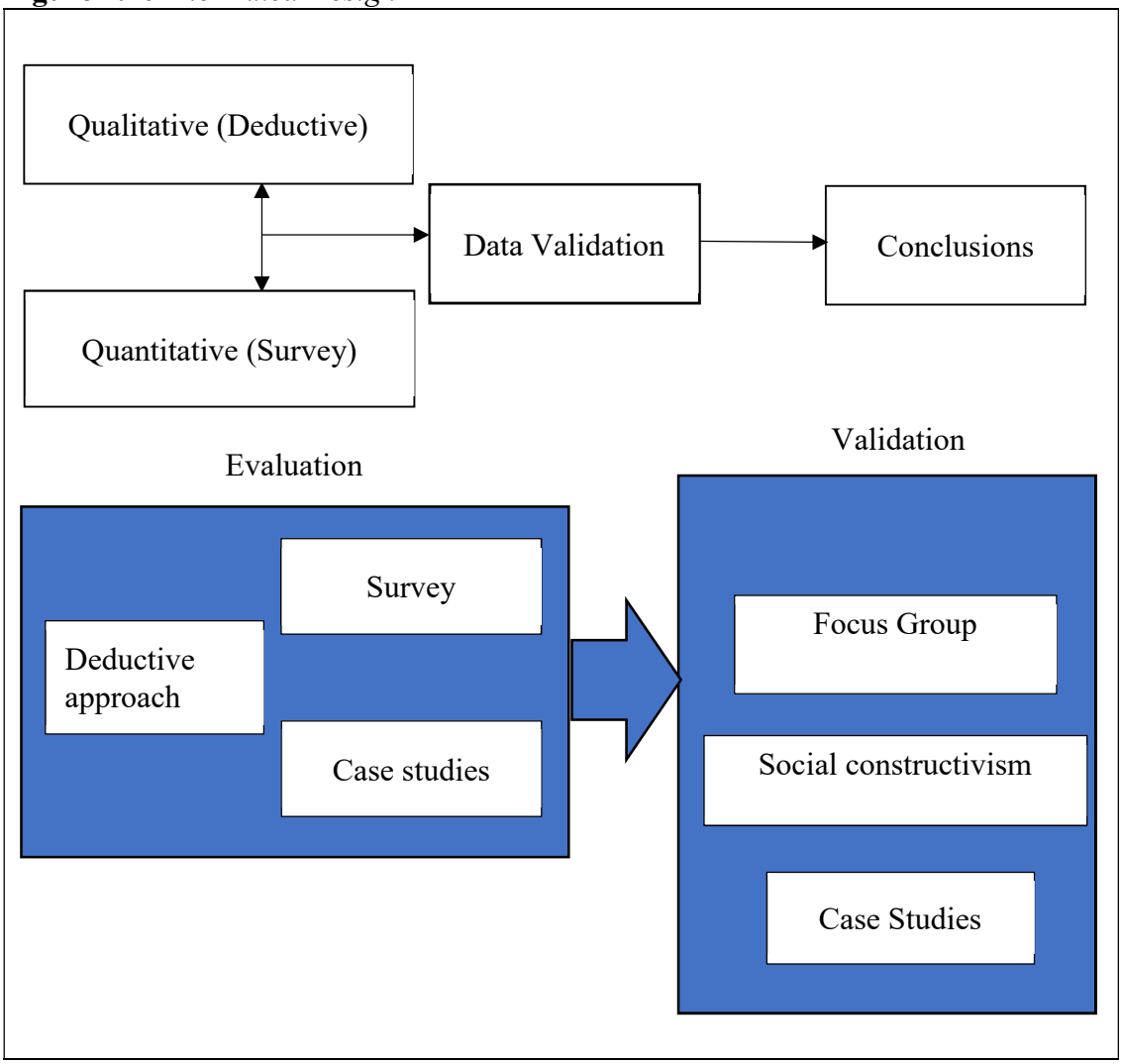
Social constructivism provides the theoretical platform for such epistemological disposition as it considers factors of the ideational realm and the role of identity. Clausewitz's theory of war is not far from this: in his book '*On War*' he emphasized the role of morals and morale beside the material capabilities for achieving victories.

The methodology to be used is to establish the analytical framework of the survival of armed groups by the use of a deductive approach to extract the theory from the grounded data.

Research in all disciplines may be conducted using one of three core types of research designs: single method (monomethod: quantitative or qualitative), mixed-method (either some quantitative or some qualitative elements in a single method focus), and multimethod (more than one data collection and analysis type in a single paradigm type) (Creswell, 2008, p.426). This research relies on the mixed-methodology paradigm in general; it consists of quantitative

and qualitative, deductive and inductive approaches employed to collect and trace data (See Figure 1.10). “There is no one method of acquiring knowledge about politics” (Stocker & Marsh, 2002, p.15); and “there now exist not only multiple approaches to empirical research, but also multiple agendas for the discipline as a whole” (Dryzek, Farr, & Leonard,1995, p.2), there is a “growing tendency to use different research methods and strategies within the same studies” (Denscombe, 2002).

Figure 1.10 *The Mixed Design*



Note: Author’s compilation

The first step in this research was to use the deductive approach to extract the conceptual framework from the surveyed literature data, later a survey of 400 respondents about the main extracted factors of survival was conducted and validated by the use of the case studies approach.

The comparative approach is used to deduce the elements that make the proto-state armed group survivable rather than other groups by observing the main groups most researchers predetermine as proto-state armed groups. The research approach is the case study, which places Hamas and Hezbollah under scrutiny to validate the extracted results.

Yin (1984) described the case study approach as "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, and mainly when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not evident" (p. 13).

Van Evera (2016) suggested that case studies are particularly appropriate for use to establish a theory or theories and to test theories that already exist. This fits this dissertation as it investigates the factors that lead to the survival of armed groups in the Middle East, and to explain any similar cases.

Yin (1984) identified five critical characteristics of applicable case study. The first is that it should be significant. Significance means that it can stand out as an excellent example; of course, the case study has to be "*relevant*. *The other one is that the case study must consider alternative perspectives."* Throughout the case study, the researcher has to present alternative interpretations for the raw data; alternative interpretations were provided in the discussion of Hamas and Hezbollah.

The case study has to display sufficient evidence; data reduction is undesirable; all the relevant data should be shown. *The case study must be written engagingly*. Readers often complain about case studies being too long, difficult to comprehend, or simply dull; the writer has to entice readers and attract their interest. These conditions apply to the selection of Hamas and Hezbollah as both are significant armed groups in the Middle East. Also, they are relevant to the dissertation topic.

Research Design

After the conclusion of the literature review, a survey is presented in which an analysis of the respondents' answers is conducted about the survival element of both groups.

In the second phase, the qualitative phase, the primary goal is to reach more accurate answers from field experts and subject matter experts (SMEs) to validate the results of the first phase by using a focus group.

"*A focus group is a discussion group in which six to ten (more or less) subjects explore a specific set of ideas or issues under the guidance of a moderator or session leader. It has been a staple research technique for many years*" (McNabb, 2015, p. 102).

According to David McNabb (2015) focus groups are used to bring out the background or contextual information, which is the survival of armed groups, also to "identify salient issues that appear to be shared among sample members. And to get respondent opinions about previous research that has been done on the topic" (McNabb, 2015, p. 104); whereas, Barbour and Kitzinger (1999) maintain that this technique might be used after conducting surveys to explain any response outliers. This way ensures a multifaceted interpretative approach that analyzes all the underlying factors.

Table 1.5 below shows the methods used in this research:

Table 1.5 *Hypotheses testing and validation methods*

Hypothesis	Method	Validation Method
The survival of proto-state armed groups depends on the interaction between the group and other circles of influence in the state circle, regional circle, international system, enemy state, and other groups circles.	Deductive approach	Survey case studies
The CoG for the conflict between a proto-state armed group and the state is the state's legitimacy, while the operational CoG is the power of resistance.	Analysis of CoG	Case studies
The victory equation is tripartite, affecting the group's support from inside and outside the state, destruction of the power of resistance, and recovery prevention.	Analysis of historical case studies	Focus group, case studies
The main factor for the proliferation of terrorism in the Middle East is the political socio-economic environment prevalent in the region.	Analysis of GTD[21]	Focus group

[21] GTD is 'Global Terrorism Data' available at https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/

The Survey

I used a survey method to investigate the views of 400 respondents about the value of the survival factors of both groups. The size of the sample is suitable (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010).

The survival factors investigated in this survey are eight: public support, external support, ideology, the role of Israeli calculations and reactions, the effect of financial assets, the military capabilities, the connection with other armed groups, and the weakness of the host state. The following table 1.6 shows the demographic distribution used in the survey.

Table 1.6 *Sample Characteristics*

Location	Number	Male	Female
Jordan	200	100	100
West Bank	100	50	50
Gaza	100	50	50
Total	400	200	200

The SPSS software was used to analyze and process the gathered data and ultimately prove the first hypothesis. The main techniques that were used are:

- Cronbach's Alpha reliability (a) "Split Half and Spearman-Brown Coefficient) tests to measure the correlation's strength, coherence between questionnaire items, and reliability.
- Descriptive Statistical Techniques, including means standard deviations.
- In one Sample T-test, the researcher used (t value = 2) to increase the value of accuracy.

The scale used is 5- Likert, as shown in Table 1.7 on the next page:

Table 1.7 *The scale used*

Very Low	Low	Medium	Significant	Very Significant
1	2	3	4	5

Relative importance, assigned due to:

$$\text{Class Interval} = \frac{\text{Maximum Class} - \text{Minimum Class}}{\text{Number of Level}}$$

$$\text{Class Interval} = \frac{5 - 1}{3} = \frac{4}{3} = 1.33$$

- The Low degree from 1.00- 2.33
- The Medium degree from 2.34 – 3.67
- The High degree from 3.68 – 5.00

To test the questionnaire for clarity I submitted it to two reviewers to take their feedback about its sincerity and relevance and ability to measure the anticipated objectives.

To measure the stability of an instrument study, I have used the equation of internal consistency using Split Half method test, in which the value of Cronbach alpha for Hamas was (0.494), for Hezbollah was (0.738), the correlation between two parts was (0.706), and Spearman Brown coefficient value was (0.828) which is acceptable for the study as shown in Table 1.8. The results of the survey are shown in chapter six.

Table 1.8 *Cronbach's alpha for the study fields*

Reliability Statistics			
Cronbach's Alpha	Part 1 Hamas	Value	.494
		N of Items	8[a]
	Part 2 Hezbollah	Value	.738
		N of Items	8[b]
	Total N of Items		16
Correlation Between Forms			.706
Spearman-Brown Coefficient	Equal Length		.828
	Unequal Length		.828
Guttman split-half Coefficient			.825

Validity and Reliability

Validity is the extent to which the data and the interpretation are credible, while reliability means similar results are obtained when using the same data collection method, the author used multiple methods for this task (Smith & Noble, 2014).

Prolonged Engagement

The author did not rely on just the existing literature for this research but also contacted experts who could validate the findings and the continuous data collection to ensure that the data was not based on isolated, idiosyncratic experience that includes the use of a focus group.

Use of detailed and in-depth descriptions

To ensure that other scholars might reach similar conclusions.

Triangulation

Data were obtained from at least three different sources to confirm its validity.

Discrepant information

The existence of information regarding observations or findings contrary to the study's key themes is acknowledged and identified.

Clarification of researcher biases

The ethics section of this dissertation acknowledges the researcher and the sample biases and their preconceptions that will inevitably color the research's conclusions.

Peer Debriefing

Other experts were consulted to ensure that the findings and the research methodology made sense.

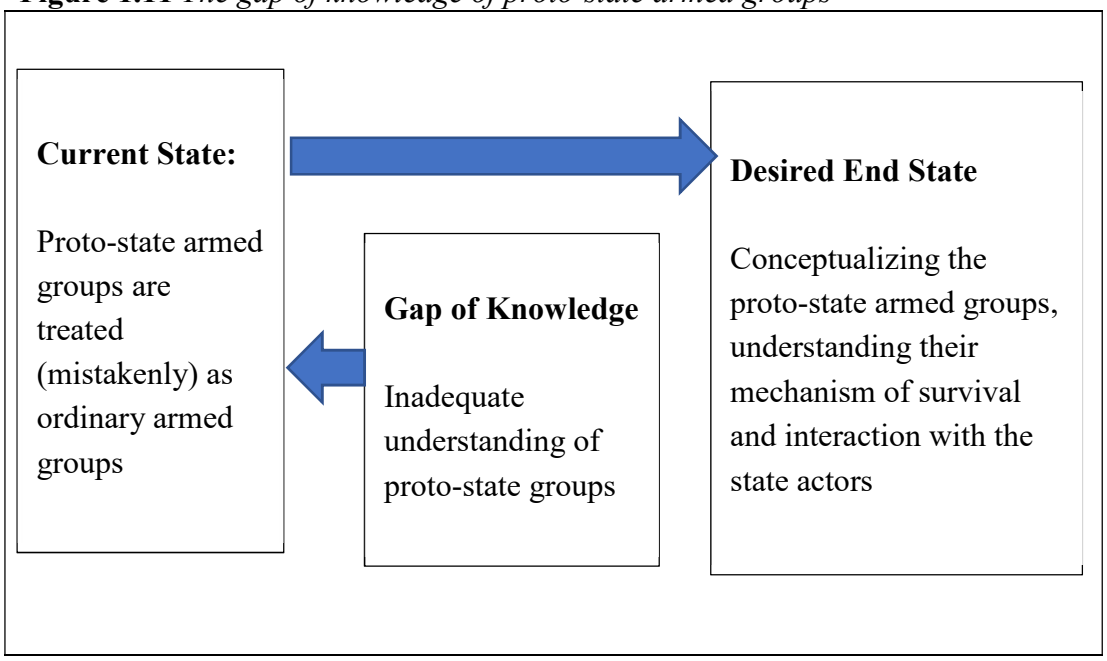
External audit

The author validated the findings through the use of scientific publications.

Conclusions

This chapter discussed the extensive literature survey that was carried out to contextualize this research within the security studies field. The literature review covers three topics: the survival of terrorist groups, counterterrorism measures, and finally, the theoretical perspectives used in this dissertation. The section on survivability finds that different approaches have tackled this subject; their common denominator is how these organizations end. However, this approach does not substantiate the research on these organizations. The gap is the absence of a comprehensive approach that considers elements from the surrounding environment as internal elements relevant to the group. The other gap of knowledge is found in the absence of specified studies for the topic of survival of proto-state armed groups, which are less entrenched in academic studies. The following figure (1.11) depicts the current lack of information about the proto-armed groups, and the desired end state that this research aims to reach.

Figure 1.11 *The gap of knowledge of proto-state armed groups*



Note: Author's compilation

The other advantage is taking a lead in conceptualizing the proto-state groups and assigning the main factors that lead to their survival. From the dedicated study of those groups identified as proto-state armed groups, it can be concluded that they share a few characteristics that distinguish them from other militant groups. The method used looks upon the proto-state armed groups generally recognized as 'state within a state,' e.g., Hamas, Hezbollah, Amal, Taliban, Houthis, Fatah. Finally, it discussed the research methodology, a mixed-research methodology which is convenient for this type of research and to validate the results.

Chapter Two

Evaluation of Hypotheses

"State on state conflicts is being replaced by hybrid wars and asymmetric conflicts in which there is no clear-cut distinction between soldiers and civilians and between organized violence, terror, crime and war"

(Dupont, 2003)

This chapter evaluates hypothesis (1) regarding the factors of proto-state armed groups' survival, hypothesis (2), about the CoG of the proto-state armed groups and the host state, hypothesis (3), which investigates a victory theory for the host state and proto-state armed groups; and hypothesis (4) regarding the proliferation of terrorism in the Middle East.

Hypothesis (1): Survival of the Proto-State Armed Group

The objective of this part of the dissertation is to evaluate the first hypothesis and to establish an analytical framework that can be used to analyze the survival of proto-state armed groups , which will be later double-checked by the two case studies of Hamas and Hezbollah as they represent the strongest evident examples of this phenomenon in the world.

The first hypothesis says:

A proto-state armed group survives due partly to internal factors particular to the group in and of itself, and partly to its interactions with the external circles. The external circles are the host state, the region, and the international system. Besides these circles, the group interacts positively or negatively with the other groups and the enemy state that targets the group's survival.

The methodology used to evaluate this hypothesis is mixed- research methodology. It starts by the use of a deductive approach and a supplementary survey to find out more about the factors that contributed to the survival of Hamas and Hezbollah. The validation phase is through the use of case studies approach by applying the deduced analytical framework on both Hamas and Hezbollah[22].

[22] The survey results are displayed in the conclusion chapter because it holds a comparison between the two groups.

Table 2.1 *Hypothesis testing and validation methods*

Hypothesis	Method	Validation Method
A proto-state armed group survives due partly to internal factors particular to the group and partly to its interactions with the external circles surrounding the group circle.... etc.	Deductive approach by collecting and analyzing data to establish an analytical framework, in addition to a survey conducted in Jordan, the West Bank and Gaza Strip.	Case studies in chapter Three and Four Survey results in chapter six

The current concept of a proto-state armed group is not entrenched within the academic environment, so it is hard to find a specific reference that focuses on it. To fill this void in knowledge, the research takes a step back and examines the broad spectrum of violent armed groups that includes insurgent groups, terrorist groups, militias, and other violent groups. Before narrowing the focus to proto-state armed groups; the unavailability of enough studies on the survival of proto-state armed groups let alone the term 'proto-state armed groups' which is conflated with other types of armed groups; necessitates this step.

Discussion of the Survival of Armed Groups

The first characteristic to note is the ***size*** of the group; the size of violent armed groups is an essential factor; terrorist groups cannot survive without a steady flow of recruits. Their survival is attached to their size. Small groups (fewer than 100 members) are less likely to remain in power. On the other hand, significant forces facilitate infiltrations and jeopardize operational security. Therefore, the best solution is to have a rigorous selection system and find the optimum number of members to satisfy operational needs.

The classification of groups according to the size as per (Jones & Libcki 2008, p.38), is that a very large group is one with over 10 thousand members at its peak, or to date, while large ones are those between one thousand and ten thousand, medium-sized groups are between 100 and 1000, while a small one has fewer than 100 members. Most scholars agree upon the importance of the group size's role in survival; more than 1000 have more probability of survival (Phillips, 2012).

A few researchers have examined the relationship between a group's size and survival and proved that a positive relationship exists (Vittori, 2009; Jones & Libcki 2008). According to

Jones and Libcki (2008), very large groups with more than 10 thousand members have a 25 percent chance of victory, while groups with less than 1000 members rarely succeed (p. 40).

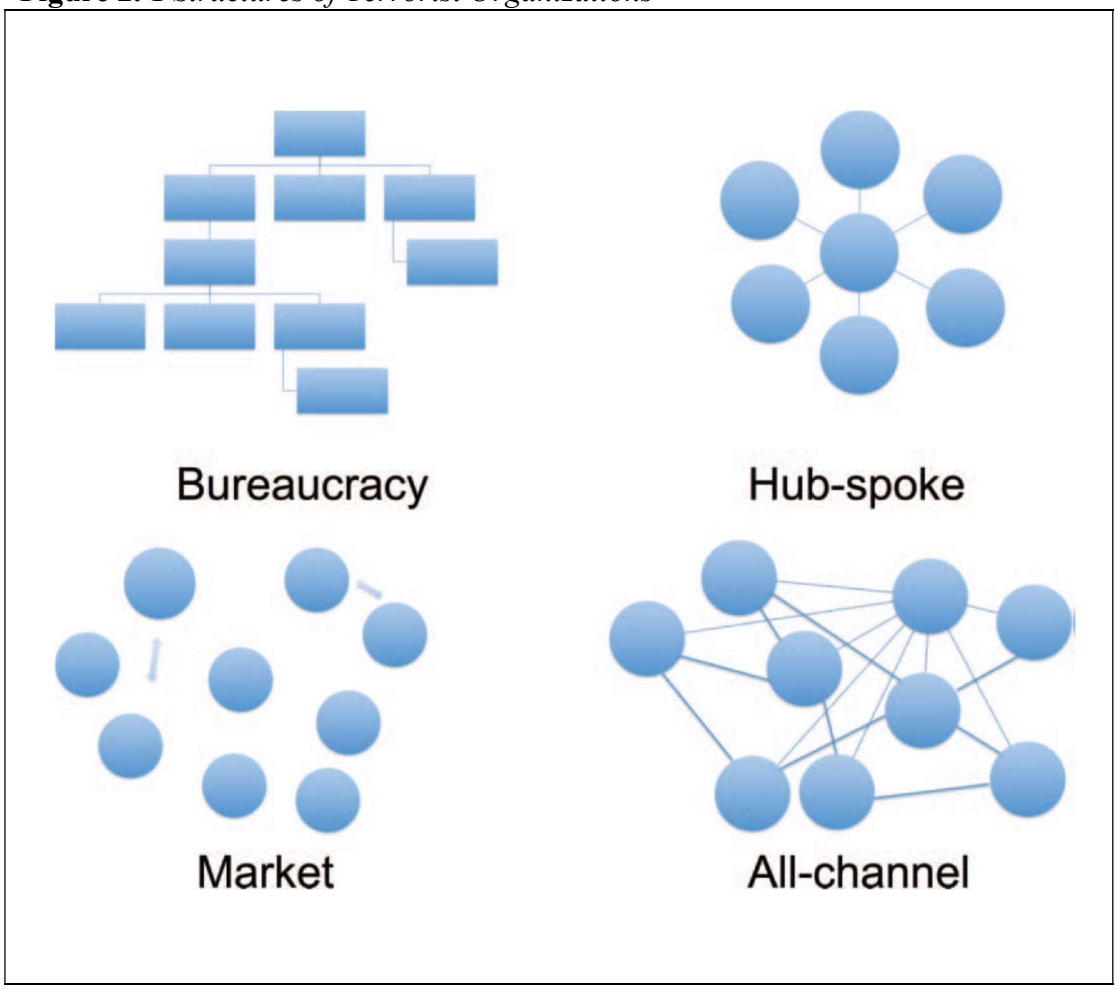
Blomberg et al. (2011) claim that an increase of group's size by 10 percent can lengthen its survival by about five months, while terrorist groups with religious ideologies operate longer than those with leftist, nationalist beliefs, or right-wing groups (p. 455). Furthermore, increasing the group's participation in transnational attacks by 10 percent decreases its survival by about 1.2 years. Also, a 10 percent increase in the non-terrorist causalities decreases its survival by about 2.5 months. (Blomberg et al., 2011). The issue with guerrillas is different. It is the "weakness of guerrillas that operate in small groups that can be wiped out in minutes. However, because they operate in small groups, they can move rapidly and secretly into the enemy's vulnerable rear" (Zedong, 1937 p.25). Similarly, it can be argued that size matters less for terrorist groups than for proto-state armed groups.

Concerning the ***organizational structure***, Cronin (2008) studied the benefits and pitfalls of vertically organized groups and concluded that they are more susceptible to leadership targeting while having more control over their members. Moreover, these groups have 'evident organizational boundaries', clear chain of command, accurate reporting mechanism, and formal decision-making procedures. Hezbollah is one of the groups that uses this typology because of the group's relative security inside Lebanon.

Kilberg (2012) categorized terrorist groups as depicted in figure 2.1 on the next page, according to organizational structure into:

- Bureaucracy/hierarchy, e.g., Hezbollah
- Hub-Spoke, spread over a vast geographical area, e.g., al-Qaida.
- The All-Channel group is small, less than six, leadership is loosely coordinated, e.g., Abu-Sayyaf Group.
- The market organization has no discernible leadership, e.g., Earth Liberation Front.

Figure 2. 1 *Structures of Terrorist Organizations*



Note. Reprinted from "A Basic Model Explaining Terrorist Group Organizati Structure" by J. Kilberg, 2012, *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, p. 813

Finance plays its role in the buildup and improvement of the armed groups; financial assets are needed to support salaries, social services, weapons acquisition, incentives for families of killed-in-action personnel. However, the organizations require proper management, otherwise they will primarily invest in illicit economic projects like drug trafficking, gold, and diamond operations.

Dishman (2001) researched the crime-terrorism nexus and identified the criminal enterprises – primarily drug trafficking – that assist terrorism (Shelley & Picarelli, 2002, p.312).

The revenues help in the recruitment process and financing of terrorist activities, similar to drug trafficking, increasing the duration of civil wars (Ross, 2004). Countries that produce cocaine or heroin have sturdy terrorist groups (Piazza, 2011) and experience more terrorism. However, participation in the drug trade is likely to harm the groups, as it shifts their objectives from

'resistance' goals into pure members' enrichment, as the example of FARC shows. Deviation into illegal financing is not far from Merton's (1957) notion of 'goal displacement',[23] when a group shifts its *raison d'être* to merely survival. At the same time, other researchers believe that organizations involved in illicit operations like money laundering are more resilient and can survive more than others, although they risk shifting their objectives.

For the groups to act and prove their nature, building a reputation of violence is needed, which *Carlo Pisacane* called a 'propaganda of the deed' (Sinclair, 2003). This reputation includes the capability of diversifying violent tactics and reliance on domestic terrorism, which gives the group a better chance of survival (Blomberg et al., 2011). PLO in the 1970s maintained that 'Black September' external operations were designed to shed light on the existence of a Palestinian cause (Abou Daoud, 2020, 23:00)[24].

Another element is ***maturity*** which means that older groups have better chances of survival than newborn and young ones. Groups moderate as they mature and usually abandon terrorism to attain their objectives. Historical experience suggests very little hope of destroying an armed group after surviving the first phase and acquiring the sympathetic support of a significant segment of the population (Zedong, p. 27), also maturity increases military experience and capabilities which are equivocally crucial to the group's survival.

The ***operational security*** means the countermeasures including passive and active policies decrease the enemy state's capability to infiltrate the group. This element is noted in multiple accounts of successful operations against these groups. It is usually a clandestine war against the relentless efforts of the adversary's intelligence agencies to penetrate the group. In this aspect IS was easy prey because of its tolerant recruitment procedures. Fatah, DFLP, PFLP and other Palestinian groups after 1968 were open field for penetration from various intelligence groups, to the level that many groups were actually created by intelligence services. Such infiltration produced various contradicting interests that weakened the main bulk and deviated

[23] Goal displacement means the situation when organizational means, rules, and regulations become more important than organizational goals. Robert Merton is a distinguished US sociologist, more about his theories is at this link: https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Robert_K._Merton#References

[24] Mohammad Ouda, famous by his nom de guerre Abu Daoud was the commander of Fatah Militia in Jordan, he claimed that he was the main architect of the Munich 1972 operation. In his book he said that the main goal of the operation was to bring the Palestinian cause to the international forefront (Abo Daoud, 1999).

their struggle into intragroup, Arafat was lenient in this matter by his famous saying 'Let one thousand flowers blossom in the Palestinian field[25]' (Banat, 2004)

The ***host- state's weakness*** is a preferred condition for the armed groups to thrive; the World Bank defines weak states as: "states characterized by poor governance, internal conflicts or tenuous post-conflict transitions, fragile security, fractured societal relations, corruption, breakdown in the rule of law and insufficient mechanisms for generating legitimate power and authority" (Underhill, 2014, p. 19). One of the famous indexes for measuring fragile states is The Fund for Peace (FFP) through the Foreign Policy Journal every year.

The leading indicators for deciding about the fragility of states are four main categories: social, economic, security, and cohesion. The FFP suggested nine signs to measure the index: fractured elites, a weak economy and spread of poverty, uneven developments, thin security apparatus, inadequate public service, the range of human flight and brain drain, state legitimacy, the existence of external intervention, the presence of group grievances, the demographic pressure and influx of refugees and IDPs. The main symptoms of weak states that assist the proliferation of terrorism are porous borders that enable terrorists to infiltrate from one country to another and smuggle weapons and finance. Also, their security apparatus does not have a monopoly over means of coercive power. Moreover, state weakness allows insurgency and terrorist groups to develop within their borders. In this aspect, different kinds of armed groups are more likely to develop in weak states (Carter, 2012; Young & Dugan, 2010).

Several studies emphasized the importance of ***regime type*** to the survival of armed groups (Wade & Reiter, 2007; Piazza 2006), believing that autocratic states are less vulnerable to terrorism, as these states have more freedom in arresting suspicious people without the burden of search warrants, while democratic states promote terrorism survival by their high margins of personal freedoms. An example is the decline of leftist terrorism in Argentina at the end of the 1970s when military dictatorships ruthlessly killed members and sympathizers. (Fearon & Laitin,2003)

Nevertheless, Bloomberg et al. (2010) consistently failed to find a statistically significant relationship between democracy and the survival of armed groups. However, there are other cases with autocratic regimes with a high rate of terrorism, e.g., Egypt. However, the

[25] The original quote was by Mao Zedong who invited intellectuals who felt constrained not to criticize the communist party in 1957. During that conference he said "the policy of letting a hundred flowers blossom and a hundred schools of thought contend is the policy for promoting progress in the arts and the sciences and a flourishing socialist culture in our land", afterward, he conducted a crackdown on those who criticized the party.

impervious character of the Egyptian case can be explained by the damage terrorist operations have done to society.

Public support is essential for armed groups as evident in the cases of IRA, Taliban, and other organizations. This principle is confirmed in the writings of most guerrilla fighters like Mao Zedong (Zedong, 1937).

Carlos Marighella in his *Mini manual of the Urban Guerrilla* (1971), argues that the groups have to "engage in armed activities to force the military forces toward intensifying repressive activities, which will turn the population against the state and make it support the guerrillas" (p. 56). One of Fatah's published document says, " *Regarding the Israeli use of violence against our brothers who are under the Israeli occupation, the pain they have to endure is the pain that will push them to embrace the revolution; we should not get annoyed when the enemy - as a result of our heavy blows to him - retaliate against our brothers, because our brothers should not feel stable under the occupation, the Algerian rebels were targeting the French soldiers in the declared calm areas to cause the French revenge, by this action they brought these calm areas into the revolution; besides that, the expulsion of our brothers from their occupied lands is not a disturbing act, especially to the surrounding Arab areas which lands will be used for preparation to the revolution*"[26] (Fatah, n.d.).

Mao Zedong compared guerrillas to "fish and the social environment to the water they swim in. If the political temperature is correct, the fish, however few, will thrive and proliferate. Therefore, the guerrilla leader's primary concern is to get the water to the right temperature and keep it there" (p. 93). The group needs as critical threshold of public support to sustain its operations, it varies from 15 to 25 percent (Zedong, 1937, p. 27).

The citizens of the host state are subjected to competition between various armed groups and the state for loyalty through the provision of public services and goods, which enable the armed groups to ask for sacrifices from their followers (Crenshaw, 2010, p.6). Nevertheless, Crenshaw overlooked the fact that at the same time these groups also rely on coercion - which can be pretty savage - to sustain their public support, popularity is not the same as public support.

The other element is the plethora of armed groups within the state minimizes the likelihood of many of them surviving, as they all compete for the same pool of recruits, resources, and population support. (Young & Dugan, 2010). this element is called ***'group density.***' In the case

[26] The original text is in Arabic language, so the translation is by the author

of proto-state armed groups they themselves control other groups and do not allow density to happen.

Researchers who study the **state economy** to find a relationship claim that a relatively high per capita GDP is increasing a group's survival, as it bolsters its prospect at home, provides a target-rich environment, and may also provide skilled recruits (Benmelech & Berrebi, 2007). At the same time, a high per capita GDP has a negative influence: discontent with the current regime may be less, thus, limiting the group's success.

A large population can serve as a shield by making it more difficult for the government to find terrorists hiding in plain sight. Also, it provides a bigger pool to recruit new members.

Another critical factor is the ***topography*** of the state. Mountains, jungles, and other rugged terrain provide better cover that promotes survival. Also, if the state's borders are easy to cross, that helps the groups sustain themselves from outside suppliers. This element is seen in Afghanistan, Yemen, Lebanon, and Gaza. Topography of the terrain played a significant role for Houthis, Taliban, Hezbollah and Hamas.

State sponsorship is an essential element; Byman (2005) defined state sponsorship as a "government's intentional assistance to a terrorist group to help it use violence, bolster its political activities " (p.10). Sponsorship helps terrorist groups fund their operations and increase their unity and size; for example, the IRA increased its operation in the 1980s after being supported by Libya (Mallie & McKittrick, 2001, p. 67). By studying groups from 1968 until 1990, Carter (2012) found out that 19 percent of the terrorist armed group had sponsorship at least for a period in their existence.

On the other hand, state sponsorship has some disadvantages as well. For example, the Palestinian groups' dependence on outside support led to organizational divisions within the overall nationalist movement that the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) struggled to control (Crenshaw, 2010, p.3). Carter (2012) argues that "groups can come to depend excessively on their sponsors, being left vulnerable if the sponsor decides to withdraw support" (p.3). Sponsorship may also turn some groups into mercenary activities like Abu Nidal Group (ANO) [27] or the Japanese Red Army working for Libya.

[27] This group was headed by Sabri al Banna, *nom de guerre* (Abu Nidal means 'father of the struggle', he was a member of Fatah, represented it in Sudan and Iraq, in an unclear move he created 'Fatah Revolutionary Council' which is famously called 'Abu Nidal' group, and his group committed many terrorist actions against Jordan, and

Social network theory suggests that ***ties among armed groups*** prolong their survival by mobilization. Relationships among the groups can take one of the following forms: cooperative, competitive or adversarial.

Cooperative groups share military experience and resources (Wiewel & Hunter, 1985). The relationship is crucial to survival as it entails coordinated attacks, shared logistics, and the exchange of experience. For example, after al-Qaida moved to Pakistan, it provided the other Pakistani groups with a wealth of knowledge that improved their status. An important part of the cooperation among these groups is in the field of information exchange, they actively update their attitudes after the acquisition of new information.

Counterintuitively, adversarial or competitive relationship might strengthen armed groups by providing their members with a sense of need to advance their position (Phillips, 2012 p. 50). The adversarial relation might arm actions between groups, e.g., Hamas and Fatah in 2007, ETA, and Spain's Anti-Terrorism Liberation Group (Phillips, 2012). Phillips draws a conclusion by claiming that groups with violent adversarial relationships lengthen their survival for four reasons: they can encourage (or coerce) civilians to take their side; promote crucial innovation, provide incentives to the group's members and make it possible to spoil peace talks. One example is Hamas's violence increasing in the time of peace talks between PNA and Israel.

Armed groups seek ***international legitimacy*** to enhance their longevity by making interactions easier with other state actors. For example, Claire Sterling (1981) linked the prevalence of leftist terrorism to support from the Soviet Union and the Eastern Block. The USSR used terrorists in its proxy wars in various parts of the world. Also, the international system was crucial in the success of the Kosovo Liberation Army (UÇK). It would not have won against the powerful Yugoslav security forces without the support of NATO, the US, and the international human rights organizations. In addition, Milosevich misinterpreted the will of the Western powers: after he had signed the Dayton agreement, he mistakenly thought that he had purchased their benevolence (Kiss, 2014, p. 247).

At this level, proto-states strive to get international legitimacy and build relations that undermine their competitors and sustain their existence despite economic sanctions. The

Fatah's prominent leaders e.g., Salah Khalaf, ANO connections to either Israeli Mossad or Iraqi intelligence services is dubious

collapse of the Soviet Union brought down many groups−especially those fighting against western ideologies (Sterling, 1981).

The proto-state armed group does not exist in an isolated environment. In addition to its host state, there will always be interaction with an enemy state that the group needs to survive as a prerequisite for its cause, ideology and 'resistance' identity. The enemy state attempts to affect the other circles of survival like the regional, by finding allies or fighting against the sponsor-state even engaging with the public of the host state to reduce public support to the proto-state armed groups, and most importantly prevent the group from getting international legitimacy and target the supportive 'other groups' (Personal Communication, Dr. Erzsebet N. Rozsa, October 15, 2021)[28]. Additionally, the enemy state 'resolve' does affect the survival of the proto-state armed groups. The ***resolve*** of the enemy state represents the negative amount that works to outweigh or offsets the pros of all the other circles.

To highlight the importance of the resolve of the state, President George Bush delivered a speech after the al-Qaida attack on September 11 in which he said:

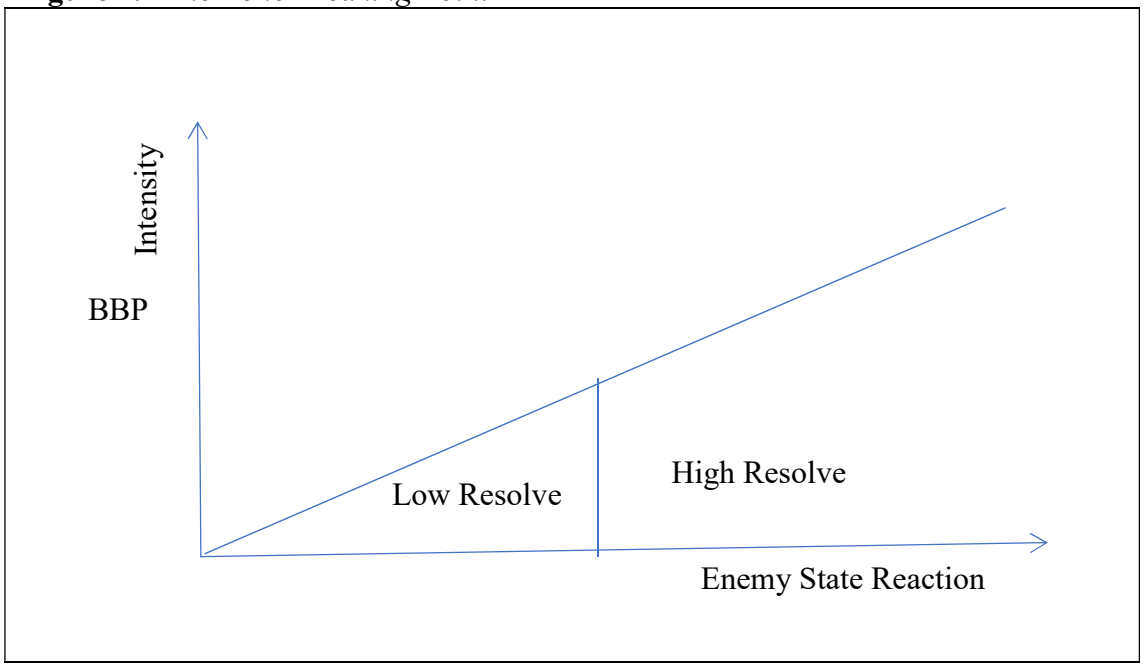
> *"Our grief has turned to anger and anger to resolution. Whether we bring our enemies to justice or bring justice to our enemies, justice will be done, and great harm has been done to us. We have suffered a significant loss. Moreover, we have found our mission and moment in our grief and anger"*
>
> President Bush, 2001

The primary element in the enemy state is the resolve of the state. The enemy state matches its reactions to the actions of the proto-state armed groups, as long as the group keeps its operations within the limits of low-intensity conflict. The enemy state is often a blessing in disguise for the proto-state armed groups' survival. Harlap (2019) emphasized the connection between victory over non-state actors and the state of resolve, which means that the enemy state will not necessarily fight its opponent with all its available might. Various calculations might oblige the enemy state to go to the extreme limit, to the point I call 'Bone Breaking Point' (BBP), which means that the group ought to play at low intensity and not exacerbate the situation, especially in its development phases.

[28] Interview with Professor Erzsebet N. Rozsa, who teaches international security among other subjects at the National University of Public Service

Figure 2.2 on the next page shows that BBP is the point that triggers violent action from the enemy state, it is the threshold which, if crossed by the group, will trigger the state to react with maximum resolve against the organization, while actions below that point can be tolerated or trigger less reaction. A good historical example is before September 11, when the US was not particularly tough on terrorism, though it reacted to bombing attacks in Kenya and Tanzania with missile inside Sudan and Afghanistan. When Qaida hit the USS Cole in Yemen, the vessel's commanding officer, Commander Kirk Lippold, said that the American people still did not recognize the threat, and it would take some 'seminal event' to awaken the public (Tenet, 2007, p.16).

Figure 2.2 *The Bone Breaking Point*



Note: Author's compilation

George Tenet (2007) complained about the frugal character of the US administrations toward the CIA before September 11, especially about the critical lack of resources to tackle terrorism that even led to the unavailability of interpreters (p.117). All that changed after al-Qaida crossed the BBP. The USA did not go to war against Japan during WWII until the Japanese attempted to cripple the US Navy in Pearl Harbor. That unexpected attack was above the 'Bone Breaking Point' which justified the US entrance decision to WWII for its public. Similarly, Israel escalated its operations against the Popular Palestinian Front (PFLP) after the Front had assassinated the Israeli s minister Rabiam Zeivy in Jerusalem.

Politicians need this point to trigger a change in public opinion to support the war. The BBP action will typically be accompanied by media campaigns to securitize the event, consistent with Buzan's securitization model. Sometimes states assign it by naming a certain 'redlines,' groups or states can cross this point by using a tactic of piecemealing their attacks.

Israel needed a pretext to invade Lebanon in 1982 to expel the PLO. Fatah knew about that and acted wisely below the BBP not to provoke the Israelis. However, Abu Nidal group[29] decided to offer Sharon the BBP that he was anxiously looking for by shooting at the Israeli ambassador Argov in London by Marwan al-Banna (Seale, 1997, p. 225). "*On the morning of June 4, 1982, Prime Minister Begin declared that an attack on an ambassador is tantamount to an attack on the State of Israel, and we will respond. He would not listen to his own intelligence personnel, who tried to tell him that the PLO had been behaving for a year, since the American-initiated ceasefire of the previous summer, and that Argov had been shot by a member of a dissident fringe Palestinian group, which itself wanted to eliminate Arafat. 'They're all PLO,' Begin proclaimed. Chief of staff Eitan was less refined: 'Abu Nidal, Abu Shmidal. We've got to whack the PLO'* " (Bergman, 2018, pp.236-7).

The European example is from the Kosovan conflict as Ibrahim Rugova insisted on passive resistance, rather than armed resistance that would provoke severe repression. He discredited the violent groups by accusing them of being Serbian *agents provocateurs* (Kiss, 2014, p. 103). Calculating the BBP needs strategic analysis based on intelligence and observations and some covert agreements.

The state or the group has to analyze the adversary's motives and capabilities to determine this point. For example, Israel considered the closure of the Tiran straits as BBP: the Israelis knew that Nasser was not aiming to attack the country. Meir Amit the Mossad director, told his US counterpart (at that time Dick Holmes) that the real reason for attacking Egypt was because of its future military threat. Dean Rusk told a few members of the State Department that Israel started the campaign sooner than planned to prevent a most likely solution of the crisis before the arrival of the Egyptian vice President Zakaria Muhyiddin who was supposed to arrive on 7th June (O' Connell, p.60). Nasser fooled himself by thinking that Israel would act upon his real rhetorical intentions.

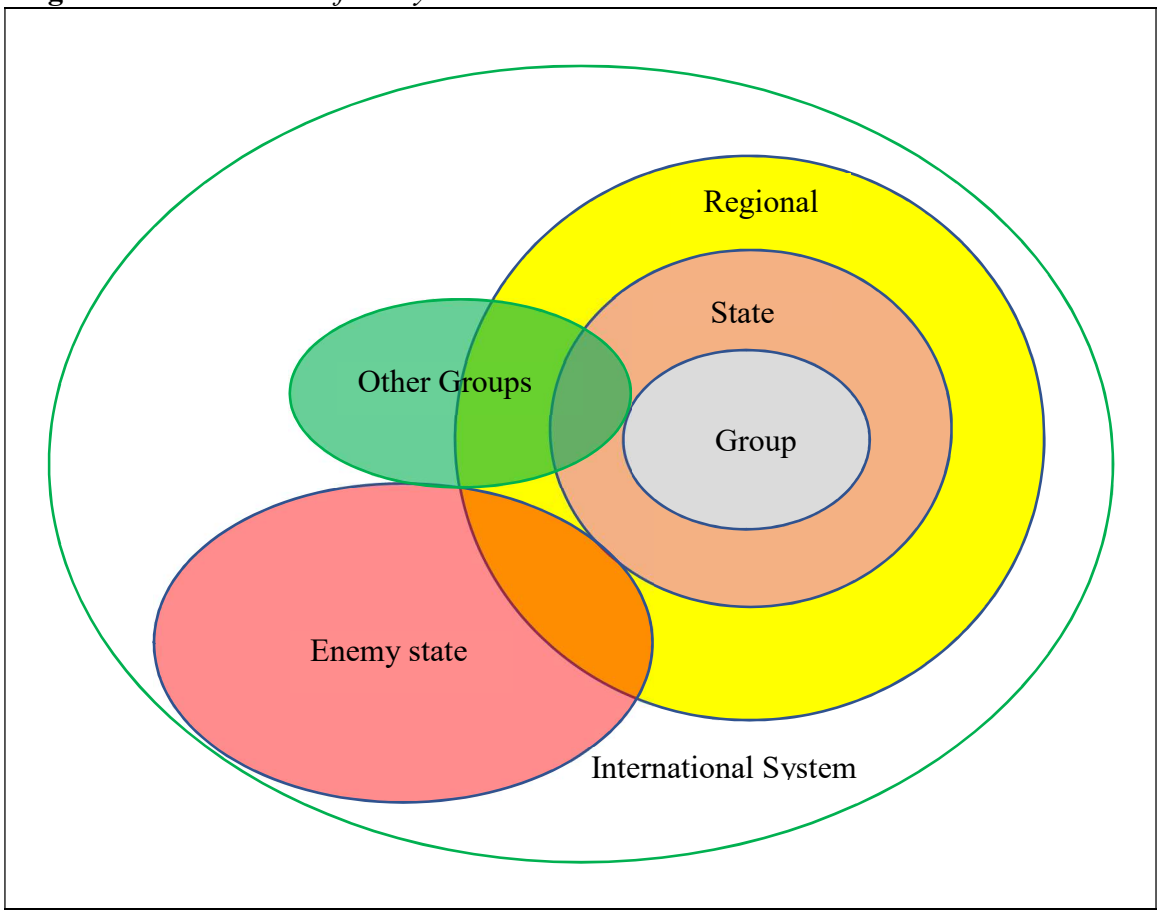
[29] That action by ANO, which was against the PLO's interests raised the suspicions about the group's affiliation

The enemy state's reaction toward an armed group mainly depends on cost/benefit analysis of escalating the conflict. One of the critical factors that govern the resolution of the enemy state's behavior is the idea that the known devil is better than an unknown angel and that a security void may ensue after the departure of the robust, controlling enemy, leading to an unretrievable chaotic situation. Also, the high cost of the occupation and the stabilization operations.

Conclusions on the First Hypothesis

The above discussions proved the existence of circles of survival that are essential for the survival of the groups. It can be summed up by the group circle, state circle, regional circle, other groups circle, international circle, and enemy state circle. Figure 2.3 shows the proposed analytical framework graphically.

Figure 2.3 *The Circles of Analysis*



Note. Author's Compilation

The survival analytical framework of the violent armed non-state actors revolves around their multilayer existence. The group's existence is a function of their surrounding context that extends the existing literature about armed groups from focusing on the group as a small unit

of analysis into investigating the contextual environment the groups live in; non-state groups survive in their hostile environment due to their Interaction with these circles of survival. These dynamics require proto-state armed groups to adapt their ways in the tumultuous environment they live in to take advantage of their cooperative signs and mitigate the cons of the elements of survival found within these circles.

The proposed survival model builds upon circles of influence divided among groups: local (group), national or host country circle, regional circle, enemy state, the other group's circle, and the international circle. The first layer is the group's circle, consisting of organizational structure, military capabilities, economy, and ideological adaptations.

The group's circle is the core or the analysis; it is the circle that interacts with all its surroundings to facilitate the group's success or leads to its failure. In this circle, many factors are considered The third circle is regional: the states that generally directly affect the first and the second circles. The group finds its state sponsorship in this circle and builds alliances with regional powers. In addition, the region's geographic location plays a role as some regions are more conducive to group survivability than others. The fourth circle comprises the international circle that contains the superpowers, great powers[30]and the Sino - UN and other international organizations. The central element in this circle is the pursuit for legitimacy; the group cannot isolate itself from the influence of the international circle as it looks forward to financial support and at least de-facto legitimacy. The other adjacent circle[31] is the 'other groups' that the group is interacting with: its peers from other groups for training and a multitude of mutual assistance programs, [henceforth will be called the 'other groups' circle]. There are three kinds of connections among the groups: cooperative, adversarial, and competitive.

The sixth adjacent circle is the enemy state group, which is the opposing force as it plays the role of the counterforce against the survivability of the armed group; this circle uses different methods to undermine the survival of the group, it has its interactions with the other circles (host state, regional, state-sponsorship, other groups).

Within every circle, several factors play the role of survival; Table 2.2 on the next page shows the factors that exist in these circles of survival.

[30] Regional Security Complex theory espoused by Barry Buzan and Ole Weaver uses the term superpower, great powers, and regional powers (Buzan, 2003); a few researchers like Haas believe that the US is no more a superpower but relegated to great power (Buzan, 2003).

[31] It should be noted that labeling it here by circle does not imply that it surrounds the group circle; it is situated outside the circle and engages with the group in horizontal relationships; in a similar token to the enemy state

Table 2.2 *Main Factors for Survival*

Circle	Factors
Group Circle	Ideology, Organizational structure, Leadership, Military capability, Financial Assets, Maturity, Size, Operational Security, Public support, Services provision.
Host State	Weakness, Regime type, Terrain, Economy, Location, Density of groups
Regional Circle	Sponsorship, Alliances
International System	Legitimacy, Sponsorship
Other groups	Cooperation, Competition, Adversarial
Enemy state	Resolve, Interaction with the circles of the other circles of survival; Public Opinion.

Proto-State Armed Groups' survival

In order to prove this hypothesis, the main characteristics through the Circles of Survival of Fatah from 1971 until 1982, Taliban after 2001 until 2021, Ansarullah in Yemen are examined following the analytical framework (see Table 2.3 on the next page). In addition, a thorough analysis of Hamas and Hezbollah in chapters three and four are made.

Table 2.3 ***Survival of proto-state armed groups***

Factor	Fatah	Taliban	Ansarullah (Houthis)
Size	More than 10 thousand members (Very Large Groups)		
Maturity	Over ten years old		
Military capabilities	• Fought against enemy states and survived, • Fought against internal competitors and won		
Organizational structure	• Decentralized in Taliban, • Centralized in Fatah and Houthis		
Operational Security	Not strong in the case of Fatah because of enemy state strength		
Terrain	Suitable for guerrilla warfare in Lebanon, Yemen, and Afghanistan		
Other Groups	Active, multifaceted relationship with other groups		
Public Support	The three groups rely on their communities for their public support		
External support	• Fatah was supported by socialist states and Arab states • Taliban had support from Pakistan, • Iran supports Houthis,		
International Legitimacy	• Houthis' legitimacy: they are not on the US list of terrorist groups • Fatah had legitimacy within Arab states and socialist states, it had a clandestine liaison relationship with the US. • Taliban achieved legitimacy by its negotiation with the US		
Enemy State	• Israel did not tolerate the actions of Fatah and took steps to evict it from Lebanon • The US was not able to defeat the Taliban • KSA was not able to defeat Houthis • Protracted conflict precipitated a decrease in enemy resolve • Israel's strategy with these groups is based on deterrence • Limited influence on international system against groups and regional circle.		
Weakness of Host state	• Lebanon was and still is a fragile state • Yemen is a weak state • Afghanistan suffers from a lack of legitimacy		
Relation with other groups	• Fatah assumed leadership of other Palestinian groups, • Taliban had a connection with Qaida and other Pakistani groups, • Houthis had a connection with Hezbollah and IRGC		

Hypothesis (2): Center of Gravity Analysis

> *"In Vietnam, the US understood that the Vietcong was the CoG and the Soviets in Afghanistan understood that Mujahidin were the ones that should be destroyed. Ultimately the US repeated the Vietcong scenario in Afghanistan again when they ignored that legitimacy is the fundamental CoG; the relationship between people and the government is the one that needs to be mended"*
>
> Ovalle, 2017[32]

Hypothesis 2 states:

Several CoGs need analysis during the conflict between the host state and the proto-state armed group. The strategic CoG for both the host state and the proto-state armed group is their legitimacy, viz., the primary source of conflict between them is their competition for legitimacy. For proto-state armed groups, strategic CoG shifts with time, in the early phases of the group's establishment, it is the leadership. Later, after the its institutionalization, the group develops its ideology and cultivates public support. The proto-state armed group's legitimacy can be reduced to internal and external support.

The second CoG is the operational CoG which is the power of resistance that equals the product of military power multiplied by the group's morale. Operational CoG is essential for winning the kinetic part of the war, and it is conducive to success on the strategic level.

The operational CoG of the proto-state armed group *is its power of resistance, which is the product of its Military Power and the Morale of the Group.*

Operational CoG = Power of Resistance= Military power Morale*

Strategic CoG= Legitimacy= Internal Public Support + External Support.

Strategic CoG of the proto-state armed groups

[32] The Columbian President Álvaro Uribe Vélez selected General Carlos Ospina Ovalle, to be Commander of the Colombian Armed Forces (2004 - 2007).

There are different methodologies to determine the CoG in contemporary military studies. One is suggested by Dale C. Eikmeier (Eikmeier, 2010), another is Godzilla methodology (Butler, 2014), and a third is Critical Factors Analysis (Smith et al., 2015).

Butler's 'Godzilla' method starts by "*…determining the overall strategic objective of the force to be examined—friendly or enemy—and investigates the objective that must be met to achieve that goal. Once the operational objective has been identified, the critical strengths for achieving that objective are identified. Next, these strengths are removed and examined one by one. The methodology posits that one of these critical strengths is the center of gravity. To identify the center, as a critical strength is removed, the question is asked: can the objective still be achieved without this strength? If the answer is yes, that strength is not the center of gravity. The strength is replaced, and another is removed, asking the same question. Once we find the sole strength—the removal of which precludes the accomplishment of the objective— the center of gravity has been identified*" (Smith et al., 2015).

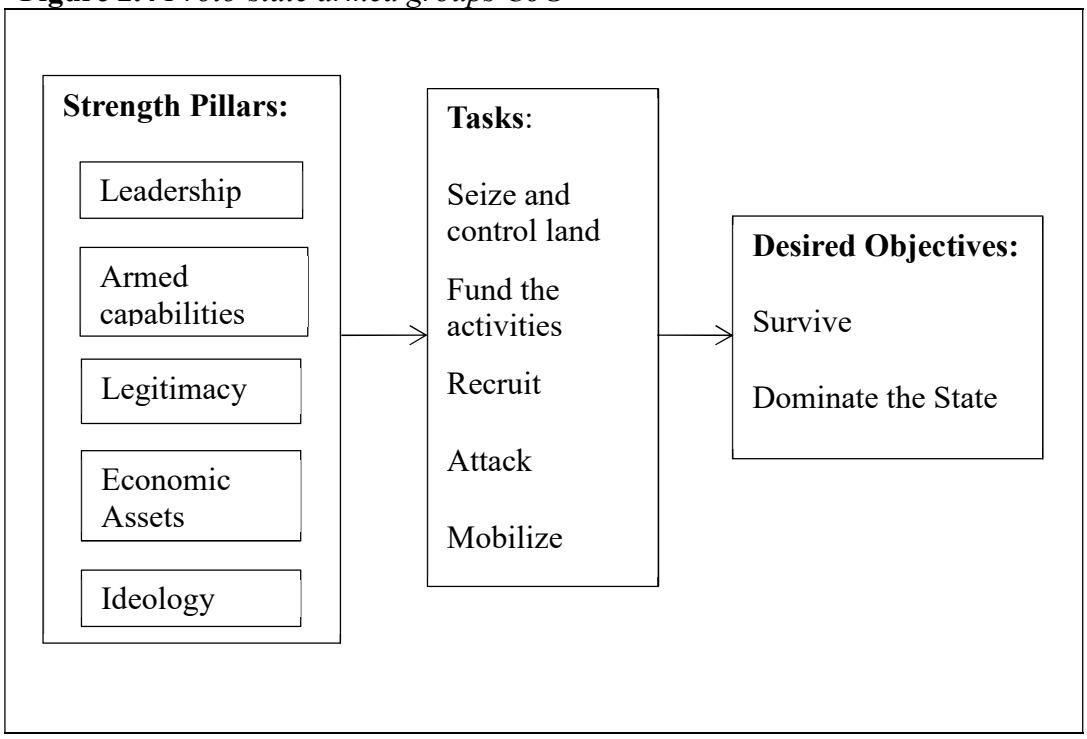
Determination of strategic friendly and opposing force (OPFOR) CoGs is essential for countering the proto-state armed group. Here what I mean by the friendly CoG is the host state's, the OPFOR's is the proto-state armed group. The critical one is the friendly CoG because the proto-state armed group's success is usually dependent on it. Beside the CoG, there are critical strengths and critical vulnerabilities that are essential for the success of the defence or the attack. Attacking the vulnerabilities can be a decisive point to achieve the defeat of the CoG. This method is more or less the indirect approach: "*in strategy the longest way round is often the shortest way there. A direct approach to the objective exhausts the attacker and hardens the resistance by compression, whereas an indirect approach loosens the defender's hold by upsetting his equilibrium*" (Liddell Hart, 1967, p. 219).

The most likely CoG of the armed groups during their conflict with the host state is their legitimacy, which means its public and external support. In my interview with Dr. Khaled Hroub, he put forth that proto-state armed groups' "*legitimacy is partially dependent on public support and external support. Nevertheless, their legitimacy has a direct connection to the military capabilities they possess. The external support can be mostly seen as implicit acceptance from international political actors, i.e., the public support and their visible military might become an entrenched reality that cannot be ignored even from international parties that are unwilling to support such groups. EU and UN deal with Hamas in Gaza because of the status quo realities, notwithstanding their formal refusal to recognize it. On the other hand,*

Israel maintains indirect relationship through international mediators with Hezbollah to keep calmness in the borders" (Personal Communications, January 2022).

Figure 2.4 on the next page shows the methodology to extract the CoG for the proto-state armed groups. The minimum default expected strategic objective of the group is to keep its survival along with the state within the same territory. For such objective, the group needs to recruit, mobilize, control, and seize territory within the state; the only resource that is capable of providing the group with all these actions is legitimacy as it entails the public and the external support, while other strengths are critical but not as much as the legitimacy.

Figure 2.4 *Proto-state armed groups CoG*



Note. Author's compilation

Public Support

Gaining public support is the primary pillar of legitimacy, most of the practitioners and researchers illuminate it as the essence of the war and victory, "Restated in terms of a theory of victory, the population is the strategic objective in COIN because winning the population equates almost directly to winning the conflict" (Bartholomees, 2008, p. 34). Galula (1964), who, among others emphasized the role of public support, said that "*a victory is not the destruction in a given area of the insurgent's forces and political organization. If one is destroyed, it will be locally re-created by the other; if both are destroyed, they will be re-created by a new fusion of insurgents from the outside. (…) A victory is … [the numerous mopping-up*

operations] plus the permanent isolation of the insurgent from the population, isolation not enforced upon the population but maintained by and with the population" (p. 54). For the group to sustain and remains, it needs to go beyond a certain threshold of public support 'Significant public threshold' which Zedong maintained that is within 15-25 % (Zedong, 1937, p.27); thereupon, here I will prove that the proto-state armed groups are capable by virtue of their nature to exceed the required limit.

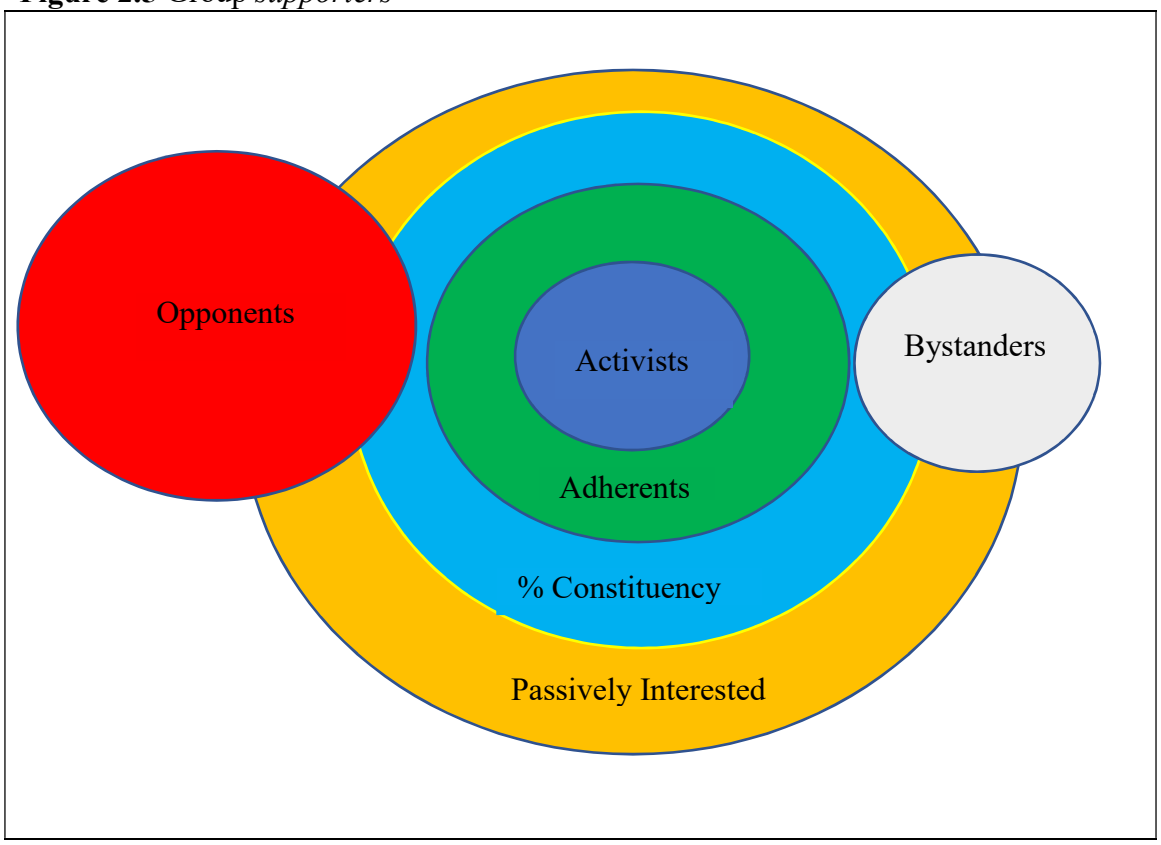
Population for any armed group is usually composed of supporters, opponents, and bystanders. Supporters are also divided into various categories according to their activities.

Azani (2009) claims that according to social movement theories, supporters of the movements like Hezbollah, fall into one of several categories. The first category is the activists, who bear the responsibility of mobilizing efforts, consequently, the charismatic leader emerges from the core of this category of supporters. The second category is the adherents who support the movement and join in the group's activities, although they are not part of the organization itself; the third category is the constituency that supports the group's actions but does not take an active part in the operations. The last category is the 'passively interested' who have an interest in the group's success, since they will benefit; however, they do not actively participate or join it. Bystanders stay on the sidelines and change sides in case their interests are affected (pp. 2-3). So, in this case, public support might be expected to rise in the case of proto-state armed groups owing to the heavyweight its physical appearance plays, because of the social services and the role of identity empowerment a high percentage of the constituency will support it on a varying scale. The groups know that it is not possible, however their motto is "Let he who does not wish to do anything for us, do nothing against us" (Marighella, p. 48).

The pool of public support = (Activists + Adherents + % constituency) $\pm$ (passively interested + bystanders) - (opponents).[33] (see figure 2.5).

[33] $\pm$ means that their loyalty to the group is not guaranteed, they need to be fixed by coercive or soft powers to shift loyalties.

Figure 2.5 Group *supporters*



Note. Adapted by the author from "Hezbollah: The story of the party of God, "E. Azani, 2009, Palgrave Macmillan.

The proto-state differs from other kinds of armed groups in its service provisions and hiring supporters within its cadres; since it acts as a state in this field, those who benefit from its services and their families will adhere to its survival; the proto-state armed groups have the coercive means to silence the opponents and affect the bystanders' decisions.

The main reason for the group's 'significant public threshold' is the weakness of the host state by its inability to provide essential services, a sense of belonging, and the capability of the group to coerce its citizens.

Adnan Abu Ouda[34], who was a major in intelligence, advised king Hussein to monitor the rise of the Palestinian militant groups, as he expected that they would amount to threatening Jordan's security; the King and the Intelligence Director ignored his claims which in less than two years

[34] Jordanian politician, in 1970, he was an officer in the Intelligence, during the conflict became Information Minister, and later assumed different political positions in Jordan. He died in February 2022

became a reality (Abu Ouda, 2017). Had they listened to his analysis; the battles could have been avoided.

So, the state has to monitor the growth of different groups' public support and act accordingly to prevent them from reaching the 'significant public threshold.' In the case of Jordan in 1970, after the al-Karama battle in Jordan, the PLO started to grow in size and pose a substantial threat to the stability of Jordan.

External Support

The second element in the proto-state armed group's legitimacy is external support. Proto-state armed groups need external states to provide funding, military hardware, and legitimacy. The element of external support is evident in Giap: "*If the Vietnamese people's war of liberation ended in a glorious victory, it is because we did not fight alone, but with the support of progressive peoples the world over, and more especially the peoples of the brother countries, with the Soviet Union at the head. The victory of the Vietnamese people cannot be divided from this support; it cannot be disassociated from the brilliant successes of the socialist countries and the movement of national liberation, neither can it be detached from the victories of the Soviet Red Army during the Second World War, nor from those of the Chinese people during the last few years. It cannot be isolated from the sympathy and support of progressive peoples throughout the world, among whom are the French people under the leadership of their Communist Party, and the peoples of Asia and Africa*" (p. 100)

In the case of Fatah, it had a wide range of supportive states that provided such support. Initially, it depended upon Algeria, Syria, Kuwait, Egypt, Libya, and socialist states like China and Eastern Europe. Hamas and Hezbollah are good examples of how foreign state funding has been critical to building and shaping the organizations and their welfare and governance programs (Berti, 2013). Hezbollah has an ideological partnership with Iran, and an alliance with Syria was cemented during the civil war. Hamas also has a relationship with Iran, Turkey, Qatar, and Egypt. Amal was supported by Iran and later by Syria, however, it lost both to Hezbollah, which contributed to its power erosion. The Houthis received support from Iran and Hezbollah; Qatar offered diplomatic assistance to the Taliban in 2013 and started successful negotiations with the US administration. Having a connection with state actors endows the proto-state the needed external legitimacy to express its existence and compete for more legitimacy.

Finally, Eikmeier suggested a "does/uses" test to test the validity of the suggested CoG which is as follows: "the center of gravity is the means (critical requirement) that has the intrinsic force necessary, which 'does' the action (critical capability), but it 'uses' or requires other resources (means) to 'do' the action."

Thus, in the case of the proto-state armed group: the legitimacy is the critical requirement that is essential for deploying the critical capabilities (seize and control land, fund the activities, recruit, attack, mobilize), but it sues (political leadership, military wing, economic assets) in order to deter / defeat the host state / the enemy state.

Host State Center of Gravity

This research proposes that CoG is:

"A characteristic, capability, or location from which alliances, nations, military forces, and armed groups derive their will to fight, their physical strength, or freedom of action, the destruction of this entity causes an overwhelming collapse as it holds the various entities together."

If we apply this definition to the case of the host state, we find that the destruction of the state's legitimacy *causes an overwhelming collapse of the state as it holds the various entities together.*

To apply the do/use test, our examination will continue below:

The state's legitimacy is the critical requirement that is essential for deploying the critical capabilities in order to regain its full sovereignty. The US Army field manual[35] (2014) confirms that, by saying "Legitimacy can be seen as the willing acceptance of a government by its population, legitimacy is an indicator of the extent to which systems of authority, decisions, and conduct are accepted by the local population" (p. 9).

The host state requires legitimacy among its citizens to retain its authorities and powers and that legitimacy is the source of the demanded population consent; "legitimacy provides willing acceptance of authority and thus requires fewer resources to enforce its authority than illegitimacy, most populations are controlled through a combination of consent and coercion" (US DoD, 2014, p.1-8).

It goes further and claims "Achieving success may depend less on defeating the armed element of the insurgency and more on the ability to legitimize host-nation institutions to the populace"

[35] FM 3- 24 Insurgency and counter insurgency

(p. 8). The strategic CoG for the host state is its strength rooted in legitimacy. In Jordan's 1970 security incidents crisis, the state showed weakness, and the PLO exacerbated the weakness by infiltrating the army and insisting on special privileges. For example, they declined to meet with King Hussein several times, took foreign hostages, hijacked several international airplanes and forced them to land in Jordan's territories (Khalaf, 1989, p. 78), forced the appointment of some ministers, and vetoed others, provoked the army officers and the soldiers, even putting the pictures of Lenin inside the Mosques (Khalaf, 1989, p. 74, p. 75). In Afghanistan's state collapse in the face of the Taliban advance, the state could not engage the Pashtuns effectively. Large swaths of the country remained planted with narcotics, and there was a high rate of corruption among government officials. In Yemen, the government could not defeat Ansarullah due to the ineffectiveness of the Saudi military campaign.

The CoG of the host state is dependent on public support. David Galula explained the mechanism to be utilized, as follows: "the counterinsurgent cannot achieve much if the population is not, and does not feel, protected against the insurgent" (p. 86). To put it bluntly, an insecure population will not provide the necessary intelligence to the host state security units. Information comes from secure population. Citizens never talk unless they feel safe and secured, and they will not feel safe until the armed group has been defeated.

On the side of the external enemy state, most of the time, it is the public opinion, on a condition that the enemy state regime type is electoral democratic, which means that the prime minister needs the citizens' votes to remain active.

Using the Godzilla methodology to gain an insight on the Israeli strategic CoG during the 1982 war, the first thing is to start by identifying the strategic objective, which most likely is signing a peace treaty with Lebanon. The second step is to identify the operational objectives that are needed to accomplish the strategic objective of signing the peace treaty, among which the required objectives were the expulsion of the PLO, weakening the Syrian control in Lebanon, and the election of a Maronite pro-Israeli government. The main requirement for these steps is to deliver a military blow to the PLO and invade Lebanon by ground forces.

The critical strengths that Israel had at that time were: solid political leadership under Menachem Begin, an able army, economy, people who supported the mission.

The main strength that has the most significant influence on achieving the strategic objective is the public opinion as it is the main requirement for the premier to practice his authorities. That support was initially granted on the allegation of the PLO's threat to the northern settlements

in Israel and on the view that the mission was limited. However, Sharon had other plans to escalate the war beyond the imagination of the Israeli citizens. Public opinion turned against the mission after the Sabra and Shatila massacre[36], in which hundreds of innocent Palestinians were killed in cold blood by extremists from the Maronite forces, within sight of the Israeli military leadership. My interpretation of this despicable crime is that it was meant to incite the Palestinians' cleansing from Lebanon to Jordan which was the main plan between the Phalangists and Sharon.

In the end, public opinion was the one that forced the resignation of Sharon from his post as a defence minister. The other case was the war in Vietnam in which the US was forced to retreat under the pressure of US public opinion.

Host State Center of Gravity: Case studies

In his article, in the analysis of the war against FARC, Gen. Ovalle points out that "from 1964 onwards, FARC used the time available for mobilizing peasants to fight and overcome the asymmetry with government forces, seasoned guerrillas turned existing social, political, and economic grievances into an adequate narrative to do so" (Ovalle, 2017, p. 255).

"*The State should be considered as the point of confluence of gravitational forces. These gravitational forces are civil society, territory, and sovereignty. The state hosts these three forces together. Their relationship is based on acceptance, approval, and cooperation; if this relationship works smoothly, we call it legitimacy. As a consequence, we decided to consider legitimacy as our CoG* " (Ovalle, 2017, p. 256).

The result of this reconsideration was tantamount to victory. "*This [consideration of legitimacy as a CoG] changed the whole situation of our war and contributed to the defeat of the FARC. The Columbian State had to maintain that smooth relation with those gravitational forces to protect the CoG*" (Ovalle, 2017, p. 256). To achieve that, local security was increased. When

[36] The massacre outraged the world, including the Reagan administration, and prompted an investigation committee in Israel 'Kahana' blamed indirectly Sharon, who resigned from his post as a Minister of Defence; The number of the deceased is slightly disputed the Palestinians claim 1500, the Lebanese home defence believed that the number was 1239 (Qassim, 2010, p. 138), while the Israelis believe that 700 were killed by the hands of the barbaric Maronite Phalangists. The executioner Robert Hatim recalled that Elie Hobeika told the 350 men to erase the camp , and 'fuck everything', the other commander was Maron Mashalani who led the biggest group inside the camp and this group as per Hatim said ' took drug as much as possible', this barbaric cowardly action was done after the *fedayeen* left the city , and under the indirect knowledge of Sharon , Yair Ravid the head of the junction team visited the Phalange HQ on the morning of 16 September and he saw them sharpening their knives and they told him in Arabic ' today is the turn of Sillah al-Abayd' (white weapons = Knives) ; (Bergman, 2018, p. 247)

the state has robust local security, it has strong legitimacy (Ovalle, 2017). "*Previously, we considered the CoG as the strength of the enemy generated from drug trafficking. We directed our efforts against this strength for many years. We were fighting an insurgency with the traditional Clausewitzian interpretation of coherence generated from strength. Thus, we decided to change all senses with a new understanding of our CoG to allow a government approach. So, we started analyzing the state and its legitimacy as the new CoG in relationship with civil society*" (Ovalle, 2017, p. 258).

This change made a difference during the war in Columbia against the FARC group, and by the realization of the actual CoG, the Columbian government started to militarize the peasants and enlist them in special units inside the army (in contrast to the PMU units in Iraq, which were horizontal to the army).

Speaking about Iraq, Cordesman points out, "*In short, the real center of gravity is not airpower, Iraqi or Syrian ground forces, or any form of US boots on the ground. It is having an Iraqi government and set of political compromises that are functional enough to unite its key factions, that offers all the incentives of security and a fair share of power and the nation's oil wealth, and that can make a quick and real start in job creation, economic development, and reviving the nation's education and medical systems when security is restored*" (Cordesman, 2014).

In Iraq in 2005, planners, briefed Gen. George Casey on two CoGs: the Iraqi government and the population. In 2007, Gen. David Petraeus took command and implemented a population-centric strategy (Eikmeier, 2017), David Petraeus wrote about the adopted strategy " *The biggest of the big ideas that guided the strategy during the surge was explicit recognition that the most important terrain in the campaign in Iraq was the human terrain — the people — and our most important mission was to improve their security,…, we had to 'live with the people' in order to secure them. This meant reversing the consolidation of our forces on large bases that had been taking place since the spring of 2004. Ultimately, this change in approach necessitated the establishment of more than 100 small outposts and joint security stations, three-quarters of them in Baghdad alone*" (Petraeus, 2013).

A mirror image example is that a powerful group like PKK could not succeed in Turkey mainly because of the increase of legitimacy of the Turkish state.

In an interview with reporters, the Minister of Foreign Affairs in Lebanon, Abedall Bohabib, said that the Trump administration and his Secretary of State Pompeo were asking Lebanon to target Hezbollah. Once, he jokingly told them, you can send 100 thousand Marines to eliminate

Hezbollah, and if you succeed, we will provide champagne (BBC, 2021, 3:15). This joke is more than the truth. Military intervention cannot provide a solution to the crisis in Lebanon. It has to be accompanied by strengthening the legitimacy of the state. France failed, the US Marines failed, and Israel failed by their focus on defeating Hezbollah rather than strengthening the weak Lebanese state. These states are demanding from the 'weak' Lebanon more than they themselves can do.

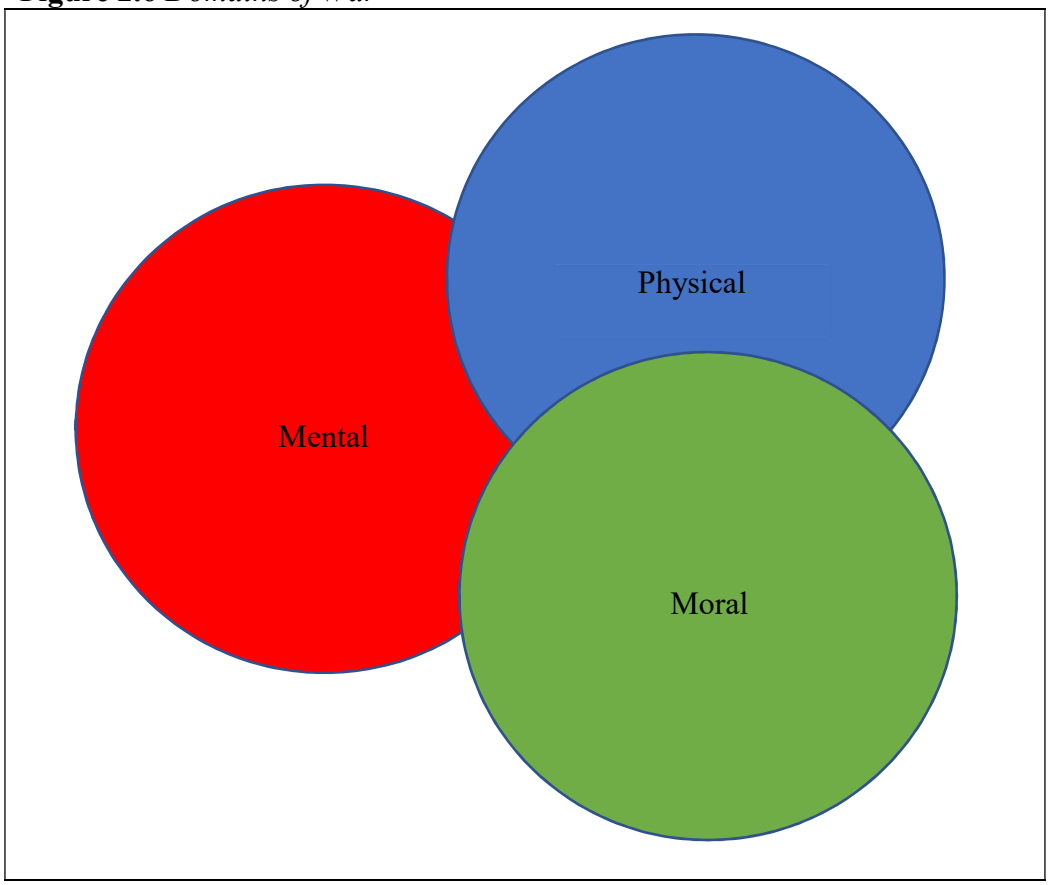
Operational CoG: the power of resistance

Clausewitz affirmed that victory is tripartite. "*If in conclusion, we consider the total concept of a victory, we find it consists of three elements: the enemy's greater loss of material strength, his loss of morale, and his open admission of the above by giving up his intentions*" (pp. 233-234). "Soldiers universally concede to the truth of Napoleon's quoted dictum that in war 'the moral is to the physical as three to one'" (Liddell Hart, 1954, p. 2).

The operational CoG is deduced from the Clausewitzian perspective of a military force that breaks the enemy's will and imposes our own on him. "*If you want to overcome your enemy, you must match your effort against his power of resistance, which can be expressed as the product of two inseparable factors viz. the total means at his disposal and the strength of his will*" (Clausewitz, 1976, p.77).

The ultimate goal is to break the enemy's will to fight which is the main part of his morale. However, military power is more inclusive as it encompasses personnel, hardware, types of training, and experienced leadership. Figure 2.6 on the next page shows that military victory is about impacting the three domains of war, the physical, the moral and the mental.

Figure 2.6 *Domains of War*



Note. Author's compilation

In this case, if the host state could reduce to zero either the military means or morale of the opponent, it would destroy his operational CoG. Destruction of the will to fight equates to victory in the war: the supreme art of war is to subdue the enemy without a fight (Tzu, 2011, p. 10). RAND describes the national will to fight by "*the determination of a national government to conduct sustained military and other operations for some objective, even when the expectation of success decreases or the need for significant political, economic, and military sacrifices increases*" (Connable, et al., 2019).

"*Measuring the will to fight is more complicated than measuring military power: the strength of his will is much less easy to determine and can only be gauged approximately by the strength of the motive animating it*" (Clausewitz, 1976, p. 77).

About the element of military power, the Egyptian General Saad Shazli (1980)[37], who led the Egyptian army during the first phase of the 1973 war, said that victory could not be achieved without destroying the enemy forces. Otherwise, an enemy can bounce back and attack and change the victory chances, land occupation is a direct consequence of troops destruction (Al-Jazeera, 2009, 14: 45). Similarly, Guderian criticized his political leadership for "driving for objectives of economic and ideological significance without first ensuring that the enemy's military strength was broken" (Guderian, p. 149).

General Omar Bradley, one of the US Army commanders during World War II, commented, "*We shall never stop until the [German] army is beaten and until the army knows it is beaten. I shall never discuss terms. I shall insist on an unconditional surrender immediately*" (D'Este, 1983, p. 405). While Gen. George Patton affirmed the incisive need to destroy the enemy means by saying in a grim humor "*No bastard has even won the war by dying for his country, he won it by making some other poor bastard die for his country*".[38]

The desired result of the will-oriented approach is the collapse of will. The Italian airpower theorist Gulio Douhet suggested "*using strategic bombing to attack the will of the enemy people and government. The bomber could fly over fielded forces and directly attack enemy cities. The intent was to break morale; this approach is the heart of all strategic bombing theory, with an intent to convince the enemy that resistance is futile; the cost of resistance exceeds the potential gain*" (Bartholomees, 2008, p. 35). The overwhelming use of violence has some philosophical backgrounds as it shortens the time of war. History shows that, in a similar vein, no colonialist power is willing to withdraw without having exhausted all its possibilities of maintaining itself (Fanon, 1964, p. 155).

The above discussion asserts that the operational CoG is the power of resistance, i.e., the product of military power multiplied by the will to fight or morale. The destruction of the operational CoG is conducive to strategic victory.

[37] Colonel-General Saad a paratrooper, who became the chief of the Egyptian Armed Forces during the 1973 war. He argued with Sadat about the constraints of the Egyptian forces, he did not like the idea to move forward without having a proper ADA coverage. Nevertheless, he is considered by many Arabs as a hero of the war (El Shazly, 2003).
Later, Sadat acknowledged his role in the war and sent him ambassador to the UK and Portugal; however, he protested against Camp David and lived in Algeria in political asylum, later he returned to Egypt but he was imprisoned, and finally died in 2011.
[38] From the Patton movie produced in 1970.

Proto-State Armed Group's Strategic CoG relationship with ideology

As for the proto-state armed group itself, the strategic CoG is not constant. For many experts, the proper CoG for these groups is ideology, which explains the intransigence of groups like Hamas and Hezbollah. The power of ideology lies in its totalitarian force that rules over every aspect of life and choices. Regarding the survival of the group and the role of ideology, Jones and Libicki (2008) found that nationalist groups with nationalistic ideologies live more than ideological groups. Also, Carter (2012) established a statistically significant relationship between nationalist groups and survival. Regarding the comparison between national and ethnic groups, those with an ethnic cause have better chances as they have a broader population in countries at a low level in nation-building.

Religiously motivated groups stay longer because of the staying power of the sacred motivations (Jones & Libicki, 2008). Religious groups last longer than others, though they rarely achieve their goals (Hughes & John, 2017, p.229). Most studies affirm that groups with ethnic or religious motivation are the least likely to end, left-wing and right-wing groups have shorter life spans since they have trouble retaining concrete goals and maintaining public support. Loyalty to an ideology often encourages violence to ensure full compliance. Ideological followers willingly sacrifice themselves to make their ideology survive- a fact that gives ideology its unparalleled power.

In my opinion, ideology does not stand as a CoG, because even ideology is meant to get legitimacy for the group; these groups practice religious and national ideologies to appeal to public support and adapt their ideologies to appease external support. So, ideology is a critical strength more than a CoG. The case of Hezbollah validates this claim as we notice a political alliance with the Maronite President despite their contradictory ideologies.

Hypothesis (3) Victory Theory for Proto-State Groups

> *"Eternal peace is a dream, and not even a pleasant one. War is part of God's world order. War develops man's noblest virtues, which otherwise would slumber and die out: courage, self-denial, devotion to duty and willingness to make sacrifices. A man never forgets his experiences in war, they increase his capability for all time to come"*
>
> *(Moltke, 1880)*

"The guerrilla wins if it does not lose. The conventional army loses if he does not win."

(Henry Kissinger, 1969)

The author is not alone in his belief that a theory of victory is more than required for wars between states and non-state actors. Several other researchers, e.g., Colin S. Gray, William Martel, and Bartholomees, are amongst those who researched the topic.

The uniqueness of the theory proposed here is that it accounts for all the domains of war: mental, moral, and physical (Fuller, 1925), while it takes into account both subjective and objective dimensions of victory. To achieve an objective victory against a conventional force, a peace treaty must be signed, the territory must be occupied, a flag must be raised in the capital city. It is hard to see signs as caveats of surrender from proto-state armed groups. Current thinking supports the belief that there will not be such ceremonies after the war on proto-state armed groups ends. The following figure 2.7 shows the main elements of the victory theory.

Figure 2.7 *Proto-State Armed Group Victory Factors*

Note: author's compilation

In general terms, victory is three-tiered: tactical, operational, and strategic. The victory is quantifiable and objective at the tactical level and depends on empirical ratios of causalities or loss of territories. At the operational level, the campaign has well-defined goals, while the measures of effectiveness are blurred at the strategic level. However, the strategic level is what counts at the end.

The success of one of these levels can lead to the success of the other, sometimes even failure at one level precipitate the success of the other. In 1973, Henry Kissinger told the Soviet Ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin in a classified call "my nightmare is a victory for either side" (National Security Archive, 2019). He feared that any decisive military victory for either Egyptian or Israeli forces would hamper the US efforts over post-war peace talks. In

conventional warfare, there are clear determinants of victory, it implies triumphant military victories and securing the assigned political objectives on the battlefields However, achieving victory for an insurgency might depend less on defeating an armed adversary and more on a group's capability to garner support for its political agendas (US DoD, 2014, p. 1.2). Table 2.4 on the next page shows the kinds of victory that can be achieved between the state and the proto-state armed groups.

Table 2.4 *Kinds of Victory*

Group	Criteria	How
Strategic Victory	Achievement of political objectives	The group is not able to act against the state any more.
Operational victory	Destruction of the operational CoG, the victory is temporary, the group has a victory sense because of survival	The victory is military and has temporary strategic value, the group claims victory due to its survival.
Deterrence	The group is intact but is deterred from action	The state shows that it has the capabilities and the will to use it. In addition to these, the state might offer inducement to keep the group controlled.
Group Dominance	The group has more than the significant public and external support, it dominates over the host state	The host state needs to regain legitimacy.

Hypothesis (3) states:

In the war between the proto-state armed group and the state, depending on the strategic objectives of the campaign, the first phase is to cut off the public and external lines of support, the second phase is to attack its power of resistance which is the product of its morale and military power. Decreasing either of them to zero is enough to achieve the mission, this step has to be coordinated with the other instruments of national power (DIME) i.e., diplomatic, informational, military, economic with emphasis on the use of hard power. The third step is to prevent the group's recovery:

Legitimacy = external support + internal public support

*Power of resistance = military power * Morale*

Resilience = Resistance + Recovery;

*Victory = (public support + external support) + (Morale * Military Capabilities) + prevention of recovery.*

To fulfill the objectives of victory, the initial phase has to be designed to deprive the proto-state armed group of public support, for which states sometimes apply brutal unmoral approaches, Byman (2007), believes "*The clandestine nature of proto-insurgent groups and the negative effects of violence can also facilitate undermining them. Governments can at times clandestinely commit brutal attacks in a group's name or can simply allow the group to commit them unmolested to undermine the group's overall credibility. This is a brutal approach, and it involves the deliberate deaths of innocents, but it can work: In Algeria, the government infiltrated parts of the jihadist movement and encouraged it to conduct attacks on noncombatants; it then used these attacks to prove to audiences at home and abroad that the jihadists deserved no quarter. Because the jihadist movement had many leaders and factions, it was not able to credibly deny the attacks committed in its name*" (p. 27). It is essential for the state to drain local support and make it difficult for them to operate by driving a wedge between the citizens and the group.

The second element of legitimacy is external support, to drain the support to be at its lowest level, after that comes the objective military campaign on the operational CoG of the group to neutralize it. (Destruction of both of military capabilities and lowering the morale or equating either one to zero). The proto-state armed group might count on information operations (IO) to increase its morale and demoralize its adversary by targeting its public opinion.

In this phase the numerical strength is important, to show force among citizens. The force ratio between the affected population and the security forces which is in peace time is between 1:500 to 1: 200 as a rule of thumb, in emergency rise up to 1:200. However, in a COIN campaign it has to rise to 1:50 (Kiss, 2014, p. 136)., The larger number of security forces personnel does not guarantee the success of the campaign, but it is an essential step toward territorial dominance. A number of historical cases bears this out. For instance, in the Battle of Algiers in 1957 the ratio rose to 1: 33 which enabled French security to curb the Algerian resistance. In the 1980s the ratio in Northern Ireland was 1: 65 and that contributed to forcing the IRA to the negotiation table. In Basra between 2003- 2007 the ratio of the British forces was 1: 300 and that forced the British to leave the city to the insurgents. Nevertheless, this does not mean that

the critical mass is the only salient factor. It has to be compounded with other factors like the political leadership. For instance, in 1999 the NATO ratio of forces in Kosovo was 1:50 but that did not prevent the vengeance on, and expulsion of, Serbs (Kiss, 2014, p. 137).

Another factor for the needed ratio of forces is the topography of the state, T.E Lawrence (Lawrence of Arabia) estimated that he needed six hundred thousand of men to protect the 300 thousand Km^2 of the Arabian Peninsula, a garrison of 20 men in every 10 Km^2 to protect it against the Ottoman army (Lawrence, 1920). The NATO mission in Afghanistan demanded 400 thousand of armed men to protect Afghanistan with an area of 652 thousand Km^2 and more difficult than Arabian desert but this discrepancy was managed through the technological advancement in the modern weaponry and hiring local police from the Taliban's rival groups like 'Jema'ah Islamiyah' (Boldizsar, 07 March 2022).

The way of attacking the operational CoG is confined to the operational approach which is "*the manner in which a commander contends with a CoG, a direct approach attacks the enemy's center of gravity or principal strength by applying combat power directly against it. An indirect approach attacks the enemy's center of gravity by applying combat power against a series of decisive points that lead to the defeat of the CoG while avoiding the enemy strength, commanders may use a single direct or indirect approach or by the employment of a combination of approaches to counter an enemy and its influence*" (US DoD, 2014, p.1-5). for this phase Galula (1964), suggests "A ratio of the force of ten or twenty to one between the counterinsurgent and the insurgent is not uncommon when the insurgency develops into guerrilla warfare" (p. 21). After the operational victory, the strategic victory demands the group's prevention from continuing its activities which can be stipulated by agreements that prevent from practicing violence or departure to another place.

Victory Pyramid

Figure 2.8 on the next page represents a pyramid of victory. The first layer is when the proto-state dominates over the host state by the acquisition of more than the 'Significant public threshold'. Secondly, it is the deterrence which is attained by the psychological fear built on showing that the state not only has the capabilities to hurt but owns the political will to use it, other than that, inducements are offered at the strategic level, so in order to successfully deter, the ideal equation is:

Deterrence = (political will * Availability of means of destruction) + Inducements

For example, in the case of Hamas and Hezbollah, Israel maintains a deterrence posture against both groups; as inducements it offers to extend the fishing limits and more work permits for Gazans inside Israel, whereas the US uses the inducements approach with its deterrence strategy to Iran.

The third layer is the operational victory in which the group also claims victory by its survival, which, according to Cronin is the first physical requirement for these groups, Mao Zedong said that "the first law of war is to preserve ourselves and destroy the enemy" (Zedong, p. 20). The highest victory is by achieving some political objectives.

Figure 2.8 *Victory Pyramid of Proto-state Armed Groups*

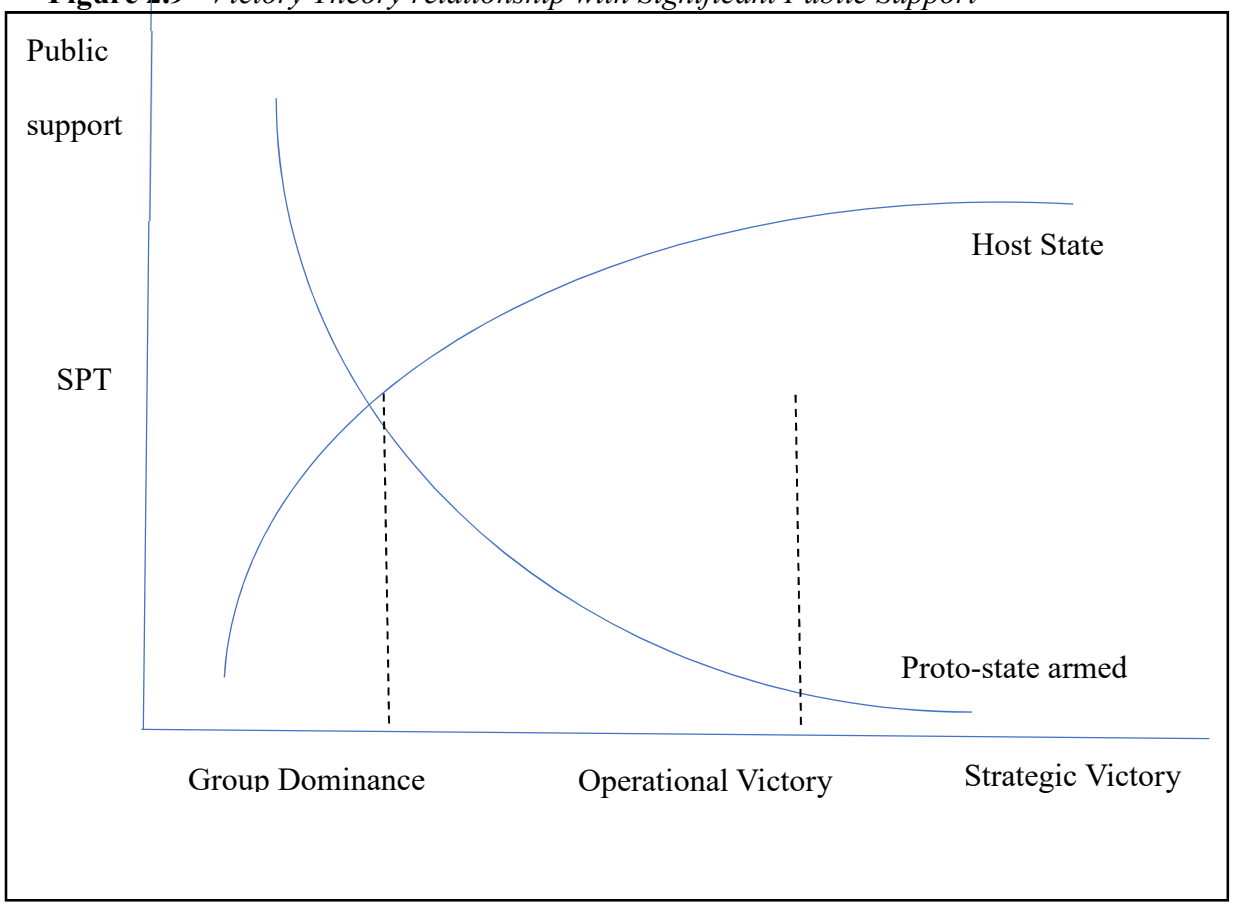
Note. Author's compilation

Figure 2.9 on the next page shows the relationship between victory and the legitimacy of the state and the proto- state armed groups. Before the eruption of the conflict the group has comfortable legitimacy that allows it to dominate over the state, any conflict with state actors is most likely ends in favor of the group.

Whenever the state changes its polices and focuses on legitimacy as a strategic CoG, the group starts to lose some of its legitimacy until it reaches the point of (SPT) which marks the 'tie' level of victory. In the second phase, the state takes measures with the assistance of other states

to regain its sovereignty, strengthen its destructive military means and intelligence assets to deliver the needed blow to the operational CoG of the group, in addition, the other essential requirement is to delegitimize the group in the eyes of its constituency. In this phase the group is content about its survival until it reaches the lowest point of its public support which can contribute to its strategic extinction.

Figure 2.9 *Victory Theory relationship with Significant Public Support*



Note: Compiled by the author, SPT means significant pubic threshold

The subsequent sections are case studies to evaluate the theory of victory and demonstrate its thoroughness**.** In 1967, Israel had prior intelligence data about the weakness of Arab armies; then, the strategic CoG was the political system of those states.

Israel did not target the strategic CoG, Damascus, Cairo, and Amman: it decided to leave the political systems intact and destroy their operational CoGs, the Egyptian Air Force. After destroying the operational CoG, the objectives were achieved with extreme ease This view was

also expressed by Amer Khammash the Chief of Staff of the JAF after 1967 (Zuaiter, 2019). This apparent ease motivated the emergence of proto-state arrmed groups as a response and a model for another mode of resistance.

The battle of al-Karama, March 1968

The Karama Battle is generally considered one of the rare battles that the IDF lost in confrontation with an Arab Army. After the Arab failure in the 1967 war, Palestinians decided to take matters into their own hands. Syria and Egypt provided support and encouraged the Palestinians to infiltrate into the occupied territories and carry out operations against Israel, but they forbade them to use Syrian or Egyptian territory. Therefore, the Palestinians began to use Jordan and Lebanon as bases and staging areas. Israel responded to the Palestinian operations with retaliatory attacks against the Palestinian camps and the civilian infrastructure in these states (Sayigh, 2004, p. 177).

Before the Karama battle, "*Fatah had '220-250' guerrillas, administrative staff, trainees in the area, and 80 from the PLO army had also opted to remain in Karama. Fatah fighters facing the Jordan River had only a handful of anti-tank mines, seven anti-tank rocket launchers, and two 82-millimeter mortars. The real backbone of the defense was provided by the Jordanian 1st Infantry Division and attached tank and artillery battalions deployed on the mountain ridge overlooking the Jordan Valley, and these units inflicted the heaviest damage on the Israeli force*" (Sayigh, 2004, p.178).

As early as March 14, 1968, Jordanian Intelligence detected signs of an impending Israeli onslaught against Al-Karameh. The 1st Infantry Division took up defensive posture around the anticipated avenues of approach at the two bridges and Karama Camp in response to this activity[39]. Jordanian chief of staff Amer Khammash met Salah Khalaf (Abu Iyad)[40], gave him the exact information about the Israeli plan and urged the *fedayeen*[41] to pull out from Karama camp to the surrounding mountains (Khalaf, 1989, p. 56), but Fatah decided not to withdraw its forces. However, according to Ahmad Jibril[42]sharing his memories in an interview with the

[39] The literal meaning is 'dignity'

[40] One of the important leaders of Fatah. He can be considered second or third to Yasser Arafat. The Abu Nidal group assassinated him in Tunisia in 1991 and other two commanders by an infiltrated member of the Abu Nidal terrorist group.

[41] Arabic word famous for PLO fighters, which means 'those who are voluntarily ready to sacrifice their lives.'

[42] Ahmad Jibril was born in 1937 in a town near Jaffa in Palestine, his mother was Syrian and his family left to Syria after the eruption of the war in 1948. He got the Syrian nationality and served as a Syrian engineering officer, in 1958 he was expelled from the Army and founded the Palestinian Liberation Front, and in 1965 his movement joined Fatah and worked closely with Yasser Arafat. In 1967 his movement joined the PFLP, later he protested

Jazeera TV network, he and the PFLP military commander Za'rur suggested to Arafat withdrawing all the forces into the eastern hills of the Jordan valley claiming that self-preservation was the most sensible option in the face of a massively superior Israeli force (Mansour, 2021). Fatah decided to leave most of its power in the camp, suggesting that an act of conscious steadfastness was needed to dispel the myth of Israeli invincibility and raise Arab morale (Sayigh, 2004, p.178). However, this decision was made only after classified personal meetings with Jordanian officers who confirmed to Arafat that the Jordan army would take part against the Israelis in case of their entrance to the East Bank (Tamimi, 2009).

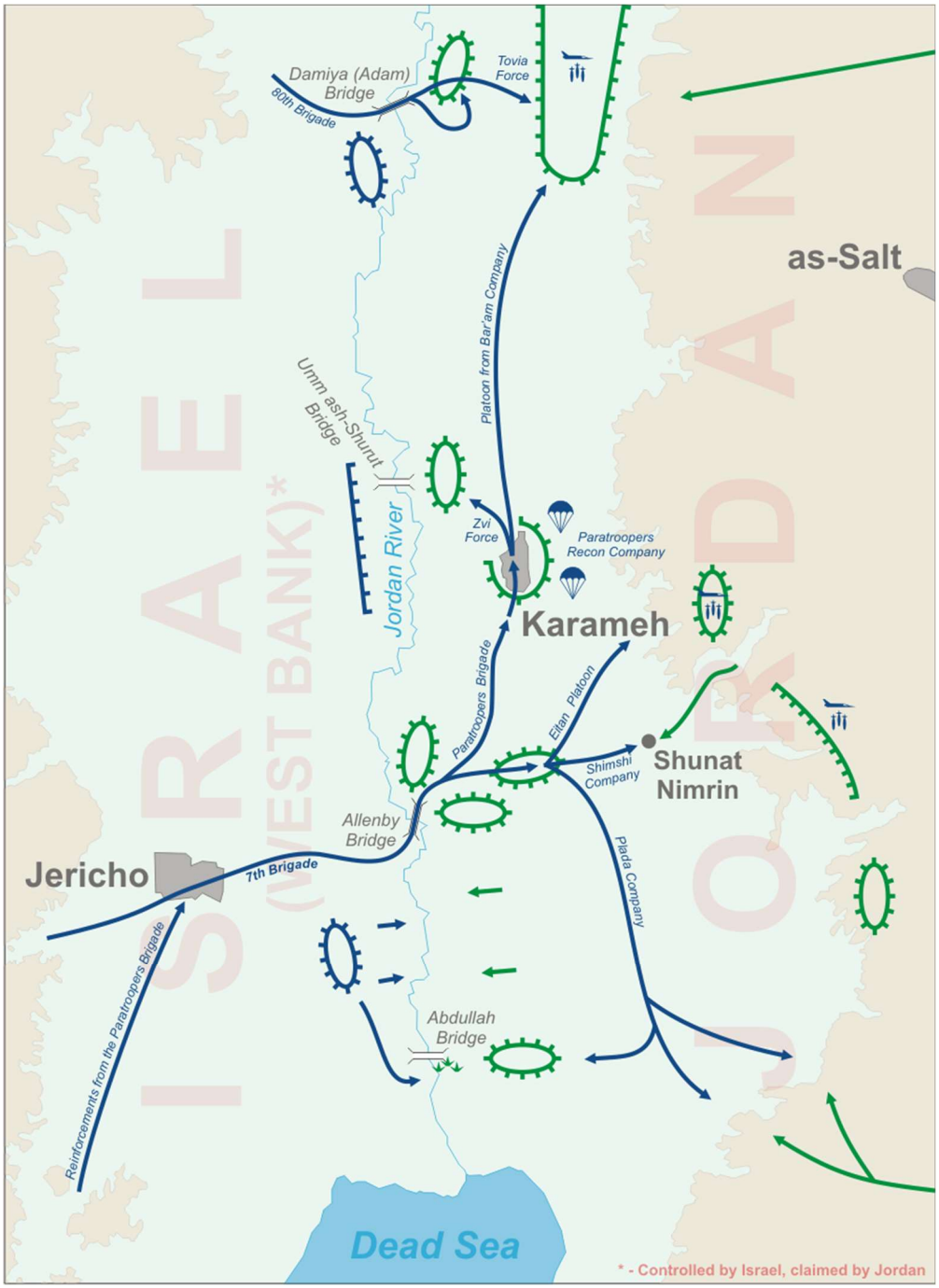
By March 20, the Jordanian Military Intelligence was successful in discovering the timing and the targeted location, what is more, "it identified elements of the 7th Armored Brigade, 60th Armored Brigade, 35th Paratroop Brigade, 80th Infantry Brigade, a combat engineer battalion, and five battalions of artillery" (Pollack, 1996, p. 413) in their assembly areas across the Jordan river. In response to this substantial concentration of firepower, the Jordanian Armed Forces took up defensive positions along the steep ridges above the Jordan valley. The elements of the 60th Armored Brigade were attached to infantry units to provide static support.

The remaining armor and the artillery were focused in sites overlooking the valley. The artillery inflicted damage on the Israeli force, and Israeli airpower could not neutralize it during the fight.

The Israeli scheme of maneuver was to divide into four task groups (see Figure 2.10 on the next page).

against the PFLP and created the PLFP-GC in which he retained the name with addition of General Command. The PFLP-GC proved its direct loyalty to the Syrian regime and fought most of its battles against other Palestinian factions especially in the war of the camps, in the Syrian civil war in 2011, when he used his men to besiege Yarmouk camp near Damascus. His relationship with Arafat was a conflicting one. He passed away in July 2021.

Figure 2.10 *The Israeli Attack on Karameh camp*



- Upper arrow: northern attack across Damia bridge
- Center arrows: crossing the King Hussein Bridge and assault on the Karameh
- Bottom arrow: diversionary attack in the south.

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The first and the largest was to cross the King Hussein Bridge and drive on al-Karameh from Southern Shuna. The second task group would ford the river from Damiya bridge, thereby catching the Karameh camp in a pincer move. The paratroop unit would be lifted to the camp; simultaneously, another task force would make a diversionary attack at the southern avenue of approach to draw off attention from al- Karameh and cover the right flank of the main thrust.

Israeli's ultimate goals were ambiguously unclear. At dawn on March 21, Israel started its offensive by fording the river from the north but failed in the southern diversionary attack; the most successful force was the paratroopers who reached the camp, destroyed it, and took prisoners.

The *Fedayeen* who decided to remain, fought bravely with primitive weapons and were joined by Arab Legion regulars supported by artillery fire from the surrounding hills.

All three sides claimed victory. From the Israeli point of view, it had accomplished its stated objectives by destroying the *fedayeen* training base. Jordanians were proud that they badly bloodied the Israelis and prevented them from mounting a drive to Amman (Pollack, 1996. P. 415).

The Israelis' casualties as per Herzog were "*28 killed, 69 wounded, destruction of four tanks, three half-tracks, two armored cars, and an airplane shot down. The Palestinians had about 100 fedayeen killed, another 100 wounded, and 120-150 captured. The Jordanians suffered 61 dead, 108 wounded, 13 tanks destroyed, 20 tanks damaged, and 39 other vehicles damaged or destroyed*" (Herzog, 1982, p. 205), while the Jordanian division commander Gen. Mashhour Haditha claims that the Israeli losses were much higher. He maintains that Israel lost seven airplanes, 1200 killed and injured soldiers, 400 damaged vehicles (Mansour, 2020 b, 32:30)[43]

"The real credit was due to the Jordanian Army, yet it was the guerrillas whose reputation soared" (Sayigh, 2004, p. 179); Yasser Arafat was outspoken on this subject. He stole the victory from the JAF and claimed it solely to himself. They just partially credited artillery units (Sharif, 2009, p.21). On April 14, Fatah named Arafat as its leader and official spokesman, offering him the opportunity to become an identifiable public figure after years of secrecy (Khalaf, 1989, p.59). From several interviews, it is transpired that the Egyptian media, especially Heikel invented the victory and attributed it (unethically) to Arafat. They did not like

[43] Interview with Mashhour Haditha, the commander of the Jordanian 1st division

the idea that a small Jordan had won a war against Israel and wanted to encourage the fedayeen and enable them to establish a base in Jordan.

My appraisal for the war is that Jordan won the battle militarily but lost it politically because it strengthened Fatah and contributed to the chaos in Jordan in 1970-71. Israel won tactically against the PLO and "succeeded in destroying the camp, capturing or killing most of the fedayeen there, but its forces had a much tougher time than expected" (Pollack, 1996, p. 415). They "probably did not do nearly as much damage to the Jordanians as they had hoped" (Pollack, 1996, p. 415). However, at the strategic level, Israel lost 'the prevention or recovery part of the victory equation' as Fatah became stronger and moved from the valley to the surrounding hills. "The battle of Karameh turned overnight into a resounding political and psychological victory in Arab eyes" (Sayigh, 2004, p. 179). Fatah lost militarily and almost committed suicide by not listening to Ahmad Jibril and Jordanian Chief of Staff Khammash and chief of Intelligence Gazi Arabiya to pull out. Its utter defeat reaped rewards, although eventually made it more robust: it had lost most of its strength in the battle; however, thousands came to volunteer to serve after the propaganda of the Egyptian media. The main factor in victory was the 'recovery part' Fatah became much more robust and started to occupy bases to attack Israel. In a nutshell, recovery means resilience and victory for the proto-state armed group. Israel managed to destroy the operational CoG of Fatah by destroying the training camp, inflicting severe damage to Fatah. Still, it could not destroy the local and external support and prevent the recovery phase.

Before March 21, Fatah was a humble group. The approximate Palestinian fighting "*strength in the Jordan Valley was between 600 and 1000, of whom some 500 belonged to Fatah and 300-400 to the PFLP*" (Sayigh, 2004, p.177). After the battle and the intensified propaganda, all the groups had a surge in their number, political support, and international support within the socialist camp. Jordan "*was powerless after Karama to prevent the guerrilla groups from setting up combat bases throughout the border region, bringing in volunteers and arms from other Arab states, and opening offices in the capital and refugee camps around the country*" (Sayigh, 2004, p. 179).

So powerful was the new myth of the heroic guerrilla that even King Hussein avowed in a speech that "we are all *Fedayeen*" (Rasheed, 2015; Khalaf, 1989, p. 57). Fatah's relations with Egypt developed into a strategic alliance. Egypt allowed Palestinian leaders to take specialized courses, and assigned an officer in Amman to liaise with them. On May 20, 1968, Fatah claimed that it was approached by "20,000 students and former soldiers in Egypt, while its office in

Baghdad claimed that it received 1,500 applications every week. A majority of volunteers went to Fatah, but even the PFLP had more than it could handle. By June, guerrilla numbers rose by around 300 percent to an estimated full-time strength of 3,000, of whom 2,000 belonged to Fatah, with some 12,000 supporters in the towns and refugee camps" (Sayigh, 2004, p.181).

Israel contributed to the rise of popularity of Fatah. Ironically, “the Israeli response proved tremendously important here. Although Fatah bungled its initial attacks, the publicity Israel gave to them demonstrated that Fatah was willing to fight" (Byman, 2007). So, according to the victory equation:

Victory = Legitimacy + Power of Resistance + survival

and:

Resilience = Resistance + Recovery.

Israel managed to reduce the resistance part of the equation but could not prevent the recovery part and the surge of power.

Jordan vs. PLO in the 1970 Security Incidents

The events of 1970 were an indirect spinoff of the Karama battle that increased the number and audacity of *fedayeen*. The Palestinian leaders were unable to control the surge in numbers. These events were neither a war between Jordanians and Palestinians nor a civil war, it was between the state of Jordan that wanted to impose its sovereignty over its territories against those armed groups that wanted to occupy the state and impose their will (al-Masri, 2021, p. 200). The *fedayeen*, especially members of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), started to provoke the military and the civilians by extorting money from merchants, setting up roadblocks, attacking courts demanding the release of their comrades. Their bases and strongholds became off-limits for the Jordanian police and military. Many Palestinian leaders viewed Jordan's takeover as an absolute necessity for the conquest of Israel. Arafat did not openly say this but continually subverted the king and behaved as if he were Jordan's ruler (Rubin & Rubin, 2002, p. 45)

King Hussein realized that a showdown with the PLO was inescapable, initially, but he was reluctant to use military force against the *Fedayeen*. His reluctance to initiate an all-out confrontation stemmed from his fear that such a move might start a civil war (Nevo, 2008); Kamal Salibi (1998) regarded Hussein's military attack as self-defence. In the first phase of his operation, he was “simply biding his time and [gave the *fedayeen*] enough rope to hang

themselves" (Shlaim, 2007, p.329; Khalaf, 1989, p. 75). The rope was the PLO losing both public and external support. Public support evaporated due to the actions of the PLO's fighters. External support disappeared as well when Arab governments distanced themselves from the PLO after the Arab Summit in Cairo, and Nasser assented to Hussein's plan to use armed force (Mansour, 2021)[44].

The second phase was pure military power that removed the PLO in two stages, first from the cities and then from the woods of Jerash and Ajlun in July 197. PLO military power and will to fight were its operational CoG, as ideology alone cannot seize or control territories, external support cannot alone do the mission. The leadership was willing to continue the fight, but military defeats subdued their will. The attacks destroyed the PLO's operational CoG both in the urban and rural areas; later, it was forced to evacuate Jordan. So, in this case, the PLO lost both public and external support due to the violent actions of its members and to King Hussein's persuasiveness in Cairo. Military operations destroyed its operational CoG, and it was prevented from recovery. Therefore, their evacuation was the main sign of strategic victory. In the end, King Hussein's meticulous calculations, compounded by PLO counterproductive actions and internal divisions, produced a quick and easy victory.

Signs of Government Weakness

The legitimacy of the Jordanian state was at stake due to the fact that – as Abu Iyad pointed out –the PLO leadership disregarded King Hussein's attempts to meet with them to the extent that he had to wait for forty days to have a meeting (Khalaf, 1989, p. 57). The PFLP was keen to show the international community the vulnerability of Jordan's strategic CoG by hijacking four foreign aircraft (the attempt to hijack a fifth failed). Three of them were forced to land at Dawson's Field near Zarqa city in Jordan, they named the desert airfield 'Revolution Airport' and turned the operation into an international media event.

Later, the PLO declared 17 September a start of a civil disobedience which could paralyze the state (Rasheed, 2015, p. 185). On the same day, Arafat declared the area from Baqa'a camp to the extreme north liberated zone, and started nominating positions in these areas (Sati, 2019).

The Kingdom had a fragile system of governance that allowed Arafat to control the ministerial cabinet (Rasheed, 2015, p. 184). He could nominate or veto suggested names for strategic

[44] An interview with Ahmad Jibril, the commander of the PFLP-GC by the Al-Jazeera TV network, Ahmad Jibril died in Syria in 2021. He was pro-Syrian regime and fought against Fatah in Lebanon.

positions. The state's legitimacy was compromised to the extent that many army units warned the King that if he would not take action, they would, which alluded to the possibility of a military coup (Sati, 2019). Jordan started to implement measures to shape the war environment by different kinds of measures; at the army level, King Hussein reactivated the role of "Morale and Guidance" in the Army and called upon a retired officer Ma'an Abu Anwar who published two Magazines and successfully raised confidence in the Army (Sayigh, 2004, p. 245)[45]. The war for 'hearts and minds' was and is still essential in any conflict between the host state and the defiant proto-state armed group. The GID was not fully qualified for such mission because it was penetrated by all armed groups (Rasheed, 2015, p. 181), so, it is believed that Jordan formed a special covert branch in mid-1 969, called the Special Branch (al-Shu'ba al-Khassa) attached to the army. It was headed by a five-man committee comprising sharif Nasir bin Jamil, sharif Zayd bin Shakir. The Special Branch devoted special attention to recruiting agents within the guerrilla groups, and gathering information about them. For example, the Army was capable of detecting their secret caches and detain their leaders in the outset of the crisis (Khalaf, 1989, p. 90). This branch was a parallel apparatus to general intelligence and military intelligence (Sayigh, 2004, p. 245)[46].

Also, the army started raising popular resistance units in the villages and distributed weapons and ammunition. These units excluded the interaction between PLO and citizens, the King announced these units were supervised by him; claims that the 'al-Moqawamah al-Sha'biah' Popular Resistance had a strength of 45,000 manifested that the King was winning the hearts and minds of the Jordanian community (Sayigh, 2004, p.246).

Public Support

Arafat though he had the ingredients of success because of the demographic shift in Jordan that occurred after 1967 (O'Connell, 2011, p. 97)

Before September 1970, the PLO was determined to use coercive measures to force Jordan to permit further leeway to use its territory as a staging base to attack Israel. Some fractions

[45] The army experienced a loss of morale after the 1967 war. The 1968 battle raised its morale, but PLO groups' manifestation of coercive measures against the soldiers after the surge of their numbers that occurred after the Karama battle put the army in a situation that it again needed an improvement in morale. This mission was made possible by the creation of this unit, which became responsible for psychological warfare and raising the morale of the army. Gen. Ma'an himself was a participant of the 1948 war in which JAF was victorious in the Jerusalem battles. After his retirement, he earned a PhD from Oxford University.

[46] This creation can be confirmed by the saying of the GID Director that the GID itself was penetrated and needed purification within its cadre

believed that the first step was removing the monarchy and setting up Amman to be like Hanoi. This thought infuriated the army, alienated some potential supporters, and ultimately provoked a backlash (Szekely, 2017, p.59). These actions of the PLO radicals, specifically PFLP and DFLP, were a blessing in disguise for Jordan. For example, for two weeks, from 26 August until 08 September they committed 547 different kinds of violations against military personnel and institutions (Sati, 2019). The Militia Commnander Abou Daoud told Alan Hart "The essential fact is this: from the time of Karamah until June 1970, we in Fatah were enjoying the support of about fifty percent of Jordan's Armed Forces. After June 1970, and partly becus of the foolish and criminal activities of the leftists in our movement, we began to lose that support, …, so, After June 1970, we lost our chance" (Hart, 1984, p. 305). In response to why Arafat allowed these counterproductive measures, Szekely answers that "*Arafat was nothing if not a survivor and was aware that this strategy was problematic. The answer lies, at least partially, in the divisions within the organization. At the same time, 'leadership' is sometimes posited as the most critical predictor of success*" (Szekely, 2017, p. 59).

Their disrespect for the mosques and insulting behavior toward the King and his family were used effectively to incite the public against them.

External Support

Regarding the external support, Arafat was eager to get it. In May 1970, Fatah leaders met with an Iraqi delegation consisting of three Iraqi VIPs: abed al-Khaleg Sameree, Zaid Hayder from Baath leadership, and Mahdi Aammash, the Iraqi Minister of Interior Affairs. They discussed overthrowing the King. The Iraqi role was to occupy Mafraq and Zarqa, using the Iraqi units stationed inside Jordan. The role of Arafat was to occupy Amman with the help of Iraqi special forces dressed in civilian clothes. In addition, the Iraqis asked Arafat to secure Syrian approval to the plan (Khalaf, 1989, p.79). After the Iraqis, Arafat needed Nasser[47] support who was reluctant and told them that he would approve the coup if they succeeded to mount it within four days (Rasheed, 2015, pp. 196-197). Some states like Tunisia and Morocco offered implicit diplomatic support. Syria was divided between Hafiz al-Assad, who was Defence Minister and did not have real appreciation of the PLO leadership, and the Syrian Baath Party and the political leadership that supported the PLO moves. Assad had ambivalent attitude toward the Palestinians. He did not

[47] King Hussein managed to change the course of the adversarial relationship between him and Nasser that prevailed during the 1950s and the 1960s by his standing with Nasser in the 1967 war; from that moment he built a friendly relationship with Nasser.

want them to interfere with an Arab state's affairs and supported them to have bases to attack Israel (Seale, 1989, p.159).

Arafat used the media to influence the Arab mobs, he claimed that Amman streets were flooded by *Fedayeens'* blood and more than 35 thousand had been killed, which was later denied by his own men, the real number for the all losses did not exceed five thousand (Mansour, 2020; Sati, 2019).

External support started to disappear when Hussein went to the Arab Summit in Cairo and persuaded the Arab leaders to distance themselves from the PLO. Hussein also obtained US political support (Heikel, 2010). Most importantly, Jordan exploited the blunders made by the PLO by provoking Nasser, i.e.; Nasser told the PLO leadership that he was going to accept the US peace initiative of Rogers[48], and gave them the freedom to reject or accept it; however, he warned them against criticizing him publicly. They had agreed to that, but when they arrived in Amman, they started to denounce him and put his pictures on donkeys on the streets of Amman. Nasser was so incensed that he asked Hussein to teach them a lesson[49] (Hart, 1984, p. 316; Khalaf, 1989, p. 75). Nasser's change of attitude was paramount for Jordan: had the government initiated the showdown before it, the consequences could have been disastrous. More blood could have been shed on both sides, and a civil war would have been inevitable (Heikel, 2010).

In order to reduce the PLO's external support further, Jordan also asked the 25,000-strong Iraqi force to withdraw from Jordanian territory and beat back a Syrian intervention force by using the air force and the 40th Armored Brigade[50].

[48] On October 28, 1969, the US Secretary of State William Rogers presented his plan that called for a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict. It called for Israeli withdrawal from Sinai, leaving Gaza for future negotiations, the return of the West Bank to approximately armistice line. Naser accepted the plan and King Hussein followed Nasser's steps. The Palestinian groups declined the offer mainly because it returned the West Bank to Jordan not to them. The USSR rejected the offer. The Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir initially rejected the plan. However, under the fear of Nixon's sanctions, she later reluctantly accepted after the US supported Israel with airplanes and financial aid. The Palestinian groups offended Nasser by their verbal attack, and the PFLP demonstrators paraded against him. However, Alan Hart believes that Henry Kissinger orchestrated the failure of his competitor's plan.

[49] I believe that Nasser did not want the events to unfold to that level; he most likely wanted a 'low scale' lesson; whatever, his intention was, it was exploited to evict the PLO.

[50]The Iraqi forces were deceived by the Jordanian military intelligence, that created a fake US plan to intervene militarily and sold this fake plan to a double agent who sold it to the Iraqi military attaché in Turkey. Days later the chief of staff asked for a meeting with the Iraqi military attaché in Amman, during that meeting the intelligence director came and asked Shreif Zaid to meet with the US advance team, he replied "Ok, later"; so, the Iraqi guest understood that the Americans have an offensive intention and apparently sent that to Baghdad (O'Connell. 2011, pp.105-106).

At the start of the crisis, the Syrians sent a reinforced Hittin brigade claiming that it was a PLA brigade [51] to aid the PLO units around Irbid. This brigade succeeded in its mission because JAF had Amman as his main priority, that success tempted the Ba'ath Party in Syria to send a force to knock out Amman, they sent the 5th Infantry division attached with two armored brigades with a strength of 200-300 *T-55s* and its manpower to over 16,000. It was disguised with Palestinian insignia (Rubin & Rubin, p. 52). This force headed from Ramatha to Amman.

This offensive was stopped mainly by the small JAF AF which was limited to 30 Hawker Hunters and 18 F-104s (EI-Edroos, 1980, p. 330); JAF Air force "*performed superbly against the Syrians. The sortie rate they managed on 22 September, four to eight sorties per plane in 16 hours, was extremely impressive, and rivaled Israeli sortie rates at the start of the Six-Day War after two days, …, no other Arab air force was ever able to generate a sortie rate such as this*" (Pollack, 1996, p. 424). The Syrians lost 62 tanks, 60 armored personnel carrier (APCs) and suffered about 600 casualties, which forced them to retreat (Pollack, p, 421). This success gave JAF huge psychological lift and demoralized the PLO.

So, the reduction of the external support was significant before attacking the operational CoG with the hard power and inflicting numerous losses. The US position was not clear. NSA formed a crisis cell, but it was talking to itself. The US provided some deterrence psychological measures by moving the Sixth fleet to the eastern Mediterranean to counter any possible Soviet intervention. They never answered Hussein's request for military intervention (O'Connell, 2011, p. 106). However, it seems that they urged the King to harden his position. The US ambassador told the King "Your Majesty, you should know, the US only backs the wining horse" (Hart, 1984, p. 313). However, Jordan was keen to show that it has the complete US support.

Prevention of Recovery

In order to stave off total annihilation, the defeated PLO signed an agreement with Wasfi Tal, the Prime Minister of Jordan, to withdraw to the forests and mountains from Amman and the cities. Jordanian Intelligence knew that the PLO had no intention to keep this agreement. Instead, it had information that the PLO's acceptance was only tactical, and had known about the caches of ammunition left behind. The Director-General of Intelligence reported to the King that it was better to violate the agreement and force the PLO's complete withdrawal from Jordan.

[51] Although it belonged to the PLO but is could not move or carry out operations without the consent of the Syrian authorities.

The King accepted the recommendation of General Natheer Rasheed[52] (Mansour, 2008), the Jordan General Intelligence (GID) estimate contrasted with Wasif's plans; however, the King concurred to the prevention of recovery estimate (27:30). The kinetic operation went easy for the Jordanian Armed Forces. Although the PLO anticipated the attack, it took no basic precautions, and it withdrew its qualified commanders to Syria and Lebanon (Tamimi, 2009)[53].

Arafat used an overload narrative to exaggerate the incidents in Amman (Heikel, 2010, 43:25). He aimed to trigger the external intervention and support by claiming that rivers of blood were flowing in the streets of Amman, he claimed the number of civilian causalities exceeded 30 thousand. In reality, the number of casualties was about 5,000 from all concerned parties (Mansour, 2020).[54] To sum up this case study, Jordan would not have had a chance to win against the PLO in this conflict if it had gone directly to military confrontation because the armed groups had significant public and external support before 1970. Instead, the measures taken by the Jordanian government, either based on solid knowledge or by fortuitous estimates, made the victory feasible by targeting the local and external support of the PLO, then delivering a military blow to the operational CoG, and lastly, preventing its recovery based on intelligence efforts.

Public support was essential to the success of the operation, in this field. I believe that the notorious actions of DFLP and PFLP were of extreme help to the achieved victory.

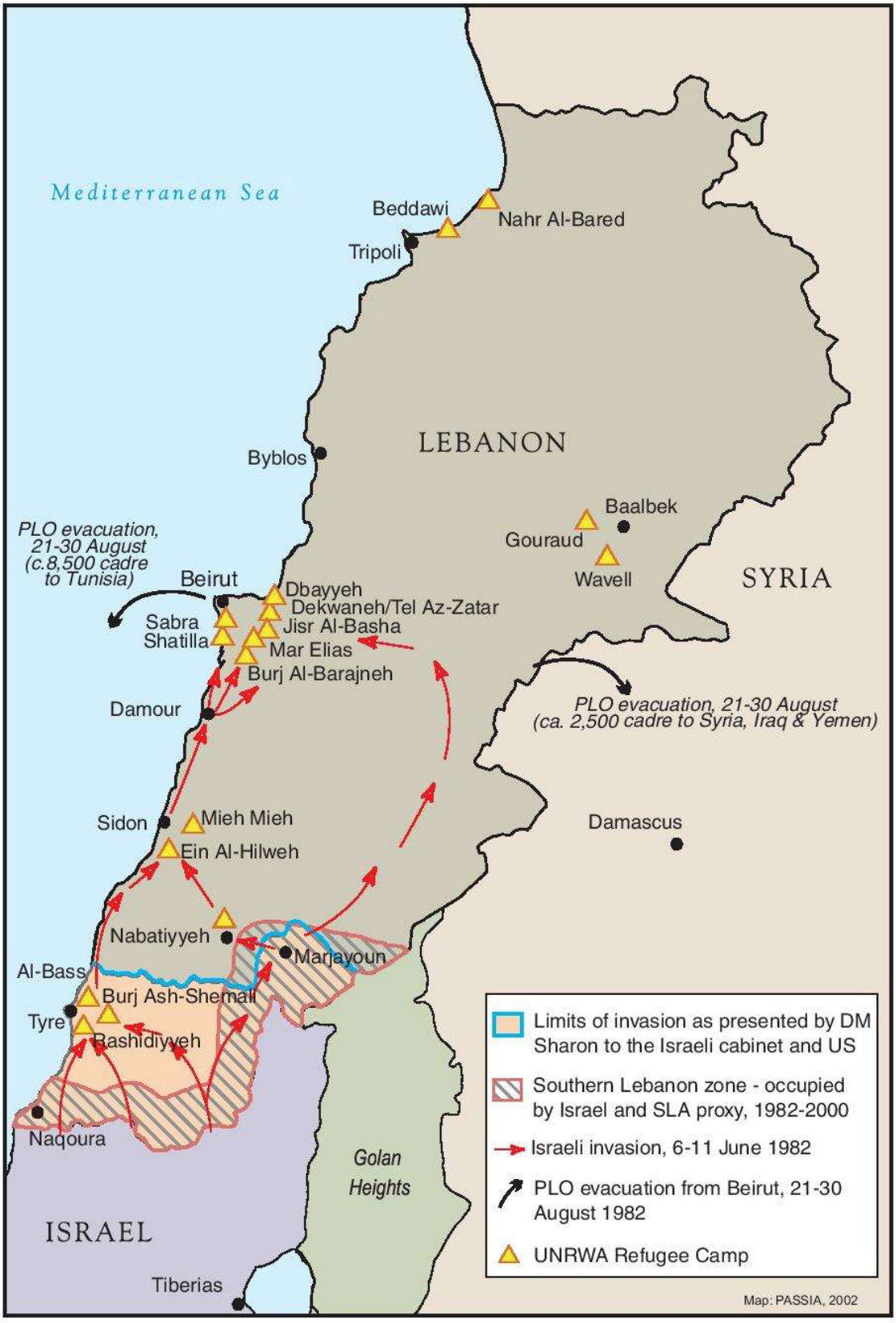
The 1982 Israeli Invasion of Lebanon

This campaign is an example of an enemy state defeating its arch enemy proto-state armed group in a clear, objective victory and forcing it to accept the state's terms.

The campaign can be divided into four phases. The first phase was the advance in the South, (June 6 to June 9). The second phase was the encirclement of Beirut and the capture of Baabda Palace in the eastern suburb (June 9 to June 13.) The he third phase was seizing control of the mountains overlooking Beirut (June 13 to June 26). The last phase was the siege of Beirut, until the cease-fire on August 12 (Khalidi, 2014, p.70). (see Figure. 2.11 on the next page)

[52] General Natheer Rasheed was the General Intelligence (GID) director during the crisis.
[53] Interview with Col. Abu Mousa from Fatah at al-Hiwar TV. Abu Mousa is a nickname for Colonel Said Maragha,who defected as Major from Jordan Armed Forces- serving as an infantry battalion commander, during the 1970 security incidents- he joined Fatah as a military commander, later defected from Fatah in 1983 and formed with Nimr Saleh and Abu Khaled Amla a group called Revolutionary Fatah which protested against Fatah and was supported by Syria in the camps war in 1985-1988
[54] According to Abu Daoud the causalities were 1000 civilians, 1000 from the Militias, 970 from Fatah, 1000 from other groups (Mansur, 2020, 43:00) the total number of casualties was around 4000 during September.

Figure 2.11. *The 1982 Operation*



The Israeli goals that the Defense Minister, Ariel Sharon, wanted to achieve were the following declared objectives to be reached within four days (Pollack, 1996, pp. 497-498):

- Occupy Lebanon up to the Litany River, including the Beirut-Damascus highway, and besiege Beirut.
- Destroy the Palestinian paramilitary units in Lebanon.
- Defeat and expel the Syrians from Lebanon.
- Conclude a peace treaty between Lebanon and Israel.
- The other recently disclosed objective by Ehud Barak (Barak, 2020), that the actual objective of Sharon along with his Chief of Staff, Eitan was "*a secret agenda that was far more grandiose: He intended to use the IDF's tanks to remake the whole of the Middle East. In his vision, Israeli forces and their Phalange allies would conquer Lebanon from the border to Beirut, destroying all PLO forces and inflicting serious damage on Syrian units deployed there. With the capital secure, the Israelis would install the Phalange's leader, Bashir Gemayel, as President, thus transforming Lebanon into a reliable ally. Next, Gemayel would expel the Palestinians to Jordan, where they would be a majority able to establish a Palestinian state in place of the Hashemite Kingdom. This, Sharon reckoned, would eliminate the Palestinian demand for a state in Judea and Samaria—the West Bank—which thus would become part of Israel"* (Bergman, 2018, pp.236-237).

Ehud Barak told Maariv "*the idea was to use the pretext of Palestinian terror, which they were providing us with, to attack them in south Lebanon and turn that into a leverage and join the Christians in Beirut, the assumption was that they will have to return to Jordan, and unlike what happened in 1970, this time will be ready and take over the government, and in that way, Zion is redeemed"* (Barak, 2021).

In my opinion, this objective can explain the indirect role of Sharon in the massacre of the Palestinian civilians in Sabra and Shatila after the end of the evacuation.

However, it can be deduced that Israel never wanted to annihilate PLO; instead, it wanted to degrade its capabilities and keep it under control. This motif has appeared in cinematic fiction as well: in Oslo Shimon Perez tells his team that the preservation of the PLO is of interest to Israel.

In an interview, Abdullatif Arabiat[55], told Tamimi that Abdallah Salah, a Minister of Information in Jordan, had told him that Israel wanted to have one united block of Palestinians be created to represent the Palestinian people. Concluding peace with this group would convince the other states to make peace and normalize their relations with Israel (Tamimi, 2020). The PLO had prior knowledge about Israeli offensive plans from multiple sources – American and Soviet, to name just two. (Khalaf, 1982; Hourani, 1982). Nevertheless, the PLO concluded that the offense would halt south of Sidon, at which point the UNSC represented by the US and USSR would force a cease-fire to which the PLO and Syria would be parties. Bassam Abu Sharif (2009), claimed that he met a source, his name was Fayez (p.70), who gave him the operational plan of the invasion. Bassam presented this critical information to Arafat, Syrians, and Saad Sayel[56], the commander of the PLO forces (Sharif, 2009, p.71). Israel sought a pretext to justify its intention to invade Lebanon. The pretext was provided on June 3, when members of the Abu Nidal group shot and wounded Aaron Regev, the Israeli ambassador in London. Thus, the offensive on June 6 at 11.00 AM should have been no surprise to the PLO. The IDF committed 75,000 soldiers, 1,240 tanks, 1,520 APCs to the operations. In addition, the Israelis had 650 combat aircraft.

The PLO resources were 15 thousand men, 6,000 (only 4,500 regulars) deployed in the South, sixty tanks, 100-200 artillery pieces, and no aircraft (Dupuy & Martell, pp. 91-94).

Syria had around 30,000 soldiers deployed in Lebanon in two armored brigades (the 62nd and the 85th), ten commando battalions,16 SAM batteries, 200-300 tanks; Seale claims that they had been compromised by graft and inattention to combat training (Seale, 1989, p. 377; Dupuy & Martell, 1983, p. 90), though they were holding superb defensive terrain.

Sharon planned to send a small division to cut the Beirut-Damascus highway to cut off the Syrians in Beirut from the Bekaa Valley and from Syria itself would also threaten the western

[55] Arabiyat was the Secretary-General for Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan and the Parliament chairman, and Salah was a Jordanian diplomat originally from Nablus who worked as representative of Jordan in the UN.

[56] Saad Sayel (Abu -al Walid) was born in 1932 in Nablus, joined the Jordan Armed Forces as an officer, and served as an engineering and infantry officer. He defected to Fatah during the 1970 incidents, left to Syria and Lebanon, took part in the regularization of the PLO forces, formed the Yarmouk brigade, led the PLO in the 1978 Israeli invasion and was the commander of the operation center in Beirut during the 1982 war. Abu -al Walid was killed on 29 September 1982 by still unknown group who assassinated him during his visit to Palestinian forces who supposedly should have left after the defeat of the PLO. Some accuse ANO group while others suspect associates within the leadership, because of his discontent about the performance of a few leaders during the campaign, and wanted to hold an inquiry to investigate the collapse of the PLO in the war. I believe that the main reason was that the PLO committed to evacuate from Lebanon and his visit did not satisfy many parties inside Lebanon and Israel. Even Arafat said “I told him not to return” (Abu Mousa interview with al-Hiwar).

flank of the Syrians in the Bekaa. By engaging the Syrians, he could get cabinet support to attack the Syrians in force, facilitating his moves against the PLO. The Israeli onslaught went according to plan but not to schedule. During the first phase, the Israeli advance was delayed by the five Palestinian refugee camps, especially *Ein al-Hilwah*, which was turned into a modern Stalingrad. The fighters were led by Muslim sheiks and spearheaded by *'Ashbal'* (tiger cubs), young students who fought furiously. The Israelis were forced to clear it from house to house. (Khalidi, 2014, p.74). The leading Israeli force bypassed Ein-Hilwah and reached the outskirts of Beirut in less than 72 hours. By June 11, they had fought their way into the Baabda presidential palace and started besieging the city's center (Dupuy & Martell, pp. 91-95).

There were several reasons for the PLO's failure. The first strategic mistake was the expectation that Israel would stop its invasion in the Litany River or 40 km from the Israeli border, which was essential to stop the bombardment of the northern settlements in Israel.

Second, although advance information was available about the Israeli offensive, the defensive planning was poor. There was no actual preparation of the battlefield, no real engineering work with prepared kill zones and traps that could have delayed the Israeli advance on the rugged Lebanese terrain. The only sign of good planning was dividing Beirut into proper defensive sectors (Tamimi, 2009).

The third strategic mistake was provoking Israel before the 'regularization' of the PLO forces was completed. By June 1982, the Palestinian military had not evolved fully from guerrilla units into regular forces using conventional methods of operation, despite the evident structural changes in that direction. Israeli Chief of Staff Rafael Eitan expressed his satisfaction that the PLO was ‘going regular’ since that gave Israeli forces a better chance to isolate and destroy it (Sayigh, 1983, p. 23; Sayigh, 1983b, p. 8). Brig. Moein al-Taher[57] (Personal communication, 31 May 2022) confirms that the tanks (T-34 with 85mm guns) were mainly in indirect fire and stationery during the battles.

Moreover, the Palestinian units had lost the guerrilla's pros without gaining the advantages of a regular army. Mao Zedong wrote about the dangers that can arise in the transitory phase between the change from guerrilla warfare into the orthodox conventional force in which the group is still unqualified as regular force and left its guerrilla style (Kiss, 2014, p. 35).

[57] Moein al-Taher is one of the PLO military commanders. He was the commander of the famous Jormog battalions that fought bravely in Shoqaif castle and made a successful rear attack during the siege of Beirut

Instead, the PLO found itself fighting with medium and heavy weapons without the necessary levels of firepower and organization, and management needed by regular armies to fight a superior enemy.

The fourth reason was the low morale among the fighters, which led to some forces (composed of mercenaries from Bangladesh) in South Lebanon leaving their positions without a fight (Sayigh, 2004, p.511, p.559). Volunteers came to serve from all over the world especially Iran, Yemen and Bangladesh but the latter were mainly used in administrative missions (al-Taher, 2017, pp. 148-151). However, some units, such as the Students Battalion at *Beaufort* Castle, the units along the Khalda avenue of approach, and the defenders of Ein al-Hilwa refugee camp, were ideologically mobilized and fought until death[58].

Concerning the proposed victory theory, public support was lost for the PLO and won by the IDF. In 1982 Shia villages in the South welcomed the Israeli armored forces by throwing flowers (Naser, 2007, p. 88; Qassim, 2010, p. 136). However, the PLO lost its support within the villages after its battles against Amal (Khalidi, 2014). The PLO presence was perceived as bringing the evil of Israeli occupation for the villagers in the South.

The issue of 'tajawazat'[59] became a central sore point with Lebanese public opinion, a legitimate, pressing concern that neither the leadership nor the cadres of the PLO ever fully appreciated. It was far from being a marginal issue. It involved significant structural problems of discipline (Khalidi, 2014, p. 60); subsequently, this character reduced the public support even amongst their supporters.

The needed external support came from Syria, but Sharon unexpectedly forced the Syrians to fight and then imposed a cease-fire agreement on June 11. Moreover, Arafat's Lebanese allies called on him to surrender and spare Beirut (Tamimi, 2009). This action left the Palestinians alone in their war. The Syrians went further and did not allow weapons shipments to come to the PLO from China and other socialist states (Khalaf, 2011). Yasser Arafat claimed that no Arab state interfered in that war (al-Jazeera, 2020, 25:02).

After neutralizing the PLO's external support, Sharon and Eitan surrounded Beirut to tackle the Palestinian operational CoG and destroy it gradually until its complete surrender.

[58] There is a documentary produced by the Israeli TV2, in Hebrew language about the fight in Beaufort castle, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TY9fdRR-UuU

[59] The Arabic word means actions over law, or excesses being committed by corrupted people

One of the operational factors that led to the defeat of the PLO was its inability to interdict the Israeli use of the Western Highway along the Mediterranean Coast. The coastal strip is very narrow and can be controlled from the Western mountains like the Shouf mountains. A closer look at this critical issue also highlights the lack of external support, as the Syrian forces and the Druze did not allow the PLO to station its forces on the high ground above the road (Hourani, 1982).

The last element that the IDF was successful in was forcing the PLO to leave and prevent it from regaining its positions after the defeat. The morale of the political leadership was down as few leaders started to lobby for withdrawal (Khalidi, 2014, p.121). So, Israel succeeded in the first phase to neutralize the public and the external support; the second phase was military advance followed by the encirclement of Beirut until its surrender succeeded to affect the morale of the leadership and persuade it to accept the US evacuation plan (Khalidi, 2014, pp.121-122). To sum up this case, Israel won the campaign and achieved most of its objectives in 1982 against the PLO (not all of them: the campaign was not concluded by a peace treaty between Lebanon and Israel). The most successful result was the eviction of the PLO from Lebanon.

According to hypothesis (3), the victory was achieved because of the shortage of public support toward the PLO in the South and the Israeli forces' neutralization of the deployed Syrian forces inside Lebanon. This operation was followed by encircling the PLO in Beirut and preventing external support to the besieged fighters and leadership, and the destruction of the operational CoG. The last phase was the conclusion of an agreement under the auspices of the US to allow the PLO to leave the Lebanese territory. The victory in this case:

Victory = Legitimacy + power of resistance + prevention of recovery

In the legitimacy, sizable public and external support was reduced, Sharon's moves against the Syrians prevented them from offering help, and his siege over Beirut exterminated external support from arriving at the needy fighters. Public support was minimal among the Southern Shia villagers who welcomed the Israeli invasions, let alone the Maronites, while Arafat had to remain in the South to fight the Israelis, his withdrawal to Beirut defamed the reputation of his struggle. In the survival, Israel destroyed the resistance, prevented their recovery at that time, and forced the PLO to leave the borders of Lebanon which provided Israel with the conceived leeway to conclude peace with Lebanon.

Although, the PLO was defeated in this war, but it was an essential step for the Oslo agreement, as the outcome of the war enabled the full politicization of the PLO and restricted its violent mechanism which assisted it in gaining international legitimacy especially from the US, in addition to the first intifada that heavily changed the Israeli mindset.

Taliban Vs. the US and the Afghanistan government

The rapid collapse of the Afghan government in 2021 surprised everyone – including the US. A few days before the Taliban victory, the American President said that it would take much time to defeat the Afghan government.

The primary element that contributed to the government's failure was the loss of its strategic CoG, 'legitimacy' in the eyes of its citizens. The state was built on the presence of the US troops, and as soon as those left, the government's legitimacy flew with them. The corruption of the Afghanistan government was a sign of its weakness and lack of legitimacy. The *Economist* described the situation as follows: "As the enemy seized province after province, government soldiers shed their uniforms and ran. On paper, the army had hundreds of thousands of well-equipped fighters. In reality, few loyal commanders had to buy ammunition from crooked supply officers and pay in cash for artillery support. The special forces fought well, but politicians' incompetent relatives often commanded regular troops. Soldiers went unpaid as officials pilfered military budgets. Citizens stayed loyal to their families and clans, not to a corrupt government that was as likely to shake them down as to help them. The state was a Potemkin village constructed to please its American sponsors. When they left, it fell" (The Economist, 2021). In this field, after the institution of Afghani personnel and pay system (APPS), the Taliban targeted the soldiers or their families in the limited number of ATMs and that left some families without salaries for months. APPS Started in 2016 to cut down on paycheck fraud involving fake identities, or "ghost soldiers" (Pers communication, Boldizsar, February 2022). The legitimacy of the Taliban was enhanced after its successful negotiations with the US in Qatar.

Concerning the power of resistance, the Afghan soldiers lacked the will to fight. President Biden pointed to this by saying, "*American troops cannot and should not be fighting in a war and dying in a war that Afghan forces are not willing to fight for themselves." Biden also said, "We gave them every chance to determine their future. We could not provide them with the will to fight for that future*" (The White House, 2021; CNN, 2021, CNBC, 2021).

ISAF used a framework of four phases to work in Afghanistan (Shape, Clear, Hold, Build). The "shape phase refers to making changes to the environment through IO or other methods, in order to create suitable conditions for success of the subsequent phases. The clear phase is an effort to remove the open armed groups presence. The hold phase is defined by providing security for the population in an area so the armed groups cannot return. The build phase entails efforts to increase security and governmental capacity so that government and local forces can control the area. Yet another necessary phase is the transition phase of security to local and government forces" (US DoD, 2014, p. 9.3). The framework did not go beyond the clear phase and was impacted by the terrain of Afghanistan. Also, the state could not build a nationhood belonging for its citizens. Afghanistan's 2004 Constitution cited Tajik, Pashtun, Uzbek, Hazara, Baluch, Turkman, Pachaie, Aymaq, Nuristani, Qirghiz, Arab, Qizilbash, Brahwui, and Gujur ethnicities, and those ethnicities have cross-border loyalties. Afghanistan has a myriad of other small ethnic groups; the tribal outside extensions explain the smaller impact of the trauma exercised by the 2001 war on the psychology of the Afghans. The terrain affected the public support, people who live outside the ring road in remote areas are out of the control of the government; especially mountaineers do not view the external world as others like Mazar al-Sharif, who had an interest to remain with the west and leave with them (Personal communication, Gabor Boldizsar, February 2022). The public support for the Taliban is more than 20 % which exceeds the 'significant public threshold' (Personal communication, Afghan Colonel, May 20, 2022). With regard to the external support, the Taliban limited its operations into Afghanistan, which is a vital element in limiting the provocation of the external states. Taliban could not be banned from cross- border support especially from Pakistani supportive Pashtun tribes, Afghanistan has borders with six states: 91 km with China, 921 km with Iran, 2,670 km with Pakistan, 1,357 km with Tajikistan, 804 km with Turkmenistan, 144 km with Uzbekistan (see Figure 2.11 on the next page).

Figure 2.11: *Map of Afghanistan*

Note. Perry-Castaneda Library Map Collection. Courtesy of the University of Texas Libraries, The University of Texas at Austin. Public domain.

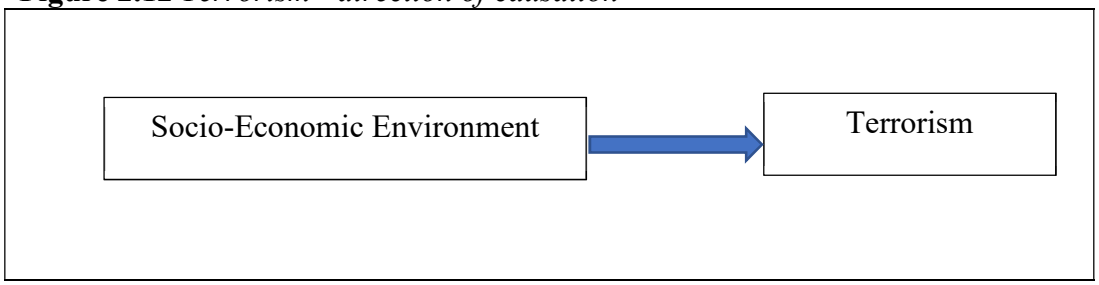
In the end, the Taliban won the war because of the failure of the government to limit the public support and the external support to the Taliban, the low morale of the government, which manifested by the scenes of the fleeing political and military leaderships. It is remarkable that they had the material means but the human competence was short because many high-ranking officers bought their positions by money, the morale of the Taliban was in its peak while the government lost its morale and subsequently its will to fight. The US failed in its long war with the Taliban as it could not prevent the recovery of the group and did not build the nation-state of Afghanistan.

Hypothesis (4): The proliferation of Terrorism in the Middle East Region

The fourth hypothesis discusses the factors that led to the existence and proliferation of terrorism inside the Middle Eastern states. It states that the main factors responsible for this proliferation are the socio-economic and political environment.

The dependent variable is the rise of terrorism, while the independent variable is the socio-economic and political environment. (See Figure 2.12 on the next page)

Figure 2.12 *Terrorism - direction of causation*



Note. Author's compilation.

A thorough analysis of the *Global Database of Terrorism* (GDT) is used to evaluate the proposed hypothesis. However, before expanding on the factors, we need to establish that terrorists and other types of armed groups exist in the Middle East in higher proportion than in any other place globally.

Discussion

A few researchers believe that regional location is conducive to the survival of terrorist groups, (e.g., Jones & Libicki; Enders, W., & Sandler, T. 2006). They used the World Bank's regional groupings that divide the world into seven specific areas: the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), East Asia and the Pacific, North America, South Asia, Sub Saharan Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, Europe, and Central Asia. However, such analysis is superficial analysis, for example, one argument exists that MENA did not have such phenomena before 1970.

Academics tried to explain terrorism by the use of different theoretical frameworks, one of them is that terrorism can be explained as a result of the radicalization of particular groups and individuals. The core of the radicalization approach is based on the thesis that not all radicals are terrorists, but all terrorists are radicals. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the meaning of 'radical' is: "Advocating thorough or far-reaching political or social reform." A radical desires fundamental change, as opposed to reformists who accept gradual change. Scholars emptied "radical" of its actual meaning by adopting the "revolutionary fundamentalist" approach (Goodwin, 2006, p. 259). The second theoretical base is the US counterterrorism strategy of 2003, which focused on the Middle East. Figure 2.13 on the next page depicts the suggested structure.

This strategy affirms that:

"Underlying conditions like poverty, corruption, religious conflict, and ethnic strife create opportunities for terrorists to flourish. Some of such conditions are real, and some are manufactured. Terrorists use these conditions to justify their actions and expand their support. The belief that terrorism is a legitimate means to address such conditions and affect political change is a fundamental issue enabling terrorism to develop and grow".

Figure 2.13 *Structure of Terrorism*

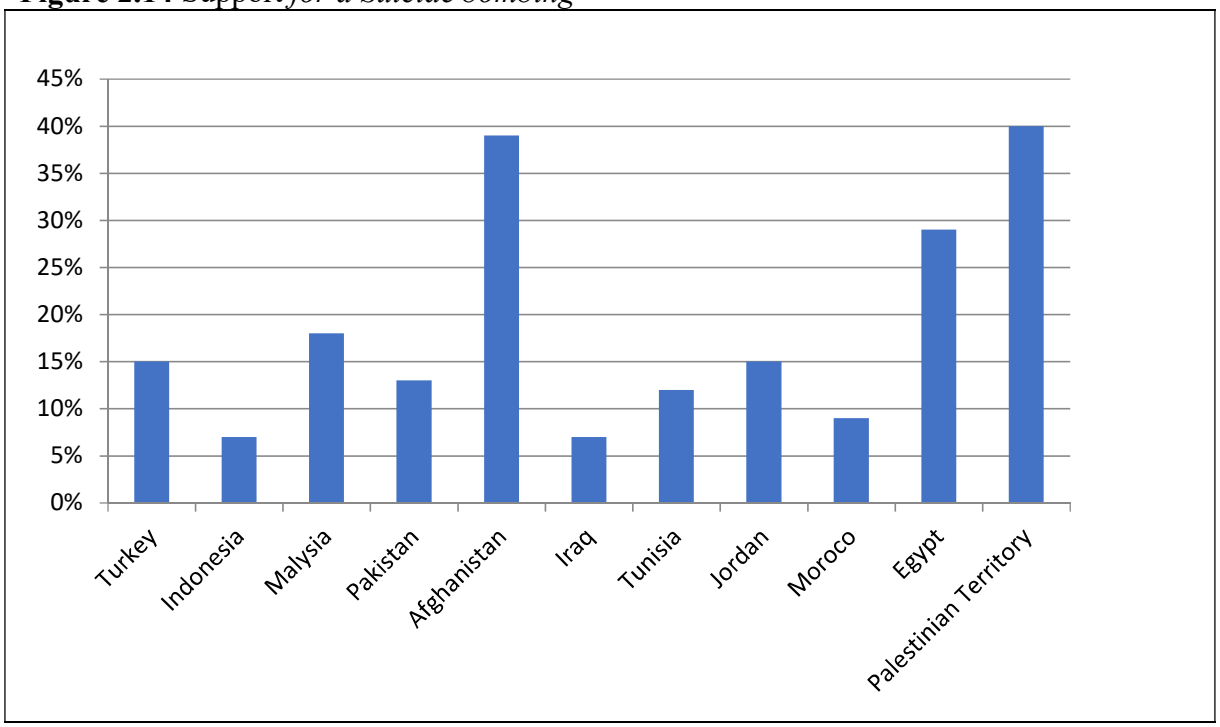
Note. Reprinted from "US counterterrorism strategy, 2003"

As a starter, we have to acknowledge that terrorism in MENA is more than any other part in the world. The ten states most affected by terrorism in 2019, according to the Global Terrorism Index (GTI) and sorted according to their rankings has Afghanistan in the first place followed by Iraq, Nigeria, Syria, Somalia, Yemen, Pakistan, India, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Philippines (Institute for Economics & Peace, 2020, p.18). In the GTD of 2018 eight states have Muslim majorities; four of these states were in the Middle East. The states with the highest number of victims of terrorism are in the Muslim world: Afghanistan with 25 % of the total deaths from terrorism, Iraq with 23 %, Nigeria with 8%, Somalia with 8%, Syria with 6 %, Pakistan with 5%, Egypt with 3%, DRC with 3%, Central African Republic (CAR) with 2%, India with 2 %, while the rest of the world is just 18% (Institute for Economics & Peace, 2018, p.13). These numbers show that terrorism affects Muslims more than any other nation; almost 70 % of deaths are among Muslims, and the deadliest groups in 2017 were the Islamic

State, Shabab, Boko Haram, and Taliban, responsible for 56.6 % of total deaths of terrorism; in 2012 were responsible for only 32% of the total deaths, a decade before, they accounted for 6%. (See Institute for Economics & Peace, 2018, p. 15). These numbers indicate the proliferation of terrorism in the Middle East, particularly in Muslim countries, and especially those affected by internal conflicts.

In order to assess the inhabitants' inclination to support terrorist groups, several public opinion surveys were conducted to gauge the public support of these groups. Figure 2.14 shows the percentage of support among the citizens of various Muslim states for a particular form of attack (suicide bombing).

Figure 2.14 Support *for a Suicide bombing*



Note. Adapted from Pew (2013)

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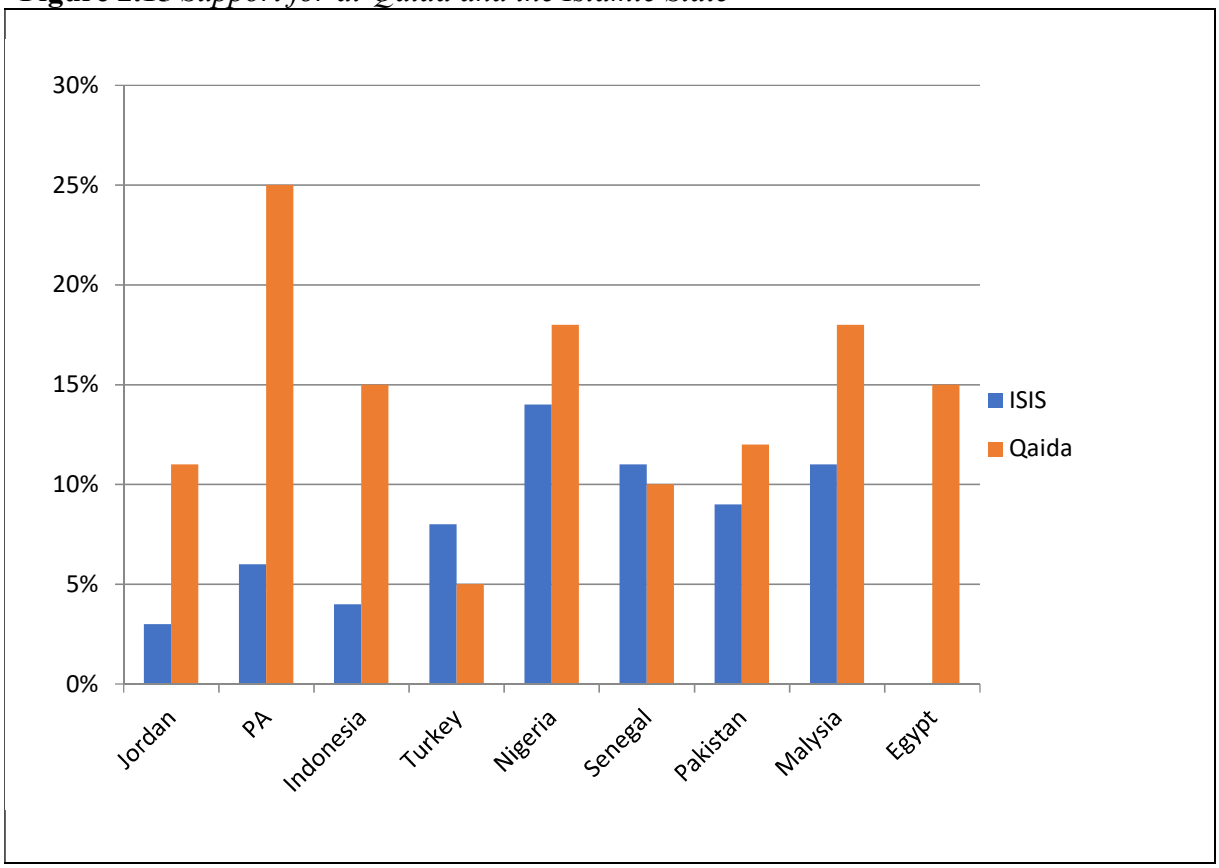
Figure 2.15 on the next page shows the support for al-Qaida and the Islamic State in 2013. The support for the Islamic State and al-Qaida varies according to brutality of their actions and their media campaigns. In general, al-Qaida enjoyed more support than the Islamic State.

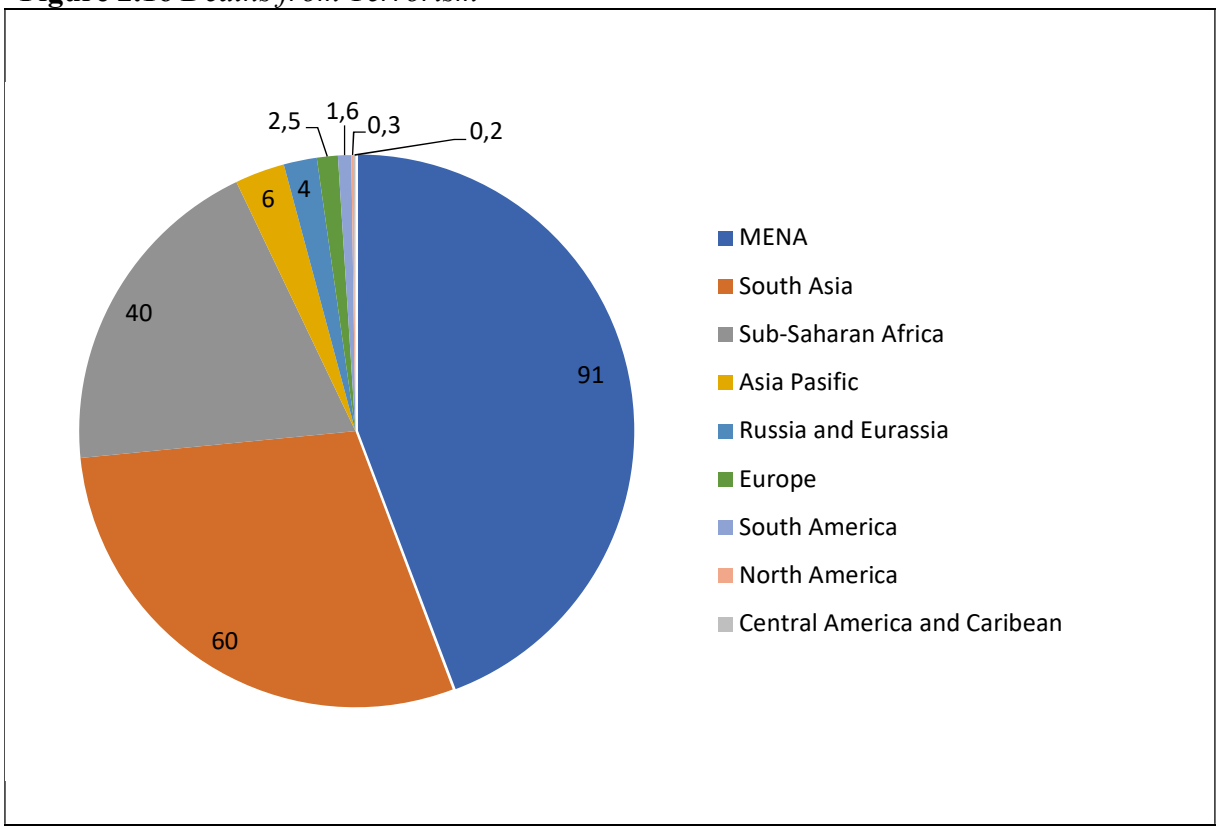
Figure 2.15 *Support for al-Qaida and the Islamic State*



Note. Adapted from PEW (2015) for the Islamic State and PEW (2014) for al-Qaida

Despite the sympathy, figure 2.16 on the next page shows that the same citizens are the primary victims of terrorism. The chart depicts the number of causalities from terrorism for the time interval from 2002 until 2017. It clearly shows that Muslims are the most heavily affected people globally by terrorism.

Figure 2.16 *Deaths from Terrorism*



Note. Adapted from Institute for Economics & Peace (2018). p. 34

Analysis

From the data represented above, it is evident that terrorism in the Middle East is more prevalent than at any other location on earth. The US counterterrorism strategy after 2003 admitted the existence of underlying conditions, but did not give them the attention they deserve. Instead, the only solutions to decrease the underlying conditions were to partner with the international community to strengthen fragile states, prevent the (re)emergence of terrorism, and win the war of ideas (Underhill, 2014). Unfortunately, these measures are not enough, and the international community was hesitant about leveraging its power in this aspect, mainly because of the fear of being accused of Islamophobia.

Robert Pape studied suicide terrorism, which scholars like to link with Islamists. After compilation of a database of suicide operations from 1980 till 2003 (315 incidents), he found that suicide attacks are not religiously motivated: most perpetrators were secular. He concluded

that the Tamil Tigers instigated these attacks first, and committed 76 out of the 315, which is more than any Islamic group's score. The PKK conducted other attacks in Turkey, so did the Popular Front of the liberation of Palestine (PFLP), even Lebanese Christians took part in some operations against Israeli forces. Secondly, these attacks were carried out mainly in response to foreign occupation (Pape, 2005, p.7).

The first factor among the direct reasons for instigating terrorism is the existence of grievances among identifiable subgroups (Crenshaw, 1981, p.383). This reason has motivated Basque terrorism in Spain, the Irish against the UK, and many others who seek secession from their original states. This applies to movements in Iraq, Bahrain, Yemen also. However, I believe that grievances are not necessarily enough for the outbreak of terrorism: they provide the fuel, but not the fire.[60]

The other factor is the lack of opportunities for political participation. In this aspect, educated people with no opportunities for employment are candidates for terrorist recruitment: many revolutions grew out of student unrest. However, the direct, immediate factors for terrorism 'precipitants' are the most difficult to guess and know because the preconditions are suitable and need a catalyst to occur; one of the main precipitants is the excessive use of force (Crenshaw, 1981). Outside the Middle East, States with upper income are more likely to be the home of nationalist and left-wing and environmentalist groups. On the other hand, developing countries are more likely to have religiously motivated groups (Jones & Libicki, 2008), and no environmentalist ones. The issue with religious groups is that they last longer than left-wing groups because of their better capabilities of recruitment and mobilization (Crenshaw, 1981), Which is a result of their commitment to a divine cause.

Another socio-economic aspect of this area is the youth explosion.

High birthrates in Arab and Islamic states enlarged the percentage of young people (between 15-35) in society, while failed economic regimes of their homelands have achieved only low economic growth. It seems unreasonable that poor people, in e.g., Nigeria, Pakistan, Egypt, Afghanistan, and others, have large families that they cannot afford to sustain and provide with education and better health conditions. In contrast, productive individuals in wealthy states have fewer members (if at all) in their families. The explanation of this phenomenon is that families are part of social security and that plays a role in states like Afghanistan where sons have to

[60] Grievances exist in many parts of the world and have existed for decades for minorities but did not turn them into terrorists.

work to provide their families with needed income, or even to offset any losses due to enduring conflicts in these states.

There is an inverse relationship between the high rate of population expansion and the existence of societal security (Personal communication, Kaiser, May 20 2019). In developing states where the social safety net is missing or weak, people tend to have more children that can take care of their aged parents. Children are part of the economy in these states (Nehr, 1971, pp. 380-89), in contrast to developed states (Rotondi, 2019, pp.7-8).

In general, inhabitants of states that are weak due to fragile legitimate authorities and the existence of protracted internal conflicts have more inclination to have more children because of unreliable societal security and future uncertainties that increase mortality rate.

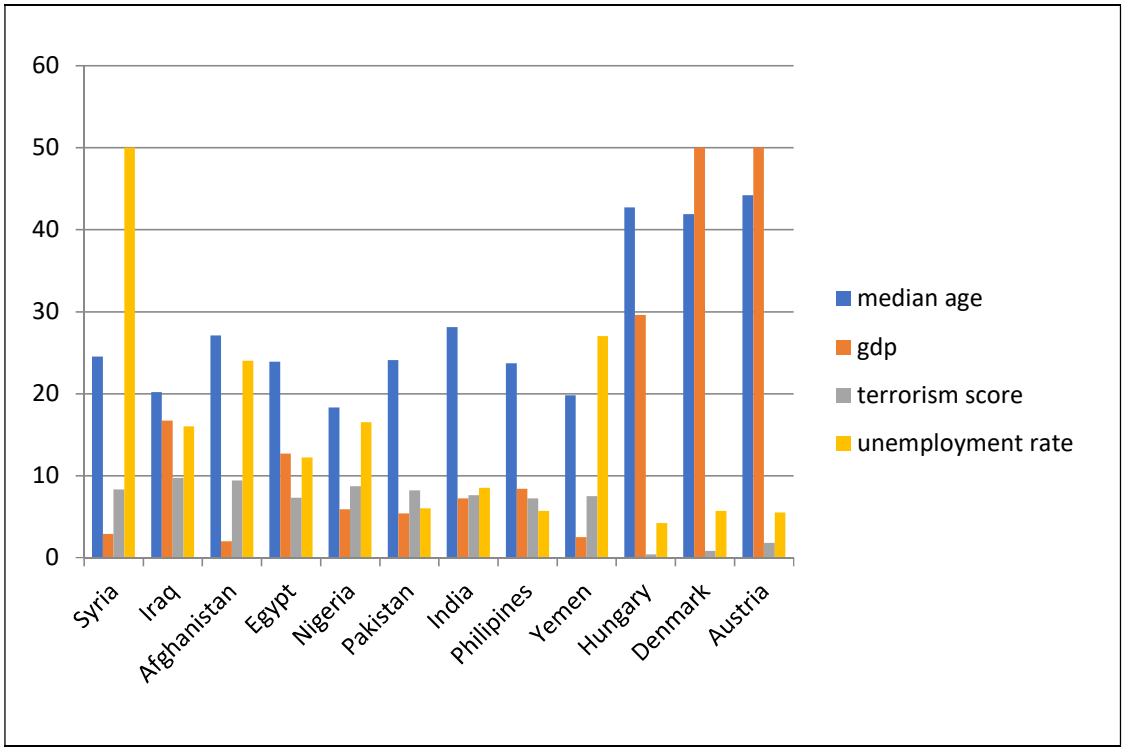
According to a study by Population Action International (PAI), there is a correlation between terrorism and states with a large youth bulge. Youth bulges exist mainly in the Middle East, Sub-Saharan Africa, the Pacific Islands, and Southern Asia, there are sixty-two 'very young' states with two-thirds of their population under thirty. Most of the states affected by terrorism are among those states. 'Young States' have more predilection for social unrest. However, this factor alone does not explain the prevalence of terrorism. The state becomes prone to terrorism if it has additional ills like corruption, a high rate of unemployment, low level of democracy, low Human Development Index (HDI). These lead to frustration amongst the young inhabitants who are more energetic than men in their 50s (Human Development Index, 2015).

The thesis is that societies with a young and rapidly growing population, a high birth rate, high population growth rate, and low economic growth often end up with high unemployment. Those disaffected youth are prone to be recruited by a terrorist organization or criminal gangs.

A good example exists in Nigeria, which is the most populous state in Africa and is expected to be the third most populous in the world by 2050. This surge of the population is unlikely to be sustainable, which is a source of danger. Another state is Egypt's with an increase of more than one million per year with a limited economy, high unemployment rate, which forces millions of Egyptians to seek better prospects abroad. In Afghanistan, nearly 43% of the population is under 14; demographically, its population is skewed toward less than 14, and less than 2.5 % of its population is over 65. Almost 53 percent falls in the 15–35 age bracket in Pakistan, while less than 5 percent of the population is over 65 (CIA Factbook, n.d.). Figure 2.17 on the next page illustrates this graphically: the terrorism score, median age, GDP per

capita, and unemployment rate of nine states with the highest terrorism index are compared to three EU states with low terror index.

Figure 2.17 *The relationship between Terrorism, Median age, GDP, and unemployment*



Note: Adapted from "CIA Factbook and Institute for Economics & Peace. (2018)"

From Figure 2.178, it can be noticed that terrorism correlates with the median age of the states' population. States with more young people between (15-35) years of age are more affected by terrorism. Secondly, if the GDP per capita is low, the unemployment rate is high, these are enough symptoms to cause frustration among the youth, especially the well-educated. Moreover, economists acknowledge that there is a high correlation between the economic growth rate and the decrease in unemployment rates.

The prevalence of terror-related conflicts and political turmoil

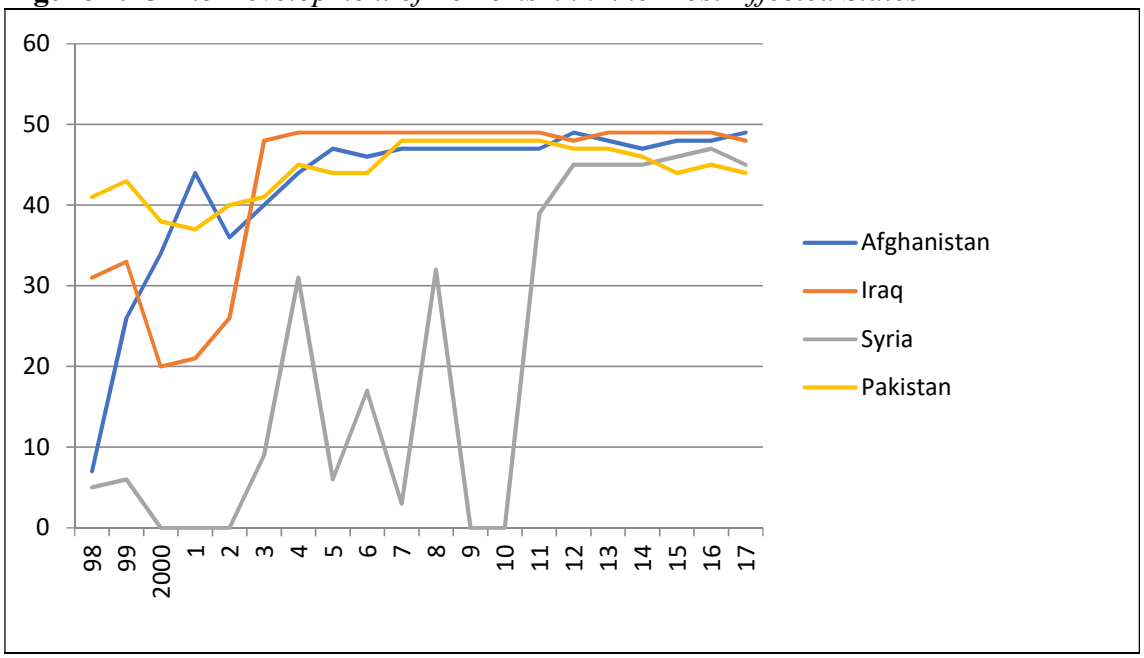
Failure in three important state functions characterizes failed states: failing to control their borders and territories, failing to meet the basic needs of their citizens like education, and failing

to provide or maintain democratic legitimacy (Underhill, 2014, p.20). Failure occurs due to external and internal factors. The internal ones are the result of weak leadership and governmental decisions. It seems that political leaders are the most culpable factor in the state's failure. Conflicts are the primarily external factors.

Conflicts and political terror are the main drivers for terrorism in 2017 (Institute for Economics & Peace, 2018, p.4), the ten countries with the highest ranking in the Global Terrorism Index have engaged in at least one conflict. If we track states like Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Afghanistan, we find that terrorism was at its lowest point before the eruption of conflicts. Ten countries accounted for 84% of the total deaths due to terrorism in 2017; every one of these states has at least one conflict; on the other hand, one of the main reasons for the decrease in terrorism is the end of violent conflicts.

Figure 2.18 on the next page establishes the relation between terrorism and conflict. For example, it shows that Iraq held a relatively low rank (24) in 2002 when it jumped to (2) in 2003, and from 2004 peaked to first, and followed the same trajectory to first and second place. Afghanistan was (43) in 1998, but from 2007 until 2021 holds one of the first three places; Syria in 2010 was in the 50 to 60 brackets, but from 2012 is one of the first five countries in the number of terrorist incidents (Institute for Economics & Peace, 2018, p. 18). The graph shows that terrorism increases in time of conflict, which can be explained by the absence of the rule of law during conflicts periods

Figure 2.18 *The Development of Terrorism in the Most Affected States*



Note. Adapted from GTI 2018.

Similarly, Table 2.5 shows the surge in terrorism in Yemen, Iraq, Syria, and Afghanistan after the fall of these states into conflicts, where numbers inside the table show the ranking according to GTI. The lowest score is the worst. The turning point for Syria was 2012, in Afghanistan 2005, in Syria 2012, in Yemen 2010; these dates coincide with the regime collapse in these states.

Table 2.5 *State affected by Terrorism*

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Afghanistan	16	13	11	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	2	2	2	1	1
Iraq	29	7	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2
Syria	107	105	55	63	49	55	39	46	56	14	6	5	5	5	4	4	4	4
Yemen	44	31	39	39	36	30	22	20	10	9	8	8	8	6	6	7	7	6

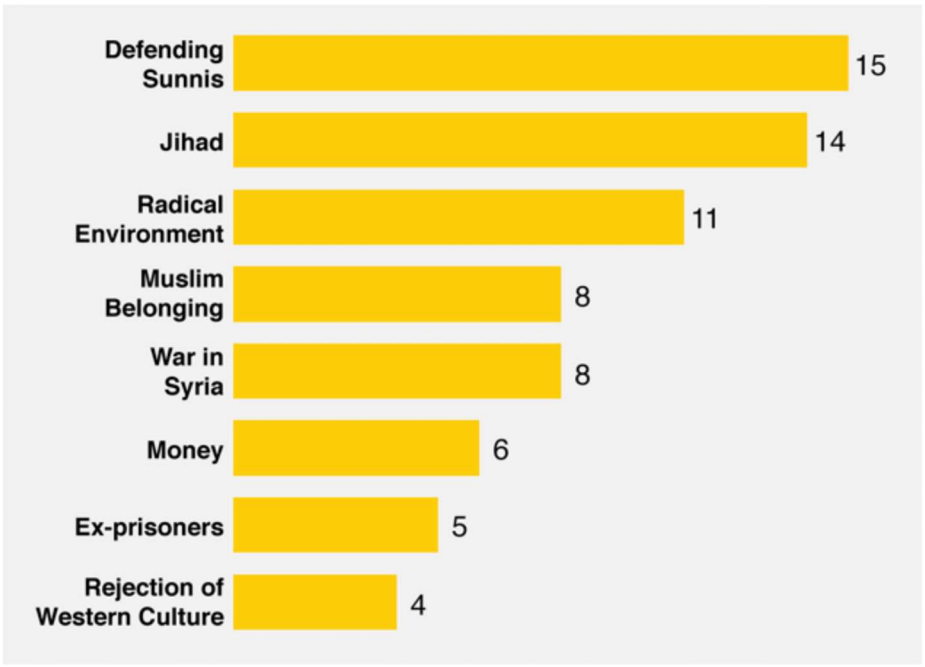
Note. Reprinted from Institute for Economics & Peace. (2020) https://visionofhumanity.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/GTI-2020-web-1.pdf, p. 18

The problem with conflicts is that terrorist groups change their character and turn into intransigent insurgencies, which requires a more comprehensive approach to weaken the insurgencies and promote the legitimacy of the affected state (CIA, 2012).

The other societal factor is ethnic divisions. Terrorism may prosper in a nation with an intermediate level of ethnic division, while. a very heterogeneous society is better at assimilation of groups with different agendas, thereby limiting the appeal for terrorism (Basuchoudhary & Shughart, 2010, pp. 65-87). External invading states may use divide and rule policies to ease and smooth their stay and exploit minorities grievances. Furthermore, conflicts cause state failure that result in a state lacking the capability to fulfill its sovereign responsibilities, lacking law-enforcement, intelligence, or military capability to assert its control over its territory (US National Security Council, 2003). State weakness invites illicit actors, including globally networked insurgents, international terrorists and transnational criminal organizations (TCOs) (US National Defense University, 2016). For example, the US 2003 Invasion of Iraq removed a strong central government that controlled social grievances for decades The Islamic State found in the Iraqi Sunni weakening status an appealing cause and built an aggressive ideology toward the newly dominant Shia government.

The following Figure 2.19 shows the result of a study conducted by Quantum Communications by interviewing 49 Islamic State members detained or defected from the group in Iraq and Syria to determine the main reason for their enrollment in the Islamic State. The following figure depicts the compilation of the obtained data. The main reason was Sunni's disenfranchisement in Iraq; the group invests in that feeling.

Figure 2.19 *Reasons for joining the Islamic State*



Note. Reason that led the youth join the Islamic State, reprinted from "*Why join ISIS? How do fighters respond when you ask them?*", by P. Tucker & One, D. (2015). *Defense One*, *8*.

The central conflict in the Middle East and Muslim World is the Israeli-Palestinian, which is a definite source of the existence of Palestinian armed groups; beyond these national groups, other external groups claim that the liberation of Palestine is their primary task. The US counterterrorism strategy (2003) confirms this claim by saying:

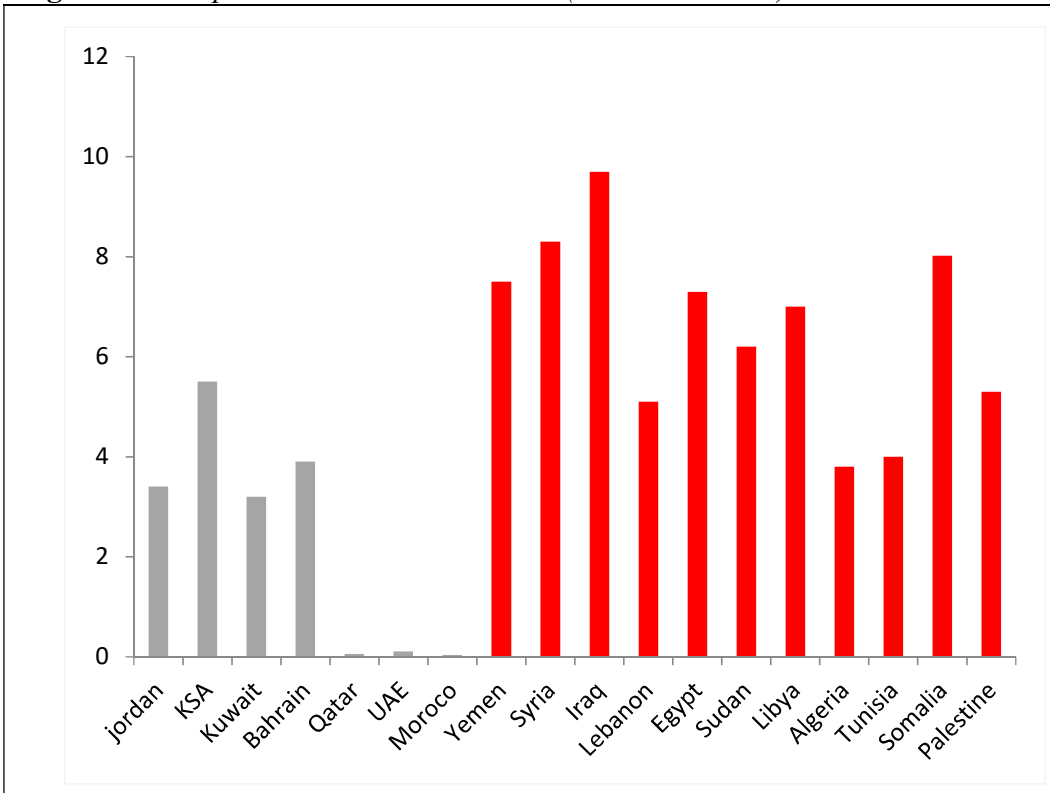
> "*Finding a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is critical to winning the war of ideas. No other issue has so colored the perception of the United States in the Muslim world. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is critical because of the toll of human suffering, America's close relationship with the state of Israel and key Arab states, and because of that region's importance to other global priorities of the United States. There can be no peace for either side without freedom for both sides" (US Counterterrorism Strategy,2003, p.24).*

This research confirms the existence of a relationship between regime type and terrorism in the Middle East. Max Weber claims that states need legitimacy for their rule; the primary sources of legitimacy are three: traditional, religious, and legal, which is based on the representation of

the people and the rule of law (Spencer, 1970, pp. 123-134). However, legal legitimacy is still absent in the Middle East region. Some of these states predicate their legitimacy on coercion and brutality, others on a religious basis, which is not enough for modern states. The first point in the political factor is the political disenfranchisement, which is yielded because of uneven representation of ethnicities, religious sects, or branches in the state.

It can be noted that monarchies and similar traditional political systems like the GCC countries in the Arab world are better able to handle terrorism than their peers of republican systems in the Middle East. The following chart (Figure 2.20 on the next page) shows the comparison between Arab Monarchies and Arab republics; the index shows the average GTI score is lower for monarchies than for republics, and accordingly, their ranking is also lower. (Some states, like Oman and Mauritania, were excluded because data were not available).

Figure 2.20 *Republics versus Monarchies (and GCC states) in the Arab World*



Note. Data is based on Institute for Economics & Peace. (2018) terrorism indexes, https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Global-Terrorism-Index-2018-1.pdf,

Three reasons explain the success of monarchies in this area. First, monarchies are more legitimate than republics since they enjoy religious and traditional legitimacy (tribalism), while the republics' legitimacy is often based on fraud, because elections are rigged by various

methods. Second, monarchies appoint prime ministers who become scapegoats for any executive failure, if cabinet reshuffles strategy from time to time. And third, terrorism is used to bolster some republics' legitimacy and evade Western powers' pressure to apply political changes in pretexts that the alternative choice is Muslim Brotherhood.

Conclusions

This chapter concluded the validity of the first hypothesis that deals with the survival of proto-state armed groups and the second hypothesis about determining the center of gravity for proto-state armed groups and host states. Also, it established the conditions that enable either the state to defeat the proto-state armed group or, on the contrary, the proto-state armed group to defeat the state. The state should encircle the group and delegitimize it by isolating it from its public and external support. After that, it targets the operational center of gravity, which is mainly the morale of the fighters or the group's military prowess. The group can be victorious by keeping internal and external lines of support open, resisting defeat, and recovering to its strength if it does get defeated. In 1970 Jordan managed to evict the PLO from the country, and the state regained its authority over the proto-state armed group danger. However, the PLO shifted to neighboring Lebanon. In 1982 Israel forced Arafat to leave Lebanon, and PLO regained its powers in Yemen and Tunisia sufficiently to exploit the 1987 first Intifada, which paved the way for the OSLO agreement in 1993.

In Afghanistan in 2021, the Afghanistan government could not eliminate the Taliban operational CoG, which was their inherent will to fight until victory, and could not fix its legitimacy. In this field, the success of the host state includes enabling the development of resilience within its people and institutions to sustain the ability to prevent the conditions from allowing the armed groups to gain strength.

The Middle East is plagued by various societal diseases that hinder its advancement, mainly socio-economic and political ones. Therefore, any strategy to counter terrorism should consider that in the long run. Studies on different armed groups proved that social bonds are a primary factor in recruitment, especially socially marginalized communities (Abrahams, 2008, p. 104). However, many studies invariably gravitate toward ideological reasons without adequately addressing the socio-economic and demographic variables. The Middle Eastern political and socio-economic environments provide fertile soil for the growth of terrorism. Most importantly, the existence of protracted conflicts provides fertile soil to terrorism i.e., the unsolved Palestinian cause provides a good reason for the sustainment of terrorism, as it seems for many

that the support for the Palestinians' struggle against Israel is legitimate as long as the Palestinian -Israeli conflict is still unresolved. One of the main findings is that monarchies are more immune to terrorism than republics; the second is that a high percentage of '*unemployed'* youth between 15-35 is a primary reason for internal turbulences. The Middle East is especially conducive to terror groups' success and survival because of indigenous support, weak governments, terrorist infrastructure, and massive recruit pooling (Blomberg et al.,2011, p. 450). As a policy a prediction based on facts, I strongly believe that Middle Eastern states will witness other waves of grassroots movements that endeavor to change the governing unqualified to provide jobs and security regimes. The primary factor that accelerates this revolutionary trend is the youth explosions without democratic rights and with low economic growth. Middle Eastern states have to take considerable actions to introduce democratic changes to handle the intrinsic lack of political freedoms, focus on the youth's demands for employment, and monitor the population explosion that exceeds economic growth.

Chapter Three

The Survival of Hamas

"The victory of Hamas is not only based on the corruption of the Palestinian Authority. Hamas has a vision and a program, and this is the reason why the Palestinian people chose Hamas. However, there is no doubt that the corruption helped Hamas's victory"

Ismail Haniyeh

"Hamas's strategy is resistance and survival. As long as they survive, this is a victory."

Tzipi Livni

The main reason for selecting Hamas as a case study is because of its overwhelmingly proto-state's character; it has the hybrid nature e.g., one of the reasons is its administrative success in managing the municipalities under its control. This chapter highlights the factors that enabled Hamas to survive as a proto-state armed group and evaluate the applicable hypotheses.

Hamas has survived for more than thirty years, from its inception in 1987 until today. Its ideological base stems from the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood (MB); although, Sheikh Ahmad Yassin refuted any organizational connection with the Egyptian MB (al-Jazeera, 1999, 14:30). From 1979, MB in Jordan started to support the MB in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, especially after establishing the 'apparatus of General Palestine' in 1986, a section of the Jordanian MB that oversees Islamic activities inside Palestine.

In respect to the host state, the Gaza Strip and the West Bank cannot be called an actual Palestinian state. The Palestinian authority is much less than the government of a sovereign state. However, more than civilian governorates, it assumes administrative duties and provides such services to Palestinians as health and education, and even conducts its foreign affairs. Hamas's heartland is the Gaza Strip, but it also has an active presence in the West Bank.

Hamas was formally created in 1987. However, its foundations were laid at the start of the 1980s. The group's nucleus was the Islamist organization 'al-Jamiyah al-Islamiyah' founded in Gaza in 1979. Many researchers claim that Israel was lenient with Hamas's foundation to

weaken Fatah (Chehab, 2007, p.20). In 1982, Sheikh Yasin[61] established a military wing called 'Mujahedeen Falestine', the Israeli secret service caught it in a sting operation, which foiled its establishment when the group tried to acquire arms.

This case of ill planning is an example of what is meant by military maturity and weak operational security in this thesis. Hamas started as a rag-tag movement and developed over time. It developed its security branch, responsible for operational security 'MAJD' (Majmouath Jihad u-Dawa – Holy War and Proselytizing Group), MAJD first commanders were Yahiya Sinwar[62] and Khalid Hindi whose initial main task was to arrest and kill informants. The first significant success of Hamas was forcing Israel's then Prime Minister Ariel Sharon to evacuate Gaza's settlements in a unilateral withdrawal from Gaza in August 2005.

Hypothesis (1): Hamas Survival

According to hypothesis (1), Hamas survives due partly to internal factors particular to the group and partly to its interactions with the external circles. The external circles are the host state, the regional circle, and the international system. Besides these circles, there are adjacent circles which are the enemy state and the 'other groups', the group interacts positively or negatively with the other groups and the enemy state that targets the group's survival.

The following discussion relies on the analytical framework to analyze the survival of Hamas. It discusses elements of survival in the Group circle, host state circle, regional circle, other groups circle, international circle, and enemy state circle.

[61] The founder of Hamas, Sheikh Ahmad Yasin, was born in 1937 in a small city near Ashkelon, went for studies at Azhar University in Cairo, and then worked as an Arabic language teacher and Imam in Gaza. He presumably was an active member of the Muslim Brotherhood and established its affiliate in Gaza, which Israel recognized in 1979, seemingly to divide the Palestinian national movements.
He had an unwavering belief in historical Palestine, the Israeli security services arrested him several times. The last one was in 1994, when he was sentenced to life imprisonment, but was released in 1997 after the failed attempt to assassinate Khaled Mishaal in Amman in exchange for the Mossad agents arrested in Jordan. King Hussein refused to hand the agents over to Israel unless Israel provides the proper antidote to Mishaal and release Sheik Yasin.
Sheik Yassin was a symbol of resistance and defiance despite the physical disabilities, a quadriplegic wheelchaired since an incident at the age of 12.
An Israeli Helicopter missile killed him on March 22, 2004; the attack was internationally condemned due to the political role of Yassin and his symbolic image for the majority of Palestinians as a spiritual leader of Hamas.
[62] Yahiya's family was expelled from Ashkelon after 1948, he was born in 1962 in Khan Younis in Gaza strip, his first arrest was in 1982, the second in 1985, the third was in 1989 he was sentenced to four life imprisonments for killing Israeli soldiers and Palestinian collaborators. He co-founded MAJD in 1985. In 2017 was elected to be the leader of Hamas inside Gaza Strip.

The Group Circle

At this level, research studies the group itself, its political organization, leadership, ideology, maturity, military capabilities, and finance.

Like other MB affiliates, Hamas started as a quietist movement to transform society according to Islamic ideals. However, its rivalry with Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) accelerated its progress to violence and led to its dual mission of reclaiming historical Palestine and the Islamization of the society.

The Organizational Structure and Leadership

Hamas has a consultative council comprised of elected members; from those members, the Political Bureau, about 15-20 members are selected, who supervise Hamas's activities. It has three main branches, one in the Gaza Strip, the second in the West Bank, and the third is for the expatriate Palestinians living in the diaspora.

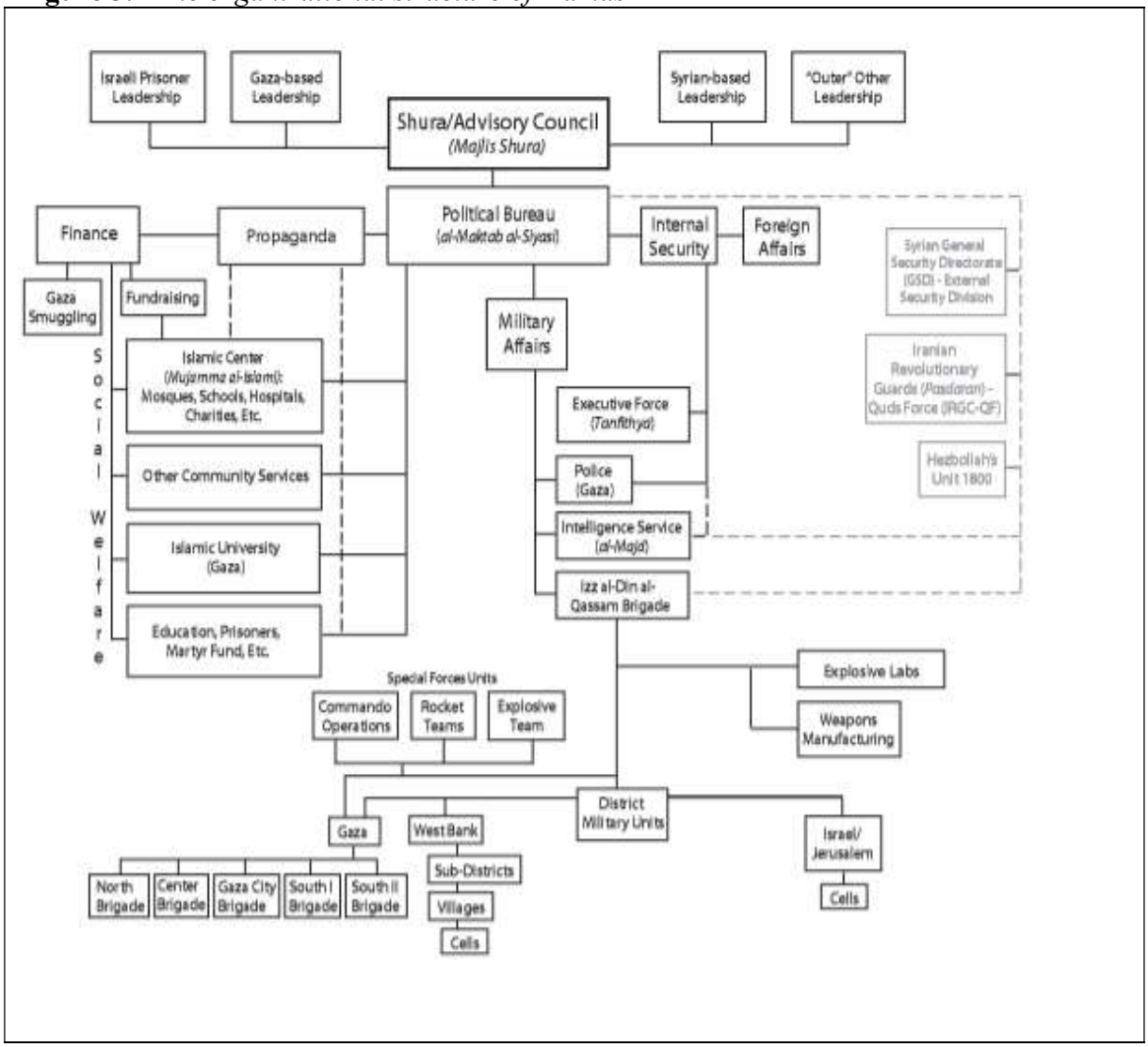
For security reasons and for survival, it has separated its military wing from its Political Bureau. Allegedly, the military leadership is responsible for all operational activities. In terms of resisting the Israeli pressure, after 1992, it severed horizontal links between operatives and replaced them with vertical links and with leadership beyond the reach of Israeli operations (Shapiro, 2013, p. 227).

Hamas separated its political bureau from its armed apparatus to defend itself from the Israeli campaigns and structured itself into two separate and redundant entities, one inside Gaza and the Political Bureau in exile (Hroub, 2006, p.116), with four main structural bases (including the Politburo): the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, the Israel jails, and the diaspora. The divide between the attitudes of Hamas leaders in Gaza and outside and between the military and political wings is often evident. For example, in 1996, Mahmoud al-Zahar stated that Hamas's operations are strategic errors that impact the national unity of the Palestinians. The external leadership denounced his statement.

According to Sheikh Yassin, when the Israelis interrogated him, "they were very eager to know who would lead the movement after him, he told them that Hamas is a grassroots organization 'you remove the tip, and a new tip will grow out of the base'" (Chehab, 2007, p. 28). This statement shows that Hamas's organizational structure includes dynamic components to sustain Israeli targeting without paralyzing the group. In less than four weeks, Sheikh Ahmad Yassin and two founders of Hamas were killed by the Israeli security forces. After that, Hamas started

to use redundant external leadership to mitigate the loss of leaders inside the occupied territories. (Figure 3.1)

Figure 3.1 *The organizational structure of Hamas*



Note. Reprinted from "HEZBOLLAH and HAMAS A Comparative Study "by J. Gleis, B. Berti, 2014.

Ideology

Hamas was created from the womb of the Muslim Brotherhood in Gaza by a group of seven founders, mainly Sheikh Ahmad Yasin, Salah Shehada, al-Zahar, Dukhan, and Rantisi.[63] It is bound by its charter, which calls the whole of historical Palestine an Islamic Waqif[64] and should not be relinquished to any other nation, nobody has the right or authority to surrender it. Palestine's importance to Muslims stems from its sacred places, especially Jerusalem, Hebron, Abraham's land. Jerusalem is mentioned in Quran by the land which Allah blessed. "Many Hamas leaders now recognize that the fundamental and essential positions expressed in the Charter could be expressed in a universal language that could appeal to both Muslims and non-Muslims alike" (Tamimi, p.150).

The role of Hamas' ideology is manifested by Ami Ayalon[65], said in an interview with the Al-Jazeera Network station that Israel cannot win over Hamas because of its ideology. "I have to remind you that even after at least two Israeli operations in Gaza, the idea was that Israel should not do it by itself. It will be a disaster, if we [shall] try to disarm Hamas, so bottom line, Israel should not try to disarm Hamas by itself, it will not help us, we Israelis tend to forget that Hamas is not only a terror organization, it is not only a violent movement, it is an ideology" (Al-Jazeera, 2020 b, 20:33-21:13).

The ideology of Hamas is represented in its charter, written in 1988, a year after its official establishment. It is believed that the primary author is Abed al-Fatah Dukhan, who was one of the seven founders of the organization. The language of the charter was inflammatory, it intended to appeal to the Palestinians frustrated with the concessions of the PLO (Tamimi,2007, p.151). The charter's significance is debatable: many leaders consider it a hindrance rather than help (Tamimi, p.148). Hamas's ideology is not exclusively religious; it has a national part that focuses on the Palestinian cause rather than the cosmic war of al-Qaida and other extremist organizations. It had its wars with al-Qaida, and its line of thought, especially after it decided to take part in the Palestinian election in 2006[66] (Personal communication, Shaban Omar, April 2019). The effectiveness of Hamas's ideology scores a ten on a scale of 1 to 10.

[63] the seven members who attended the meeting on 1987 December 1, were Sheikh Salah Shehada, Issa Al Nasshaar, Dr. Ibrahim Al Yazuri, Dr. Abdul Aziz Al Rantisi, Abdul Fattah Dokhan, Mohammed Shamhaa, in addition to Sheikh Ahmad Yassin (Chehab, p. 23).
[64] is an inalienable charitable endowment under Islamic law. Rich people may make plots of their lands for public use
[65] Ami Ayalon headed the Israeli navy, the Shi Bet, and was elected as a Knesset member for the Labor Party..
[66] Interview with Omar Shaban, researcher inside Gaza and the Pal think research center owner.

Writing about the Charter, Tamimi said that Hamas' charter is the "first attempt to produce a written document for others to learn what Hamas stood for" (Tamimi, 2007, p.147). Nevertheless, "many Hamas leaders now recognize that the fundamental and essential positions expressed in the Charter could be expressed in a universal language that could appeal to both Muslims and non-Muslims alike" (Tamimi, p.150).

In 2017 Hamas made a political concession by publicizing a new political document which assures that "Hamas affirms its position that its conflict is with the Zionist project in Palestine not with the Jews because of their religion (al-Jazeera, 2017, 8:40). Hamas movement does not wage a struggle against the Jews because of their religion but instigates a struggle against the Zionists who occupy Palestine. Nevertheless, the Zionists constantly identify Judaism and the Jews with their colonial project and illegal entity" (Hamas Islamic movement, 2017). The new document abandons references arguing that Hamas is part of the international MB, to whom it was associated when formed, such attitude helped it to improve its relationship with the Egyptian authorities.

The most significant concession is the abandonment of its position in the previous charter: Hamas "…considers the establishment of a fully sovereign and independent Palestinian state and that Jerusalem is its capital along the lines from June 4, 1967, with the return of the refugees and the displaced to their original homes from which they have been expelled, to be a formula of national consensus." Tacitly, it now accepts that another state entity will exist outside these borders, without explicitly mentioning Israel. In the past, Hamas political leaders made verbal commitments to the limited objective of a viable Palestinian state, but the organization has never made a formal written offer before (Wintour, 2017). Dr. Adnan Abu Amer, a political scientist and columnist inside Gaza, considers the 2017 document "Document of General Principles and Polices" a comprehensive substitute to the previously 1988 charter (Personal communication, May 2019).

Military Capabilities

For states, wars continue the policy in other ways (Clausewitz, 1976). The same is applicable for non-state actors, with an additional factor: armed operations contribute to their public support and subsequently to their perceived legitimacy The main characteristics of Hamas's armed operations are the adoption of offensive Jihad, operations that are restricted to Palestine, and the seperation between the military wing and the political wings.

The main military capability factors contributing to Hamas's survivability are its size and maturity. Regarding the size, it varies from wartime to peacetime, but not less than 15000 members are organized in the al-Qassim Brigade and the executive force. Military maturity is shown in its evolution of use of armed capabilities.

One of Hamas' past methods was the use of suicide operations. Some of the suicide bombers were females, although the first female was not from Hamas, the 27 years old Wafaa Idris came from al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade[67]. Hamas justifies the use of suicide bombings in two ways: the first is that each suicide operation is an answer to Israeli action, the second is that the Israeli society is heavily militarized (Wyne, 2005, p.3). Sheikh Ahmad Yassin replied to a question about bombing Israelis by saying, "Hamas does not endorse the killing of civilians, but that is sometimes the only option it has if it is to respond to the murdering of Palestinian civilians and the cold-blooded assassination of Palestinian activists" (Tamimi, 2007, p.165).

In April 1994, it conducted its first successful suicide operation, killing eight and injuring dozens. Hamas used suicide bombings to inflict damage in the Israeli community and raise its popularity with its community. The view to these operations was that it is part of religious duty (Tamimi, 2007). Hamas used guerrilla warfare tactics, mortars and rockets against an Israeli target, burning kites, balloons, and peaceful marches to the border during its wars with Israel. These operations show Hamas's ability to diversify its tactics of violence. This ability to diversify contributes to prolonging its survival.

Operational Security

Hamas is at a perpetual war with Israeli and other security agencies even in peacetime, as these agencies work continuously and relentlessly to infiltrate it and collect information inside the group. To mitigate internal threats, it introduced the internal security apparatus 'MAJD' to purge infiltrators from the movement. For this effort, Hamas prioritized exterminating Palestinian collaborators with Israeli security agencies, especially Shin Bet. Secondly, it utilizes its hierarchy to settle Israeli and Fatah threats. (Shapiro, 2013, p.227).

[67] In Arabic is called ' Katā'ib Shuhadā' al-'Aqṣā' which translates to ' Battalions' , it is recognized to be a Fatah militant group , took part in the 2nd Intifada , is responsible of widespread militant activities I.e., suicide bombings, shootings ; the relationship between this group and Fatah is vague and in my opinion its creation led to Sharon's decision to eliminate Arafat; its main leader was Marwan al-Barghouti ; I believe that its creation was a dangerous play from Arafat in a bid to challenge Hamas public support by maintaining Fatah's 'resistance' identity and give ; however , after it became the monster that is beyond their real control

Hamas uses compartmentalization to provide security for its members: it gives them code names; they live in separate safe houses and report vertically to one captain. It is also good at security techniques like constantly changing cell phones. Highly developed operational security was also evident in the successful hiding of the abducted Gilad Shalit for many years. The Israeli security agencies i.e., Shin Bet focuses on recruitment of collaborators to penetrate Hamas' security and keep an eye on its operations, before 2005, Palestinian security organizations believe that the total of collaborators at that time was up to "in excess of 20,000. Many of them were forced to flee to Israel, where they are housed in specially built villages following Israel's evacuation of Gaza, for fear of reprisals" (Chehab, 2007, p. 69). The Israelis "preyed on the vulnerable, blackmailing them with promises of work, education or medical treatment outside the territories or tempting them with sums of money, …, Palestinian security officials have estimated that up to 25,000 collaborators of varying importance have been recruited in this way " (Chehab, 2007, p. 84). One of the Shin Bet main success stories is the recruitment of the 'green prince' Musab who is the son of Hassan Yousef, one of the Hamas' influential commanders inside the West Bank[68] (Mosab, 2011).

Size

Hamas's size is not accurately known; it has fought full-scale wars against Israel in 2008, 2014, and in May 2021. It can quickly increase its numbers at the time of need, as proved by its struggle against Fatah in 2007. Avi Issacharoff (2017) claims that "Hamas is built like an army in every way. Twenty-seven thousand armed men are organized into six regional brigades on its muster rolls, with 25 battalions and 106 companies." Those numbers include the elite 'Nakhba' unit that consists of 2500 professional fighters and the 'Navy Frogmen' unit. To sum up, Hamas is considered among the very large groups.

Maturity

Hamas started in 1987, though it acted as a quietist group that belonged to the Muslim Brotherhood before that time. It did not believe in violence and believed in the community's preparation to fulfill its religious duties. Hamas's first operations were primitive random shootings poorly planned roadside bombings. The effectiveness of these operations was dubious, but eventually, it started to improve its capabilities with murder, kidnapping, and suicide bombings; military maturity was crucial as it took Hamas two primitive failed

[68] Mosab is the son of the main leaders of Hamas inside the West Bank; his other brother also chose to collaborate with the Israeli security; he is now living in the US after his convert to Christianity

operations before the success of the third. Also, they began to use Acetone and other household elements to make high explosives instead of TNT which they have learned (Davis, 2014). Maturity also affected the political wing of Hamas, as it departed from its old charter to the new political policy, which gave it more freedom.

Group's Economy

The Council of Foreign Relations (CFR) estimated Hamas' annual budget was $70 million in 2009. Hamas mainly depends on donations (zakat)[69] From wealthy Arabs and Muslims, it has little or no access to funding from Western nations because of its designation as a terrorist group (Zachary& Robinson, 2021). Historically, Saudi Arabia used to support Hamas, and Saddam Hussein paid the families of suicide bombers a sum of $25,000 (Hoffman, 2006, p.58). After Saddam's fall, Iran filled the void to gain influence in the occupied territories. As a result, Qatar provides Gaza with financial resources with the consent of Israel. So, Hamas's incomes are not enough to finance the Gaza Strip, and its activities simultaneously put it is in a tricky position: it has to request Israel to lift its sanctions over work permits for Gazans to work inside Israel.

Host State Circle

After the 1948 Arab-Israeli war, the Gaza Strip came under Egyptian control until 1967, when Israel occupied it. From 1949 until 1957, Palestinians formed the 'All-Palestine Government' to govern themselves, though its authority was limited to Gaza and recognized only by six independent Arab states. However, Jordan, in control of the West Bank, did not recognize it. That government did not last long and was soon replaced by the Egyptian military administration. In 1948, Gaza's original people were around 80 thousand, but Gaza became overwhelmed by refugees from nearby cities like Ashkelon, Jaffa, and others after the war. Gaza has borders with Israel for 51 Km, a 12 km border with Egypt also a buffer zone along the border, called by Philadelphia Route, about 14 kilometers long; Rafah Crossing is the only crossing between Egypt and the Gaza enclave (CIA Factbook, 2020), (see Map 3.1 on the next page).

After the Oslo agreement, Gaza became part of the PNA, which aspires to build a sovereign Palestinian state inside Gaza and the West Bank. Nevertheless, Hamas and Fatah's internal

[69] Zakat is considered one of the five pillars of Islam faith: all Muslims have to care for the needy and poor people. It is an obligatory tax paid by Muslims worldwide as a percentage of their non-essential income.

cleavage, surfaced from 2007-temporarily separated Gaza from the PNA. The Gaza Strip and the West Bank are unofficially named as State of Palestine, which supposedly is the host state circle for Hamas.

After 2007 Gaza became dominated by Hamas, and the movement ran it administratively with Qatar's aid, donations from wealthy individuals, and the United Nations programs that help the impoverished refugees inside Gaza. At present, Gaza can be best described as a proto-state, a self-governing territory with characteristics similar to the state: well-delineated borders, a stable population, and a unique governing structure, but without international legitimacy.

Figure **3.1** *The Border Crossings between Gaza, Israel and Egypt*

Note. Reprinted from Britannica (n.d.)

PNA Weakness

One of the primary parameters for the survival of armed groups is host state weakness. The weakness of the de jure host state is evident in the rifts within the PNA, the inability of its security agencies to restrain armed groups, and the prevalence of corruption: most foreign aid goes to the West Bank, while Gaza is partially deprived of international financial aid. However, Hamas succeeded in the 2006 elections in large part due to the protest vote against the septuagenarian kleptocrats of Fatah (Levitt, 2006, p.1). Before the election, the PNA was deemed corrupt by over 90% of the population (Hilal, 2011).

"Fatah's local election defeat in Gaza exposed great fault lines within Fatah and demonstrated a need for President Abbas to address the public perception of corruption with the PNA and the party. At this point, 87% of Palestinians believed in corruption in the PNA institutions led by Fatah" (PCPSR, 2006).

According to the World Bank, between 1993 - 2004, the sum of monetary aid to the PNA amounted to $10 billion, and was considered the highest per capita aid. An IMF study in 2003 pointed out that only 8 percent of the funds allocated had been used appropriately, while the rest was to pay off supporters and control monopolies (Gleis, & Bretti, 2012, p.108; Sayigh, 2007, p. 24).

The other factor contributing to state weakness is the question of borders. The PNA does not control its borders: Palestinians in the West Bank need to go through Jordan, whereas Gazans travel through Egypt in a troublesome 10-hour trip of just about 400 Km due to the security measures inside Sinai[70]. (Personal communication with students from Gaza).

Despite the Israeli withdrawal from Gaza in 2005, the territory is still under siege. People cannot move freely, have control over their borders, and have frequent disputes with different parties.

Terrain

The Gaza Strip is a condensed area with about two million living in 363 Km^2 representing 3.2 % of the whole area of historic Palestine. Geographically Gaza "comprises three longitudinal zones of sands, alluvial soil, and sandstone ridges. The city of Gaza is an overpopulated urban center with 400,000 inhabitants and a density exceeding 10,000/ Km^2 while Jabaliya Camp and

[70] Although Gaza was controlled and administered by Egypt after 1948, and was occupied twice by Israel (in 1956) and later in 1967 while it was protected by the Egyptian army, Egypt did not give its residents the right to hold its citizenship in a bid to keep the Palestinian identity in contrast to residents of the West Bank who were granted the Jordanian citizenship.

Ash Shati Camp are considered the largest and the densest camps" (OCHA, 2020). The geography of Gaza does not facilitate Israeli incursions: population density is a barrier to military operations because of the likelihood of heavy collateral damage, which is convenient for armed groups. Hamas prepared the area for battles against land forces. It has tunnels that enable the fight to target the Israelis from different angles. However, Israel claims that it destroyed more than 100 Km of the 'Metro' during the Guardian of Walls operation in May 2021.

Demographic Distribution

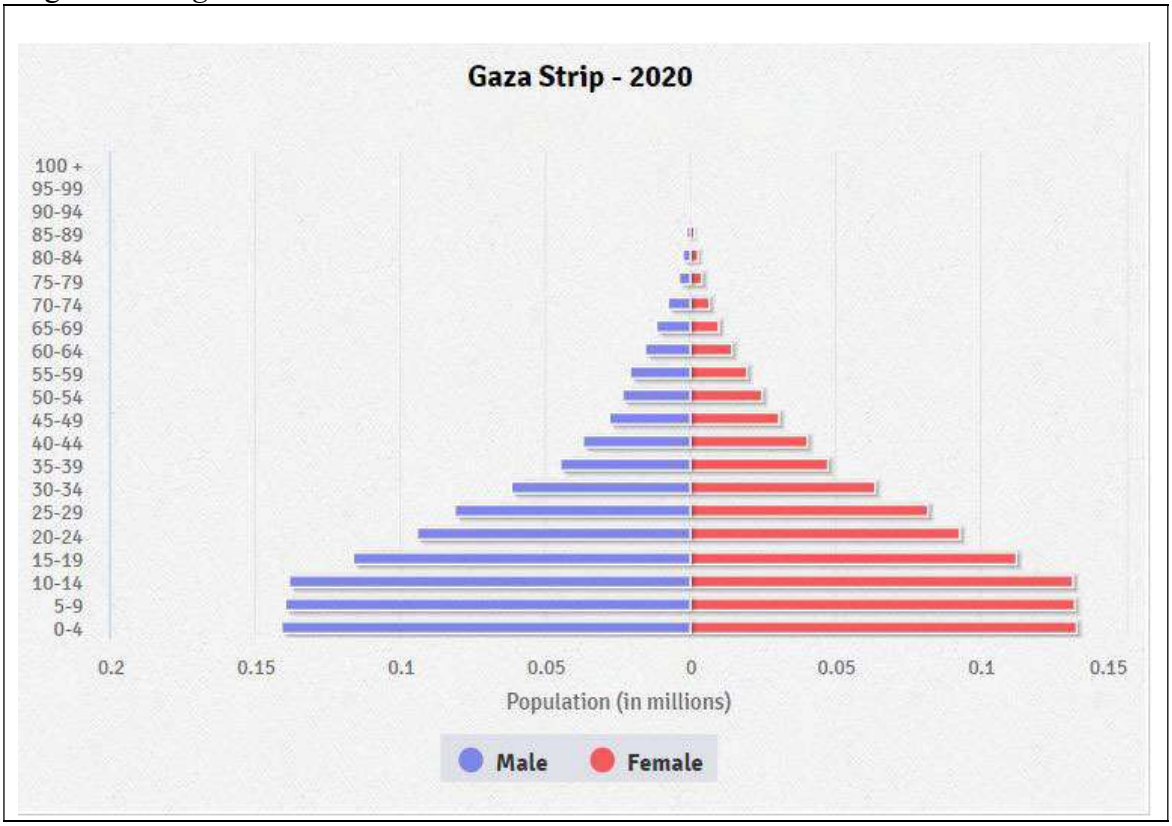
Gaza has 2.1 million, overwhelmingly are Sunni Muslims, with about 1,000 Christians mostly Orthodox, most of the Christians emigrated from Gaza (Personal communication, A. Abu Amer. 2019, May 10). Table 3.1 shows that 50% of Gazans are between 15-54 years old, these young people have no future because of the overwhelming unemployment. Figure 3.2 on the next page shows the age distribution within the Gaza Strip.

Table 3.1 *Age Structure in Gaza*

Age	Percentage	Male	Female
0-14	42.53%	418.751	397.013
15-24	21.67%	210.240	205.385
25-54	29.47%	275.976	289.277
55-66	3.66%	36.409	33.731
67-and over	2.66	27.248	24.191

Note. Adapted from "CIA Factbook" by CIA, 2020.

Figure 3.2: *Age Distribution in Gaza*



Note. Reprinted from "CIA Factbook" by CIA, 2020.

Socio-Economic Status

During Gaza's Egyptian military rule, a focus was placed on planting fruits, especially oranges and lemons, instead of industrial focus; the second character of the economy is the Mediterranean's availability, which provides people with a source of food and economic opportunity.

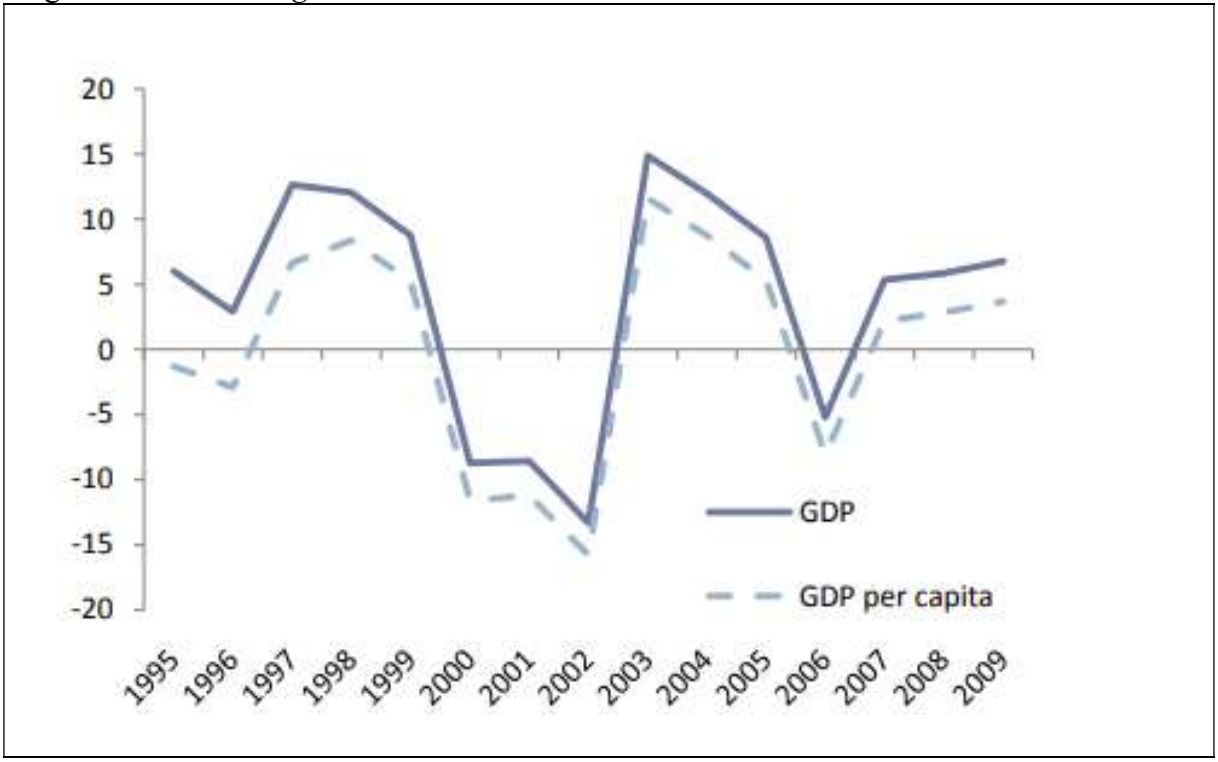
Investment is not high in Gaza because of security fears due to routine military operations. The poverty rate is high: 38%, with 54 % food-insecure and 75% aid recipients.

About 1 million of its inhabitants are refugees, with eight refugee camps (Jabaliya, Ash Shati, A Nuseirat, Al Burj, Deir al Bablah, Al Maghazi, Khan Yunis, Rafah). These camps are characterized by high poverty levels, poor infrastructure, a lack of services, and high density exceeding 50,000/ km^2.

According to the 2011 Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) statistics, poverty in Gaza stands at 38% (Hilal, 2011). However, UNDP and OCHA's reports indicates that 70-80%

of Gazans live in poor conditions. Also, 30% of the infants have anemia, 72% of the population are food insecure, 45% of the land is not agriculturally productive, unemployment reached the level of 45.3% in 2014. Figure 3.3 Shows that the economic growth was fairly high in the pre-Intifada phase, it slowed down in 1995-6 with the Israeli closures, then started to peak after 1997 with the cessation of hostilities; however, then began to plummet with the outbreak of violence in September 2000; in 2021, growth reached 5.4 percent (World Bank, 2021)

Figure 3.3 *Economic growth and violence in the PNA*



Note. Reprinted from World Bank based on Palestinian Central Statics Bureau

Figure 3.3 affirms that a relationship exists between the eruption of hostilities in the PNA and its economic growth; eruption of hostilities lead to the slowdown of the economy and the rise of unemployment, at the 2020 the unemployment rate at the West Bank was 27.65% while in the Gaza Strip reaches 45.3% , the population growth is very high in the West Bank and Gaza , from 2007 until 2017 the population grew on average with 2.5% per year (Palestinian central statistics bureau, 2021, p. 21). [71]

[71] It is difficult to establish a correlation between economic growth and unemployment because Palestinian economy depends on the Israeli economy.

Public Support

Both Israel and the PNA failed to answer the basic needs of Palestinians who desperately need primary medical care and suffer from a high unemployment rate (Levitt, 2006).

In 2006, Hamas won the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) elections, which demonstrated its popularity. Hamas received almost 60 % of the votes, resulting in 78 % of eligible voters. Dr. Khaled Hroub (2006) believes that Hamas' bedrock popularity with the Palestinian constituency ranges from 30-40 % (p. 80).

According to a survey held by the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research (PCPSR) in the last quarter of 2018 that "*If new presidential elections were to be held today and only Mahmoud Abbas and Ismail Haniyeh were nominated, the former would receive 42% and the latter 49% of the vote. In the Gaza Strip, Abbas receives 36% of the vote, and Haniyeh receives 62%. Abbas receives 46% in the West Bank, and Ismail Haniyeh receives 41%. Suppose the competition was between Marwan Barghouti and Ismail Haniyeh. In that case, Marwan Barghouti receives 55% - though he is still in prison, but believed the most popular Palestinian leader – and Haniyeh 40%*" (Azza, 2020), this number of Ismail Haniyeh gives him de-facto legitimacy to conclude hardly acceptable agreements.

David Pollock held two different polls to measure the people's support for peace and showed that support for peace is high inside the Occupied Territories (Pollock, 2018; Warikat, 2021).

Regional Circle

Hamas's leading regional players are its relations with Hezbollah and Iran, Syria, Egypt, Qatar, Turkey, and Jordan.

Iran

Iran is proud of its ancient Persian empire that extended its rule over the contemporary Middle East from the 7th century BC until the 7th century AD. It had a world order similar to the Chinese in which cultural, psychological and political achievement played as significant a role as military conquests (Kissinger, 1974, p. 85).

It started to support Shia movements after the success of the Islamic revolution in 1979. Hamas is a Sunni movement. Nonetheless, it is supported by Iran through the Islamic Revolutionary Guard (IRGC). Other organizations' support comes from the multi-billion-dollar organization named 'Bonyad-e Mostazafan za Janbazan' (The Oppressed and War Veterans).

Previously, this organization was named a Pahlavi Foundation, used by the Shah for charitable works, it is in charge of a third of the Iranian budget, controls essential industrial plants and some of the state's most lucrative businesses and answerable only to the Supreme Leader. Hamas has received as much as $150 million in economic aid from Iran, with PIJ receiving nearly a similar amount (Davis, 2014, p. 113). Military advisors and experts from Hezbollah and Iran entered Gaza through tunnels and assisted in the buildup of rocket projects (Davis, 2014). Hamas' relationship with Iran was lukewarm after its position during the Syrian civil war, but that lukewarm phase started to warm up after 2015.

Qatar

In 1999, Jordan decided to shut down Hamas' offices; the Qatari Foreign Minister brought Hamas's leadership issue in Jordan. He asked the King's permission to deport them to Qatar; the King is said to have commented:

"What do you need them for? Sheikh Hamad Jassem responded that Hamas would provide the Qatari state with a plausible cover for their intentions to start diplomatic relations with Israel's state. 'By having Hamas as our guests, it will keep relationships good with other Arab governments" (Chehab, p.134)[72]. Qatar regularly hosts political leadership in Doha and through financial contributions by funding of the Yusuf al-Qaradawi Centre in Qatar[73] (Davis, 2014, p. 313). The Qatari funds are disbursed without Israeli consent, and the Qatari diplomacy uses Tel-Aviv airport instead of Cairo. Qatar presumably has a political role in moderating Hamas's stance and adopting the 2017 political document, allowing money transfer through its international airport and banking system to prevent reaching Hamas.

Egypt

Egypt is a pivotal player for Gaza; it is geographically neighbor and was controlled by the Egyptian administration after the 1948 war until 1967, when Egypt lost the war with Israel.

The main border crossing for Gaza is through Rafah crossing, which travelers use to ship goods. The PNA controlled it until the takeover by Hamas in 2007.

[72] Chehab claimed that the Jordanian monarch was King Hussein, but due it to the date, I suspect that it was at the time of King Abdallah, so, that might be a typo mistake

[73] Dr. Yousef Qardawi, Qatar's famous Sunni Muslim scholar, stands against the Sisi regime in Egypt. Read more: https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2020/07/palestinian-hamas-iran-financial-support-israel-annexation.html#ixzz6SCgC519N.

From 2007 until 2013, tunnels between Gaza and Egypt intensified to provide Gazans with daily demands, such as gasoline at half the Israeli price. These tunnels were also used to deliver weapons and military equipment, providing Hamas with funds, as they imposed taxes on products coming through these tunnels. Sisi, who replaced Morsi in Egypt, has an antagonistic view toward MB and consequently for Hamas and ordered the Egyptian army to destroy the tunnels, which affected the tax revenues of Hamas.

The other role of Egypt is its assistance through Egyptian intelligence to mediate between Hamas and Israel. Egypt also tries to reconcile Fatah and Hamas to establish a unity government, which they did in 2010 and 2014. Nevertheless, these efforts failed due to the intransigence of the involved parties. Some Israeli experts believe that Gaza's solution is to unite with Egypt (personal communication, Adnan Abu Amer). However, this offer is not welcomed either by Egyptians or by Palestinians. The current role of Egypt is based upon humanitarian and security concerns. Egypt considers Gaza as a part of its national security and strives to prevent the influence of its rivals from Iran, Qatar, and Turkey and curb any assistance to terrorist groups in Sinai. The relationship between Hamas and Egypt is intricate one, Egypt tries to hegemonize over Hamas and use it as a political leverage even against Fatah; however, it coordinates with Israel about its connections with Hamas.

Syria

Hamas' political leadership was obliged to settle in Syria in 2001 after Jordan decided to evict it due to the mounting political pressure from regional and international political powers. Nevertheless, in 2012, was forced to choose between its neutral stance or the sanctuary provided by Syria. It was also motivated by its prominent supporters in the Gulf and inside Palestine. Assad forced them to vacate to Qatar and Turkey, however, its connections might be reestablished in the future due to its good relationship with Hezbollah and Iran.

Jordan

In 1994, Hamas conducted suicide operations in Khdeira and Afolla inside Israel, Israel, which caused outrage inside Israel. That operation put pressure upon Jordan, which hosted Hamas in Amman, but that did not precipitate the closure of its offices until King Abdullah took the

throne. He decided that Jordan should cut its relations with Hamas, thus, Hamas moved to Damascus and Qatar, however, it enjoys a supportive public opinion inside Jordan.[74]

Other Groups Circle

Ziad Abu Amr, Palestinian foreign affairs minister in June 2007, wrote, "one of the important negative characteristics that characterize Palestinian resistance movements is the phenomenon of the political loyalty to the movements which becomes stronger than the loyalty to the homeland" (Amer, 1995, p.17). This issue is evident also in Islamic movements because of the blurred lines between means and objectives. Various relationships can coexist: the same movement can simultaneously have hostile, competitive, and friendly relations with another group.

Fatah

'Fatah' is a reverse acronym for Harakat al-Tahrir al-Filastin, or 'Liberation Movement of Palestine,' which refers to the historical period of expansion within Islam, thus an appealing name. The history of Fatah can be divided into distinct periods; the first is from 1965 until the first Intifada in 1987; the second is during the first Intifada to the Oslo agreement; the third is from 1993 until the second Intifada in September 2000; the fourth is second Intifada phase; the fifth is Abbas's presidency era.

Adopting guerilla warfare tactics characterized the first phase without a significant presence in the occupied territories. From the moment that Arafat was elected to be the chairman of the PLO in 1969, Fatah dominated decision-making in the PLO. The number of fighters in the 1970s was about 25 thousand, in addition to the 15 thousand in the Palestinian Liberation Army. Their operations were cross-border raids through Jordan until 1971, then from the southern part of Lebanon until the Israeli invasion in 1982.

In 1974, the Arab League declared the PLO the 'sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.' In 1989 the PLO recognized UN resolutions 242 and 338, mostly accepting the notion of negotiations with Israel based on a two-state solution to the Palestinian- Israeli conflict. This acceptance allowed for a significant rise in acceptance of the PLO by the international

[74]Taher al- Masri who served as a Prime Minister in Jordan wrote that Arafat pushed Jordan to expel Hamas from its territories. In a classified meeting to decide the fate of Hamas which included the King in addition to ex-Prime ministers and the GID Director, most of the attendants supported that decision, the only ones who voted against it were Taher al-Masri who has strong roots in Nablus, Badran and Obeidat who served as GID directors thought it is better to keep Hamas under Jordanian eye and have it as the valuable political card (al-Masri, part one, 2021, pp. 147-148)

community. With the signing of the Oslo agreements, Fatah transformed itself into a political entity that has a mission of leading the whole PLO to start realizing the dream of building Palestine's state.

Many Palestinians, as well as many Jews, opposed the first Oslo agreement – sometimes violently. The most violent Jewish settler reaction was the February 1994 terrorist attack at the Abrahamic Mosque in Hebron. The attack gave a significant impetus for the suicide bombing campaign against Israelis (Hroub, 2006, p. 52), instigating a wave of violence in the occupied territories.

After the Camp David II Summit collapse in July 2000, violence spiraled out of control. By September, the second Intifada, dubbed 'Al Aqsa Intifada' by the Palestinians, had commenced.

The Second Intifada marked the beginning of Fatah's decline within the Palestinian territories and the progressive rise of Hamas's popularity and credibility, in pursuit for public support, Fatah started its brand of violence by creating Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, which, under Marwan Barghouti[75], considered a splinter or offshoot of Fatah. There is significant evidence that Arafat and his followers refrained from controlling, and at times even supported, violent activities following the outbreak of the second Intifada. At the outset of the second Intifada, the various Palestinian factions tried to put their differences aside and pool their resources against Israel. Although Fatah and Hamas had been fierce competitors during the Oslo talks period, they temporarily cooperated during this initial phase of the uprising. Following the outbreak of hostilities in late 2000, Arafat also sheltered and assisted Hamas's members wanted by Israel, hiding them in his own Muqataha compound and releasing Hamas fighters that the Palestinian Authority had previously arrested under past agreements with Israel (Berrti, 2010).

Hamas vs. Fatah

The PNA was alarmed over the challenge of Hamas to its legitimacy and its competition for the public support of Palestinians. In order to weaken Hamas, the PNA was determined to shut down its underlying layers of support, like mosques and charity committees. In the fall of 1994, at least 13 people were killed, and 200 were injured in a bloody firefight between Hamas and

[75] Marwan Al-Barghouti was born in 1959 near Ramallah, he is leader of the 2nd Intifada. He led an armed offshoot of Fatah 'al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade' which carried out violent operations against Israelis during the Intifada. He also took part in the first Intifada in 1987; in 2002 was arrested during the operation Defensive Shield and sentenced for five life imprisonments. He is the most popular person for Palestinians and all polls give him overwhelming majority of acceptance if fair elections carried out in Palestine, he is for many Palestinians, the unifying symbol.

PNA supporters near the Gaza Mosque. Fatah was quick to blame Israel: "We have reason to believe there have been instigations and attempts to blow this up into a major civil war," said Nabil Shaath, a PNA spokesman. “We believe these parties used bullets and shot at both sides” (Schanzer, 2008, p.67). After Arafat died in 2004, the Abbas era is characterized by his strategic decision to abandon violence to bring peace. The other issue is that the Palestinian divide is apparent, and he does not control Hamas. Fatah is afraid of giving Hamas’ legitimacy as this will undermine its authority, and today the relationship between Hamas and Fatah is more adversarial than competitive.

The two organizations fought each other in a limited civil war in Gaza between 10 and 15 June 2007. Hamas defeated Fatah in that war and evicted it from Gaza. According to the Guardian, this war was a preemptive coup to seize power. It claims that British intelligence built a plan for the PNA to crack down on Hamas’s layers of support by replacing the imams of mosques, detaining leaders and activists, and shutting down media outlets. “The disclosure of the British plan, drawn up by the intelligence service in conjunction with Whitehall officials in 2004, and passed by a Jerusalem-based MI6 officer to the senior PA security official at the time, Jibril Rajoub, is contained in the cache of classified documents obtained by Al-Jazeera and shared with the Guardian. The documents also highlight the intimate level of military and security cooperation between Palestinians and Israeli forces” (Guardian, 2011).

Avi Dichter and Byman (2006), indicate the level of hatred some Fatah leaders nurse toward Hamas: “Palestinian officials privately told the Israelis that they were glad a particular individual was dead as it made it easier for them to assert control,” (p.11) in a private response to the targeted killing associated with Shin Bet.

The Islamic Jihad (PIJ)

Established by two Palestinians influenced by Egyptian Jihadi movements, Sheikh Abd al-Aziz Adwa and a physician Fathy Shiqaqi. In 1979, the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), was the first powerful Islamist group in the Palestinian territories under Israeli occupation.

PIJ shares with Hamas the idea of establishing an Islamic state. However, it has some different views as well. The first is that, compared to Hamas, PIJ’s engagement in politics is low. Unlike Hamas, the PIJ never had any severe political platform or substantial interest in participating in the political process, even though it did not oppose Hamas's political participation. Since its creation, PIJ has focused almost exclusively on violence against Israeli civilians and soldiers and has generally ignored the need for an effective social welfare system. The second main

difference is ideological. Hamas is a more Sunni group, while PIJ believes in 'political' Wilayat al-Faqih (the Shia theory of the rule of the clergy over the state), at least from the political view. Thus, PIJ distinguishes itself from Hamas both ideologically and operationally.

The relationship between the two groups is neither friendly nor hostile. Both have Iranian sponsorship, but PIJ enjoys a significant advantage. For example, this competition is shown by the complaint of some trainees from Hamas that PIJ gets better courses than they do during joint training in Iranian camps.

PIJ receives annual economic assistance from Iran and Syria and training from the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC), especially the al-Quds Brigade at Hezbollah training camps in Lebanon.

After signing the Oslo Accords and ongoing peace talks between Israeli and Palestinian officials, PIJ often acted as a spoiler, launching some of the deadliest suicide bombing campaigns against Israeli civilians. Consequently, it lost its founder Khalil Shiqaqi in an Israeli operation in Malta in October 1995, and as a result, the group's activities slowed to a near standstill. However, by the second Intifada, the group bounced back and is again responsible for some of the worst attacks inflicted on Israel, occasionally in conjunction with Hamas, Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, and other Palestinian rejectionist groups.

Despite the ideological differences with Hamas, the two organizations have shown the ability to cooperate, even while competing for membership and support from the same sources. For instance, during the years of the second Intifada; they usually create a joint operation room during confrontations with Israel, which was evident in the 2021 and the 2022 'Break the Waves' encounter with Israel.

Salafi-Jihadi movements

Jihadi Salafism is an Islamic ideological stream that revolts against existing social norms, political powers, the prevailing culture, and international relations (Abu Amer, 2015). Salafist groups adopt a revivalist approach, not necessarily by using force but also by focusing on social services and proselytism, they started to flourish in Gaza during the 1980s. A few Jihadi-Salafi movements act inside Gaza, some of them splintered from Hamas. They do not have a national project of the liberation of Palestine, but a transnational project similar to al-Qaida look for Islamizing the Palestinian community as the priority in their agendas, usually do not believe in political participation within a secular non-Sharia legal system – this explains their rejectionist attitude toward Hamas's participation in the 2006 elections. "The Salafi-jihadi groups in Gaza

are highly critical of Hamas' decision to participate in the 2006 Palestinian elections, and since then they have opposed the Hamas government" (Berti, 2010, p. 5).

One of the groups is *Jund Ansar Allah*, funded by Syrian-born Abu A Abdallah al-Muhajir (al-Suri), it had been active against Israel since 2008 (Sabah, 2009). It has foreign fighters. Its size is claimed to be 500 members. This group clashed with Hamas in 2009 when its leaders asked to create an Emirate inside Rafah. That crackdown resulted in 22 causalities. Subsequently, Hamas degraded this group's capabilities.

The second movement is *Jaish al-Islam*, one of the first Salafi-Jihadi movements in Gaza started in 2006 under Mumtaz Dogmosh, gained notoriety by conducting the successful joint operation with Ahmad Jaabri, the then al-Qasam brigade commander, of the abduction of Gilad Shalit. After 2007[76], it started to approach Hamas negatively because 'Hamas betrayed the Palestinian cause aggressively.'

Another movement is *Jaljalat*, whose membership reaches 700. It started as a reaction to Hamas's 'moderate' stance against peace in Gaza was responsible for an operation against Hamas's security buildings and Internet Cafes in Gaza (Berti, 2010). Its primary operations were the abduction of Westerners e.g., a Fox News reporter and cameraman and the abduction of the BBC reporter Alan Johnston for about four months until Hamas released him.

Hezbollah

One of Hamas's development milestones was the deportation to the Southern part of Lebanon in 1992 of 415 Palestinians (rounded up from various Palestinian factions), during their stay in Lebanon, they received assistance from Hezbollah (B'Tselem, 2011).

In the second Intifada, Hamas carried started to distinguish itself in quality and quantity by the use of Hezbollah's tactics after the return of the deportees 1992.

Hezbollah started to mention the role of Imad Mughniyeh by assisting Hamas in its training. (Hezbollah Site, 2020), the camaraderie built between Hamas and Hezbollah is primarily based on the idea that they are fighting the same enemy state.

Hamas's relationship with Hezbollah worsened after the neutral position of Hamas in the civil war in Syria. But after the nomination of Yahiya Sinwar as the Hamas leader in Gaza, the

[76] In my view, the fact that such an operation was conducted within a small decentralized cell, that has little connection to the political wing, is due to the fact many unfolding events revealed that Shin Bet had many operatives inside Gaza and within Hamas and other Palestinian groups

relationship returned to normal, with the exchange of positions, training, and the minor role of consultations.

Sabreen Movement (Patients)

The group formation could be a bid from Iran to protest Hamas' stance in the Syrian civil war, it was designated as terrorist group by the Trump's administration in 2018 saying the group fired a few rockets to the direction of Israel in September. 2015 and detonated an explosive device against the IDF in December 2015 (Jonathan & Grant, 2014).

The Sabreen movement was created by Hisham Salim, who had defected from PIJ and had pro-Iranian attitude especially in the Syrian civil war. It is believed that he had converted to Shiism, Sabreen refused any reconciliation attempts with Israel, so in 2019 Hamas attacked the group and detained 70 of its leaders, confiscated its weapons, and mostly ended this group. This group is an example of the importance of the 'significant public threshold' as it could not get to that point despite the Iranian financial support;

The International Circle

> *"Once the principle of survival had been recognized as a strategic goal, it could not be achieved solely through reliance on internal resources. Arab and Islamic countries were too important to be alienated or ignored. Henceforth, Hamas' ability to thrive and expand could be significantly augmented by striking alliances or establishing proper relations with Arab and Islamic actors."*
>
> Musleh, 1999

The establishment of Hamas took place in four main phases, described by Zaki's interview with Sheikh Yasin. The first phase was to start social, charitable institutions with open doors to assist needy people. The second phase strengthened the resistance's roots and bolstered its political credibility. The third phase was building the military wing by the use of basic techniques. The last phase was to seek international legitimacy and Arab political support (Chehab, 2007, pp.21-22).

The international circle impacts the survival of Hamas in several different ways. The first is the pursuit of legitimacy, which is also a struggle between Hamas and Fatah, as the legitimacy of Hamas adversely impacts the hegemonic role of Fatah over the Palestinian struggle. This struggle prompted Hamas to approach other groups and the governments of sovereign states

and explain its cause. few foreign powers have shown reciprocity and have not labeled the group's political wing a terrorist entity.

Hamas drew closer to those groups and states whose foreign policy subscribed to an Islamic doctrine. This inclination is a natural option for a religious movement that attaches to Islamic values and uses it as an instrument of mobilization (Davis, 2014).

One of the principles in this circle is the reciprocity of interests. Hamas has advantages that facilitated its acceptance of the international system. First, Hamas' policy restricts its actions against Israel to inside Israel and the occupied territories. Second, it helped rescue hostages that other violent groups had kidnapped. Its charter confirms this policy, and it has gained considerable success in this area. Its Politburo had frequent meetings with Russian diplomats and influential Muslim states like Turkey and Indonesia.

The second element is financial backing, the United States and the European Union provide generous support: between 1994 and 2013, the EU had given over 5.6 billion Euros to the PNA while the US had provided more than $5 billion. These funds were intended for Gazans to reduce the difference in the quality of life between those governed by Hamas and those by the PNA (Davis, 2014, p. 76). This action prompted Hamas to refer to those payments provided by 'biased' players.

The essence of the conflict between the international circle and Hamas is that Hamas does not accept the conditions set by the Quartet (United States, Russia, the EU, and the UN): (1) recognize the State of Israel, (2) abide by previous agreements, and (3) renounce violence. It is unlikely, according to the constructivism theoretical framework, that Hamas will willingly accept conditions that are contrary to its identity. So, such a request is hard for Hamas unless it transforms itself into a political organization and joins the PNA as part of the political game. The former British Prime Minister Tony Blair considered that the international community should have allowed Hamas to participate in the political process instead of denouncing its participation in the election process, which the international community observed in 2006 (Macintyre, 2017).

The US reached out to Hamas through a series of US diplomats in Amman over two months in 1992. These efforts were halted in March 1993 by the US declaration that Hamas needed to accept the peace process.

In the case of Hamas, Dr. Mohamad Abu Roman said, "the effect of the international community is minor in comparison to the regional and the ideological stance of the group"

(Personal communication, February 3, 2021). Similar to this is the position of Hasan Abu Haniya,[77] who emphasized that the group's identity matters more than any other factor (Personal communication, Hassan Abu Haniyah, February 3, 2021).

Enemy State Circle

Somodi (2016) believes that "Hamas came to being as an opposition force on the Palestinian political landscape against the claim of the PLO (Fatah) to be the only legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. From that time on, Hamas was the most important force on the Islamist side within the Palestinian political life and opposition to the secular movements within the PLO" (p. 85). It was encouraged by Israel to counterbalance the allegedly 'terrorist' group at the 1980s.

After 2014, Hamas avoided reaching the 'breaking point' with Israel by keeping a low-intensity conflict designed to attract more attention than to hurt, Issacharoff (2017) claims that "*Hamas is doing everything to prevent another round of armed conflict with Israel from breaking out. If we look closely at its conduct since Operation Protective Edge ended in August 2014, Hamas — an organization sworn to the State of Israel's destruction — acts almost like Israel's own Border Police. While the goal of the positions it has established along Israel's border may primarily be to keep a lookout on the Enemy State, they also prevent suspected men who could perpetrate terror attacks against Israeli targets from being near the fence*." In the meantime, Israel does not have the capability or motivation to eradicate Hamas for several reasons:

- Hamas gives Israel the pretext to refute the two-state solution and maintain the one-state solution: "The truth about Hamas and Islamic Jihad is that they don't prevent Israel from existing or even flourishing, they prevent Palestine from coming into existence" (Medved, cited in the Jewish portal, n.d.)[78].
- It maintains security inside a geographic enclave bordering on Israel that Israel cannot handle;
- Hamas is a rational player that can control the more irrational movements like Salafi-Jihadist movements to the point that it started to control the borders with Israel;

[77] Hassan Abu Haniyah is a prominent researcher in the field of Islamic militant movements.
[78] Site for quotes, http://www.thejewishportal.com/inSupportOfIsrael.html

- Hamas has been working since 2014 on preventing attacks against Israel from other 'rebel' groups by inspecting drivers and thwarting any planned operations by other groups.
- Israel does not have an appetite to occupy Gaza, 'it has not built any biblical narratives' about Gaza.

Hamas has two main adversaries: the PNA/Fatah movement as an internal Enemy state and Israel as the primary Enemy state. Politically Hamas won the 2006 legislative elections in Gaza, and militarily it swept Fatah from Gaza in 2007. Hamas's Enemy state is Israel because it maintains a stranglehold on Gaza, controls all movement across the borders, controls fuel and electricity supply. The economic life of people inside Gaza depends significantly on Israel. Israel allows money transfer to Gaza from Qatar, which plays a role in calming the Strip situation. The Israeli approach to Gaza is primarily humanitarian rather than political. It tries to label its actions as being humanitarian (Personal communication, Omar Shaban). In order to rein in Hamas, Israel used an extensive array of methods, as shown below:

Politicization of Hamas

Hamas cannot demand historic Palestine's liberation as "*a realistic condition for peace with Israel. Instead, it changed its tone to conform to international demands. In a 2008 interview, the chief of Hamas Politburo, Khaled Mishaal, offered that a peaceful resolution could be achieved by establishing a Palestinian state with full sovereignty based on the 1967 borders, including East Jerusalem, without Israeli settlements. This was not a new offer: it is along the lines offered by Sheikh Ahmad Yassin, Abed al-Aziz al-Rantissi, and others as far back as 1996*" (Warikat, 2021).

The second driver for politicization is a 'hurting stalemate' that hurts both sides. Zartman[79] (2001) claims that "*Parties resolve their conflicts only when they are ready to do so — when alternative, usually unilateral means of achieving satisfactory results are blocked, and the parties feel that they are in an uncomfortable and costly predicament. At that ripe moment, they grab on to proposals that most of the time has been in the air for a long time and that only now appear attractive.*"

Another factor is the "*loss of state sponsorship. Structural reforms happen when the group loses its primary contributor. Hamas is still on good terms with Iran, its relations with Egypt*

[79] Zartman is a scientist and writer of conflict management.

were affected by the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) but the relationship started to improve. During the Syrian civil war, its neutral stance caused her to lose Syrian support, though, when Yahiya Sinwar took over from Ismail Haniyeh in 2017 as Hamas's leader in Gaza, the relation with Hezbollah and Iran returned to its normalcy. However, it is believed that Iran will stand against any political solution between Hamas and Israel" (Warikat, 2021).

Dr. Adnan Abu Amer[80] (Personal communication, Adnan Abu Amer, 2019, May 11), "a *Palestinian expert claims that people in Gaza fall into three main groups about Hamas: the first group is the supporters; the second group is the anti-Hamas Fatah supporters; the last group is indifferent, who mostly sympathize with what they feel is right for themselves. The first group might not accept peace with Israel, but in the end, they are committed to the cause of Hamas. The second group will exploit any peace deal to stigmatize Hamas and attack its credibility. People in the third group will form their opinion upon the change they notice in their everyday life*" (Warikat, 2021). A sign of the politicization process is that Hamas's objectives are narrowing. They are becoming humanitarian-oriented to improve Gazans' living standards and return prisoners and detainees to Israeli prisons. In a survey conducted by the Israel Democracy Institute's monthly peace index, 57 % of Jews were in support of holding talks with Hamas, while the right-wing voters were supporting with 45% (Fulbright, 2018).

Targeted Killing

Assassinations can be divided into three categories: assassinations in the course of military operations, assassinations on the Shin Bet orders, and assassinations carried out outside Israel's borders by Mossad. It is estimated that Mossad is responsible for killing 50 to 60 in this category, including scientists who worked for other countries abroad (Melman, 2020). Within Gaza and the West Bank, the specialized units for arrests and assassinations are small undercover teams; they are called 'Mustarebean' because they try to mimic Arabs and wear Arab clothing.

After signing the Oslo Accords, Israel has focused on leadership targeting against Hamas top leaders, so, its main targets are arch enemies whose arrest is impossible, and bomb makers whose removal significantly affects the performance of Hamas operatives. The list has to be approved by the prime minister, then the identity of the target must be confirmed through UAV reconnaissance before the strike (Dichter & Byman, 2006). Israel killed such top leaders as

[80] A doctor of Politics at Uma University in Gaza.

Sheikh Ahmad Yassin in 2004, Aziz Rantisi who followed Yasin, Engineer Yahya Ayyash[81], Jaabari, the military wing leader and responsible for the abduction of Shalit, and many others. Nevertheless, Israel failed to subdue Hamas by using such methods ranging from targeting senior leadership to launching primary military operations (Al-Jazeera, 2009)[82].

Punitive Deportation

The policy of punitive deportation was inherited from the British Mandate in Palestine, in 1945 it issued the Defence regulation 112, it used it against Arabs who were deported to the Seychelles while Jews were deported to Eritrea and Kenya. The number of deported Palestinians from 1967 till 1992 was 1600 persons (B'Tselem, 1993).

Rabin used this method and though it is effective for prevention and deterrence, though has been cast over its effectiveness. This policy has its repercussion over the deported and his family, in the national context it distances them from the national political struggle, for Israel it is a lengthy cumbersome judicial process.

Special Measures

Special retaliatory measures include economic sanctions like limiting the area allowed for fishing, decreasing or increasing work permits for Gazans to work in Israel, and demolishing the houses of those who engaged in operations against Israel, the use of informants, building the security fence, and the use of roadblocks.

Military Operations

In these operations Hamas has proven its ability to inflict painful losses inside Israel. Between 1987 and 1996, Israel killed 5,050 Palestinians, including 998 children. the Israelis' losses were about 1,426 Israelis, including 137 children (B'Tselem, n.d.) [83].

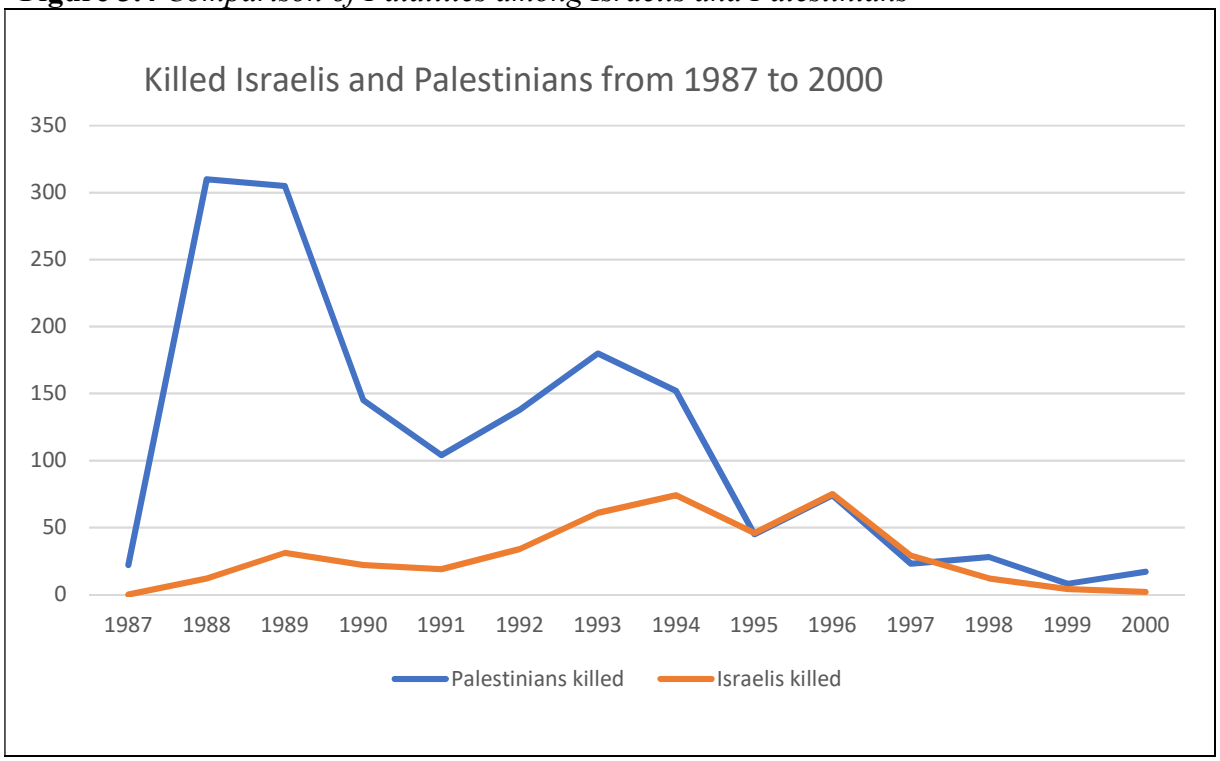
Figures 3.4 and 3.5 compare the fatalities among Palestinians and Israelis. They show a steep increase after the year 2000.

[81] Yahiya Ayyash was born in 1966. He graduated from Beirzit university in Electrical Engineering, applied to get Master degree in Jordan but the Israeli authorities denied his request. He then entered Hamas to become the renowned bomb maker and the father of suicide bombings. Israeli security agencies put him first on their list for many years. He was smart in disguise to the way that surprised Israelis that he could go unnoticed from Gaza to the West Bank. In 1996 he was assassinated by a technological and human intelligence effort: a Palestinian agent Kamil Hamad gave him a phone with eavesdropping devices containing 15 grams of RDX explosive. As soon as he picked up a call from his father, a helicopter hovering overhead sent a signal to a command-and-control unit that sent the signal to explode the head of Ayyash.

[82] Sheikh Ahmad Yassin interview with Al-Jazeera in 1999

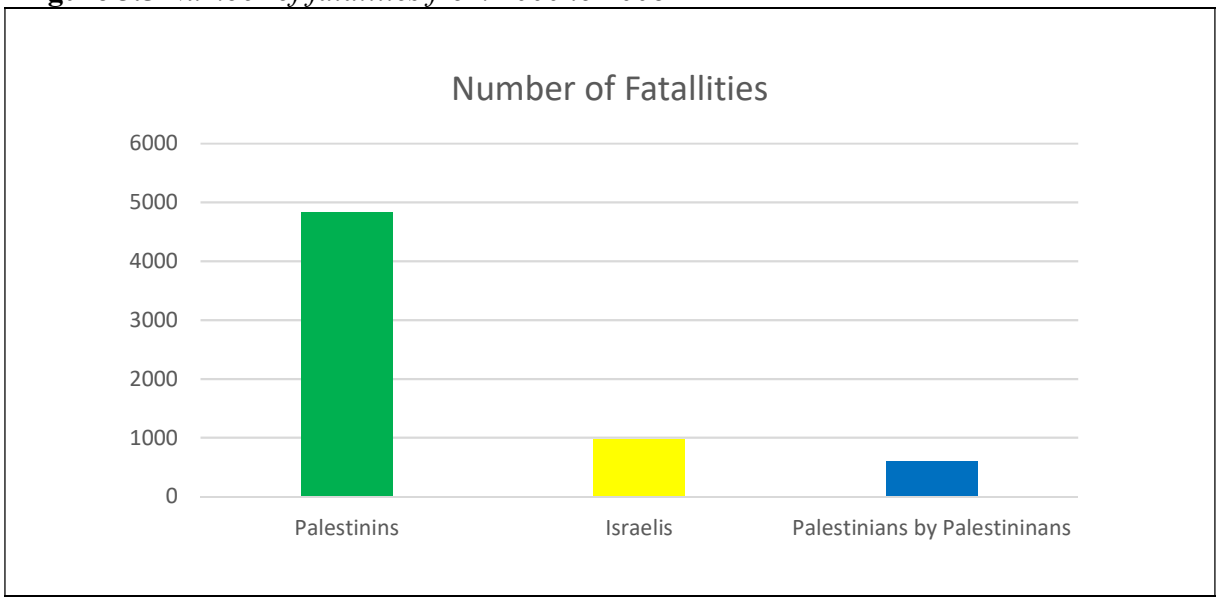
[83] B'Tselem – is an Israeli human rights organization.

Figure 3.4 *Comparison of Fatalities among Israelis and Palestinians*



***Note*:** Adapted from "Fatalities: All data "by B'Tselem. (n.d.). https: www.statistics.btselem.org/en/all-fatalities/by-date-of-incident?section=overall&tab=overview

Figure 3.5 *Number of fatalities from 2000 to 2008*



***Note*:** Adapted from B'Tselem, https: www.statistics.btselem.org/en/all-fatalities

Defensive Shield. Israel launched the Defensive Shield operation, similar to the West Bank's reoccupation as an answer to the second Intifada.

The exact number of casualties has not been universally agreed upon; however, estimates point to approximately 52 Palestinians and 23 Israeli soldiers killed. In an interview with an Egyptian newspaper, a member of the PIJ who assisted in booby-trapping a refugee camp explained what type of fight Israel was up against: "*We had more than 50 houses booby-trapped," the bomb-maker explained. "We chose old and empty buildings and the houses of men whom Israel wanted because we knew the soldiers would search for them. . .. We cut off the lengths of the main water pipes and packed them with explosives and nails. Then we placed them about four meters apart . . . in cupboards, under sinks, in sofas*" (Gleis & Berti, p.175). As for Israel, it used varied tactics ranging from warning civilians to leave a given area, then bulldozing homes by D-9s.

In the narrow alleyways, Israeli troops often moved from house to house by blowing holes through connecting walls to protect themselves from snipers and explosives planted at buildings' entrances, also used dogs with cameras strapped on their back to identify targets, explosives, tunnels, suspects, and booby traps. In the past, dogs were used almost exclusively by IDF Special Forces and an elite dog-training combat unit known as 'Oketz'; in the meantime, infantry units of all types use them, along with UAVs.

Operation Cast Lead. It started on December 27, 2008, and lasted 23 days until 2009, January 18, and the ferocity of the onslaught was unprecedented. It started with seven days of aerial bombardment, followed by ground incursion in which more than 1400 Palestinians and 13 Israelis were killed (Institute for Middle East Understanding, 2012). Israel's hidden goal was to undermine Hamas's governance in the eyes of Palestinian and incite them to revolt against it and call the PNA back. That did not happen mainly because of the disproportionate use of force that made people more supportive of Hamas. In a purely military sense, the performance of Hamas was mediocre and cannot be compared to Hezbollah. In the end, Israel did not topple Hamas, and the excessive collateral damage cast Israel as the aggressor in the eyes of the international community and brought to light the plight of the Palestinians.

Pillars of Defence. On November 14, 2012, as a result of the assassination of the al-Qassam force leader Ahmad al-Jaabri, Hamas and other militants launched more than 100 rockets into Israel. Israel mobilized its ground forces and started an aerial campaign for eight days. The campaign claimed the lives of 158 Palestinians, six Israelis and injured 1,269 (OCHA, n.d.).

Protective Edge Operation. After the kidnapping of three Israelis and murdering them, Israeli started in June 2014 a collective punishment campaign against the West Bank and the Gaza Strip; the operation lasted for 52 days.

Hypothesis (1) Conclusions

Hamas survived due to factors internal to the group, and its interactions with the outer circles that surround the group: the 'PNA circle', the Israel circle, the regional circle, other groups, and the international system, in the course of their effort to gain internal and external legitimacy. Table 3.2 on the next page shows that Hamas has the required elements for survival.

In the group circle the main element is size which is over 10 thousand fighters, which has a proven hybrid threat military capabilities of conventional and guerrilla warfare and terrorism. The third factor is its maturity which grows from its inception in 1987.

In the host state circle, Hamas deals with a weak PNA. It exceeds the 'significant public support', in the regional circle, it gets various types of support from Iran, Turkey, Qatar, and Egypt. Hamas has an active network with other groups, especially PIJ and Hezbollah, and receives mainly symbolic support from other Palestinian factions and individuals.

Hamas does enjoy partial external legitimacy in the international circle system even though it is still designated a terrorist group by the US, UK, Canada, Australia, and the EU.

In the enemy state, Hamas is besieged by Israel from the three dimensions: sea, land and air. "*Hamas's frustration derives from a lack of legitimization by Israel and by much of the world. It is this frustration that leads them to such destructive desperation. That's why we need to grant them status as a legitimate enemy - before we talk about an agreement or, alternatively, about a frontal war, Israel needs to stop calling Hamas a terrorist organization*" (Yehoshua, 2014).

Table 3.2 *Pillars of Survival*

Factors	Hamas' Measures
Size	10 thousand members (Very Large Groups)
Maturity	Since 1987
Military capabilities	Fought against Israel and survived, Defeated Fatah and competitor Salafi-Jihadi movements
Organizational structure	Decentralized: separate military and political wings, external Political Bureau.
Operational Security	Israel infiltrated Hamas, killed its leaders, and in 2021 destroyed its tunnel system.
Terrain	High population density means risk of extensive collateral damage and limits enemy state options due to international public opinion.
Other Groups	Defeated its direct rival Fatah, has support relationships with Hezbollah, PIJ, and other Palestinian groups.
Public Support	Public opinion shows that Hamas enjoys more support than any other group inside the PNA.
External support	Has external political and economic support from Iran and Qatar and enjoys public support among Arab nationals,
International Legitimacy	Has de jure legitimacy and relationships with Russia and with other Muslim countries.
Enemy state	Israel indirectly contributed to its creation
	Israel fought against it militarily and could not achieve its strategic objective.
	Hamas deals effectively with leadership targeting by Israel.
	Israel's strategy is based on deterrence.
	Israel has succeeded in influencing the international system against legitimatizing Hamas's activities inside the regional circle.

Hamas does not constitute an existential threat to Israel. Instead, it controls an area that Israel has no intention to occupy and rule after its withdrawal in 2005. The burden of the administrative and political governance of a population of two million limits its inclination to

use violence. Hamas controls other Salafi-Jihadi groups: it acts as a rational actor with a need to have a low-intensity conflict with Israel. The terrain of Gaza is not suitable for military incursions because of the risk of extensive collateral damage due to the density of population. Israel also realizes that conclusively defeating Hamas would create chaos in its backyard, especially in the stabilization phase, because the weak PNA does not have a real chance of establishing and maintaining law and order inside Gaza Strip.

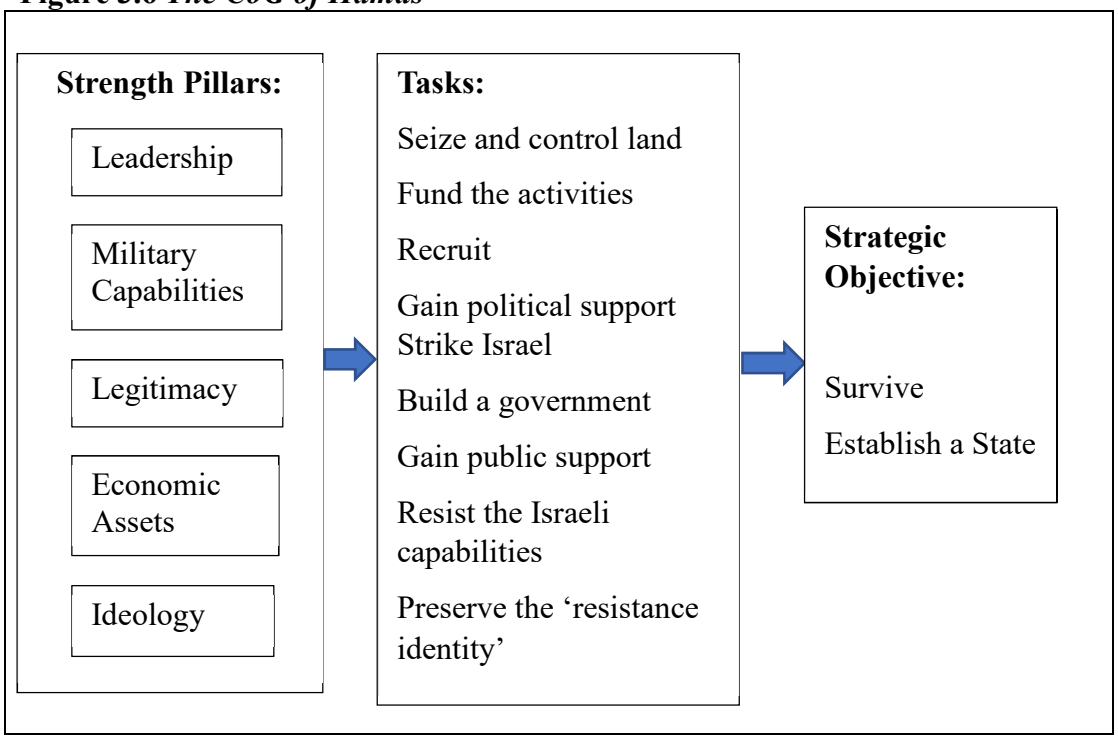
Hypothesis (2): Strategic CoGs

The second hypothesis is about the center of gravity of Hamas and its host state (PNA), legitimacy is the center of gravity for both, which should be the PNA's focus.

Hamas enjoys widespread public support – more than its 'supposedly host state', as shown in the public opinion published by the Palestinian Center for Policy and Research (PCPSR) in 2021, September 15-18, showing if a Presidential election with only two candidates (Mahmoud Abbas and Ismail Haniyeh) were held, Abbas would receive 34% and Haniyeh 56% of the votes. Moreover, 78% of the public wants President Abbas to resign, while only 19% want him to remain in office (PCPSR, 2021b). The war 'Guardian of the Walls' increased the reputation of Hamas and caused a decrease in the PNA's legitimacy, not only as a result of Hamas' popularity, but mainly due to the Palestinians' dissatisfaction with the PNA. So, Hamas is far beyond the 'significant public threshold'. In the section of external support, its implicit recognition by holding negotiations with parties like Egypt, Germany and other states underpin Hamas' leadership in Gaza and abroad, which is welcomed in many states.

The most likely desired end state of Hamas is to establish a state in the whole of Palestine. The focus group survey also confirmed that the most likely desired end state for Hamas is building a Palestinian state inside Palestine. In order to achieve that goal, Hamas needs to recruit, mobilize Palestinians, fund its activities, preserve its ' resistance' identity, resist against Israel, resist against Fatah, retain control over the Palestinian territories, strike Israel if needed, gain the support of citizens and from external states. Figure 3.6 on the next page shows the developed way of extracting the strategic CoG of Hamas.

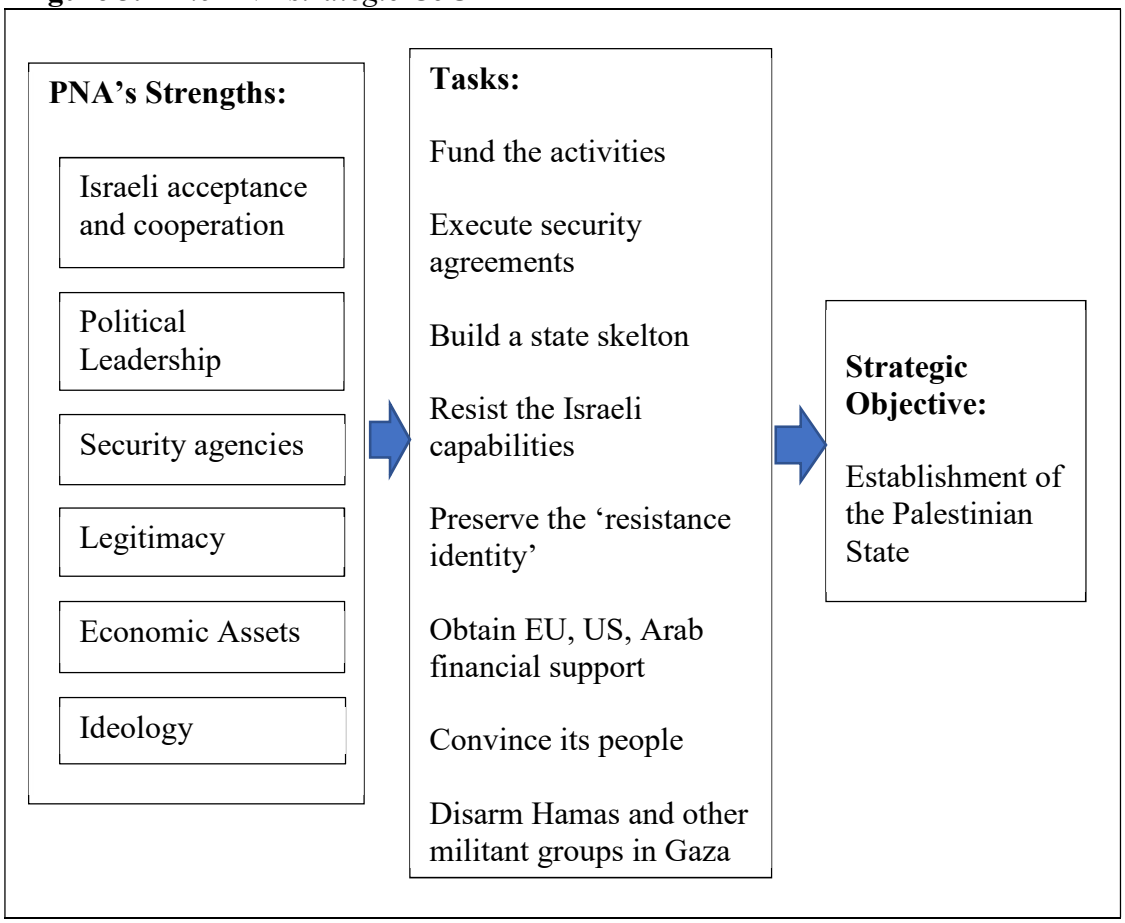
Figure 3.6 ***The CoG of Hamas***



In order to '*perform'* the above missions, Hamas needs proto-state governance, army, security agencies, relationship with external actors, legitimacy, ideology, political leadership. It is evident that legitimacy is the main pillar to achieve the above-mentioned missions.

Figure 3.7 on the next page shows the strategic CoG of the PNA: its desired end state is to build the Palestinian state in accordance with the UNSCR 242 by acceptance of the two-state formula. From the mentioned means, the only one that can achieve the end state is the legitimacy of the PNA as it gets external support and garners public support, negotiates with Israel, fulfills its international commitments, especially to the security of Israel. It is extremely hard for the PNA to move forward without international support and without the Palestinian people's acknowledgment of its authority.

Figure 3.7 *The PNA strategic CoG*



Hypothesis (3) Hamas's Victory Theory

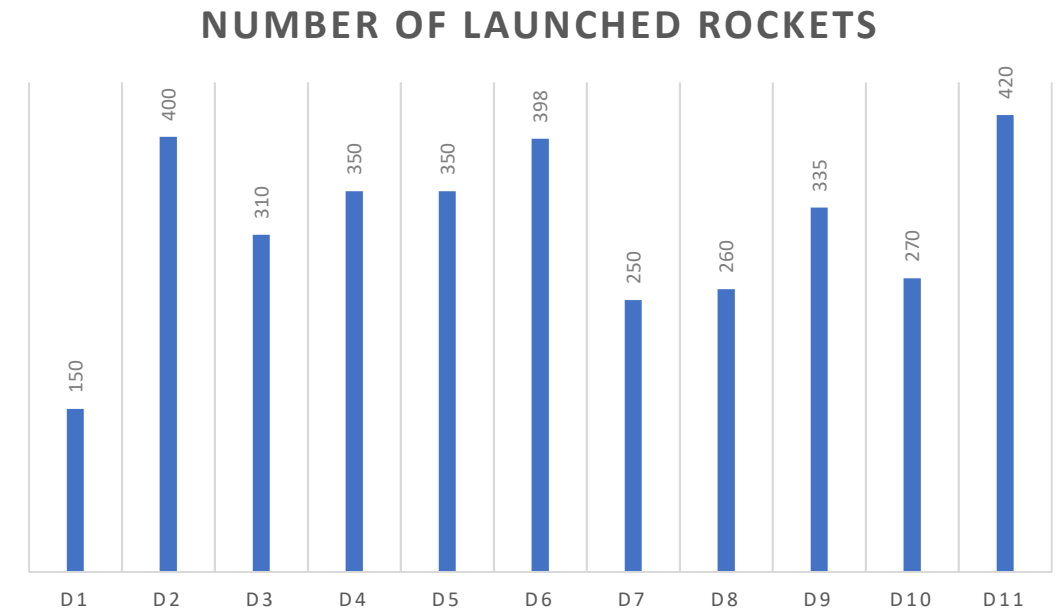
The 'Guardian of the Walls' ('Jerusalem Sword' as dubbed by Hamas) operation was selected as a case study to demonstrate the victory theory of Hamas and validate the 3rd hypothesis about victory in wars between proto-state armed groups and state actors.

On May 10, 2021, after rising tensions in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood in Jerusalem, Hamas issued an ultimatum for Israel to stop evictions of Jerusalemites. Otherwise, it would fire rockets into Israel. Hamas's ultimatum expired at 1800 hrs., three minutes after the end of the ultimatum, sirens in Jerusalem signaled the first wave of salvos.

Over the next 12 days, Hamas and the Islamic Jihad launched 4,360 rockets and mortar shells at Israel (approximately 1,000 of which fell short of the border), about the same number as the Protective Edge in 2014 which lasted 50 days. Compared to the average of 130 rockets per day during that conflict, this time, there were nearly 300 launches per day. The Iron Dome system intercepted about 90% of the fired rockets; two anti-tank missiles were successfully fired at Israeli targets while several attempts were aborted; one soldier was killed when ATGM hit his

jeep, the second lightly injured one soldier (Israeli MFA, 2021). The following figure 3.8 shows the rate of rockets shelled by Hamas. It shows that Hamas managed to shell on the last day of the war 420 missiles, more than any other day, to send a message that its military capabilities are intact and that it was not prevented from recovery, which is an essential part of the victory equation.

Figure 3.8 *Timeline of rocket-launching*



Note. Adapted from the Israeli Foreign Ministry. (2021, May 20). Operation Guardian of the Walls.

This battle was unique in several aspects: first, it was started by Hamas, not by Israel; second, Hamas managed to influence Arab-Israelis in Israel, which threatened with a divide within the Israeli society; third, it ended without agreements based on US pressure to halt the Israeli offensive.

The IAF struck over 1,500 targets, including launch sites, command and control centers, and weapons storage sites. One of these targets was Hamas's tunnel system (named 'Metro' by the Israelis). This tunnel network-enabled military training, mobility, weaponry storage, and the capacity to carry out and manage military operations. The Israeli strikes killed a few leaders, mostly technicians like Professor Jamal Zabdah, who contributed to the development of the

missile project. The Hamas-run Gaza Health Ministry has only acknowledged the deaths of 243 Palestinians in the fighting, including 66 minors and 39 women (Gross, 2021).

Who is the Victor?

Both parties claimed victory. Israel said, "*we succeeded in our mission to defend Israel, fight terror, and ensure the security of Israeli civilians; the IDF was able to destroy a large number of Hamas' weapons manufacturing capabilities, in order to bring an enduring calm to the people of Israel*" (IDF, 2021).

A survey was conducted in Israel in May 2021, questioned 684 Israelis, with a 4.3% margin of error, whether Israel had better success in Guardian of the Wall than in previous rounds of fighting. Of the respondents 66% said yes, with the figure dropping to 30% of those who live in the south, while 30% said no (28% among southern residents) (Times of Israel, 2021, May 21).

On the Palestinian side, a survey conducted by PCPSR between 9-12 June 2021 shows that "*an overwhelming majority of Palestinians (77%) believes that Hamas has come out a winner in its last war with Israel, while 1% think Israel came out a winner; 18% say no one came out a winner and 2% think both sides came out winners. Moreover, 65% think that Hamas has achieved its declared goal behind firing rockets at Israel: to force Israel to stop the expulsion of the families in al-Shaikh Jarrah and bring Israeli restriction on Muslim access to an end at al-Aqsa Mosque*" (PCPSR, 2021). Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh declared that the Palestinians have "set a new balance of power" vis-à-vis Israel following the war; he also said: "Hamas will not abandon Jerusalem, nor will we abandon the resistance" (Siryoti, 2021). With the passage of time, in September 2021, the number decreased to 71% who believe Hamas won the war (PCPSR, 2021 b), which can be explained by the euphoria of war that dissipate with the passage of time.

From the economic point of view, Trajtenberg and Fadlon (2021) estimated the economic cost of the operation by separating three types of economic costs: the direct military cost, reduction in economic activity, and property damage caused by the rocket fire from the Gaza Strip.

The cost of Protective Edge (2014) had been roughly NIS 8.7 billion.[84] For Guardian of the Walls, they estimated that the direct military cost was NIS 4-5 billion, the total cost of property

[84] NIS stands for Israeli New Shekel

damage was NIS 315 million, and the cost of the damage to economic activity during the campaign amounted to NIS 1.2 billion (Trajtenberg & Fadlon, 2021).

Official committees and international organizations estimated the economic losses in the Palestinian side to be 479 million USD. The losses in the residential and infrastructure sector were 61% of the whole losses with 292 million USD, the economic development 33% with 156 million USD, and the social development 7 % with 30 million USD (Palestinian Ministry of Information, 2021). These estimates do not contain the direct losses for Hamas, i.e., the destruction of the 'metro.'

The application of the victory theory to operation Guardian of the Walls

Although Israel had apparent successes on the tunnel front and elsewhere, this war was far from "a resounding victory for the IDF. The military failed to prevent Hamas from firing over 4,000 rockets and mortar shells at Israel" (Gross, 2021). Whereas Israel's thinking during the fighting "displayed a tactical-quantitative logic, Hamas's thinking was strategic-qualitative" (Matza, 2021).

The Future of Hamas

The future of Hamas cannot be determined on an academic theoretical basis, snatched out of its historical and actual political context. For Hamas, the two-state solution related to Israel and the PNA, and an internationally guaranteed peace settlement of the conflict would either offer a definitive future for Hamas through its integration into the process, or a descent into social and political insignificance.

Conclusions

This chapter discussed the survival of Hamas. The discussion is built upon the analytical survival framework. In the group circle, Hamas has a sufficient size, with more than ten thousand fighters. Its structure varies from the political to the military, there is little evidence of the relationship between the two wings. Hamas also excels in operational security with its 'MAJD' counterespionage organization; however, this success is pretty relative due to the size of Israeli security agencies daily monitoring. Dr. Khaled Hroub (Personal communication, March 2020) maintains that the primary reason for Hamas's survival is its core objective, which is resistance, since resistance by itself represents the engine of the Palestinian identity.

In the host state circle, the PNA's weakness is an advantage to Hamas's survival. Hamas exists beyond the control and reach of the PNA, a fact that enhances its chances. The unpleasant

reputation of Fatah and the PNA and their corruption paved the way for Hamas winning the hearts and minds of the Palestinians in the Gaza strip. The society is partially supportive because of the perception of the corruption of the competitor, the provision of socio-economic services: Hamas helps society build social services, e.g., schools, kindergartens, da'wa outreach, and health centers. The conflict with Israel is an element of Hamas's identity and an appealing cause for Hamas and other groups. The discussion of the community role and its impact on Hamas' survival can be deduced from the prevalence of poverty and feelings of injustice due to their land's occupation; most Gazans are refugees after the 1948 war, they need a group to adopt their cause.

The deteriorating economic situation inside the strip, with the majority of Gazans still young generation generates frustrations that precipitate violence. Hamas's image as an uncorrupt organization, democratic, and resistance group helps it to get more than the 'significant public threshold' inside Gaza, the West Bank, as well as outside Palestine.

Hamas enjoys various contacts in the other group's circle: friendly, supportive with Hezbollah, competitive and coordinating with PIJ, and partially adversarial with Fatah. Moreover, the other ten groups of Palestinian resistance movements have an unstable relationship, but mostly they acknowledge the status quo. It does not weigh its relationships according to its ideology; for example, it cooperates with PFLP and other leftist groups. Hamas benefits from all these relationships, enhancing its ability to survive, e.g., it did a joint operation with the Salafi-Jihadist movement to kidnap the Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit. Its worst relationship is with Fatah, which tries to delegitimize Hamas. Nevertheless, that adversarial relationship represents little danger since Hamas is more militarily capable than Fatah in Gaza.

Hamas enjoys significant support in the regional circle. It gets support from Iran but not to the level of being acquiescent to all Iranian demands, as was manifest in the Syrian civil war when Hamas insisted on a neutral position to satisfy its Sunni supporters. In the international circle it succeeded in getting de-facto legitimacy from a significant segment of the international community, because of its power on the ground. Israel does not have an absolute resolve to deal a severe blow to Hamas for several reasons: control over the borders; it is the evil Israel knows; the conflict is maintained as low-intensity, below the 'Bone Breaking Point'. The latter point was manifest on many occasions. One example was during the funeral of Yitzhak Rabin when Hamas kept its silence and did not provoke the resolve of grieved Israelis. Israel used all the possible means to rein in Hamas by leadership targeting, waging military operations, arresting high-value targets, house demolitions, deportations, naval blockade, limiting or increasing work

permits inside Israel, use of informants. None of these methods yield a positive result over Hamas. It might be concluded that peaceful reconciliatory approach is the only one that can put off the conflict between the two parties.

Analysis of the CoG of Hamas proved that its legitimacy is its strategic CoG during its conflict with the PNA, as the two parties compete over the same pool of sympathizers and supporters. The conflict between Hamas and the PNA (*de jure* host state) is over the legitimacy, which is the strategic CoG in their conflict. Hamas's victory in legislative elections in 2006 and its success in the war in May 2021 has earned its legitimacy in the eyes of Palestine, as polls show. Regarding the victory theory, Hamas is a resilient group with more than 20% of public support, which is more than the 'significant public threshold' above which any defeat will be costly by spreading uncontrolled chaos among its vast constituency. The May 2021 war showed that it could take the initiative and attack Israel. It has external and internal support (even among the Arab Israelis). Its morale and the military means at its disposal were manifested during that encounter.

Chapter Four

The Survival of Hezbollah

"We will consider every hand who will try to take our weapons as an Israeli hand."

Hassan Nasrallah

"It acts openly as a state within a state. It commands an army much more robust and far better equipped than Lebanon's, on Lebanese soil, in defiance of two UN resolutions. Financed and trained by Iran, it fights wars with organized units against a significant Enemy state."

Henry Kissinger, 2006

This is the second case study for proto-state armed groups, The objective of this case is to investigate the factors that led to Hezbollah's survival against its rivals inside the host state and its enemy state. Hezbollah is one of the most influential organizations in the world. It has hybrid characteristics: possess a political character within Lebanese political life, with two ministers and 14 parliament members (in 2019), but it also has the characteristics of an armed group. The other face is the social façade.

Sheikh Naim Qassim[85] (2010) said that Hezbollah evolved from a liberation force to an equilibrium keeper and confrontation force. Subsequently[now] it has played the role of deterrence and defense (p.468).

It does act outside the Lebanese borders without submitting to binding laws in terms of its military wing, its communications networks, and its outside alliances. It has all the characteristics to be named as proto-state armed group, as it embraced the cause of the liberation of Lebanon from Israeli occupation in the south with an ideological stance, controls a part of Lebanon, where it exercises its authority. It also has an external enemy power (Israel, and to some degree the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia), it seeks internal legitimacy as it has members in the government and in the Parliament, with political alliances with Amal (the Shia movement) and the Free Patriotic Current which is run by Michel Aoun, the Maronite President of Lebanon. Externally; furthermore, it has a relationship with several states, e.g., Iran, Syria, Iraq, France,

[85] Sheikh Naim Qassim, is the second person in Hezbollah, he is Deputy of the Secretary-General Hassan Nasrallah.

and indirect influence in states in Africa, and Latin America. These factors make Hezbollah a suitable case study in this research.

Hezbollah is considered a terrorist organization in the USA, Israel, Australia, Germany, the UK, New Zealand, and the Arab Gulf states (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Oman, Kuwait, UAE), while some countries like France restrict the terrorist designation to its military wing.

In 2014, the PEW Research center conducted a poll, which discovered that 31% of Christians and 9 % of Sunnis in Lebanon have a positive image of Hezbollah. This popularity can be attributed partly to the wide range of social services the group provides in Lebanon (Robinson, 2020). However, its participation in the war in Syria led to the loss of more than 1600 fighters (Pollak, 2016, p.12), this participation also led to the loss of its appeal in the Arab World, which had supported its policy of resistance to the Israeli occupation. Hezbollah's two main achievements were that it forced Israel to pull out unconditionally and unilaterally from the southern part of Lebanon and it withstood the perils of the July 2006 war.

Hypothesis (1): Hezbollah's Survival:

Group Circle

It is believed that Hezbollah was formed in 1978, but did not declare itself at that time. Joseph Agha (2006), maintains that it surfaced in 1978 as an Islamic jihadi social protest movement. However, Hezbollah was not formalized into a concrete organization until 1985 (p.13). During its first, undeclared years Hezbollah presumably practiced the Shia principle of Toqiya[86] (religious dissimulation), and worked clandestinely, for fear about its survival.

Hezbollah benefited from internal strife in the dominant Shia movement, Amal. The first serious defection occurred by a group under the deputy of Sheikh Hussein Mousawi, who formed 'Islamic Amal'. "Iran encouraged defections from secular Amal and Da'wa Islamiyah to form Hezbollah, mainly because it was dissatisfied with the policies of these parties" (Ranstorp, 1997, p.30). The real schism in Amal occurred in 1982 when radical members protested against the participation of Nabeeh Beree[87], the Amal leader, in the National Salvation

[86] Toqiya means that it is religiously allowed for the believer to hide or lie about his real identity and intentions and claim another identity as a cover for his real personality. It was justified for the Shia to survive under the hegemony of other groups.

[87] Nabeeh Beree is a Lebanese politician who was born in 1938, and has been the Speaker of Parliament since 1992. In Lebanon the Speaker is selected from the Shia, the Prime Minster is Sunni, the President is Maronite. Berrr is also the leader of the Amal movement.

Committee organized by the then President Ilias Sarkis to handle the Israeli occupation. That group included such names as Hassan Nasrallah, Abas Mousawi, and Imad Mughniyeh.

Hezbollah revealed itself on February 16, 1985, by a statement read by Sayyed Ibrahim al-Amin, on the first anniversary of the assassination of Sheikh Raghib Harb by Israeli forces. Until 1989 it chose a collective leadership. Its first elected Secretary-General was Sheikh Subhi al-Tufayli whom the Shoura Council chose on June 1989. Hezbollah announced its main principles in an 'Open Letter,' and declared its identity and its relationship to the Islamic revolution in Iran:

"We, the sons of Hizballah's umma, whose vanguard God has given victory in Iran and which has established the nucleus of the world's central Islamic state, abide by the orders of a single wise and just command represented by the guardianship of the jurisprudent (waliyy al-faqih), currently embodied in the supreme Ayatullah Ruhallah al-Musawi al-Khumayni… who has detonated the Muslim's revolution, and who is bringing about the glorious Islamic renaissance" (Agha, 2006, p 224).

The open letter was harsh in its ideological language and its explicit call to overthrow Lebanon's secular government to replace it with an Islamic religious one. A committee of eleven selected persons convened to compose Hezbollah's opening document. Tthe main tenets for the movements were:

- Islam is the religion that is convenient to the people;
- Resistance to the Israeli occupation;
- Wilayat al-Faqih (Guardianship of Jurisprudence).

These principles were submitted to Imam Khomeini, who approved the newborn Hezbollah. They constitute the backbone of Hezbollah's religious beliefs and ideology (Qassim, p.37).

There were several factors that contributed to the emergence of Hezbollah: First, it was the Israeli invasion in 1982 (Azani, 2009). The invasion eradicated the Palestinian movements that existed in the south of Lebanon, dominated the area and launched attacks on Israel. In addition, the success of the Iranian Islamic Revolution brought hope to the revival of Shiism all over the world (Naser, 2007). The fourth reason was the existence of the Amal movement, so Hezbollah had a platform to start from. However, Amal chose a more nationalistic political secular form,

which is not hostile to the Maronites and Israel. In contrast, Hezbollah's founders chose a religious ideology built on the idea of resistance to the Israeli occupation.

In May 1991, Hezbollah elected its second Secretary-General, Abbas al-Mousawi, and Sheikh Naim Qassim as Deputy. On 17 February 1992, Hassan Nasrallah was elected to be the third Secretary-General. Later the movement changed its laws to allow the Secretary-General to remain in his position. Nasrallah, who was born in 1960, studied in Najaf, and joined the Da'wa Islamiyah party in Iraq before moving to Amal, is seen by many experts as a charismatic leader.

.Ideology

> *The tribal or religious inclination should be available for political conflicts to prevail to motivate subordinates to fight and die illusioned by a good reason for their death*
>
> Ibn Khaldun[88]

Józef Agha (2006) defines ideology as "*any kind of coherent and systematic whole of ideas on politics and society. This systematized whole functions as a rationale for political and social action. As such, it connotes a worldview held by any social group to justify their actions*" (p.16).

The ideology of Hezbollah impacts most of its behavior and actions. Its religious ideology is built on the Twelvers' Shiism branch of Islam, which is prominent in Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, and Bahrain. Hezbollah is a resistance movement that was built upon religious and political ideology with a political program. (Qassim, 2010).

Wilayat al-Faqih (Guardianship of Jurisprudence). The essence of wilayat al-Faqih is governance, spiritual guidance. Wilayat al-Faqih has two connotations: the temporal government or the authority to govern, and the practice of spiritual guidance and sanctity. According to Imam Jaffar al-Sadiq, "*The Imam is seen as the spiritual friend or supporter [Wali] who guides humankind into the mystical or inner [esoteric] truth of religion. It is through him that God's grace extends to the Earth, the Imam [guides] humankind onto the path of spiritual enlightenment and progress [he is] master and friend in the journey of spirit*" (Agha. 2006, p. 80). According to Shiism, the Wali is the last Imam (Mohamad al-Mahdi), who chose to go into hiding 'Occultation'[89] since 874 CE the tenth century when he was five

88 Ibn Khaldun is considered the father of sociology, born in 1332 and died in 1406, wrote the book ' *Muqaddimah'* or *Prolegomena* meaning the (Introduction).

89 *Lesser Occultation*, the period of about 70 years when, according to Shiism, al-Mahdi, the last and the twelfth Imam, left this physical world, however, remained in contact with his followers through a succession of four deputies. After their death no successor was named, and the *Greater Occultation* started which continues until his return (Khomeini, p. 49).

years old. He is still in his occultation and they believe that he will reappear in the future to lead his followers against evil (Ghorayeb, 2002, p.34).

To the tenets fixed that nobody has the right to rule except the Imam Mohamad al-Mahdi. Imam Khomeini solved this dilemma by suggesting that Iran's supreme leader is deputized to lead the Muslims in place of the Mahdi until his reappearance (Khomeini, 1979, p. 44). Khomeini claimed that any government that does not rule by divine instructions is heresy. The primary conditions for rulers are proficiency, understanding and interpretation of the divine law (Khomeini, 1979, p. 55). In his opinion, this ability exists only in religious authority figures. Therefore, Khomeini concluded that the state's leadership must be given to the skilled religious scholars who knows Islamic law (Azani, 2009.p.40). The Hezbollah leadership chose Wilayat al-Faqih as the cornerstone in their ideology that originates in the historical relationship between the Shia of Lebanon and Iran. This relationship extends to the sixteenth century when Ismail Safavid[90] of Iran called for religious scholars from Mount Amil in the southern part of Lebanon to help him convert the Sunni Iran to Shiism to compete with the Sunni Ottomans.

Another premise of Shia ideology is the importance of Karbala[91], to remind them of sacrifices they need to pay and the importance of victory through pain. "*In the case of Husain , a careful study and analysis of the events of Karbala as a whole reveals the fact that Hussein from the very beginning was planning for a complete revolution of the religious consciousness of the Muslims, all of his actions show that he was aware of the fact that a victory achieved through military strength and might is always temporal, because another stronger power can in course of time bring it down in ruins , but a victory achieved through suffering and sacrifice is everlasting and leaves permanent imprints on man's consciousness*" (Jafri, 1976, p. 143).

[90] Emperor Ismail, is the founder of the Safavid dynasty in Iran who ruled for two centuries, he was the 'Shahn shah' 'King of Kings' from 1501 to 1524, Iran at that time ruled most of Georgia, the Caucasus, Azerbaijan, Iraq, Bahrain, Kuwait, Armenia and Afghanistan; his main rival was the Ottoman empire.

[91] After the death of Caliph Mu'waiah, he nominated his son Yazid as a Caliph, which was in contrast to the selection process of the first four caliphs that was built on Shoura and paying homage from people to the new caliph. His son Yazid asked Hussein – Ali's son and the Prophet's grandson, and a few others to pay homage. Hussein refused and the people of Kufa 'Shia of Ali' sent for him to come to Kufa in Iraq to lead a rebellion against Yazid. Hussein left Mecca to Kufa with 70 of his family for Iraq after receiving hundreds of messages from Kufans. The governor of Kufa, upon orders from Yazid, intercepted the arrival in Karbala. The number of fighters was disproportionate and Hussein was killed in Karbala with most of his family. Until today Shia celebrate the tenth of Muharam, the first Arabic month built on the lunar system; that day is called ' Ashoura' and in that day they flog themselves.

Political Ideology

> *"We wish to favor the downtrodden in the land and make them leaders [Imams] and make them the inheritors; And establish them in the land"*
>
> Holy Quran (28:5-6)

The first fact of Hezbollah is its Islamic identity, which is entrenched in its selection of the name (Party of God) in there two verses of the Quran that say 'Hezbollah is the winners,' 'Hezbollah is victorious'. Its political ideology is linked to, and justified by, its religious identity, which is the first deterministic factor. Its relationship with other groups is built on its view of the world, the division between oppressed and oppressors, views on Jihad, views vis-a- vis others like the west.

In Hezbollah's view about the oppressors and the oppressed, the oppressors are the world's tyrants, like the western imperialist states, especially the 'Big Satan' (USA). The oppressed are mainly the undeveloped states in their fight against their oppressors. Hezbollah views the world as a struggle between oppressed and oppressors, contrary to the Marxist view as a struggle between social classes.

Financial support

According to Mohamad Ra'ad, a Hezbollah parliamentarian figure, most of the group's income comes from its investments and donations from wealthy people (Levitt, 2005). There are large communities of Lebanese living as immigrants all over the globe, they send some of their earnings to the group. According to Israeli intelligence, Ivory Coast ranks first for the fundraising in Africa, while Senegal is second by expatriates' remittances to Hezbollah (Levitt, 2005). The other source is Iran, which contributes to the material supply of resources to Hezbollah's social systems inside Lebanon. Iran is believed to fund the group with 100 million $ in annual support. This number can increase to 200 million $ per year (Wilson, 2004). My belief is that there is no fixed amount but a fluctuating one that decreases or increases in accordance with the Iranian economy and the assumed missions of Hezbollah.

The third source of income is charities and front organizations, like the al-Aqsa international organization, primarily a front organization for Hamas (Levitt, 2005), and the Martyrs organization (Bonyad-e Shahid) which pays to the families of fallen soldiers. Yet, another source of income according to Levitt (2005) is criminal enterprises, money derived from a wide variety of activities ranging from fraud, through money-laundering to the theft of credit cards.

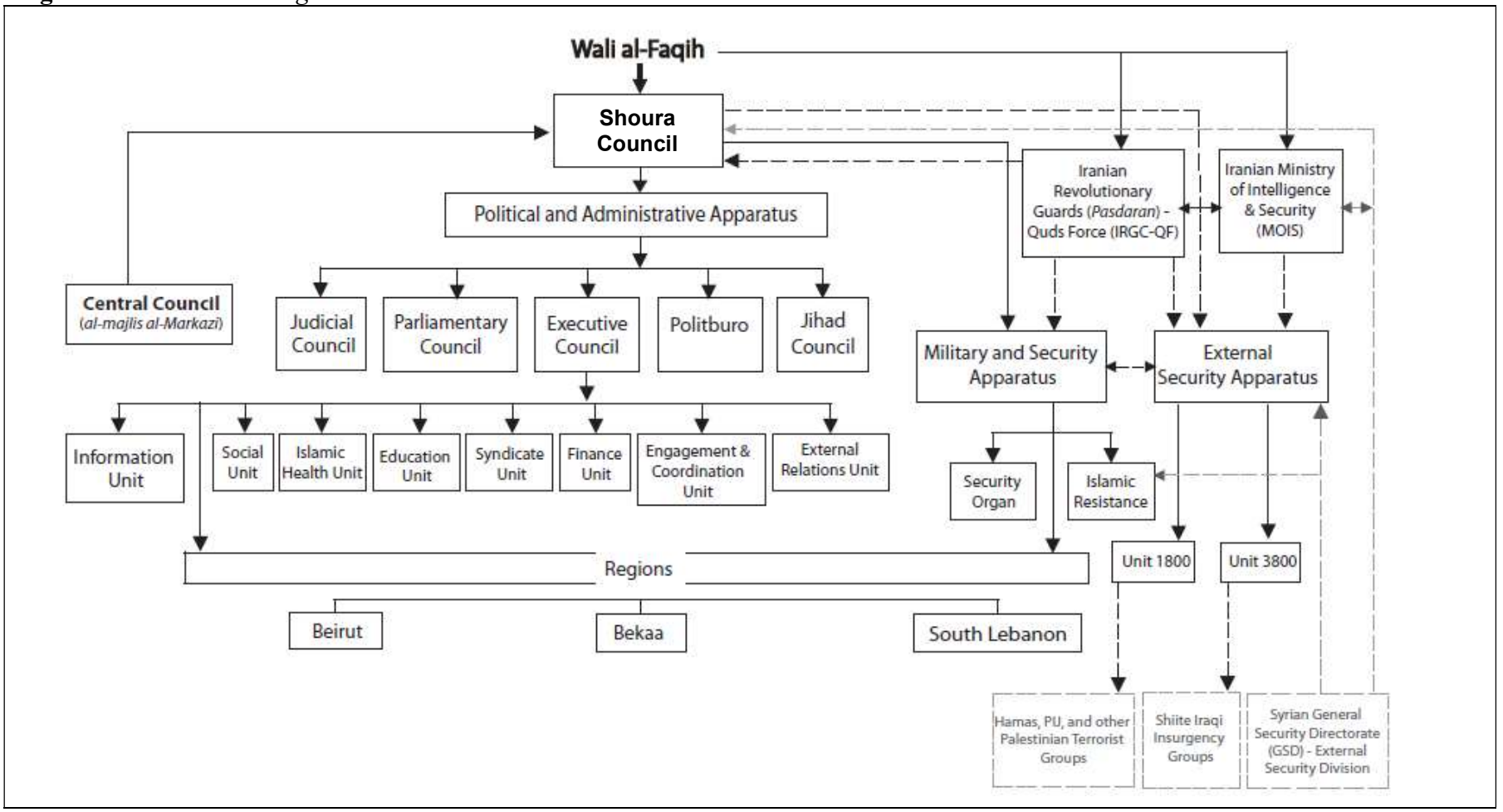
Organizational Structure

Hezbollah's political body is the primary determining body, the Secretary-General of the movement chairs it. He is the one who represents the opinion of the party and has the role of foreign affairs. The interests of the Lebanese state do not confine to Hezbollah's politics: its relationship with Iran commands its policy. The party's political organization is hierarchical. (See Figure 4.1 on the next page) On top is the Secretary-General of the party, who is elected by the Shoura Council every two years, though a change had been done to allow Nasrallah to retain his position. The second figure is Sheikh Naim Qassim the Deputy of the Secretary-General. He assumes such positions as Jihad council supervision.

The Shoura Council is a seven- member council. Every member supervises a separate council, so it is like a council of chiefs. Previously it had nine members, and in the early years of the party it assumed a collective form of leadership. It was only later that the group agreed to have a secretary-general. The leading five councils supervised by the Shoura council are the Executive Council, the Politburo, the Judicial, the Parliamentary, and the Jihadi Councils. The second element is the Central Council which contains about 200 members who elect the seven members of the Shoura council. The executive Apparatus comprises of the following:

- The Executive Council oversees political, cultural, and organizational matters. Its departments are similar to various ministries of a state.
- The Parliamentary Council, whose main activities are to deal with the Lebanese Parliament.
- he Judicial Council acts like the Judicial part of a state and functions according to Islamic law.
- The Jihad Council is similar to a Ministry of Defense. It supervises the military activities of the party.
- The Politburo Council was created in 1989 in a supervisory role. It is responsible for recruitment, propaganda, and support services; 15 members manage it.

Figure 4.1 *Hezbollah's organizational structure*



Note. Reprinted from "Hezbollah and Hamas: A Comparative study", by J. Gleis, & B. Benedetti, 2012

Maturity

The Open Letter disclosed in 1985 was harsh in its language and called for the Islamization of the Lebanese society. However, that language was reversed in the 2009 political letter, which accepted Lebanon's pluralistic nature. Hezbollah started as a ruthless, violent movement responsible for hijacking and suicide bombings. That reputation was needed in the 1980s to attract supporters. Later it won approval from Iran, fought to be the sole representative of the Lebanese Shia.

Syria fought it at a time in support of Amal; yet, Hezbollah managed to bend the Syrian position in its favor and became the Syrian Presidents' favorite group, which strengthened and boosted it. Today Hezbollah without Syria would be a suppressed organization.

Hezbollah's first step towards primacy was to stop calling for an Islamic state in Lebanon. It started to participate in Lebanon's domestic politics as members in the legislative council and the executive apparatus, without giving up its fight with Israel. However, the rate of violence declined to near-zero levels after the 2006 war, after the UNIFIL deployment and the Lebanese forces in the south in accordance with the UNSCR 1701 which was in pursuant to the UNSR 1559 (UN, 2004)

Maturity is closely linked to adaptability, especially the transition from radical group to more moderate, taking into account the potential loss of adherents who maintain that ideological purity and principles are above practical politics (Harik, 2005, p.53)

Military Capabilities

Under the supervision of Ali Akbar Muhtashimi, the Iranian Ambassadors to Syria, the Revolutionary Guards (Pasdaran) sent al-Qudus trainers to 'Sheikh Abdullah' Camp in the Bekaa Valley to train six consecutive courses[92] , every course consisted of 300 people from the Amal movement (Pellegrini, 2012, pp. 50-51)[93].

[92] In 1982, an Iranian delegation consisting of the Defence Minister Solaimi, the IRGC Commander Mohsen Ridai, the Iranian Ambassador and others, discussed with Hafiz al-Assad the launching of armed struggle against the Israelis. Later the Shia occupied a military base belonging to the Lebanese military in the Bekaa Valley– its original name was Sheikh Abdallah and later they renamed to Imam Ali. It seems that some of the weapons were left by the Fatah movement (Thomas, 2009) in an agreement between Yasser Arafat and the Iranian regime. The agreement between the Iranian delegation which was to allow the sweep of the Iranian IRGC staff to the Bekaa to start building the foundational military base. Then started the basic military courses to found a Shia military movement that would fill the Palestinian void.

[93] The French Major General Allain Pellegrini was the UNIFIL commander during the 2006 war and wrote a book about that war

Long before the official announcement of Hezbollah, the group started its operations against the Israelis using one of its preferred tactics, suicide bombings[94]. It succeeded to inflict a lot of damage and causalities on the Israeli units and their allied Southern Lebanese Army (SLA). Although suicide is prohibited in Islam and leads to an eternal stay in the hell, religious clerics gave fatwas to permit the usage of this tactic against oppressors. Ahmad Qusair carried out the first suicide attack on November 11, 1982, targeting the headquarters of the IDF command in Tyre, killing and injuring 141 Israelis (Qassim, 2010, p. 77). Initially, Hezbollah refrained from claiming responsibility or even declaring the executor's name; they claimed it only after the Israeli withdrawal in 1985 with a video recording of the operation's details. Hezbollah still marks that day every year, as 'Martyrs's Day,' in which the Secretary-General usually delivers his annual speech.

Afterward, the presumably suicide attacks[95] targeted the Multinational Force in Lebanon (MNF), the international peacekeeping mission during the Lebanese Civil War. It attacked the US Marine Corps barracks, killing 243 marines, sailors and soldiers in one of the deadliest attacks in American history. At the same time, it attacked the French peacekeepers, killing 58. Also, it attacked the US Embassy in 1983, which ultimately forced the US to flee from the quagmire of Lebanon.

Hezbollah moved to kidnapping westerners[96] A series of kidnappings continued throughout the Lebanese civil war, from beginning to end. The earliest incidents were in June 1975, when

[94] Car bombings and suicide operations have links to Imad Mughniyeh who most likely was the military commander, Imad liked to work behind the scenes.

[95] There is still no enough evidence that would link Hezbollah to the attacks on the US Marines, the US Embassy, and the French Paratroopers. A group called 'Islamic Jihad' assumed responsibility without any physical existence to it. All these operations took place in the 'clandestine phase' of Hezbollah, before the formal declaration of its existence. Imad Mughniyeh was accused in these attacks. The creation of an off-shoot clandestine group is a tactic for constructive ambiguity. It is allowing the group to deny involvement, yet leave some hints to the perpetrator. Fatah used similar tactic when a few of its leaders created 'Black September', the group that bore responsibility for the assassination of the Jordanian Prime Minister Wasfi al- Tal and Munich 1972 operation.

[96] During the Civil War in Lebanon 92 Westerners were kidnapped (among them 17 Americans). Iran and Syria exerted their influence to release most of the captives by 1991. The motives were different. Some criminal groups kidnapped for ransom. However, Hezbollah used kidnapping for political motives: to declare its identity, to protest Western support to countries like Kuwait that sentenced 17 Shia. Another reason that Hezbollah took hostages was as insurance against US retaliation for the US Marines killings in Beirut. Among those whom Hezbollah kidnapped was Terry Anderson, who worked for Associated Press; he spent six and a half years in captivity (History.com Editors, 2019). Another one was Terry Waite, Anglican Church Envoy, who spent four years as a prisoner of Hezbollah, and was subjected to various kinds of torture during captivity. Whatever the reason for the kidnappings, Iran and Syria had their role in the process (History.com Editors, 2019b). Another kidnapping victim was Thomas Sutherland, a professor at the American University. He spent six years as a hostage of Hezbollah. After the official establishment of Hezbollah, it focused on the kidnapping of Israelis mainly for making prisoner swaps, e.g., on October 7, 2000, Hezbollah detained three soldiers near the Shibaa farms. On October 16, they kidnapped a reserve Colonel Elhanan Tannenbaum from Dubai and transferred him to Lebanon. He was accused of being a Mossad case officer. On november 29, 2004 the swap was made with Israel.

Colonel Morgan of the US military aid mission was kidnapped. This was followed by the abduction of three French Guards at the French Embassy in West Beirut in July 1976, and three Irish soldiers of the Irish battalion in South Lebanon in December 1988 (Qassim, 2010).

The assassination of Secretary-General Mousawi in 1992 brought armed activity to a crucial turning point. In response to the assassination, Hezbollah launched Katyusha rockets at the settlements in northern Israel for the first time, introducing the rockets as a new factor in the confrontation. Until 2000, Hezbollah used guerrilla warfare, mainly hit and run tactics, to harass the Israeli forces and the SLA, which obliged the Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak to withdraw unconditionally.

Sheikh Nabil Quack, Hezbollah's chief of military operations, gave an interview to a weekly news magazine in which he claimed that the party continually tries to devise new tactics. He also gave some examples e.g., an old T-55 tank fired at Israeli military locations from a static position and was not discovered by sensors because its engine was turned off and had no heat signature. Another tactic was aiming guided missiles at the loopholes and observation slits of the concrete bunkers that dotted the border. They also tried to develop their skills at jamming the Israeli's radars and close circuit TV monitors. They perfected such low-tech methods as the use of artificial boulders, into which roadside bombs were inserted which could be brought for less than 20 dollars each. Explosives were also placed among the branches of trees rather than on the ground where Southern Lebanese Army (SLA) fighters would be looking for them. Herds of sheep were often used to throw off Israeli heat sensors. The guerrilla would make easily observed moves to momentarily distract Israeli and SLA lookouts while certain other activities were carried out. The success was significant because the men under his command could melt away into a sympathetic population after operations. Firing was limited and controlled: they used Katyusha rockets only in response to the Israeli offensive that took a toll on Lebanese civilians, in order to mitigate the risk of counterbattery fire (Harik, 2005, p.3).

In 2006, in a miscalculated step, Hezbollah provoked Israel by kidnapping two soldiers that led to a war lasting 34 days[97]. The real motive is still unknown but my belief that the intention was to create a new prisoners swap with Israel which will enhance the reputation and the power of Hezbollah after the Syrian withdrawal.

[97] There are some diverse writings about the number of days of the war, but it started on July 12, and ended on August 14 which makes it 34 days.

There were many distinguishing tactics in this war. First, they launched rockets against Galilee's residential areas to affect Israeli public opinion who saw citizens living in shelters and leaving their area in mass displacement due to the danger of Iranian rockets.

Second, they studied the strengths and weaknesses of themselves and the Israeli forces, and prepared the battlefield in anticipation of Israeli forces. They built a network of bunkers where soldiers had sufficient ammunition, weapons, rations. A sound ventilation system allowed them to stay underground for long periods and to move from place to place unobserved, and attack the Israeli forces from behind. Hezbollah focused on using small unit tactics: fewer that 5-6 fighters in a team, decentralized, with authority to make decisions. The primary weapons they used against the Merkava tanks were modern anti tanks guided missiles, like Kornet (AT-14) and Iranian TOW. They managed to disable more than 11 tanks, also used the ATGMS to strike bunkers and groups of Israeli soldiers.

Israel was surprised by the number of rockets Hezbollah had accumulated in its arsenal. Israel claimed that it destroyed more than 50 percent (the long-range rockets) during the first 48 hours. However, Hezbollah shifted to using short-range rockets like Katyushas, that were harder for Israel to discover and protect against. In a symbolic move, Hezbollah targeted Israel on the last day of the war with about 250 rockets to prove its resilience and its survival against Israeli military might. It is worth to noticing that Hamas also used the same technique in May 2021.

Hezbollah's participation in the Syrian civil war honed its skills and impetus in the advanced technologies, especially the use of drones, C4 systems, and armored vehicles (Pollak, 2016). It cooperated with conventional forces like the Syrian army and the Russian forces. Its soldiers learned to use armored vehicles, to be more offensive, and to participate in joint and combined operations with other armies and different Shia militias like the Fatamid brigades. It is expected that in future operations, these Shia militias will coordinate their efforts under the Iranian al-Quds brigade umbrella (Pollak, 2016). The other valuable military lesson it gained in Syria was urban warfare in cities like Aleppo and Daraa.

One of the main battles was Qusair, where Hezbollah took a leading part in targeting the defending militias. In that battle they divided the city into sectors and lines in order to ease the command and control during the fight.

Military Structure

Accurate details about the military's structure and the fighters are not available. They have limited command, their cells are autonomous, but they know what they are required to do. The

military personnel strength of Hezbollah is not disclosed: different sources give different data. Some consider the regular force to be 45 thousand, others believe that it is 21 thousand, while some believe that the number does not exceed 5-8 thousand. The central defensive force and the first line of defense are the territorial reservist units, as follows:

- Bekaa Valley sector. It has seven infantry battalions, three of them mechanized. The battalions in Hezbollah usually have 252 members. It has the Sheikh Abdullah Camp, which is used for training and logistics. This sector protects the shipments of military equipment from Syria and Iran. It has temporary caches and maintains liaison with the Syrian army.
- Southern Beirut sector. It has two light infantry battalions and one mechanized battalion.
- South Lebanon sector. This force is activated during wartime as the Lebanese army is responsible for the border with Israel and coordinates with the UN force (UNIFIL).

The regular units[98] are as follows (Alkhanadeq, 2021; Pollak, 2016):

- al-Radwan Brigade is an extraordinary force brigade being active in the Syrian crisis.
- Alraed Brigade.
- Aziz Brigade. in the eastern part of the South to Bekaa Valley
- Nasser Brigade. Responsible for the South until the Litany River
- Bader Unit. From north of Litany to Saida
- Haider Unit. in the central Bekaa
- Non-Shia Command encompasses: Sunnis, Druze, Christians named as the 'Lebanese Resistance Brigades'[99]. Started in 1997 to show unity and Lebanonization of the group
- Armored Battalion. Hezbollah got T-54 and T-72 tanks from the Syrian army and gained practical experience in their use during the military campaigns in Syria.
- Rocket Units. Specialized in surface-to-surface missiles

[98] The designation of units within armed groups i.e., platoons, battalions, brigades, regiments is not the same as in regular army units. They use arbitrary ways, sometimes for historical religious events. They do not have a standardized and disciplined way for such designations. It is funny for example that the English name for ' Kata'b al-Aqsa' is translated into English by ' al-Aqsa Brigade' while it literally means 'Battalions of al-Aqsa.' Many believe that these units are much less than expected because they need economic assets to sustain big size units. They might keep skeleton crews of minimum required personnel and increase the numbers in the emergencies.
[99] In Arabic called by ' Saraya al-Muqawama al-Lubnaniya'

- Special Intelligence Unit. Active in intelligence collection and counterintelligence. It relies on open-source information, and analyzes the Israeli media daily. Its members interrogate prisoners of war and other captives, and listen to the Israeli military networks. In addition to their activity in Human Intelligence (HUMINT), where they succeeded in recruiting one of the reservists in the IDF, they also deal with drug dealers.
- Imam Mahdi Scouts which are for students' training, whose number is about 75 thousand (Khandeq,2021).

External Security Apparatus

It is hard to obtain any information about the external activities of the group. According to leaked information the External Security Apparatus (ESA) is directly connected to the Secretary-General and maintains liaison with the Iranian Ministry of Intelligence and Security (MOIS), and has limited liaison with Syrian Intelligence. It has close connections with the al-Quds Brigade. It was reportedly commanded by Imad Mughniyeh until his death in 2008 in Damascus whose existence was denied by Hezbollah. Its footprints are evident in many places all over the world. It has a role in gathering information, carrying out assassinations and conducting reprisal operations against Jewish or Enemy state properties.

It is believed that the 'Special Security Apparatus,' has three subgroups: a central unit, a preventive one, and an overseas security group responsible for contacts with locals living abroad. Hezbollah was able to maintain secrecy over its operations because it employed loyal family and clan members in these departments (Harik, 2005, p.54). ESA's Unit 1800 is responsible for operations against Israel inside the Palestinian treaties. It has links with Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and other groups, and provides them with training, weapons, and systems (Gleis & Berti, 2012). One of the primary missions of Unit 1800 was to recruit Palestinians to work for it, the other unit is the Unit 3800, formerly called Unit 2800. Its responsibilities are to train Shia military movements like the Mahdi Forces under Muqtada al-Sadr, who fought the US troops in Iraq.

The author believes that with the real structure unknown, Hezbollah focuses on constructive ambiguity 'having *the benefit of doubts'*, it has a sufficient reserve that can called in war time. In the peace time it has minimal units like al- Radwan, it has a core of staff officers, trainers on regular positions.

Operational Security

Armed groups are prone to relentless efforts to infiltrate them by the various intelligence groups.

The security of Hezbollah's training camps was a concern. They were made mobile and camouflaged to avoid bombardment by the Israeli warplanes continuously flying across Lebanese skies. One of the points that Hezbollah was aware of is the high number of Lebanese collaborators with Israel, like Saad Haddad and Antwan Lahad. Their number at the time of the Israeli presence was about 10 thousand while other sources claim the number is 6 thousand (Qassim, 2010).

Israel successfully penetrated Hezbollah for several successful operations, i.e., kidnaping Sheikh Abed Kareem Obeid from his home on July 28, 1989, and Sheikh Mustafa Derani on May 31, 1994. Hezbollah has a rigorous policy of background investigations for his recruits to avoid such penetrations.

State Circle

Lebanon consists of four main geographical areas: the fertile and narrow coastal plain on the Mediterranean in the west, then to the east a series of the western mountain ranges, then the Bekaa Valley which is hilly with an altitude of 900 m, and finally the eastern mountains that form a border between Syria and Lebanon (Pellegrini, 2012, P. 39).

The state of Lebanon is one of the smallest states in the world with an area of just 10,420 Km^2. The Sykes-Picot agreement, signed in May 1916, divided the Arab possessions of the Ottoman Empire between France and England. Lebanon and Syria became a French mandatory state. The French favored the Maronite Christians and enlarged the size of Lebanon at the expense of Syria to form '*Le Grand Liban*' on September 1, 1920. Its borders were internationally recognized. Its first Constitution was promulgated on May 23, 1926. It was written by the Mandatory (French) Government, and followed the French pattern. The Greek Orthodox Charles Debbas was the first elected President. Lebanon gained its independence from France in 1943 (Agha,2006, p. 22).

On November 3, 1969, the Cairo agreement was signed between the PLO and the Lebanese Army Chief General Emil Bustani. It allowed the *Fedayeen* (Palestinian fighters) to stage attacks against Israel from specific sanctioned locations famous as '*Fatah Land'*. As a consequence, the people of Southern Lebanon started to suffer the brunt of Israeli retaliation raids.

Israel started its first war against Lebanon on March 14, 1978. It was a massive ground operation called 'Operation Litany.' Its goal was to establish a security zone in southern Lebanon, in order to minimize the effect of the PLO's rockets fired into northern Israel.

In 1982, Israel carried out another major operation, 'Peace for Galilee,' intending to uproot the PLO from Lebanon and lay down a solid foundation for a peace agreement with Bashir Gemayel's government, who was killed for his role in allying Lebanon with Israel. His assassination led to the Sabra and Shatila massacre: Lebanese Phalangist militiamen killed several hundred innocent civilians (Palestinians and Lebanese Shia), presumably to avenge the killing of Gemayel (Seale,1989, p. 392).

State Weakness

The Lebanese state lost its central authority during the Civil War years of 1975—90. Its authorities were distributed amongst factional, militia, and partisan powers across the different regions. Many groups with their agendas developed despite the foundation of the Joint Forces within a framework of a national movement in the so-called West Beirut region where the Muslims and the PLO were based, and despite the launch of the Lebanese Forces in East Beirut. As soon as civil war ended, Hezbollah emerged as the only power in the new Lebanon. In order to control the state, Hezbollah believes in what its Secretary-General Hassan Nasrallah named the Golden Rule: the trinity of People, Army, and Resistance, which is similar to Clausewitz's theory of the nature of war. In Nasrallah's formulation resistance replaces the government. A government is vulnerable to political pressure, while not having a central organization that can be pressured gives the movement great flexibility (Qassim, p.155).

Lebanon experiences acute economic crisis. The inflation rate was 84.9% in 2020, and in 2021 it reached 154.8% (Lebanese Central Administration of Statistics, 2022). The state faces long-term economic structural weaknesses, i.e., poor services delivery, institutionalized corruption, red tape over regulations, fiscal deficits, increased rate of debt to GDP ratio, low economic growth in the range of 1-2% in 2011-17. The Syrian crisis also affected the Lebanese economy and increased social tensions with an influx of one million registered and 300 thousand unregistered refugees. This number in more than 20 % of the whole population, estimated at 5.3 million. The Lebanese community is a young one, 46.7 % are between 25-54 while less than 17.5 % above 55, the median age is 33.7 years (CIA Factbook, 2022).

Public support

The composition of Lebanese society cannot be established by firm numerical data. The UNHCR believes that it consists of 28% Sunnis, 28% Shias, 22% Maronites, 6% Druze, 4 % Greek Catholic and 8 % Greek Orthodox (UNHCR, 2008). But these estimates cannot be confirmed, as the first and last census took place in 1932. At that time Maronites were the majority of the state among the eighteen confessional minorities, followed by Sunni. The Shia were the third, with 19.6% of the population (Ghorayeb, 2002, p.8).

That census was the basis of the National Pact – an unwritten agreement among the various confessions – that served as the framework for independence (declared on November 22, 1943). The Pact stipulated the distribution of senior public offices among the confessions: the President would be a Maronite, the Prime Minister Sunni, and the Speaker of the Parliament assigned to the Shia, and so forth (Ghorayeb, 2002).

Geographically, the Shia of Lebanon live mainly in the southern villages of Lebanon, the north-eastern part in the Bekaa Valley that borders on Syria, and also in west Beirut, mainly in the Southern Suburbs (Dahia), where they formed many impoverished slums as a result of forced displacement due to the Israeli occupation to the south of Lebanon.

The rise of the Shia in Lebanon is due to an Iranian clerk, Mousa al-Sadr. He was born in Qom on March 15, 1928, obtained a degree in law from Tehran, in 1954, then moved to Najaf to study religion with such renowned scholars as Mohsen al-Hakeem, Abu-Qassim al-Khoi and Mohammad Baqeri al-Sadder. Upon the request of Shias in Lebanon, he travelled there, married a Lebanese and in 1963 earned Lebanese citizenship by a decree from the President (Ajami,1986).

In the beginning, Imam Mousa fought against the traditional Shia feudal Zu'ma[100] families like al-Asa'ad, and Hamad, who dominated the scene for decades, as far back as the Levant's Ottoman existence. In 1969 he took a step to unite the Shia by forming the Shia Higher Council and lobbied for his cause in Tehran, Damascus, and other Gulf states. In 1974, he started a grassroots movement called 'Harakat al-Mahromeen,' the 'deprived people' movement that cared for oppressed people. In 1975, in order to protect the Shia in the civil war, Imam Mousa established the (Afwajj al-Mogawemah al-Islamiyah) translated to (Islamic Resistance Detachments), known by the acronyms of the first letters as AMAL (means Hope in Arabic). As related earlier (in the 'Group Circle' section), Hezbollah benefited from Amal's internal

[100] Zu'ma is a plural form of Za'im which means 'leader', it is a military rank for some armies; but here means 'wealthy able to demonstrate his powers, respected because of ancestral heritage.

strife, by recruiting a lot of its disgruntled members (Abu Samra, 2022). Amal is the first military Shia movement founded in 1975 by Imam Mousa al-Sader[101]. At the start of the civil war, it came to the support the Mahromeen Movement (Deprived Movement). However, Nabeeh Berri who came after the disappearance of Imam Mousa is more secular than religious, he opts for a Lebanese national strategy that is contrary to Iranian aspiration that needs a Shia movement with a Wilayat al-Faqih ideology. This attitude is the reason for encouraging the defections from Amal to form Hezbollah.

Hezbollah has a rich system of social services that is supported by Iranian aid. It pays salaries to a large number of families. It founded the 'Jihad al-Binna Association' (for construction and development) less than three years after the party's creation (Harik, 2005, p, 82). The association participated in rebuilding houses that had been damaged or destroyed in the 2006 war. The party is popular among the Shia in Lebanon because of its identity and offering social services.

The size of the Hezbollah armed group was stated by Hassan Nasrallah speech in October 2021 when he announced that he could mobilize 100 thousand fighters if he wanted to. It is difficult to verify the number which is more than the 85-thousand Lebanese Army (El-Deeb, 2021 October 18). This number means that Hezbollah exceeds the 'significant public support'.

Regional Circle

State sponsorship entails military training, the provision of equipment, funding, political support and such other services as assistance in organizational support (Byman, 2005, pp. 53-78).

The influence of the regional circle over Hezbollah is significant. Regional players i.e., Syria and Iran consider Hezbollah as an instrument for realizing their strategies (Azani, 2009, p.200). However, the role is reciprocal: it also benefits Hezbollah and strengthens its posture on the ground. Hezbollah has successfully maneuvered between the desires of its patrons and their rivals. Its maneuvers have not fit the whims of his patrons all the time (Azani, 2009, p.200).

[101] The disappearance of Imam Mousa is still one of the unresolved mysteries. Qaddafi denied his responsibility a number of times. Some believe that the Abu Nidal group or other groups inside Syria, like PFLP-GC acted on orders from Syrian command, or that he had a bad relationship with Imam Khomeini and maintained contact with the Iranian Shah at that time.

Syria

Hafiz al-Assad started the relationship with Hezbollah in order to achieve his goals of controlling the armed groups in the region[102]. The relationship between Hezbollah and Syria had a bloody start. Syria allied itself with the nationalist Amal group. Syrian forces confronted Hezbollah and massacred twenty-seven of its cadres. An impasse ensued, yet Hezbollah restrained its members from retaliation that would have embroiled it in strife and turmoil. Whatever the event's magnitude, adopting a pragmatic approach to treating the causes and eliminating any grounds for tension, distrust, or mistaken estimations was the key to adapting to Syria.

The June 1988 clashes between Amal and Hezbollah prompted a decision by the Syrian forces to enter Southern Dahia of Beirut under the pretext of separating the fighting parties and re-establishing security. Hezbollah's leadership requested a meeting with al-Assad, soliciting direct, official guarantees on the neutrality position of Syria. Thus, the Syrian President reassured Hezbollah's leaders that its deployment of forces in Beirut's southern suburbs was only for security reasons without any biased intentions.

Hafiz al- Assad saw Hezbollah as an opportunity to regain the Golan Heights: their recovery was a matter of national honor. He felt that his forces were no match for the Israeli army, he needed two assets: "a surrogate force that could provide the necessary disturbances and frictions that might keep the Golan Heights issue alive and some help with the logistics of the strategy he had in mind" (Harik, 2005, p.31), Hezbollah and Iran provided these assets.

Al-Assad recognized the importance and the benefits of the sponsorship of the armed groups. In addition to Hezbollah, he also maintained relations with such other groups as the Kurdish PKK, the PLO, Hamas, and the Abu Nidal group. Nevertheless, Hezbollah was the tool to be used against his opponents in Lebanon and Israel. Hezbollah benefited from this relationship, in the form of arm shipments. Syria reaped considerable political rewards from Hezbollah, it drew the world and especially Israel's attention to the fact that Syria was the only power that held some sway with the fundamentalist guerrillas. Therefore, Israeli would be well advised to negotiate with Syria (Harik, 2005, p.149).

[102] Syria had connections: with the Abu Nidal Group, PKK in Turkey, Carlos the famous terrorist, the Palestinian 'rejectionist groups', and this policy was part of Assad use of proxy warfare strategy

After President al-Assad's death Syria's new President Bashar al-Assad continued to pursue the same policy track and further accentuated his interest in Lebanese and Palestinian resistance.

In 2011, in the Syrian Civil War, Hezbollah went through the baptism of fire once again (Akbarzadeh, 2016, p. 127). From that moment, the relationship witnessed a steadily growing strategic relationship. This involvement can be explained by the fact that the withdrawal of Syria from Lebanon, and the emergence of a hostile regime in Damascus could choke Hezbollah in Lebanon which explains the group's persistence to fight for Syria in a war in which it lost a lot of its fighters. Hassan Nasrallah stated that "*Syria is the backbone of the resistance, and the support of the resistance. The resistance cannot sit with its hands crossed while its backbone is made vulnerable and its support is being broken, or else we will be stupid"* (Hezbollah official website, 2013, 54:50).

Iran

The relationship between Iran and Hezbollah is based on the Iranian project, which was revealed by the King of Jordan Abdallah II during an interview, when he spoke about the 'Shia Crescent.' The idea is not really new: after the success of the revolution, the first Iranian President Abolhassan Bani Sadr after the success of the revolution- already said during an interview with Al-Jazeera that Iranian religious figures wanted a corridor from Iran to Jerusalem and thus rejected a peace deal with Iraq[103] in June 1981 (BBC News, 2020, 36:25). The relationship's success is due to the a shared of ethnic and, communal identity, as well as a shared ideology. Hezbollah proved a far better match than any other group (Szekely, 2012, p.115).

Iran started the Hezbollah project when it sent the Pasdaran (Revolutionary Guard) to train the fighters of Hezbollah in the Sheikh Abdallah Camp in the Bekaa Valley (Pellegrini, 2012, p. 50), and "this is how Hezbollah came to be" (Nicholas, 2007, p. 26). The assistance of the Revolutionary Guard, in particular the Quds Brigade, founded Hezbollah, besides the military training in Iran or Bekka Valley training camps.

Sheikh Naim Qassim (2010) confirmed the strategic relationship between Iran and Hezbollah, especially the Wilayat al-Faqih linkage (Qassim, pp. 86-90). For example, he acknowledged that civil disobedience in 2008 could not have been practiced without the concurrence of the

[103] The war extended for eight years between Saddam Hussein and Iran; it called as the First Gulf War. Saddam wanted to exploit the chaos after the success of the Islamic revolution and was supported by western powers like the US and other Arab states – except Syria and Libya-, later the US adopted a double containment policy toward both of Iran and Iraq

Wali-al-Faqih. Also, participation in the parliamentary elections was approved by Wali -al-Faqih (Qassim, p,273).

Mohtashami-Pur, one of the important founders of Hezbollah during the 1980s, described the relationship between the group and Iran by saying "*Hezbollah is part of the regime in Iran; Hezbollah is an elementary factor in the Iranian security and military establishment; the connection between Hezbollah and Iran is much greater than the connection of a revolutionary regime with a party or a revolutionary organization outside of the borders of its country*" (Azani, 2009, p. 236).

Iran's objectives beyond its borders lie in "*enhancing its regional and global stature, and promoting its ideals, including Islamic democracy*" (Zarif, 2014)[104]. Iran's role in Hezbollah's equation is prominent: it is the founder, financier, and guide on the tough decisions. Iran's global mission is reiterated in Article 154 as follows:

"*The Islamic Republic of Iran considers its goal to be human beings' happiness in all human societies. It recognizes the independence, freedom, and rule of rights and justice for all people worldwide. Therefore, while practicing complete self-restraint from any kind of influence in other nations' internal affairs, it will protect the struggles of the Mustazafin against the Mustakberin in any part of the world*" (The Islamic Parliament of Iran, n.d.).

Besides financial support, Hezbollah gets military equipment, especially the rockets (ground-to-ground), anti-tank guided missiles (ATGMs). Most of the shipments come through Syria to the Bekaa Valley, to a joint Syrian-Hezbollah camp. Another area of support is assistance in establishing social services like schools, clinics, and building destroyed houses.

Other Groups Circle

Hamas

At his time, Yitzhak Rabin expressed concern that Lebanese Hezbollah's tactics might be imitated in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. That started to happen after his policy of forced deportation to the 'no man zone' in south Lebanon (Qassim, 2010, p.149).

The success of military operations against Israeli forces in Lebanon had an uplifting effect on the Palestinian armed group, Hezbollah funds Hamas and PIJ and shares fighting experiences

[104] Jawad Zarif was the Foreign Minister of Iran.

with those groups. The relationship was disrupted after Hamas's attitude to the Syrian civil war; however, it was mended as Iran required both parties to regain their comradeship (Koss, 2018).

Possible Links with al-Qaida

CIA Director George Tenet claimed in February 2003 that "Hezbollah, as an organization with the capability and worldwide presence, is al-Qaeda's equal, if not a far more capable organization " (Levitt, 2005).

US intelligence showed concerns over possible links between Hezbollah and al-Qaida, especially with the Abu Musab al-Zarqawi network cell (Levitt,2005).

In addition, according to the '9/11 Commission Report, "*Hezbollah used its camps to train al-Qaeda activists that were involved in the terrorist attacks against the American embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in September 1998*" (National Commission on Terrorist Acts upon the United States, n.d.).

Amal

Mobilization and recruitment efforts over the same pool of Shia by both Hezbollah and Amal created a competitive atmosphere, occasionally expressed through adverse incidents at the individual level. These efforts were also coupled with a divergence in opinions over major political issues such as UN Resolution 425 (United Nation, 2004), which Hezbollah criticized for the ambiguity surrounding security measures, and for recognizing Israel as a nation. The conflict took a dangerous turn on April 5, 1988, when Amal decided to disarm Hezbollah fighters. Given Amal's conviction that Hezbollah had exceeded its boundaries, the likelihood of widespread fighting was high, but for the Hezbollah high command's decision to refuse to fight. It ordered all its fighters to stop the bloodshed even if this should mean complete disarmament of Hezbollah in the south. The first ceasefire agreed between Amal and Hezbollah in February 1989 was not sufficient. The battles that followed in July 1990, a tight siege for more than 100 days, and ending about the time of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait and the looming Gulf war. Developments in the region forced the two groups to halt their conflict. Reconciliation efforts were crowned by the Amal-Hezbollah agreement at November 9, 1990, which concentrated on halting hostilities between the two parties, a program for reconciliation, and Hezbollah's return to the south. The accord laid the foundations for a relationship of mutual understanding between Hezbollah and Amal.

The US support to Amal is evidenced by the fact the former US Assistant Secretary of State Richard Murphy proposed handing over the responsibility for security in South Lebanon to Amal in 1987.

International Circle

It is believed that Hezbollah is globally networked in over forty countries spanning the five continents. In spite of this global reach, the international circle is primarily hostile to Hezbollah, but the regional supportive effect impacts the survival more than the international hostility (Personal Communication, Dr. Mohammed Abu Ruman[105], 03 February 2021). Hezbollah is embedded within the Lebanese society, making it difficult to limit or restrain its power.

Hezbollah is constrained in the international circle by being labeled a terrorist organization, especially after the September 11 attacks that ushered in a new era of dealing with the armed groups. Nevertheless, it managed to gain a de-facto international legitimacy when UN Secretary General Kofi Anan met Hassan Nasrallah in 1996 to discuss the potential of peace with Israel.[106]

The United States of America

The US supported and covered two wide-ranging Israeli operations in July 1993 and April 1996 to dismantle the group by exerting pressure on the Lebanese authorities to take action against the group.

The US also expressed its aspiration for a Lebanese state that would provide the necessary social services for its citizens, particularly those in its southern parts. For the US, Hezbollah's influence and attractiveness through its provision of services were to be sidelined.

Hezbollah's stance has therefore been clearly at odds with US policies for the Middle East. Nevertheless, following September 11, 2001, Hezbollah issued a communique denouncing the attacks. Although the US administration acknowledged the broad popular support of Hezbollah in Lebanon, it still insists on labeling it as a terrorist group (Azani, 2009). Establishing the sovereignty of Lebanon on all its territories is still an essential part of the US policy toward Lebanon (Qassim, p. 202).

The European Union

[105] Dr. Abu Ruman is a researcher in the Strategic Studies Center in the Jordan University. He served as a Minister of Youth, and he is known for his research on Islamic Jihadi movements.

[106] Also, on June 20, 2000, Kofi Annan, the UN Secretary-General, visited Lebanon, met with Hassan Nasrallah, and asked for the release of Israeli hostages (Qassim, p.215).

Europeans, especially the French and British attempt to keep their connections with their former mandated states. France's role in Lebanon started during the time of the Ottoman period, in 1860, when it assumed the role of protector of Christians in Mount *Leban*. From their position as a protégé during the Ottoman Empire rule, France had vested interest in the Maronites of Lebanon (Agha, 2006, p.21). However, France had an exaggerated estimate of its capability to influence the future of Lebanon, starting from the repercussions of the 1982 Israeli invasion and ending with their support of General Michel Aoun before the latter's demise. French troops participated in the multinational peacekeeping forces deployed in Lebanon in 1983.

In the end, the European role in Lebanon is secondary. It is following the US and does not defy the Israelis. Although the French role is influenced by its history, and the Lebanese, especially the Maronites, see France as a compassionate mother (Mama al Hano na), which means 'warm mother with feelings'. There are still substantial disparities in points of view to the legality of Hezbollah between the concerned parties.

Enemy state Circle

Hezbollah did not break the bond with Israel, before 2000, it had a legitimate war against military targets and effectively inflicted damage to the SLA and the IDF. Israel is indirectly one of the main reasons for the creation and popularity of Hezbollah, without the Israeli victory in 1982, Hezbollah does not have a real chance to exist.

Most of the skirmishes after the 2006 war were meant for advertisements, deterrence, and local consumption. For example, I believe that Hassan Nasrallah's famous Ammonia speech[107] in February 2016 cannot be interpreted that the Hezbollah wanted to attack Israel, but as a reminder it had a capable deterrent power, mainly to create an equation of 'balance of terror'[108].

[107] In February 16, 2016, Hassan Nasrallah threatened to destroy the ammonia storage facilities in Haifa Bay, saying that an attack over this site would be similar to the effect of a nuclear bombs that will kill tens of thousands of Israelis within the 15 miles around. He said that Lebanon has a nuclear bomb which he could use. Later he claimed that Israel moved the facility from Haifa; however, he is still able to destroy the ship that provides the ammonia. This speech became known as the 'ammonia speech' and went as follows: *"As per an Israeli expert, the people of Haifa are afraid of a lethal attack. Whether war breaks out or not, they are still afraid of the attack on the huge containers which store ammonia in Haifa. In the 2006 war we refrained from attacking these containers., They contain more than 15 thousand tons of this gas. Let me repeat ton of gas, which would cause the death of tens of thousands of residents. The expert adds: this is exactly like a nuclear bomb, which means that Lebanon owns a nuclear bomb. There is no exaggeration in this matter, surely no exaggeration. We do not really have a nuclear bomb, it is a nuclear bomb in the sense that several rockets from here, together with the ammonia containers in Haifa, the result will be the same as the impact of a nuclear bomb. He said if a few rockets land on these containers in an area inhabited by 800 thousand, lead to the death of tens of thousands".*

[108] Balance of terror is similar to mutual deterrence where every actor fears the outcome of going to war because of the heavy losses that the other is going to inflict, the case of mutual assured destruction (MAD) is an example of 'balance of terror', that the nuclear powers did not fight each other. I suspect that the 'Israeli historical collective

A further consideration is that Israel has its rules inside Syria and applied them against Iran and Hezbollah as well. It carried out over hundreds of raids, but these raids did not elicit any retaliatory attempts which means that Hezbollah prefers not to fight Israel in such circumstances.

In the 1982 invasion Shiite villagers in southern Lebanon received Israel initially as a blessing, because they had grown weary of the Palestinian groups. However, this relationship was short and temporary. Israel's preference of Maronites and marginality of Shias led to the relationship worsening (Azani, 2009. p.177).

The main point in the Enemy state calculation is the existence of deterrence power in Hezbollah's hands, which Israel is unable to reduce.

In an interview Ehud Barak, the Israeli prime minister who ordered the withdrawal from the south of Lebanon, was asked about the reason that hinders Israeli capabilities from liquidating Hezbollah. He answered, "*Hezbollah could not be eliminated. It is an authentic resistance movement that sits inside the villages in civilian coverage. You have no way of eliminating them without going deep into Lebanon, including Tyre and Sidon, and staying there. Furthermore, we have already tried that, not successfully. At the withdrawal, I did not find anyone who wanted to return to Lebanon, even if they were assured that the entrance would also be without casualties. Some people like Tamir Command and Amira Levin demanded more vigorous actions of the IDF offensive. It is tactical and fun to work with people like that who always strive for contact. However, they underestimated the fact that such blows create a burden and suffering for our citizens because Hezbollah has responded with missiles, and it is the people of the north who have to go into shelters for many days*" (Barak. 2019). This logic made Hezbollah a force to be reckoned with.

Resolve

Hezbollah is committed to playing under the BBP threshold, as it manifested several times. The Breaking point must be estimated accurately. For example, Hassan Nasrallah, in a TV interview on August 27, 2006, declared that "*the leadership of the group did not expect at any percentage that the kidnapping of the Israeli soldiers will lead to such retaliation operation by such size from Israel. Had we known that we would not have done it*" (McCarthy, 2006).

memories' will not accept having such balance to happen, due to the judgement of the rationality actor, and given the fact that its size is small, and that most of its inhabitants are inside the northern triangle.

After the 2006 war, there have been no significant encounters between Israel and Hezbollah inside Lebanon. There is a non-written commitment by both parties of no escalation that could deteriorate the Lebanese situation that is already on the brink of no return. The Israeli measures against Hezbollah can be summed by the following:

Policing. Israel used measures of policing against Hezbollah, ranging from intelligence efforts to kidnapping, but these measures were not successful.

Politicization. Politicization of Hezbollah is not an Israeli measure, but it is worth noting that after consultations with the Iranian Supreme leader Hezbollah agreed to take part in politics (Qassim, 2010). On February 6, 2006 a political understanding was reached between Hezbollah and the Free Patriotic Front led by the Christian President Michel Aoun. This alliance supported Aoun to be a President. Hezbollah's conditions were that the government would support Hezbollah politically, and would not target Hezbollah (Qasim,2010). Hezbollah participated in the government of Najib Mikati in 2005 by providing one minister, and with two ministers in the subsequent government of Fuad Siniora a few months later (a third minister was provided by the Amal movement. (Qassim, p.269). This participation in politics is stipulated to support the group against disarmament demands from other parties. However, politicization in the case of Hezbollah entrenched its presence in the Lebanese state and prevent any disarmament endeavors from the government.

Leadership Targeting

The Israelis turned attention towards the clerics' role in attracting and motivating the population against it. The most prominent cleric was Sheikh Raghib Harb[109]. He had started an activist mobilization movement against Israel.

On February 16, 1984, he was assassinated by Israel's collaborators' hands, becoming the first cleric Israel assassinated after the 1982 invasion. Sheikh Abdullatif al-Amine, murdered on November 15, 1984, was the following targeted cleric.

[109] He is a Shia cleric in the Amal movement. He was famous for his calls to fight the Israelis. Before that there was a relative peace between Shia in Lebanon and the Israelis. So, the Israelis detained him for two weeks, then as a result of protests they released, him. However, on February 16, 1983 he was killed by Shin Bet agents, who then fled to the US and Denmark and confessed that it was upon Israeli request. The operation was made by request of the Shin Bet commander Meir Dagan who did not like the way Harb was inciting the southerners against the Israeli presence (Bergman, 2018).

The failed assassination attempts against al-Sayyed Fadlallah[110]. The CIA was involved in the failed attempt to assassinate Fadlallah on March 8, 1985. The attack was executed through a car bomb near the cleric's home in Bir al-Abed, and the target's survival was miraculous. The massacre's toll was eighty, 256 wounded and massive destruction of buildings and other properties occurred. One of the killed was the brother of Imad Mughniyeh (Qassim, 2010, pp. 156-158). Hezbollah and Fadel Allah has consistently denied any organizational between them, they claim that it is not compulsory consultatory relationship (Ghorayeb, 2002, p. 6; Qassim, 2010, p. 35).

Sayed Abbas Al-Mousawi. The Council elected al-Sayyed Abbas al-Mousawi as a Secretary-General in May 1991.

His term as Secretary-General was limited to nine months. On February 16, 1992, his convoy was hit by Israeli warplanes. The following day, Hezbollah's Council convened to unanimously elect Hassan Nasrallah as al-Sayed Abbas al Mousawi's successor (Qassim, 2010, p. 168).

The assassination of the Secretary-General brought armed activity to a crucial turning point. For the first time, the group launched Katyusha rockets at the settlements in northern Israel in response to the assassination, thereby introducing the rockets as a new factor in the confrontation.

In retrospect, Maj. Gen. (ret.) Uri Sagi, who promoted the killing of Abbas Mousawi, admitted that it was a poor decision. He said that it provoked a backlash from various Shi'ite groups (with the assistance of Iranian intelligence) (Melman, 2020).

Imad Mughniyeh. Also known by Haj Radwan and nicknamed the Fox. Presumably had been responsible for the murder of over four hundred people and the torture of even more. America had placed a bounty of $25 million on his head (Thomas, 2015). His start was a young boy in Fatah in the Force 17 -security unit, which explains his sympathy with the Palestinian cause, after the success of the Iranian revolution, he was the principal bodyguard of the 'spiritual leader' of Sheikh Mohammad Hassan Fadel Allah.

Imad had an elusive character that was not stopped by the different intelligence agencies. He is accused of being the planner of the cruelest attacks against the US, the US Marines bombing,

[110] Sayed Mohamed Hassan Fadlallah denied any relationship to the terrorist attacks against the US, he also denies that he is the spiritual leader of Hezbollah, he is the main Marja (Shia religious position) in Lebanon, so it seems that attempts to assassinate him has stopped, any attempt will generate outrage inside the Lebanese people who respect his religious figure.

the Embassy bombing, the French paratroopers, kidnapping the CIA Chief and killing him. One of the officers that followed him was the CIA officer Robert Baer. He had the mission in Beirut to hunt Imad after intelligence came from the Algerian intelligence about his roles in the attacks. As the Baer's mission was futile (Baer, 2002), late in 2008 Imad was assassinated by unconfirmed joint operation from the CIA and the Mossad, though I believe that it was mainly CIA and Syrian collaborators who identified Imad. He was killed in an operation similar to his own: he walked by an SUV loaded with explosives that was detonated remotely.

At the end, I have some doubts about the role of Imad. I Believe that it was exaggerated. In 1983, he was only 20, not old enough to lead the most sophisticated operations and the most lethal group, but one retired CIA officers once said "When in doubt, and we are always in doubt about this, blame Mughniyeh" (Bird, 2015, p. 309).

Military Operations against Hezbollah

The confrontation started incidentally in Nabataea on October 16, 1983, when the Chairman of the Supreme Shiite Council, issued a religious fatwa against Israel by calling for a rebellion against Israel. This paved the way for Shia confrontation with Israel, led by Amal (Azani, 2009).

The July 1993 War. Hezbollah exerted significant continuous pressure, raiding Israelis bases and laying ambushes for their patrols, continuously inflicting casualties on Israeli soldiers and their collaborators.

Israel launched a large-scale operation on July 25, 1993, lasting seven days, with the objective of warning the Lebanese government to end its support to Hezbollah.

Israel soon realized that annihilating Hezbollah was not feasible. In addition to the intensive bombardment of settlements, Hezbollah executed thirty military operations during the seven-day invasion. It targeted Israeli and the SLA bases along South Lebanon's border, hitting ten bases at a time. On July 31, 1993, an agreement, which later became known as the "July Accord," was put into force. It was an oral accord, achieved through mediators, without any formally written document. According to the agreement Israel would halt its assault in return for an end to the Katyusha's bombardment.

The operation resulted in the death of 140 civilians, including 13 members of the Hezbollah. Five hundred people were wounded, and around 200,000 inhabitants were displaced (Qassim, 2010, p. 173)

April 1996 War/ Grapes of Wrath. Israel started on April 11, 1996. An air raid launched targeting Baalbek and Iqlim al-Tuffah region. This operation was the first during which the southern suburbs of Beirut were directly shelled since the 1982 Israeli invasion. The operation's code name was 'Grapes of Wrath'. It was more challenging than the July 1993 operation, it covered a larger geographic area and lasted for sixteen days. In total, 250 civilians died during Israel's April 1996 operation, including four Hezbollah members. Israel's operation aimed at battering Hezbollah, and putting an end to its operations by preventing rocket attacks on Israeli settlements; exercising pressure on the Lebanese government; and creating a divide between the populace and Hezbollah.

After the end of the war, Hezbollah undertook a significant effort at the social level, working together with public and social organizations to lodge the displaced population, provide them with food, clothing, and health care facilities, and secure their return to their homes following the ceasefire. The party took the initiative of restoring homes that had been damaged in the Israeli operation.

Hezbollah successfully negotiated the April Accord, that took effect with the declaration of a ceasefire on April 27, 1996. Being a written agreement, it differs from the July Accord, which had been more of an understanding (Qassim, pp. 177-184).

Conclusion for Hypothesis (1)

The main element that contributed to the survival of Hezbollah is the weakness of the state of Lebanon. The state has a porous border with Syria, and it has not control over the border with Israel for a long of time. The multi-religious society and its sectarian political system prevented building a common interest for all constituencies. This weakness was a result of a catastrophic civil war that lasted for about 15 years from 1975 until 1989. Hezbollah thrived on this weakness and provided social services to Lebanese citizens with an intention to compete with the state. The regional intervention in Lebanon that contributed to the deteriorating the situation of the state to the point of brinkmanship.

The other factor is the cause, which is the Israeli occupation of the south and Shebaa Farms[111], it was made a part of the ideology of Hezbollah. A particularly important principle in

[111] Its area is approx. 47 $km^{2,}$ the ownership is contested between Syria and Lebanon, according to UN it is a Syrian land that was occupied during 1967 war and that puts it under the 242 and 350 (Disengagement force establishment) UNSCRs but not 425 which established the UNIFILL force. Israel claims that it is a Syrian land, Syria provided the UN with documents that it is part of the Lebanese territories.

Hezbollah's ideology is the Wilayat al-Faqih that requires consulting and obeying the leader of the Islamic republic, and abiding the strategic directives.

Hezbollah managed to gain public support through provision of social services to its supporters. including, but not limited to, hospitals, schools, charities.

The other significant factor is the state sponsorship by Iran, and partly by Syria, especially before the 2011 Syrian civil war. Iran considers Hezbollah as a part of its grand strategy to achieve its objectives in various parts of the world, Hezbollah does not deny this special relationship. Table 4.1 on the following page shows that Hezbollah has the main characteristics that qualify it for survival.

From Table 4.1 it is clear that Hezbollah is survivable group, as it holds legitimacy among its supporters, it is stronger than the Lebanese state or any other group like Hizb al-Qowat al-Libnani under Samir Farid Geagea,[112] who is the most outspoken critique of Hezbollah from the Maronites and other groups. It has support from other groups like Fatamid, PIJ, the Houthis, and Hamas. Israel came to recognize that it has no capability to erase the group, so it deals with it through a deterrence strategy. However, it targeted the group inside Syria to prevent it from coming closer to the borders. Most notably it is above the 'significant public threshold'.

In the regional circle it is supported by Iran and Syria. In the international circle it is not recognized, but the influence of the international circle is minimal. The use of the analytical framework seems more logical than any other approach to analyze the group.

[112] Samir Farid Geagea is a politician and militia commander serving as the Executive Chairman of the Lebanese Forces since 1986.

Table 4. 1 *Hezbollah's Pillars of Survival*

Size	Over 10 thousand members (Very Large Groups)
Maturity	Since 1983, it changed its charter, politicized part of it.
Military capabilities	Fought against Israel and survived. Fought against Amal, in the Syrian Civil War. Has advanced rocket arsenal. The strongest group in the Middle East. More powerful than the Lebanese Army.
Organizational structure	Hierarchical organizational structure, but decentralized small units in combat
Operational Security	Israel eliminated some of its leaders and managed to infiltrate it (Medium)
Terrain	Difficult for land operations, especially for armored units Hezbollah is good at preparation of battlefield kill zones by building tunnels and bunkers.
Other Groups	Won over its direct rival Amal Ppolitical alliance with the Maronite National Patriotic Movement and Amal Cooperates with Shia movements around the world (e.g., Fatamid) Cooperates with Palestinian groups (PIJ and Hamas)
Public Support	Has a strong base among Lebanese Shia. In October 2021, Nasrallah announce that he can mobilize 100 thousand fighters, Mossad estimated that Hezbollah has 300 thousand in reserve (Thomas, 2009, p. 581).
External support	Has support from Syria and Iran
International Legitimacy	Has de jure legitimacy and relationships with Russia and other states like France it is commonly said that ignoring the existence of Hezbollah does not bring any fruitful results
Enemy state	Israel indirectly contributed to its creation. Fought against it militarily and could not achieve its strategic objectives. Used leadership targeting and Hezbollah managed to deal effectively with it. Israel's strategy is based on deterrence. It influenced the international system against legitimatizing its activities inside the regional circle.

Hypothesis (2): The strategic CoG of Hezbollah

It is evident that limited legitimacy is the main issue for the host state in Lebanon, and that legitimacy is not likely to be regained due to the interwoven relationship of Hezbollah within the state. The strategic CoG of Hezbollah is the group's legitimacy, legitimacy depends on the public and external support Hezbollah has, it has influential constituency and strategic relationship with Syria and Iran. According to Azani (2009), the group success is based upon two major elements: The regulative element, which is the group's ability to obtain internal and external support to build its capabilities. The legitimacy element, which is its reliance on organizational discourse to justify strategic changes in order to participate in the existing Lebanese political framework (p.242).

Hezbollah's operational CoG is its power of resistance, (armed capabilities multiplied by morale). Hezbollah's war with the Amal movement in the 1980s, as well as its encounters with Israel show that morale among its members is high during their fights.

Desired End State

The desired objective for Hezbollah is the destruction of Israel, which is beyond its capabilities, so the practical objective, proven by the historical analysis, is deterrence of Israel and serving as an instrument in the Iranian grand strategy. For Iran, Hezbollah is a strategic asset that extends Iranian influence to the Mediterranean. Feltman[113] goes further by saying that "For Iran, Hezbollah is a malevolent version of the Swiss Army knife, with special capabilities always ready for distinct tasks" (Feltman, 2019).

Hezbollah's pillars of Strength

Hezbollah is unique in many respects: Shia origins; attachment to the Iranian regime; readiness to take part outside its territories e.g., Yemen, Iraq. The pillars of its strength are:

- Political Leadership. If the organization were deprived of its leadership, it would sustain a heavy loss, but that is not going to affect it for the long term. Some of the organization's leaders were the victims of targeted assassination. Its first leader, Abbas Mousasi was killed

[113] Jeffrey Feltman served as US Ambassador in Lebanon between 2004-2008, and is a visiting fellow in Brookings Iinstitution.

in an Israeli airstrike, but the group was not affected because it is in the institutionalized period.

- Military Capabilities. The military capability is more than to be named tactical and operational CoGs, without leadership, economic assets, ideology, public support and external support the military capabilities are useless unsustainable power.
- Financial assets. This point is "connected to state sponsorship; however, the organization also diversified its resources. It gets one-fifth of the Shia population's annual revenues 'Khoms[114]'. It has local support abroad, mainly Lebanese Shia in Cote d'Ivoire, as well as other African and Latin American states. Should its finances decline, the organization will most likely drop many of its social-economic activities and prioritize its expenditures on defense budgets" (Warikat, 2019).
- Public support. Public support is a vital element and core requirement for the needed domestic and external legitimacy.
- Ideology. The ideology of Hezbollah is dependent on the principle of Wilayat al-Faqih. By this ideology it relinquished significant decisions to the will of the Supreme Leader of Iran and to the Iranian scheme. The other issue is that Hezbollah adapted its position toward Lebanon in 2009 The last point is that the ideology in Hezbollah is a way of controlling its constituency to gain legitimacy.
- Legitimacy. The existence of the party came after the al-Taif Accord in which all the other involved parties in the civil war were dissolved except Hezbollah whose 'resistance' to Israel justified and legitimized its existence. The party later focused on legitimacy by, taking part in the national assembly and assuming portfolios within the executive branch and participating in the intricate internal politics of Lebanon. On the other hand, it is active in the social services and created a satisfied constituency. Lastly, its military arm is based on its continued rhetoric about being the sole liberator of Lebanon. Without legitimacy the party will fall. The other element is the state's legitimacy is weak. Figure 4.2 on the next page shows that legitimacy is the strategic CoG of Hezbollah, while Figure 4.3 on page 224 shows that the Lebanese government has a limited legitimacy.

Figure 4. 2 *Strategic CoG of Hezbollah*

[114] Khoums means one fifth of earned money has to be given to poor, needy people.

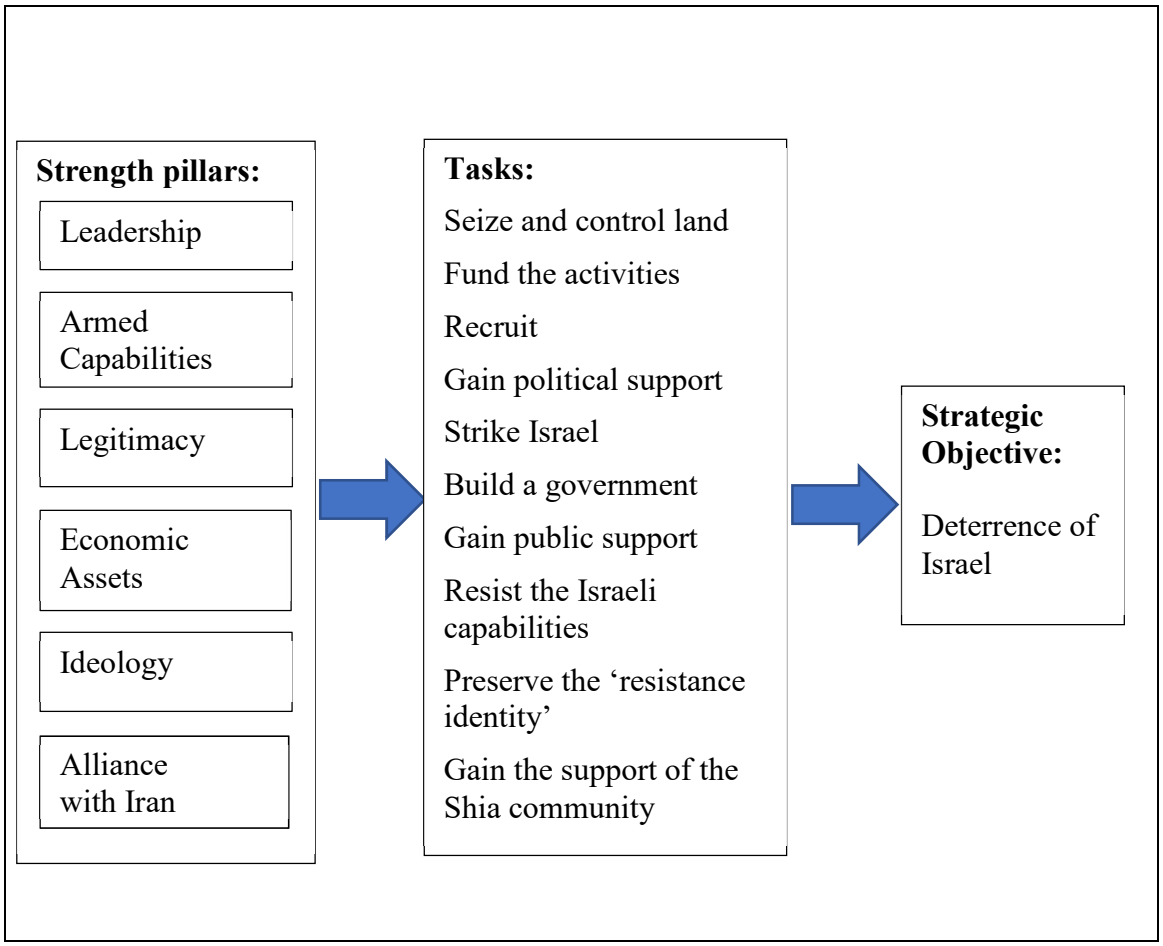
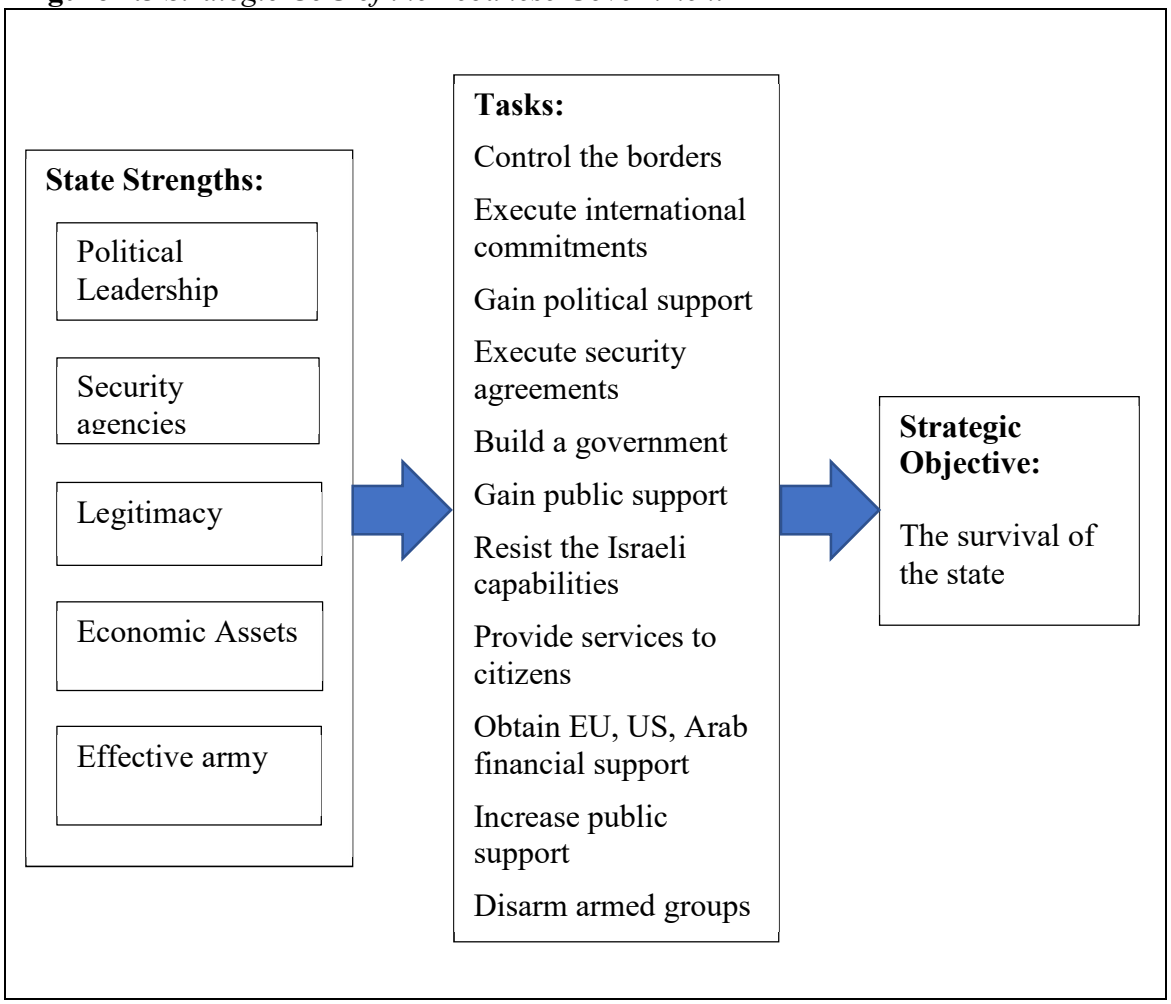

Strength pillars:
Leadership
Armed Capabilities
Legitimacy
Economic Assets
Ideology
Alliance with Iran
Tasks:
Seize and control land
Fund the activities
Recruit
Gain political support
Strike Israel
Build a government
Gain public support
Resist the Israeli capabilities
Preserve the 'resistance identity'
Gain the support of the Shia community
Strategic Objective:
Deterrence of Israel

Figure 4.3 *Strategic CoG of the Lebanese Government*



Hypothesis (3): Hezbollah's Victory Theory

To better explain this case, the 2006 war is presented because it is the longest war and the last one between Hezbollah and Israel. It was the most significant war fought between a mighty state army and a proto-state armed group. Israel started with objectives that were beyond its capabilities: the eradication of Hezbollah and the destruction of its operational CoG (Morale * Military Means). Israel planned to influence public support by the adoption of Dahia Doctrine.[115] However, that practice did not happen because the citizens saw Israel as an aggressor and Hezbollah as a defender to their state.

The Operational CoG also was not destroyed as in the first phase of the fight, Israel depended on IAF, and for actual destruction, they needed boots on the ground.

[115] A theory by General Gadi Eisenkot that by inflicting damage to the Lebanese infrastructure, the citizens will shift their support from Hezbollah to the Lebanese State.

At the end, Israel was not successful in destroying Hezbollah. It could not destroy Hezbollah's operational CoG, could not minimize its external support and could not shift its internal public support to the Lebanese state. Having said that, the fact remains that Israel harmed Hezbollah to the point that it allowed UNIFIL and the Lebanese Army to control the borders between Israel and Lebanon in accordance with the UNSC 1701 (UN, 2006).[116]

Hezbollah fought skillfully, repulsed the Israel attacks and effectively used its IO to target Israeli public support. The July 2006 war was the longest between Hezbollah and Israel. It lasted 34 days. In the first phase Israel used its air force to knock out the group's medium and long-range missile launchers. In the second week it developed a land incursion.

Later, Israel was content with driving Hezbollah out of the South of Lebanon and removing the threat of launching missiles toward Israel. These two objectives were achieved through a political settlement at the end of the war, by the acceptance of deployment of UNIFIL force under the 7th chapter of the security council and the deployment of the Lebanese army in that area.

According to Pellegrini, Israel used cluster munitions during the last days of the operation. More than 951 positions were struck by 1,800 cluster bombs, roughly one million bomblets[117](p. 224, 175). Hezbollah had many successes during this operation. First, its strategic information operations were masterful, its Al-Manar TV station remained operational despite the destruction, it was a source of information during the war. It also used the international media to get its message out. On the battlefield Hezbollah used weapons that were new in the theater, such as Kornet ATGMs to destroy Merkava tanks. It relied on tunnels for movement, shelter, and storage, and networking that surprised the IDF and caused many casualties.

the Israeli Air Force committed to about 400 sorties per day, did 12,000-15,000 sorties during this war, dealt with 7,000 targets (Pellegrini, pp. 182-183), Dan Halutz, the Israeli Chief of Staff said "victory is not land occupation but will defeating, air force is capable of the mission while the use of land forces is from the past" (Pellegrini, p. 182).

[116] To have an idea about the resolution, see https://www.un.org/press/en/2006/sc8808.doc.htm
[117] The UN report about four million of cluster munitions used in 1400 Km^2 (Human Rights Watch, 2008, p, 9)

At sea, the warship Hanit was targeted by C-802 anti-ship Chinese missile[118] . Four Israelis sailors were killed during that operation. There was an Israeli intelligence failure as there were no reports about such missiles in the hands of Hezbollah (Pellegrini. p.79).

At the end of the war, Israel claimed that it destroyed 70-80% of Hezbollah's arsenal of medium and long-range rockets. Israel staged 9300 airstrikes to hit 5000 targets;

Hezbollah lost between 400-500 fighters, 30 of them were from other armed groups like the Communist Party, PFLP-GC, the Syrian Socialist Party. 120 bridges were destroyed, and were from oil spill polluted the Mediterranean out to 140 km from the shore. The Lebanese economy lost an estimated 4.1 billion Euros, halt of its income from tourism, which contribute to 12 % of the Lebanese GDP. On the other side, the Israeli losses were 118 dead and 254 wounded, in addition to 48 civilians killed and 1,500 injured, 500 thousand displaced from the north to central areas. Israel was struck by 4,000 rockets, including 900 in urban areas. Fifty Merkava tanks were damaged including, 21 that were penetrated by the ATGMS or the land mines. Four helicopters were lost, one F-16, one frigate was damaged. The war cost an estimated 4.4 billion of euros (Pellegrini, pp. 170-180).

Nahum Barnea[119] (2006) claims that Israel achieved its objectives of calming the northern border by deploying the Lebanese army instead of Hezbollah in the southern part of Lebanon and the degradation of the long and medium-range rockets. He also says that "The war offered few tangible military achievements that could comfort the public: Hezbollah's leader Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah evaded capture or death, no white flags of surrender were flown, and Hezbollah prisoners weren't thrown into Israeli jails by the truckload. But despite the blistering criticisms of the Israel Defense Forces' (IDF) performance, Israel did achieve one of its primary objectives. The border with Lebanon is expected to be calm for the foreseeable future" (p. 22).

At the end, Israel failed in destruction of the Hezbollah morale. It destroyed a significant portion of Hezbollah's military capabilities, but external support through Bekaa Valley compensated that loss, Israel did not succeed in preventing Hezbollah in rebuilding its capabilities as it could not impact the 'external support'. Accordingly, it is not possible for Israel to claim victory in

[118] The missile, although it is originally a Chinese design, may have been developed in Iran. It was named 'C-802 Noor', (Pellegrini, p. 79). It could have been fired by Iranian experts. The Israeli ship did not sink, perhaps because the missile's explosive charge malfunctioned and did not explode, but the incident was an intelligence failure because there was no mention that Hezbollah owns anti-ship missiles.

[119] Nahum Barnea, a military correspondent for Yediot Ahronoth Israeli newspaper, accompanied the Israeli soldiers during the war.

this encounter, although it achieved some tactical objectives during the war and one of its strategic objectives was achieved- deployment of Lebanese army in the south and calmness of the borders under UNSCR 1701.

Hezbollah Future

Following the Amal-Hezbollah agreement, the pressure of international requests to disarm Hezbollah and halt its operations escalated. Quite a few members of Lebanon's government thought that Hezbollah should subordinate itself to the government's political decisions. As by then-Minister of Foreign Affairs, Fares Boueiz, put it, there must be "imperative harmony between the government and the Resistance." The basis for such a stance was that Lebanon was responsible to Israel and the international community for all actions undertaken within its boundaries. Hezbollah considers that the government loses its ability to liberate the occupied territories because of international political constraints. Similarly, the government would be responsible to the international community to execute decisions that might be prejudiced in favor of Israel, a fact that would defeat the Resistance's ability to maneuver or at least hinder it (Qassim, 2010, pp. 166-168).

On the other hand, Hezbollah is free of political obligations can operate without restraint, and its actions do not reflect adversely on the government. Such behavior could assist the group in capitalizing on the liberation cause and supporting the government's political objectives (Qassim, 2010). However, according to Hezbollah the government was too weak to capitalize on its resistance, given Israel's patronizing presence (Qassim, 2010).

After the end of the 'accountability operation' in July 1993, which lasted for seven days, the Lebanese army was deployed in the South. Lebanese military sources declared that the army's presence in the South "will not be under the auspices of any other party, and will not be in concord with anyone. It will be absolute and for all. Possession and carrying of weapons will not be allowed." However, Syria reacted to this step, resulting in the abandonment of the decision to deploy the Lebanese army in south Lebanon. Following discussions between Syrian and Lebanese officials, the initially planned widespread deployment was replaced with a limited deployment in several villages and did not threaten the existence of Hezbollah against the occupation.

After the Syrian withdrawal, Hezbollah recognized that it needs violence to survive as an organization. It thus continues to find reasons for 'resistance' (Gleis & Berta, 2012, p. 2). It was in continuous search for reasons to continue resistance until 2006. When his policy of 'walking

on the brink' had failed by withdrawing from the south, Nasrallah formulated new strategies that minimized direct confrontation and increased indirect confrontation through the use of Palestinian groups (Azani, 2009, p.224).

For many in Lebanon, Hezbollah has to be integrated within Lebanon's defense strategy, but that demand has been rejected because it entails dismantling the group's armed wing (Personal communication, Rashed Daher, 2020)[120]. In the survey made by the author, more than 95% believe that Hezbollah will retain its position in Lebanon.

The logical future for Hezbollah is to be part of the Lebanese state and to move forward to build a nonsectarian system of governance. Nevertheless, Hezbollah does not have the will to dismantle itself even after the Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon. Sheikh Naim Qassim (2010) says, "Diplomats and foreign journalists have frequently posed the question: what would become of Hezbollah if Lebanese land was wholly liberated, and all captives and detainees were finally freed? Both Israel and the US look forward to answering their plans and are programmed to be drawn accordingly. Hezbollah insists on not answering this question, for the issues are intertwined, and developments bring forth much change and many surprises. There is a different detailed answer to every future possibility, and as possibilities are numerous, so is the number of potential answers to such a question. When a reply of any kind serves to fulfill an Israeli interest, it is better left unsaid. It is useless for Hezbollah to bind itself to any a priori positions that would later be subject to an inquisition. Add the complexities and interplay among various developments on the other fronts, such as the Palestinian and Syrian and Israel's possible actions in the region. The need for preparedness becomes paramount over any untimely provision statements. Moreover, it is impossible to delineate a unique channel for resistance operations or limit their maneuvers margin to pre-specified methods. It is better to keep all choices and possibilities open. Planning future results and drawing alternative plans for their achievement might only expose such plans to enemy eyes. It is best to beleaguer the enemy and cause it to worry over what surprises may be in store" (pp. 448-449)[121].

Such a declaration shows that Hezbollah does not intend to abandon the 'resistance' even if Israel withdraws from Lebanon. It will find another reason to continue.

The explanation for this attitude is that such a strategic decision is subject to the Wilayat al-Faqih concept. Hezbollah also claims that Lebanon still feels the repercussions of occupation

[120] Dr. Rashed works for the Arab Center in Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest.
[121] This quote is the author's translation from Arabic.

in the form of the presence of refugees, continuous violations of Lebanon's airspace and territorial waters, Israeli occupational presence in the Shebaa Farms, and attempts to deny Lebanon the use of its natural water resources. Irrespective of how Israel attempts, compulsively, to deal with some of these issues, it shall continue to represent a threat to Lebanon (Qassim, 2010). To sum up, Hezbollah's future will be determined by the genuine return of legitimacy to the Lebanese state and at that time it can decide the future of Hezbollah. In the end, Hezbollah's future is linked to the stabilization of the larger region including Syria and also Iran (Personal communication, Ambassador Bella Jungbert, 11 July 2022).

Conclusions

This chapter demonstrated the survival elements of Hezbollah. It has shown that this group survived because of the factors that pertain to the group's strength, which is mainly its proto-state armed group character. Hezbollah has all the required elements for survival which are its size their numbers are likely to fluctuate rather than being static but the size is way beyond the 'significant public threshold'. It depends mainly on its reserve; its maturity is in political pragmatism; its armed wing is capable, it operates with efficient use of hybrid warfare; its organizational structure is complex, which allows it to participate in the politics of Lebanon and execute covert violent action including outside missions in Syria, Iraq, and Yemen. The state circle is also optimal for survival. The state is weak with its confessional governance system; its borders are porous from the Bekaa Valley with direct and exclusive control from Hezbollah. The geography also helps Hezbollah in its battles with Israel with accurately prepared terrain for land operations. The existence of sponsors like Iran and Syria helps the group be sustained. The cause of enmity with Israel helps the group maintain the resistance mantra. Israel does not dictate Hezbollah's future, and cannot destroy Hezbollah because it is entrenched within the society (Barak, 2020).

It has good relations with PIJ, Hamas, and other Shia groups. It is the consultant and the trainer of groups like Houthis, Iraqi Hezbollah and other groups. All these elements indicate that Hezbollah is unlikely to vanish shortly unless a change occurs in Iranian politics. At the same time, its strategic CoG during the conflict with the host state is its legitimacy which is dependent on its alliance with Iran and partially with Syria, and its internal public support, while the CoG of the Lebanese government is its limited legitimacy which makes it vulnerable to Hezbollah's control. The case study of the 2006 war between Israel and Hezbollah validates the victory theory. Israel failed to deprive Hezbollah from external support via Syrian borders, the brutality of the attacks raised Hezbollah public support, the operational CoG was slightly touched, let

alone the prevention of recovery could not be achieved. Another issue with the survival of Hezbollah is the absence of ‘balance of power’ inside Lebanon as a result of Taif accord and the Israeli 1982 invasion, they allowed Hezbollah to be the sole armed organization inside Lebanon, that happened due to the al-Assad regime’s pressure at that time. Partially to the Lebanese desire to settle the dust of the long civil war and their naive thoughts that Hezbollah will disband itself after ending the mission of Lebanese soil liberation.

Chapter Five

Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter presents the conclusions and their security implications, the new scientific findings, recommendations for future studies, and positions the research within the context of the existing academic research.

The problem this dissertation has addressed is the survival of proto-state armed groups in the Middle East, despite presumably effective counter-insurgency measures. The research sought to understand the factors that contribute to their survival. The importance of the subject stems from proto-state armed groups' influence upon international security, their international relations, and the prominent role they play in the Middle East. These reasons motivated the research of this topic, in addition to the high value of proto-state armed groups in the Middle East, the new roles and threats they represent to the established state system, and their challenge to the power and authority of the state.

The research also shifts the discussion from the individual organization level of analysis to the multidimensional level, taking into consideration the interactions between agency and the structures. During the research process it became clear that a sole dependence on the agency model, like the excessive focus on specific dynamics of motivations such as religious beliefs, is insufficient to explain the actions of these groups (Shapiro, 2005; Sino 2008).

Research Objectives and their achievement

The research objectives were achieved in the dissertation as follows:

Establish an analytical framework for the analysis of non-state armed groups, including proto-state groups

The proposed analytical framework of ‘circles of survival' was used to analyze the survival of Hamas and Hezbollah qualitatively; this analysis can be expanded to any other group, for example to Ansarullah in Yemen.

Conceptualize the term of Proto-State Armed Group

The concept of Proto-state armed groups is used ambiguously to mean any violent and influential non-state groups like ISIS. However, this research-imposed conditions to qualify the groups. Groups can enter the club of proto-state armed groups if they satisfy the conditions, or leave it when they do not. The conditions are: the group must have control over a part of the territory inside the host state; it must pursue internal and external legitimacy; it has an enemy

state; it has a hybrid character and threat which means that it has a political wing, social provision services, an armed wing, and its armed activities have a hybrid warfare character.

Investigate the center of gravity (CoG) of proto-state armed groups

This research proposed that during the conflict between the state and the proto-state armed group, the state has a challenged strategic and operational CoG); these CoGs were derived from historical analysis of several cases in Columbia, Jordan, Lebanon, and Afghanistan.[122]

Analyze the effectiveness of the state's countermeasures against proto-state armed groups

A victory theory was proposed and found suitable to identify the victor in the conflict between the proto-state armed group and the state. Any outcome that falls short of the victory theory makes the victory subjective and debatable. The victory in this dissertation should start with regaining and enhancing the legitimacy of the host state and delegitimizing the group by blocking its public and external support. Then the kinetic and psychological effects at theatre embedded into the operational environment are used to destroy the enemy's military capabilities, paralyze his will to fight, and subject it eventually to agreeing to conditions that do not allow him to recover to practice violence.

Highlight the factors that are responsible for the proliferation of terrorism in the Middle East region

The proliferation of terrorism stigmatizes the Middle East: the geographical location is perceived as one of the primary elements in the success of terrorism. This research proved that this is not the Middle East's destiny but a factor that can be repaired. It is not the location, but the political and socio-economic environment that is the main factor.

Methodology

A mixed methodology was used to find answers to the research questions. It relied on a combination of several methods to prove the validity of the proposed hypotheses. The first step was to use the deductive approach to extract the main factors that are responsible for a group's survival, and to establish the analytical framework. The second step was using a survey appropriate to the investigation. The overall sample comprised 400 respondents (200 from Jordan, 100 from the West Bank, and 100 from the Gaza Strip). The survey was conducted

[122] The discussion of some conflicts outside the Middle East confirms the hypothesis by providing more proof from contemporary documented cases.

using a structured questionnaire that adopted a 5-point Likert scale (very high, high, medium, low, and very low) to identify the importance of eight survival factors developed by the researcher. After the survey, subject matter experts were interviewed, followed by a focus group to validate the analysis results. Also, the results were examined in the social constructivism theoretical framework. Finally, the results were validated using the case studies approach of two of the most prominent groups in the Middle East (Hamas and Hezbollah).

Table 5.1 on the next page shows the respondents' answers on the survival of Hamas and Hezbollah. Table 5.2 and 5.3 on page 228 show the total results of the survival factors for Hamas and Hezbollah after the use of SPSS.

Table 5.1 *The results of the survey*

Factor	Hamas						Hezbollah						Total	
	Jordan		WB		G		J		WB		G		Hamas	Hezbollah
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F		
Public Support	480	475	235	240	245	242	380	240	152	155	103	145	1917	1020
External support	290	230	160	145	185	130	420	480	250	235	240	245	1140	1870
Israel	104	101	140	115	90	130	104	101	140	85	150	55	680	635
Ideology	340	280	140	190	160	200	260	170	159	190	180	137	1310	1096
Mil Capabilities	310	290	200	140	145	190	450	380	190	250	250	250	1275	1770
Economic Capabilities	490	490	150	140	145	141	490	482	285	240	225	225	1556	1947
State Weakness	500	499	90	205	240	72	500	495	245	249	247	190	1606	1926
Other groups	190	190	145	90	130	52	300	295	170	170	140	60	797	1135

Note: the results were created by the multiplication of the respondents' numbers with their evaluation, very high=5, high=4, medium=3, low=2, very low=1

Table 5.2 *The importance of the various factors for the survival of Hamas.*

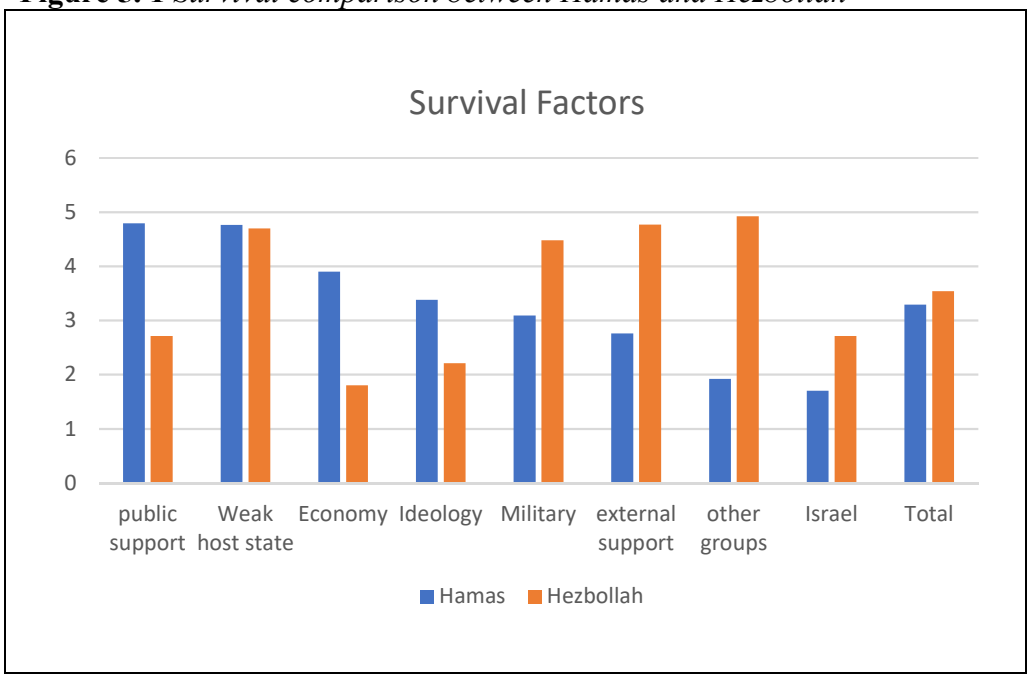
Survival factors	Mean	Std. Deviation	Rank	Importance level
Public support	4.79	0.41	1	High
Weak host state	4.76	0.43	2	High
Economy	3.90	1.07	3	High
Ideology	3.38	0.66	4	Medium
Military	3.09	0.48	5	Medium
External support	2.76	0.81	6	Medium
Other groups	1.92	0.49	7	Low
Israel	1.70	0.84	8	Low
Total	3.29	0.32		Medium

Table 5.3 *The importance of the various factors for the survival of Hezbollah*

Survival factors	Mean	Std. Deviation	Rank	Importance level
Other groups	4.92	.28	1	High
External support	4.77	.42	2	High
Weak host state	4.70	.46	3	High
Military	4.48	.74	4	High
Israel	2.71	.71	5	Medium
Public support	2.71	.74	5	Medium
Ideology	2.21	.84	7	Low
Economy	1.80	.40	8	Low
Total	3.54	.36		Medium

Figure 5.1 shows that the survival factors for Hezbollah differ from those of Hamas. In the case of Hamas, public support ranked first with a mean value (4.79) with a standard deviation of (0.41), weak host state ranked second, the impact of economic assets third. For Hezbollah other groups ranked first with a mean value (4.92) and a standard deviation of (0.28), the external support ranked second with a mean of (4.77), third was the weak host state. These results show that Hamas is more dependent on its public, while Hezbollah depends more on external support. The ideology and the threat to Israel also have their say.

Figure 5. 1 *Survival comparison between Hamas and Hezbollah*



The main limitation of the survey is the absence of Lebanese respondents, due to logistical difficulties. However, an interview was conducted with such experts as Dr. Rashed Daher to compensate for the absence of data.

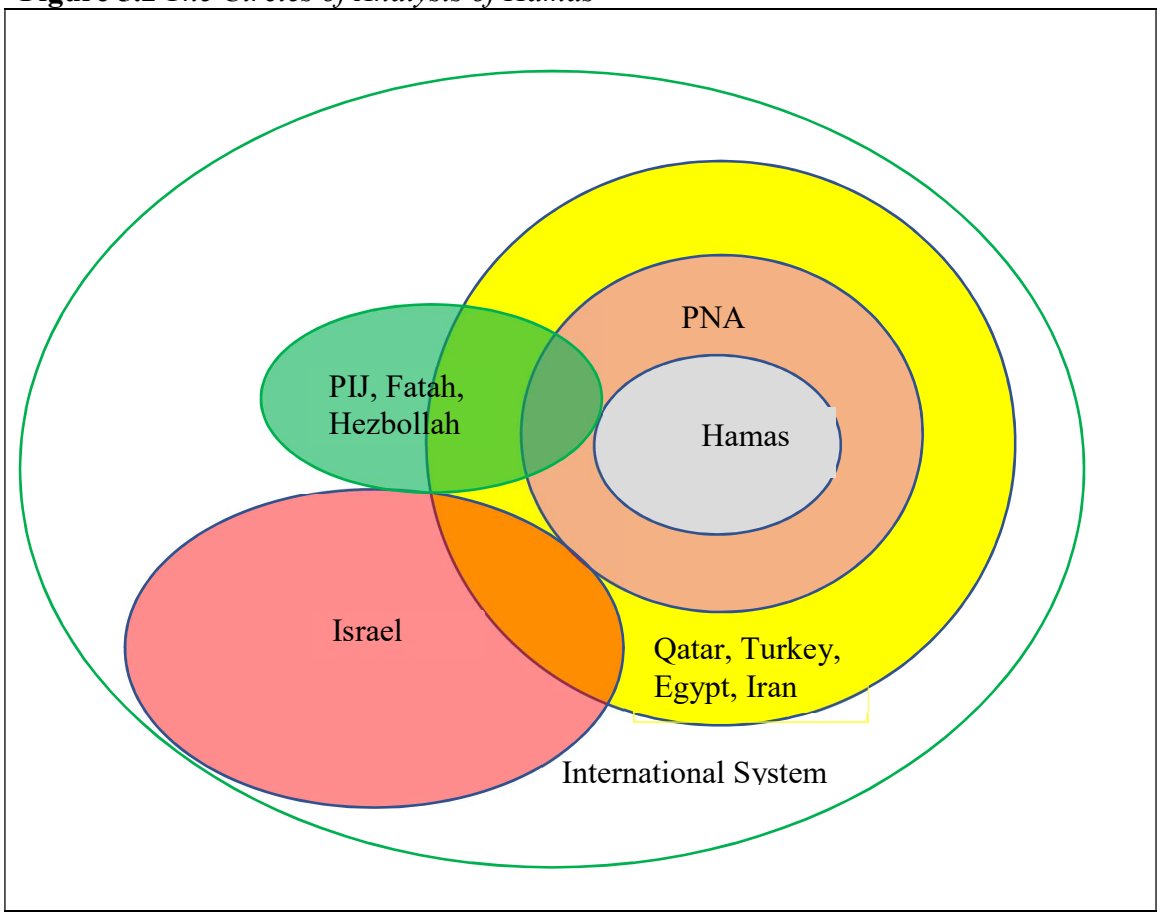
The following section discusses the four hypotheses after including the case studies of Hamas and Hezbollah.

Confirmation of the Hypotheses

Hypothesis (1): Survival of Proto-State Armed Groups

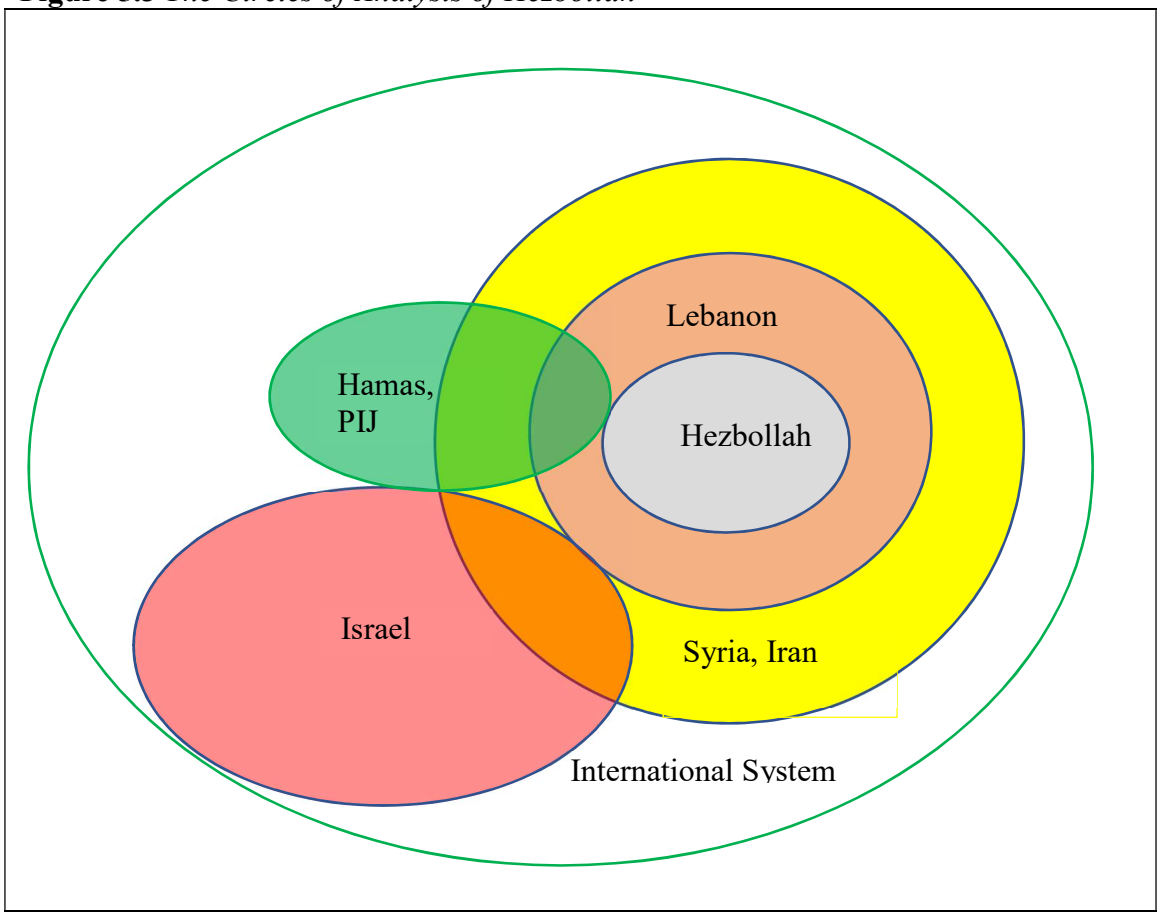
The following two figures (5.2 and 5.3 on the following pages) show the application of the 'circles of survival 'analytical framework to the cases of Hamas and Hezbollah.

Figure 5.2 *The Circles of Analysis of Hamas*



Note. Author's Compilation

Figure 5.3 *The Circles of Analysis of Hezbollah*



Note. Author's Compilation

Table 5.4 on the next page shows that both groups confirm the validity of this hypothesis. Both groups have a cause, a religious, nationalistic ideology, and reliable military power. The host state is weak enough: the PNA is not yet a state, and its authority is weak in the Gaza Strip, while Hezbollah deals with a weak Lebanon. The sponsor-state is essential for both. The importance of the research is that it shifts the discussion from the unit-level of analysis to the multidimensional level, taking into consideration the interactions between agency and structures. During the process of the research, it became clear that the actions of these groups cannot be explained through dependence only on the agency model, like the excessive focus on specific motivational dynamics such as religious beliefs (Shapiro, 2005; Sino 2008). Moreover, Iran has a role in strengthening Hamas and Hezbollah via military hardware, training, and financial support. The internal public support is significant for both of them in the Middle East, the investment in the cause of 'resistance' is one of the leading causes and directly relates to adopted ideology, and it has a direct linkage to legitimacy. These results are to confirm the survey results, which provided similar findings.

Table 5.4 *The survival factors*

Factors	Hamas	Hezbollah
Size	10 thousand members (Very Large Groups)	
Maturity	Over ten years	
Military capabilities	Fought against Israel and survived, against internal competitors and won	
Organizational structure	Decentralized in Hamas, more centralized in Hezbollah	
Operational Security	Medium, Israel had infiltrated both groups several times	
Terrain	Lebanon: unsuitable for tanks, difficult for land operations Gaza: density of population	
Other Groups	Defeated their direct rivals (Fatah and Amal, respectively) have supportive relationships (PIJ and Amal, respectively)	
Public Support	Public opinion shows that Hamas enjoys public support more than any other groups inside the PNA, Hezbollah counts about 100 thousand	
External support	Both have external support from Iran, limited in the case of Hezbollah	
International Legitimacy	Weak in both cases, but de jure legitimacy is strong	
Enemy state	Israel contributed to the creation of both groups Fought both groups militarily and could not achieve its strategic objective It used leadership targeting, and they managed to deal effectively with it. Israel's strategy with these groups is based on deterrence. Which is based on the forced acceptance of the status quo, the alternatives could be worse It has little success to impact the international system against both groups and the regional circle.	

Hypothesis (2): Strategic and operational COG

This dissertation takes the lead in discussing the role of operational art and military design in the discussion of the center of gravity of proto-state armed groups and host states.

It concludes that legitimacy is the center of gravity of the host state during a conflict with a proto-state armed group; by the same token, legitimacy is the strategic CoG of the proto-state

armed groups as well during the same conflicts. The conflict in Jordan in 1970 was discussed, and it shows the role of legitimacy in the war between the proto-state armed group and host state. The war in Columbia with FARC also proved that legitimacy was the strategic CoG for host state and the FARC.

The operational CoG is the power of resistance, which is the product of military power and the will to fight (morale). This operational center of gravity applies for both the state and the proto-state armed groups. The collapse of the state of Afghanistan in 2021 and the corresponding victory of the Taliban demonstrate the role of legitimacy for the state and the consequences of the loss of its operational CoG, as claimed by US President Biden. President Biden bluntly put it as the main reason for the Afghan government's collapse in the face of the Taliban. The discussion of the CoG in the cases of Hamas and Hezbollah proved the Lebanese political system's weakness and the PNA's incapability to challenge these groups.

Regarding the operational CoG, both groups are uncompromising in their wars and demonstrate high morale in fighting with local competitors or enemies. Both groups consider that the CoG of their common enemy state (Israel) is Israeli public opinion, so they attempt to influence it in their own favor. Interestingly, public support has a connection to their capability to conduct violence (see Table 4.2), which shows that Hamas was reflective of the public opinion in its actions.

Hypothesis (3): Victory Theory

The third hypothesis proposes a victory theory. The victory theory equation consists of three parts: affect the group's support inside and outside the state, destroy the power of resistance, and prevent recovery.

The war between the proto-state armed groups and the state is between tangible CoG against intangible CoG, making analysis more difficult. However, the cases validate the hypothesis. The security incidents in Jordan in 1970-1971, the Karama battle in 1968, the 1982 war between the PLO and Israel, the 2006 war between Hezbollah and Israel, Hamas-Israel wars in 2008-2009; 2014, the Guardian of Walls ‘Sword of Jerusalem’[123] in 2021, and the Taliban victory over the government forces of Afghanistan support the proposed victory theory.

[123] The operation's name is ‘Guardian of the Walls' for Israel and ‘Sword of Jerusalem’ for Hamas.

Hypothesis (4): Proliferation of terrorism in the Middle East and MENA region

The database of GTD was used to validate this hypothesis. The cases of Hamas and Hezbollah raise another root of terrorism: the unresolved Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

Hypotheses Examination by Social Constructivism

Social constructivism is the theoretical perspective that this dissertation adopts. This adoption came as a result of a post-positivist approach that the truth is subjective and belongs to us, it is internal to us, and it varies depending on the identity of the affected people. The proto-state armed group itself consists of mutable realities which are socially constructed.

The results of this research do not contradict the social constructivism paradigm that the CoG of proto-state armed groups is legitimacy, which is part of the ideational world theory that "the world is partly material, partly made of ideas" (Wendt, 1999). Legitimacy is an ideational concept that strengthens the acceptance of the state, and this ideational concept is believed to be the CoG of the host state that it has to regain during its war with the proto-state armed group.

The second is the victory theory, which gives weight to the personal power of the will to fight; this element proved itself in the confrontations between the government of Afghanistan with its 300 thousand soldiers having state of art weaponry against 50 thousand tribesmen armed with AK-74s and a will to fight. In this area of research, will to fight correlates with an ideology which is the way that soldiers look upon their cause.

The identity of proto-state armed groups in the Middle East is primarily Islamic ideology, resistance to occupation and colonialism, and nationalism. The group's identity is deeply rooted in resistance and struggle. This identity explains the need to have an enemy state as a condition for the proto-state armed groups; as said by Yazid Sayigh that "*the armed struggle provides the political impulse and organizational dynamic in the evolution of building a national identity and in the formation of parastatal institutions and a bureaucratic elite, which is the nucleus of government within the group" (Sayigh, 2004, p. viii).*

This identity creates norms and perceptions, and prompts dislike of foreign powers. Such perceptions motivated by ideology dictate a particular way of response. This explains the die-hard fighters of these groups in contrast to terrorist groups. The proto-state armed groups are usually motivated by the public opinions, and that drives them to violence as 'legitimacy of resistance' endows them with public support.

The other side of ideology is that it might act as a constraint to develop the group. This is what has happened to most proto-state armed groups. Hamas issued the policy document in 2017 to soften the international community's reaction to its charter that was full of rhetoric. In its new document Hamas presented itself as an Islamist-nationalist organization that accepted the concept of a Palestinian state along the 1967 borders, and avoided using the anti- Semitic language that was included in its original charter.

In 2009 Hezbollah also made a major policy change. Its open letter, issued in 1985, had called for the establishment of an Islamic state in place of the secular Lebanese government. The new manifesto dropped the reference to an Islamic republic in Lebanon, with a substantial Christian population, confirming the need to respect Lebanon's diversity.

Conclusions

The Future of Proto-State Armed Groups in the Middle East

Closing this research without predicting the future of proto-state armed groups in the Middle East would greatly diminish its value. It can be concluded from this research that there is a close relationship between the Middle East and proto-state armed groups. The conditions in the Middle East are the primary condition of their existence, due to the legitimacy weakness of the state, its inability to answer the high rates of population growth and the failure of its conventional armies to deal with other states' armies, as well as the availability of appealing causes, like the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The frustration of the youth in these states, and their contempt, motivate them to search for alternative structures to the state, as these political systems do not seek to democratize their societies, and rely on the existence of Islamist groups to provide a cause for their legitimacy in the eyes of the Western Powers. "*Jihadi groups not only offered young people a salary and sense of belonging, but they spoke to the estrangement and alienation that many young people felt. Weak economies bred despair, as much more youth sought government employment than governments could provide*" (Alterman, 2021).

Due to the apparent weakness of conventional armies, the need arose to have proto-state armed groups collaborate with the state to deal with foreign powers, as the cases of Hezbollah in Lebanon, or PMU in Iraq demonstrate. This offsets the weakness of the state's CoG and narrows the technological gap with their adversaries. Additionally, the public will find some satisfaction in the military effort of proto-state armed groups.

Although the proto-state armed groups seem to be strong enough, they have their inherent vulnerabilities. First, their visible physical appearance makes them easier to be targeted by state actors: their units and bureaucratic organizations are mostly known to the state and well recorded in its target folders. However, “complete control over the physical and the social space is required for the government's success, whereas the non-state belligerents can achieve their goals with far less control” (Kiss, 2014, p. 132).

Second, they are vulnerable to an identity crisis, which ensues as a result of mission displacement, when they turn to extortion, counterfeit money, and smuggling drugs to raise their funds, and these methods become their ends. Another reason for identity crisis emerges when the group gives up its 'resistance identity,' enters political life and reconciles with the enemy state. Its supporters cannot distinguish it from other secular or state entities, contributing to the loss of public support and consequently the destruction of the group’s CoG 'legitimacy.'

Third, the group’s readiness to exaggerate its operations and lie exposes it to ethical loss; these groups are free to use every trick, they are often judged by what they promise, unlike the state which is judged by what it does, if the state lies, it will be at the price of being discredited (Galula, p. 9). Such behavior can be dealt with by IO campaigns to defame the group.

Centers of Gravity

The cases of Hezbollah and Hamas prove the validity of the second hypothesis as the legitimacy of their host entities is the critical factor for their survival. They sustain their public and external support within these weak entities, providing them with the needed legitimacy to remain in existence. The wars of the future will stem not so much from the ambitions of the states, but rather from their weaknesses (Szenes, 2018, p. 100).

The effect of the unsettled Arab-Israeli conflict

The unresolved Palestinian- Israeli conflict provides a cause for the existence of the proto-state armed groups. Inhabitants of the Middle East view their states incapable of standing against Israel, and even accuse them of collaboration. For decades, the Arabs and the international powers considered this conflict a central part of their politics; however, Israel has a long-standing position against this centrality of the conflict. Benjamin Netanyahu (2009), vociferously maintains that the theory of centrality of the Palestinian cause does not prove its validity (pp. 99-133) in addition, he provides multiple cases -including the Iraqi invasion to Kuwait - as an example of the invalidity of the centrality of the Palestinian cause (p. 100).

The centrality of the cause deems that the root cause of terrorism and the survival of the armed groups i.e., the Palestinian insurgencies is a consequence of the Israeli occupation. Internationally, the EU still sustains the two-state solution, the independent and sovereign Palestinian state beside the Arab recognition and full security of the State of Israel, with recognized borders, resolving the status of Jerusalem and the refugee issue (Personal communication, Ambassador Bella. Jungbert, 11 July 2022). The Israeli position in this issue was stated by Netanyahu (2000): "Most Israelis oppose the insertion of a PLO state on the West Bank because they do not want a state allied with Iraq and the most radical forces in the Arab World on their doorstep. Such a state would nullify the whole value of the buffer area on Israel's eastern front" (P. 272).

In a nutshell, most of the groups, and especially the Palestinian groups, survive mainly because of the unique and exclusive tragedy of the unresolved Palestinian issue which still persists. Primarily this factor fuels the survival of Hamas and Hezbollah.

Victory Theory of Proto-State Armed Groups

In order to defeat proto-state armed groups, the first requirement is to strengthen the CoG of the host state, which is its legitimacy. The following step is to deprive the group of its internal and external support. The third is to use military power, intelligence efforts, and IO to destroy the power of resistance by destabilizing their will to fight and inflicting damage to their armed wings. The last is to prevent the group's recovery by making the leadership commit to a political deal, which prevents the reemergence of the group's violent character.

The distinctive features of war with proto-state armed groups are that it is first and foremost a war over the population. It needs intelligence preparation, protection of the army and security agencies from defections and penetration. The population in general must be protected, and the state's campaign has to be based on a comprehensive strategy that uses information operations, arrest, secure borders and strengthens the state capabilities.

The proliferation of terrorism in the Middle East

The Middle East is fertile soil for terrorism because of the socio-economic and political deficiencies and the unresolved Arab-Israeli conflict. The case studies also demonstrated that conflict is essential to the persistence of political turmoil that generates violent expressions. The population explosion with low economic growth creates unemployment, which turns the energy of young people to negative options of practicing violence.

The other conclusion is that states with a high percentage of youth in the 15-35 age group, and with low economic growth, are susceptible to political turbulences that lead to the proliferation of terrorism due to the state's inability to balance between the annual population growth and the needed economic growth.

Survival of Proto-State Armed Groups

As soon as the armed group becomes a proto-state one, its chances of survival improve compared to any other armed group. Its survival is rooted in the host state's weakness, the public support it has, the services it provides, and the external support and roles it plays. Later, even the host state will refrain from referring to it by pejorative connotations. The proto-state armed group is hard to destroy if it reaches the "significant public threshold" in support. Mao Zedong believes that the number for insurgencies is 15-25 % of the population. Hamas and Hezbollah both have more than the threshold of support and that is attributed to the maturity of the groups and their practice of providing social services.

The second element is that it is not the ideology that is essential to the survival of the group, but its ability to adapt the ideology to its circumstances.

Both Hamas and Hezbollah demonstrate the importance of ideology in the struggle with the host and the enemy state. However, the critical factor is their frequent adaptation of the ideology, the ability of the leadership to reshape their ideology to meet the changing environment constantly. Both groups have updated their charters to meet the challenging environment.

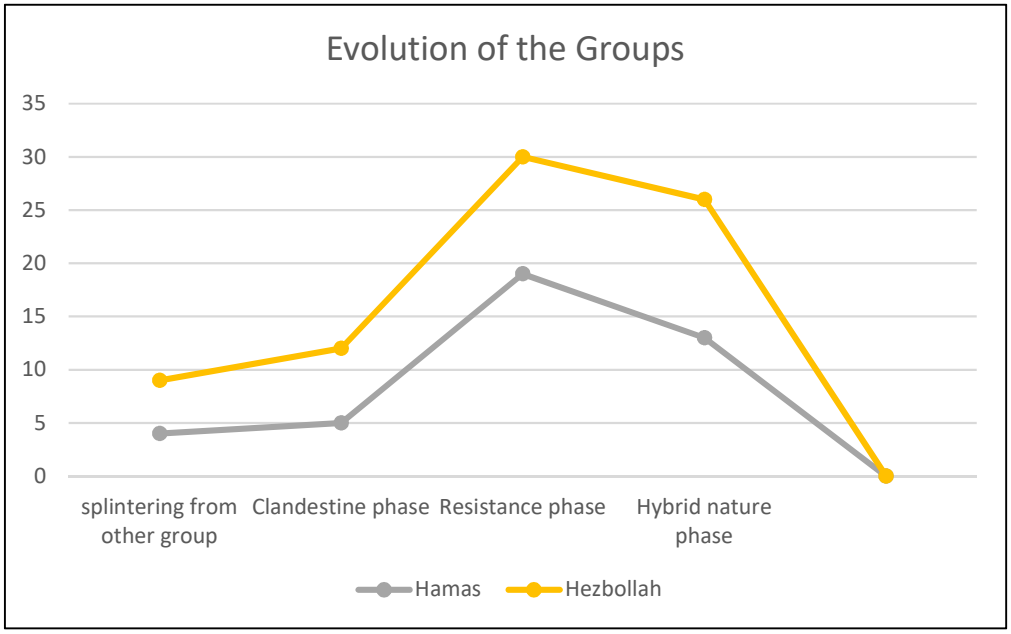
Evolution of the Proto-State Armed Group

From the comparative study between Hamas and Hezbollah, it can be concluded that the emergence of proto-state armed groups stems from social protest movements environment. They usually start by splintering off from a more peaceful group. The splinter groups are led by hawkish leadership inspired by ideology as a reaction or protest to the reconciliatory behavior of the original group, or influenced by external states. The second step is to justify splintering off by perpetrating clandestine terrorist actions that provide the groups with confidence. As soon as they get enough recruitments, the groups become visible by declaring their political charters, announcing their resistance rhetoric that is designed to attract popular support by claiming appealing causes. After the charter declaration, they embrace external state sponsorship from powers that aim to include them within their grand strategy. This step

provides them with the finance to obtain more popular support and go beyond the" significant public threshold."

In this step, they also adopt hybrid threat and hybrid nature to pursue external sources of legitimacy and accept politicization efforts. They declare a substitute charter in which focus is more on political ends and relinquishing terrorism as a means and as a price they end up with implicit international acceptance. In the last step, they force their trinity of war over the host state and lead to a synthesis of trinities in which the state is incapable of rejecting their existence. The following figure 5.4 depicts the approximate representation of the evolution of Hamas and Hezbollah.

Figure 5.4 *The evolution of the groups*



Survival of Hamas and Hezbollah

According to my survey, Hezbollah has more survival potential than Hamas; its strength lies mainly in the external support and military capability (Warikat, 2021b).

Academic Contribution of the Research

This work established a conceptual framework for the proto-state armed groups. Past research does not distinguish between terrorism, insurgency and proto-state armed groups. This generated missed and complex interpretations that do not reflect reality, as mostly these groups

have a physical appearance and are publicly supported in their host states and have their indirect open communication lines with regional and international state actors.

The analytical framework takes into consideration the combined effects of the region, the international system, the reactions within the host state and the enemy state, and within other groups. It is an alternative to the currently used framework that focuses on the strengths and weaknesses of the group. Also, this research demonstrated the use of different theories in this field, most notably the use of social constructivism to delve into the future of these groups and explain their reactions. Likewise, this research used the center of gravity theory for proto-state actors, which was constrained to the classical Clausewitzian way of thinking.

New Scientific Findings

This dissertation achieved the following scientific findings:

1. I have developed the analytical framework for the analysis of the survival of armed groups. The framework can be used to assess the proto-state armed groups, and it can contribute to the analysis of new terrorist groups and assess the possibility of their survivability.
2. I have proved the existence of the 'enemy state calculations' in the analysis of the survival of the armed groups; it mainly depends on the concept of the 'Bone-Breaking Point.'
3. By analyzing the existing proto-state groups and their conflicts with their host states, I have proved that the strategic center of gravity (CoG) of the host state and the proto-state armed groups during the conflict is their legitimacy. Their operational CoG is the product of the military power multiplied by the morale of the group's leadership and fighters.
4. I have established the theory of victory in the war between the state and the proto-state armed groups.

Recommendations

Recommendations are presented here on two levels: recommendations for future research and policy recommendations:

Recommendations for Future research

The followings are a list of recommendations for future research based on the results of this research and its limitations:

- The survivability of proto-state armed groups and the ability of newborn groups to remain and endure, a case study might be the Ansarullah group in Yemen.

- The impact of state failure on counterterrorism efforts.
- The role of mission displacement in counterterrorism efforts.

Recommendations at the Policy Level

The following is a list of recommendations on the policy level:

- The international community and the US, in particular, should study the advantages of negotiation with proto-state armed groups and encourage them to disarm and contribute to the peace process. It is better to develop a relationship with democratically elected, yet ideologically hostile political systems and seek reconciliation with them. By such action, the international community encourages modification of the group's norms.
- Encourage the affected states to build their legitimacy, and enhance their nation-building process. Threats, in general, are combinations of own weaknesses and the adversary's intent and strengths. The state's weakness is the factor that enables proto-state armed groups and other groups to flourish. They exploit the vulnerability of the state, and in some ways, they perform tasks that state ought to do, like building schools, preventing crime, controlling illegal bands. It is a waste of resources to fight the proto-state armed group before doing the first task: the Afghan government, the US and the international coalition wasted 20 years and untold resources in the war with the Taliban; they failed to build the nation-state and focused on the destruction of the operational CoG of Taliban.

  The weakness of the host state is an essential cornerstone of the endurance of the proto-state armed groups. It is of utmost importance to recover the host state from its weakness. The lesson learned from Afghanistan in 2021 was to fight corruption and build a system that is accepted by the local people, not because of its agency to the sponsor powers.
- States are occasionally forced to create proto-state armed groups to combat hybrid threats. They have to be careful with this creation and control it from the first minute, because it will not be easy to dismantle these units after their triumph as the case of PMU in Iraq demonstrates. Other than that, state's countermeasures have to be cautious of the use of splintering as a way to weaken the group as it can result in a multi-uncontrolled threat.
- In contrast to older generations in the Middle East, the youth is iconoclastic in their definition of the legitimacy of their states. They are unwilling to base it on rigid religious or even ethnic structural elements responsible for conflicts dating back millennia. They demand to base

legitimacy upon good governance. Existing political systems should take note; if they do not, they ignore it at their own peril.

- The state has to pay attention to the importance of the armed groups passing the 'Significant Public Threshold' for their survival, making them impervious to the government measures. If the state allows them to pass this threshold, then at a later phase, it will have to pay in blood for its initial acceptance, or relinquish its sovereignty. States need to exploit the "golden hour" when decisive action might have hindered their existence.
- The Proto-State Armed Groups have their norms which are different from the state's norms. Seeking international legitimacy, they concede these norms and get state-level norms, creating an identity crisis for these groups. Thus, engaging with the intransigent groups is to integrate them within the state defence strategies and politicize their activities and that might wipe out their identities.
- Host states fighting their proto-state armed groups, have to apply a holistic approach that is legitimacy centric approach to diminish the group's legitimacy while strengthening their legitimacy, it is unlikely to succeed by moving directly to the use of military hard power without draining their pool of public and external support and targeting their IO and ideology.

Practical Application

This dissertation offers a practical guide, and will certainly enhance the knowledge of military planners and the officers of security agencies, and assist them in dealing with armed non-state actors. Help academics and researchers to fully understand the mechanism, the motives of these groups, and effectively analyze the survival of these groups.

Its use is recommended to military personnel in peace operations missions like UNFIL, in order to obtain an understanding and a concise appreciation of the area and its nuances that cast a shadow over the success of the mission.

Hungarian diplomacy is active in the Middle East and that demand a greater understanding of the causes and remedies for intractable conflicts that are common in that area. This research makes a significant contribution in this aspect.

The scientific findings and the conclusions are applicable to similar conflicts that might take place in any part of the world, Europe is no exception in this case.

Nowadays the conditions are not conducive to the growth of proto-state armed groups in Europe because European states are generally stable, and state fragility is not a problem, but this condition can change at any time.

The use of hybrid warfare is entrenched within state actors, e.g., Russia relies on pro-Russian militias and separatist armed groups in Ukraine.

I used a set of historical case studies to maintain the authenticity of victory theory. I strongly believe that the theory is applicable in any part in the world, and it can prove its value in the current Russian-Ukrainian conflict.

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