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From Jihad to Muqawamah: The Case of Hizballah in Lebanon

ABSTRACT: The history and politics of the Middle-East are often understood as a battle-field where various religious currents and ethnic factions are constantly struggling for hegemony. In contrast, in this paper I argue that this history and politics is better understood as a struggle between two competing world-views or political theologies: the exclusionary world-view of *Jihad* on the one hand, and the inclusive world-view of *Muqawamah,* on the other. Focusing on Hizballah in Lebanon as my case-study, I show how this Islamic movement has traded a discourse that emphasizes Jihad, to one that emphasizes resistance. By so doing, I argue, Hizballah's discourse of resistance provided a common-ground for cooperation with other forces and groups on the local, regional, and global scene.

KEYWORDS: Hizballah, Jihad, Muqawamah, Resistance, Lebanon, Syria

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Introduction

The *Arab Spring* is long gone. Seasons have turned, spring gave way to fall, and a great emancipatory hope has been traded for tens of thousands of victims who were killed across the Arab World. The current Syrian civil war is probably the most extreme example of the bloody aftermath of the Arab Spring. Ironically enough, at the heart of this war, two groups that Israel and the West have always considered terrorist forces with the same agenda are now combating each other in this civil war. These two groups are Hizballah and the resistance forces on the one hand, and the Takfiri and the Sunni Jihadist movements, somewhat related to Al-Qaeda, on the other.

While it is tempting to regard this conflict as one between different religious fractions or ethnic groups, in this essay, I will attempt to provide a different framework for understanding the Middle Eastern conflict in general, and the Syrian and Lebanese conflicts in particular. I will do so by focusing on the case of Hizballah in Lebanon, and argue that this movement has undergone a transformation in the way it presents itself, by switching from the discourse of *Jihad* to that of *Muqawamah.*

Hizballah and the *Takfiri* Movements

An innocent observer of the Middle-Eastern scene would be confused upon seeing the merciless confrontation between Islamists of different factions. Both parties to this conflict fight in the name of the Islamic political slogan that calls for submission to the law of God and his Messenger in one Islamic state, where Shari'a is the state law. This innocent observer might conclude that the current wars in Syria, Lebanon, and to a certain extent in Iraq, are merely sectarian wars, in which the Sunnis stand against the Shiites and other minorities in these countries, including the Alawites and Christian minorities. But far from being all closely-related fractions of Islam, which stand for similar worldviews, these Islamic movements in fact have developed from very different origins. Moreover, the theoretical background of Hizballah-like movements is utterly different to that of Islamic Takfiri and "Jihadist" movements.

Hizballah and the Islamic Takfiri movements operating in Lebanon and Syria differ not only in their historical development, but also in the reasons that have led to their foundation. Both these two very different "Islamic movements", however, operate in Lebanon, the most politically, religiously, ethnically and socially diversified arena in the Arab World, and the one that has also maintained the flames of the Arab-Israeli conflict high

throughout the 1970s and the 1980s. Hizballah is characterized, especially in its later phase, by tolerance and a willingness to compromise, negotiate and collaborate with the other forces in order to achieve common goals. In contrast, the Takfiri and Wahhabi movements and parties that emerged in closed surroundings, and are still sponsored by the Saudi regime. These movements took root in different parts of the Arab and Islamic world including Egypt, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and Palestine, despite the fact that these countries' social diversity makes them unnatural habitats for such radical movements.

The Jihadist movements, in their new format, were established on the Afghan territories in opposition to the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in the 1980s. Upon the completion of the mission assigned to these young men, many have returned to their homelands and have instigated an internal *Jihad*, within the boundaries of the homeland. Their *Jihad* against foreign Soviet intervention, that was supported by other foreign regimes such as the United States, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, was directed toward the "infidel" nation-state. This gave rise to organizations ideologically inspired by radical Salafi jurisprudence, that regards all nation-states that follow man-made law rather than their interpretation of Islamic law, as pagan and infidel. These ideas were formulated by Sayyid Qutb, a key Islamic theorists of these movements, whose theories were based on the writings of Ibn Tayimyyah (especially his Fatawas), dating back to the 14th century.

It is well known that this approach refuses to comprise with other forces operating within these states. This approach is made clear in the following passage, from Sayyid Qutb's *Ma'alim a'la al-Tariq (Milestones*):

> The first step in our path is to surpass the pagan society, its value and perceptions, without modifying any of our values and perceptions in order to achieve compromise… if we renounce any step, we will lose our doctrine and our way" (Qutb 1979, 81). [1]

From the point of view of these movements, all existing Islamic societies are "pagan" and should be fought against. As Sami Zubaida puts it, referring to the Wahhabi movement which is the source of the Jihadist movements of the 20th and the 21st centuries: "…the first targets of Wahhabi Jihads were Sunni Muslims who, by virtue of following other paths of religion, were deemed infidels and confronted with violence." (Zubaida, 2015, 143). Therefore, these movements direct their attention, efforts and activism against their own states, and raise the banner of Jihad against these regimes, especially if they are secular, or with secular orientation. They even go as far as acting against other Islamic movements that are opposed to the Jihadist Salafi movements, like Hizballah in Lebanon.

[1] All the passages quoted in this paper were translated by Ms. Ruba Simaan.

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Before getting into more detail about the different foundations of the *Muqawamah* and the Jihadist movements, it is important to understand the etymological and historical roots of these two terms, that play a crucial role in current conflicts in the Middle-Eastern as well as in the politics of the entire region.

Jihad

The word "*Jihad*" derives from the Arabic root ج.ه.د. According to the encyclopedic dictionary *Lisan al-'Arab*, its meaning is Juhd, that is, effort, activity or diligence (Ibn Manzour). "Mujahid" is the person who makes or invests efforts. Another word that derives from the same root is "Mujtahid"- an Islamic cleric working diligently on the interpretation of the Sharia, the Quran and words of God. The Jihad is an action, usually a violent one that targets the ones who do not follow the word of God or the infidels. Therefore, the Mujahid makes all possible efforts to follow the word of God and to enhance the prestige of Islam.

Some Western authors and Middle-East scholars translate "Jihad" as "Holy War". This translation is very problematic, as indicated by Roxanne L. Euben (Euben 2002). In fact, as noted by Bernard Lewis, in Classical Arabic there is no phrase equivalent to "Holy War" (Lewis 1988, 71).

The Jihad in Islam

The use of the term "*Jihad*" can be traced back to the time of Prophet Muhammad. The wars that the prophet declared or fought were considered Jihad, as they aimed to expand the boundaries of the Islamic State, and subsequently the Islamic empire, and to protect the state or empire from hostile attacks (Peters 1996, 1).

For many centuries, the term "*Jihad*" has been used to designate the war against infidels, and for expanding "Dar al-Islam". The practice of Jihad, however, took different forms throughout history, in light of the controversies and debates that the Islamic Empire had witnessed since the 8th century A.D.

With the rise of colonial empires such as Britain and France, the defensive and resistive meaning of Jihad gained an additional momentum by the work of reformers and thinkers who took a reformist approach to Islamic Fiqh (the Islamic Jurisprudence). Among those thinkers was Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī. He argued that a state of peace and harmony is the natural condition that should prevail between Muslim states and the other religions, but Muslims are driven to defensive Jihad by European

colonialism (Peters 1996, 6). This reformist approach laid the ground for justifying resistance to colonialism throughout the Islamic world.

In the 1950s and the 1960s a more radical and modernist conception of Jihad was developed by Islamic thinkers such as Sayyid Qutb in Egypt and al-Maudidi in Pakistan (Euben 2002, 378). These thinkers were inspired by the writings of Ibn-Taymiyyah from the 14th century. Ibn-Taymiyyah had issued Fatwas (religious ruling) that enabled Muslims to rebel against their leaders. These Fatwas also enabled Muslims to deem their leader infidel and declare Jihad against him, if he does not implement the Sharia'a properly in the state (Ibn Taymiyyah 2003, 298). Al-Maududi and Sayyid Qutb had revised these Fatwas and adapted them to the 20th century. They have become the main thinkers and founders of a new kind of Islamic and Jihadist fundamentalism in the Sunni World. To remove the last barrier standing in the way of Jihad against the Muslim leaders in Muslim states, such as Egypt, modernist Jihadists took an extreme step by declaring that although they were Muslims, these leaders were infidels (Peters 1996, 7).

The Shiite and Orthodox Sunni movements in Islam significantly differ in their conception and practice of Jihad. The Sunni Muslims have used "*Jihad*" to refer to Islamic wars against the infidels, and their wars have taken a religious-Jihadist form, even when initiated by Muslims. The Shiite Ulama (the religious scholars), in contrast, were very prudent with their use of the term. On their view, only Prophet Muhammad or one of the twelve infallible Imams, who are the legitimate leaders of the Islamic Ummah (nation), have the authority to declare Jihad. As the twelfth Imam, Al-Imam al-Mahdi, is a "hidden Imam", the Shiites maintain that the Muslims are no longer allowed to declare Jihad (Abedi & Legenhauseen 1986, 15).

This, however, reflects only the position of the Shiite Ulama of to the Akhbari School, the conservative school of the Shiite Fiqh. The interpretations associated with the Ulama of the Ussuli School, in contrast, emphasize "Ijtihad al-Ulama". According to this interpretation, the ban on the declaration of the Jihad in the absence of the hidden Imam applies only to offensive Jihad. But Muslims are obliged to defend themselves and to declare defensive Jihad when the Islamic Ummah or land is endangered or attacked by external forces (Peters 1996, 4). This position plays a crucial in the Islamist-Shiite interpretation of *Muqawamah* in the late twentieth century, as will be demonstrated later. This position, that allows for defensive Jihad, was adopted in the doctrine of the Iranian Revolution's leader, Ayatollah Khomeini. His line of thought was similar to that of the Ussuli Ulama, and has transformed Jihad, in the guise of a defensive means against colonial forces and infidels, into an additional mainstay of Islamic religion and faith.

Muqawamah

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Unlike the concept of "*Jihad*", the "*Muqawamah*" concept is not deeply embedded in Islamic history, nor does it appear in the Quran. The root of the word "*Muqawamah*" is ق.و.م. The words that derive from this root have several meanings. Among the meanings of the noun "Qiyam" that derives from the same root are standing up (Ibn Manzur, "قوم" entry); resurrection, adherence and preservation of something (Ibid), and confrontation of the enemies to prevent them from achieving their goal. The meaning of the word "*Muqawamah*" is resistance.

The concept of *Muqawamah* was not in circulation as a political idea until the 20th century. Even when the reformist Sheikh Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī wrote on colonialism in the 19th century and used the term, he used it in its technical sense that is closer to material-natural resistance and not as a political concept with broader cultural connotations and meanings (al-Afghani, 447). Al-Afghānī uses the term "Nuhud", which also stands for "standing up" and "resurrection"; and in the period of Al-Afghānī's writings, one of its direct connotations was the "An-Nahda" (the Renaissance) period in Europe, and later in other regions of the world. As a reformist cleric and one of the Islamic renaissance leaders, Al-Afghānī suggests that the colonized nations, mainly in the Islamic world, cannot achieve real renaissance (Nahdah) without Nuhud, that is, without confronting colonialism and terminating it.

When Al-Afghānī refers to Islamic nations, he adds to the technical concept of "*Muqawamah*" (the one that is not informed by a comprehensive view of the society and culture where *Muqawamah* is imbedded) and to the broader concept of "*Nuhud*", the concept of "Jihad", which I have already addressed. He interprets "*Jihad*" as *Muqawamah* and *Nuhud* against all colonial forces.

Michael Melstein maintains that the term "Resistance" emerged during World War II as a collective attribute of the clandestine organizations that operated in Europe against Nazi forces (Milstein 2009, 21). These organizations contained different groups from France, the Balkans and the Soviet Union. Due to this historic background regarding the emergence of the term, the concept of "resistance" acquired a positive meaning in most languages, designating a struggle for achieving national liberation against rampant colonial forces. This may account for the fact that *Muqawamah* movements are usually considered more legitimate than originations that appeal to other terms of Islamic origin. Milstein also outlines the geographic journey of the term. He notes that "The National Liberation Front", founded in Algeria in the mid-1950s to struggle against French Colonialism, had been the main agent of the transition of "Al-*Muqawamah*" (as a political term) from Europe into the North-African arena, and then into the Middle East (Ibid, 22).

Mu'een Ahmad Mahmoud also traces the roots of 'resistance' back to World War II, and specifically, with the operations of the Fedayeen in the Middle East. After World War II, the Algerian revolutionary forces and the Viet Cong in Southern Vietnam appropriated the concept of "resistance". Subsequently, it also reached the Palestinian organizations that started operating in an organized way in the second half of the 1960s (Mahmoud 1969, 24-34).

Mahmoud, Milstein and others agree that the concept of "*Muqawamah*" became common in the Middle East as a result of propaganda efforts exerted by the Palestinian factions that started their systematic resistance operation in the mid 1960s. The defeat of the Arab regimes in the Six-Day-War in 1967 and their subsequent weakening enabled the Palestinian factions to free themselves to a certain extent from official Arab domination. Consequently, the concept associated with their activism grew more common.

Muqawamah vs. Jihad

As mentioned earlier, *Muqawamah*, unlike *Jihad*, is not a Quranic term. The term "*Muqawamah*", in its current meaning, does not appear in the Quran. Nevertheless, the term is used to refer to different Islamic movements, and has become an integral part of their official name, as in the case of Hizballah in Lebanon and Hamas in Palestine. This secular term has replaced the term of Jihad, although the latter term has not been completely jettisoned by these movements. Rather, they have found a special doctrinal interpretation of *Muaqawamah* that has gradually substituted Jihad.

Far from being an insignificant or merely cosmetic change, the shift from *Jihad* to *Muqawamah* marks the dramatic ideological change these movements went through. Specifically, the endorsement of *Muqawamah* is associated with openness and willingness to cooperate with national and religious partners who do not share these groups worldview.

Hizballah is often considered the most prominent representative of the values of the *Muqawamah* movement, both in its communication with the different forces, be they religious or secular, and in leading the resistance against Israeli and Western occupation. By endorsing the concept of *Muqawamah* (in the guise of defensive *Jihad*, interpreted jurisprudentially), Hizballah is able to prioritizes common concerns over sectorial ones, both within Lebanon and in the Arab world as a whole.

The Takfiri movements, in contrast, use *Jihad* to distinguish themselves from the rest of society, and to justify actions taken against those who disagree with their vision. These movements push *Jihad* to its extreme limit by confronting forces they regard as Pagan within the boundaries of the Islamic world. This strategy is readily apparent in the Syrian war. Subsequently, Islamic and secular movements that raise the banner of

Muqawamah, in its comprehensive sense, and turn it into a strategic goal and an axis of different alliances with internal and external forces, are able to present themselves as tolerant, and as subscribing to a national, patriotic and Islamic vision which acknowledges the diversity in the Middle-East. These forces also represent themselves as promoting the mobility of the region's people, regardless of their religious, sectarian, social or national identity.

As for the movements that raise the banner of internal *Jihad*, they first alienate themselves from large sections of society; later on, they even denounce society as a whole, which they deemed "pagan". They seek to destroy these societies in order to build a utopian Islamic society that draws its laws from their interpretation of Islamic Shari'a. According to Cook, for these movements, "the more pressing issue was the nature of the society that was to be liberated from foreign rule" (Cook 2005, 105).

The Roots of Hizballah's Muqawamah: Karbala

The murder of Imam Husayn and his family members was the formative event that set Shiite narrative as one of marginalization, and has led the Shiites to raise the banner of justice against tyrants. The Imam was assassinated on 10 October 680, together with his family members and seventy-two associates, including his sons and siblings, who were all on their way to Kufa, Iraq.

Following the death of Muʿawiyah, the first Umayyad caliph, his son Yazīd was made a caliph by inheritance. Yazīd's renouncment of Islamic morality gave rise to a bitter controversy among the Islamic nation regarding his right to rule, and the residents of Kufa invited Husayn to their city to declare him Caliph (Momen 1985, 28). Upon their arrival to Karbalāʾ, Imam Husayn and his family ran into the army of Yazīd, which consisted of thirty-two thousand soldiers, according to some sources (Al-Haydari 1999, 91). On the Day of ʿĀshūrāʾ, the tenth day of Muharram in the Islamic calendar, the forces of Yazīd killed Husayn and his companions, including women and children (Momen 1985, 30-31).

For centuries, the Shiites have sought to instill this atrocious tragedy of the Prophet's grandson as the founding myth in Shiite doctrine. They detached the "Martyrdom of Husayn" from its historical context, and transformed it into a symbol: "every day is ʿĀshūrāʾ, and every land is Karbalāʾ". ʿĀshūrāʾ and Karbalāʾ have transcended their historical parameters, and have become an integral part of the Shiite ideology of resistance.

However, the Shiite interpretation of the martyrdom (*Istishhad*) of the third Imam has changed and developed over the years. Generally speaking, one could refer to two main interpretations of the founding event in the

history of the Shiʿa Islam: a passive-conservative interpretation of repentance, and an active revolutionary interpretation. The passive-conservative interpretation has been the dominating interpretation for many years. Karbalāʾ and ʿĀshūrāʾ rituals, in which the story of the murder of Imam Husayn is retold, were long weeping ceremonies for Shiite believers. This weeping is mainly directed inwards to enhance the believer's feelings of guilt, weakness and fear. It is coupled with striving to abolish the original sin, manifested through the disregard of the necessity of assisting Imam Husayn in his confrontation with the forces of Yazīd, and abandoning the former, the Prophet's grandson, to meet his bitter fate.

Clergy and new activist frameworks that appeared on scene in the mid-20th century have introduced a change in the interpretation of the ritual. They aimed to channel the tremendous energies hoarded in ʿĀshūrāʾ and in the attempts to comprehend the historical and mythical event that happened to the third Imam in early Islam toward a contemporary socio-political activism. This activist interpretation of the Shiite narrative of Karbalāʾ events has emphasized the strong will of Imam Husayn to reach Karbalāʾ and confront the army of Yazīd, although he knew that he and his family were destined to martyrdom. The purpose of this loss was to realize the divine plan that strives for "the triumph of blood over the sword" (Dabashi 2011, 80). Husayn has become a symbol of resistance by the wretched of the earth. Although he and his family were defeated and massacred, his commemoration and the myth that he consolidated upon his death have preserved the "true faith" and showed the world the significance of resistance and martyrdom, that can overcome human evil, embodied in different "Yazīds" throughout history.

Through these rituals, ʿĀshūrāʾ and Karbalāʾ would change from historical events into an integral and immutable part of the Shiite collective memory. This understanding of collective memory is line with Guy Rocher's:

> The collective memory is not necessarily the historians' history, although it would be a source of inspiration. The past should be simplified, summarized, pruned, deformed and transformed into a myth; that is what symbolism is meant for. It suffices to list some names of superheroes surrounded by the halo of the myth; it suffices to refer to dates and places saturated with memories, and to some deformed events.
>
> The collective memory, both tangible and deformed, is the most powerful element that enhances mutual social responsibility; and the symbols it uses are filled with meanings and interpretations (Cited in Rizqallah 1977, 118-119).

Karbalāʾ and ʿĀshūrāʾ have become an irrefutable myth. They provided dissidents and revolutionaries of coming generations with revolutionary

fuel, as understood by George Sorel. Sorel maintains that the significance of myths lies in the fact that they are irrational means for mass mobilization toward political activism, replacing rational ideas (Sternhell 1992, 93).

The renewed interpretation of ʿĀshūrāʾ was also inspired by Khomeini, who took an additional step forward and transformed the interpretation of ʿĀshūrāʾ from "lamentation" and repentance into a militant revolutionary political project, directed against oppressive regimes and global imperialism. In his book *Nahḍat ʿĀshūrā'*, he writes:

> Do not think that these funerals and these convoys aim towards a ceremony of weeping over the Master of Martyrs. The Master of Martyrs does not need this weeping ceremony; and this ceremony does not lead to any activism. The significance of these assemblies lies in mass gatherings and in the target they are all heading to.[2]

He adds elsewhere that:

> What matters in ʿĀshūrāʾ is the political dimension, the appeal to Allah and the concentration of the masses on one point and on one goal. This is what mobilizes the people for the Islamic cause… what matters is the political dimensions that the believers had planned for from the dawn of Islam to guarantee its sustainability. It is about holding the same banner to achieve the same goal (Ibid).

Khomeini accordingly opines that the aim of ʿĀshūrāʾ is to mobilize the masses to resist oppressive forces, even when these forces are stronger or outnumber the believers:

> Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) taught people not to fear the quantity, for it is not the essence. What really matters is the quality, and the way one should confront the enemies and fight against them. This is the essence and the path towards achieving the goals (Ibid).

Khomeini's interpretation of ʿĀshūrāʾ and of the revolt of Imam Husayn means that the believers' victory is inevitable. If they defeat the enemy in the battle, they will be victors in this world and the world to come. If they lose the current battle, their loss will also be deemed a victory, because they will be martyrs and will go to heaven, and will be commemorated as advocates of righteousness and justice. Throughout history, Husayn has been always remembered and glorified although he lost, while Yazīd has

[2] Khomeini, Nahdat Ashura, http://www.imamkhomeini.com/web1/Arabic/showitem.aspx?cid=2189&h=19&f=20&pid=2525, last visited on 27.08.2018.

been forgotten. He might have won that battle, but Yazīd lost the war over his place in history.

Khomeini asserted the great potential that lies in Shiʿa as a source of resistance and insubordination. He subscribed to the interpretations developed by nonreligious Shiite intellectuals, such Ali Shariʿati and his teacher Jalal Al-e-Ahmad (an ex-Communist who joined forces with religious parties and adopted potent Iranian nationalist views, (Halm 2011, 137). Being a respected clergyman, Khomeini endowed the interpretations of these Shiite intellectuals and reformists with religious legitimacy, transforming them into a powerful and revolutionary means of resistance for organization like Hizballah.

Hizballah's conception of *Muqawamah* draws heavily on this active interpretation of Shiʿa Islam. In el-Husseini's apt words, "with Hizballah the Karbala paradigm becomes resistance against the oppressor/occupier rather than revolt against the ruler" (el-Husseini 2010, 805). As Abisaab &Abisaab note, the association between Karbala, Palestine and resistance "has run deep in southern culture and over time has been articulated by secular nationalists, leftists and more recently Islamists" (Abisaab & Abisaab 2014, 135). Therefore, the organization could easily reconcile its religious roots with its resistance project that served both as a goal and as an essential component of the organization's identity. This active interpretation of Shiʿa Islam, adopted by Hizballah, places a special emphasis on other unifying foundations that will prepare the ground for different anti-imperialist forces in the region, and will serve as a common ground for negotiation, even with Christian parties and other groups that support the liberation theology.

Hizballah's unique conception of *Muqawamah* could not have developed without the cultivation of its ideological background by thinkers such as Musa al-Sadr, Mohammad Hussein Fadlallah, Ruhollah Khomeini and Ali Shariati. Fadlallah's conception of *Muqawamah* was integrated in his sermons in a mosque in South-West Beirut, during the Civil War and especially during the Israeli Invasion of Lebanon in 1982. In these sermons, collected and published under the heading "Al-Muqawamah al-Islamiyyah", Fadlallah provided the Shiites in Lebanon, especially the young militants who have experienced the radicalization process of their community, with religious authorization of their *Muqawamah* against Israeli occupation. Fadlallah also gave there a detailed analysis of *Muqawamah*'s activism and the *Shahada* (Martyrdom) of the *Muqawimon* (those who resist). He considering *Shahada* to be a rational action and not a product of "brainwashing", so long as it is conducive to the goal of defeating the occupier (Fadlallah 2000, 42-43).

The significant contribution of Fadlallah was his definition of *al-Muqawamah* as a large-scale project that is not limited to resistance operations against the Israeli occupation in Southern Lebanon. He

presented *Muqawamah* as an Islamic and universal project within which all oppressed populations, Muslim and non-Muslim alike, could act together as one (Ibid, 18). He spoke of *Muqawamah* as an inclusive universal and Islamic project, under which all the Mustaḍʿafoun ('the downtrodden'), both Muslims and non-Muslims, can operate. As he explains:

> We do not want to be only an Islamic Muqawamah that operates only in the South. We strive to be an Islamic Muqawamah in the Islamic world and among the wretched peoples of the Third World. (cited in Sankari, 2008, 317)

Fadlallah's view integrates the thought of Ruhollah Khomeini and Dr. Ali Shariati, who maintained that Islam is the real comprehensive and revolutionary ideology, through which one can liberate disempowered populations across the globe. This view allowed Hizballah at a later stage to shape the *Muqawamah* project, which engaged not only the Shiite, but various actors within Lebanese society.

Despite Fadlallah's continuous attempts to differentiate himself from Hizballah and to emphasize that he is not the organization's spiritual leader, it is evident that he exerted a remarkable influence on it. Fadlallah's openness and tolerance, for instance, paved the way for some of the changes that the organization went through.

Despite his enthusiasm and support of the Islamic Iranian revolution, Fadlallah insisted that such a revolution could not occur in Lebanon because of this small country's demographic diversity. He therefore did not believe in the possibility of establishing an Islamic state in Lebanon in the foreseeable future. Instead, he argued that Lebanon must become a "Man State" (Dawlat al-Insan) before it could turn into an Islamic state, which according to Fadlallah and his supporters, is the ideal state. This 'Man State' would abolish sectarianism, and respect all human beings equally, whoever and wherever they are, regardless of their religious beliefs. (Ibid, 353-357).

Hizballah's Emergence: From Jihad to Muqawamah

The first few years following Hizballah's foundation witnessed the civil war on the one hand, and the Israeli invasion of southern Lebanon on the other. In addition, the Islamic revolution in Iran proved to be successful, and had a significant impact on Shiite communities outside Iran, especially in Lebanon. This impact led Hizballah, in its early days, to adopt an uncompromising, radical Jihadist approach, an approach that was also apparent in the part's official name: "*Hizballah: the Islamic Revolution in Lebanon*". As is implicit by this name, and as was later made explicit in Hizballah'a messages to the Lebanese people and to the whole world, the

party intended to develop a revolutionary plan to overthrows the Falangist regime, that the organization regarded as illegitimate.

The revolutionary atmosphere into which Hizballah was born proved to be the most influential factor in shaping the movement's national and political vision. The movement intended to overthrow the current regime and to establish a new one. According to Hizballah's first public message, this new regime will not include the Falangist and the other Right-Christian movements that had cooperated with Israel in its invasion of Lebanon and with the Western colonial countries, particularly the USA and France. In this "Open Letter", Hizballah asserts that its main goal is to overthrow the existing regime. Although this letter argues that the most appropriate regime would be an Islamic regime, modeled after the Islamic Republic of Iran, it also calls upon all Lebanese people to elect the regime that they find suitable.

Hizballah has always perceived the non-Muslim Lebanese as an integral part of the nation. Nevertheless, the origination also considered them to be inferior to Muslims and encouraged them to convert to Islam so that they would enjoy blissful living on earth and in the afterlife. This approach is apparent in a declaration given by Ibrahim Amin Essayed, one of Hizballah's leaders and founders, at the occasion of the ninth anniversary of the Islamic revolution in Iran, in 1988:

> The Muslim people in Lebanon refuse to be part of the political project of others (the Lebanese state with the Maronite hegemony) that serve the interests of the Maronite president. Instead, the others should find themselves a place within the Islamic project.(*Al-A'hd* 12 Februar 1988)

After the Lebanese civil war had ended in 1989, Taif agreement had been signed, and Khomeini had passed away, Hizballah's political and national vision went through some significant changes. Some scholars deem these changes pragmatic steps taken to maintain the organization's legitimacy in the new Lebanese state (Azani 2009, 246), while others take them to be natural changes, rooted in Hizballah's original Islamic-Lebanese agenda (Jousef Al-Agha 2006) and (Sa'ad-Ghrayeb 2002). But regardless of our understanding of these changes, there is no denying that Hizballah and its theorists have made a long way towards changing their vision and conception of Lebanese nationalism. This gradual change eventually led to change the organization's title from an Islamic party (for the Shiite sect) into a Lebanese nationalist party, with an Islamic vision.

In the years that followed the signing of the Taif agreement, and especially in 1992, Hizballah stood at a crossroads. It could either continue its rebellion against the Lebanese state and overthrow it, or it could integrate itself into the Lebanese political game and try to bring about the desired change in the Lebanese regime from within the parliament, and not

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from without, as was the case during the civil war and the revolutionary/Jihadi period of Hizballah in its early days. The group that favored integration was headed by Hassan Nasrallah, the third Secretary General of the organization. The more radical group, that opposed integration, was headed by the first Secretary General of the organization, Sheikh Subhi al-Tufayli. Internal and external factors, including the political change that took place in the Iranian leadership following the death of Khomeini (Assadallahi 2004), have led Hizballah to seek the ruling of Al-Wali Al-Faqih (Islamic jurist), Khamenei. The ruling was in favor of the group that supported integration into the parliamentary elections.

Hizballah's transformation from a revolutionary opponent to the political regime of the Lebanese state into an active participant in the political system (albeit in a limited manner, at the very beginning) affected the party's national vision and its political and strategic attitude toward the Lebanese state and its internal partners. Subsequently, it changed its name into *Hizballah: The Islamic Resistance in Lebanon*. The resistance became the main agenda of this organization. And despite its militaristic connotations, the party's leadership later on emphasized that resistance is not limited to a purely-military strategy.

Naim Qassem, the deputy-secretary of Hizballah, defined the *Muqawamah* of the party as a "social world-view in every dimension":

> A military, cultural, political and communicative Muqawamah… That is why we have always called for building a Muqawamah society and will never be satisfied with a Muqawamah group. The Muqawama society contains its own continuity, while the activism of the Muqawamah group is temporary.

Qassem contrasts here between two conceptions of *Muqawamah*: as a temporary strategy, carried out by a *Muqawamah* group, and as ongoing social project, that requires a *Muqawamah* society. Hizballah's project, he argues, is that of building a long-lasting society, in which *Muqawamah* engages society as whole, rather than limiting it to an elite avant-garde or an isolated militia, the "*Muqawama* group".

Following the Taif agreement, Hizballah has undergone a remarkable transformation. This transformation is reflected in the organization's approach to the main pillars of its ideology, including:

- **The Islamic State**: in its early stages, Hizballah regarded the Quran as the constitution of the Islamic nation, and Islam as the system of religion and state. Accordingly, it called Muslims across the globe to struggle, using all legitimate means, for the enforcement of Islamic law. At these early stage, Hizballah also regarded the political regime, dominated by the Maronite politicians, as a pagan regime.

Later on, however, Hizballah has started redirecting its bayonets at the political sectarianism into Sunnis and Shiites, and called for reforming the political system by eliminating political sectarianism, as defined by the new Lebanese constitution. The party maintained that *Muqawamah* is a national project, because struggling against external intervention and internal fragmentation is the only way to form a strong Lebanese state, capable of protecting its citizens regardless of their religious and ideological affiliations.

The organization went as far as justifying intervention in Syrian affairs, by appeal to its alleged-role as the protector of Lebanon and the other groups that maintain Lebanese uniqueness. This position was defended by Nasrallah, in a speech he gave at 18.10.2015:

> The Muqawamah protects all the nations of this region - the Christians, the Sunnis, the Shiites and the minorities; it protects the right of partnership and freedom of opinion[3]

- **The relationship with Christians:** At first, Hizballah was strongly opposed to submission to a Christian regime. It aimed at preventing Christians from taking part in the government, regarding them as Ahl al-Dhimmah ("protected people") who should eventually be given social and religious rights, but not political rights. After the Taif agreement, however the Christians have become Hizballah's partners. Hizballah's electoral lists included Christian candidates, and some were even Maronite. The Memorandum of Understanding that Hizballah signed in 2006 with the Free Patriotic Movement, headed by the Maronite former army commander (and the current president of Lebanon) Michel 'Aoun, testifies to the transformation of Hizballah's approach toward Christians. An unpromising religious discourse was substituted for an open and inclusive one, and Hizballah was willing to cooperate with them in governance. In other words, Hizballah has substituted a "Jihadist" discourse that excludes other members of the nation for a *Muqawamah* discourse that is mainly concerned with national partnership that stands against the external enemy. This approach is apparent in the organization's political manifesto:

> The consensual democracy represents a proper political formula to assure true partnership and contributes in

[3] http://www.alalam.ir/news/1750378 (last visited on 27.08.2018).

> opening the doors for everyone to join the phase of building the reassuring state (Hizballah 2009) [4].

Hizballah has therefore dramatically changed its approach to Christians in Lebanon. From regarding them as members of a religious minority, it acknowledged them as citizens with equal rights. But until an ideal state of equal rights to all citizens would be established, the organization will settle for a state with equal rights to all sects.

- **Flexibility and tolerance:** Al-Agha maintains that Hizballah had first believed in the need to liberate Lebanon from the Maronite political chains and from the sectarian political regime that is based on man-made laws and constitutions (al-Agha 2008). Over the years, however, Hizballah has come to accept these laws, and even participated in lawmaking through its parliamentary members.

  In addition to these changes, one could note Hizballah's use of patriotic Lebanese symbols. With time, the party has started to raise the Lebanese flag and to play the Lebanese national anthem, alongside the party's anthem, in its official events and activities. Through these symbolic gestures Hizballah asserts its Lebanese patriotism, thereby distinguishing itself from "Jihadist" movements. This change of attitude toward the Lebanese nation-state is explicit in Hasan Nasrallah's speeches to the cadres of the party:

> Hezbollah has changed and its priorities have changed based on circumstances […] There was a time when we used to see Lebanon as a colonial construct that was part of the Ummah […] That was in our early days, and the country was going through a Civil War. All parties were calling for a Nation that fits their liking […] Today conditions have changed. We believe that this country is our country, and that the flag of the cedar is our flag that we need to protect, too. At this stage, our priority is to protect the state in Lebanon and to build it. (cited in Daher, 2016, 167)

Muqawamah as a National Project: "Al-Wathiqa as-Siyassiyah"

More evidence for the change in Hizballah's approach to national and patriotic ideas are found in the political manifesto issued by the organization in 2009. This manifesto testifies to the shift from a purely

[4] The version of the document is taken from Hizballah's website: https://www.Moqawama.org/essaydetailsf.php?eid=16245&fid=47 (accessed on 27.08.2018)

Jihadist ideology, that characterizes Takfiri Jihadist movements, into a resistance-based ideology. Moreover, the 2009 manifesto lacks much of the religious Islamic visions that appeared in Hizballah's writings during the civil war. In this later manifesto, Hizballah refers to "the people", without placing a special emphasis on Muslims, or excluding any group.

This change can also be made apparent by comparing between the use of the terms "*Muqawamah*" and "*Jihad*" in the political manifesto of 2009 and their use in the "Open Letter" of 1985[5]. In the "Open Letter", the term "*Muqawamah*" appears 18 times and "*Jihad*" appears ten times; in contrast, in the manifesto "*Muqawamah*" appears 52 times, and "*Jihad*" appears only seven times.

In the introduction to the 2009 political manifesto, "al-Wathiqa As-Siyassiyah", Hizballah's prepares the ground for the integration of the Left, the father of resistance in Lebanon. The "Jihadist discourse" is traded for a "Muqawamah discourse", along with a quasi-Marxist analysis of the global economic crisis of the Capitalist system, and the impact of this crisis on the United States and Israel:

> What deepens even more the international hegemony system crisis are the collapses in the international and US financial markets and the fall of the US economy in a situation of failure. This gives a clear expression of the peak of the structural crisis of the arrogant capitalist sample. Therefore, it's possible to say that we are amid historical transformations that signal the retreat of the US role as a predominant power and the fall of the arrogant uniloparism and the beginning of hastening historic demise of the Zionist entity. The resistance movements stand at the heart of these international transformations and emerge as a strategic factor in the international scene after performing a central role in producing or promoting these transformations in our region. (Hizballah 2009)

In this document, Hizballah points out to the role of the different resistance movements, united by their resistance to imperialist hegemony and US domination. Therefore, and in contrast with its early dichotomous approach, the organization defines itself not merely as an Islamic or patriotic movement, but also as an integral part of the marginalized forces across the globe that resist the tyranny of Israel and the United States.

Hizballah's reference here to Lebanon's foreign relations is of utmost importance. The organization reminds the European countries of the "resistance history of some of them", in order to justify the project of "Lebnan al-Muqawamah" which the organization attempts to build:

> Europe holds responsibility for the damage it has caused due to the colonial "inheritance" it has left behind - the consequences and

[5] The version of the document is taken from Joseph al-Agha 2008.

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> results of which our people still suffer from. Since some European people have a history of resisting the occupier, Europe's ethical and humanitarian duty - before being a political duty - is to acknowledge the right of the people to resist the occupier, on the bases of distinguishing between resistance and terrorism. (Hizballah 2009)

Hizballah not only refer to European countries as potential partners for Hizballah and the *Muqawamah* project in Lebanon, in light of their history of resistance; it also sketches a map of potential cooperative relationships with liberation and resistance forces worldwide, especially in Latin American countries:

> We look at the experience of independence and liberation that rejects hegemony in the countries of Latin America with a lot of respect, attention, and appreciation. We see vast intersection platforms between their project and the project of resistance movements in our region, which leads to constructing a more just and balanced international system. (Hizballah 2009)

Hizballah's renewed identity reflected in this political document is not completely new, for it is largely based on the 1985 document. This more recent document, however, demonstrates the ideological institutionalization of the organization and its transformation from a small organization deeply concentrated on military activism in the eighties, into a large and branching out one, that enjoys considerable status at the local and regional levels, in the early 21st century.

In the "Open Letter" of 1985, Hizballah addresses the countries that oppose American hegemony, and calls them to join the religion of truth (Dīn al-Haq), namely Islam. (Hizballah 1985) However, in al-Wathiqa al-Siyassiya, Hizballah abstains from an appeal to Islam. It rather calls upon the countries and groups opposing American hegemony to act on the basis of the common interests and mutual respect for the ideology and unique nature of each group.

"Al-Wathiqa as-Siyassiya" thus introduces Hizballah's new order of priorities, and its accomplishments at the different levels. The document is comprised of four chapters: the first, "Hegemony and Revival", includes an analysis of the current global power relations and of the dominant American hegemony. The discourse in this chapter is explicitly a revolutionary discourse pertaining to the Third World, in which resistance to American hegemony and its metastasis, Israel, is not justified on religious grounds, but rather by a "materialistic analysis" of the motives of this hegemony.

In the second part, the organization refers to *Muqawamah* in a "broad sense". It proceeds from a specific and more significant reference to the new

project, not only from Hizballah's perspective, to a broader project. The opening paragraph concerns the homeland:

> Lebanon is our homeland and the homeland of our ancestors, descendants and the future generations. It is the homeland for whom we had sacrificed our dearest sons to protect its sovereignty and dignity, and to liberate its lands. We want a homeland that pertains to all the Lebanese people; a homeland that embraces them all and thrives through the achievements and contributions of its sons. We want a comprehensively united country, with its lands, people and institutions, and we shall stand against all explicit or concealed attempts towards fragmentation. We want a sovereign, strong, free and independent homeland that plays a major role in the regional arena, and contributes to the formation of the present and the future, as it has contributed to the formation of the past. (Hizballah 2009)

This text is a radical development in the organization's approach, no to say a denouncement of the discourse of the "Open Letter", which had totally disregarded the Lebanese homeland and referred only to the nation of Islam, "whose pioneers gained victory in Iran, with the Help of God" (Hizballah 1985). Immediately thereafter, "al-Wathiqa" refers to the *Muqawamah* that is interwoven in the homeland, and that gains legitimacy from its being national-Arab-Lebanese, rather than religious-Islamic-Shiite.

The third part discusses the state and the regime that should govern it, with no mention of Islamic regime. This, however, does not mean that an Islamic regime is not part of Hizballah's long-term vision. The fourth part deals with the Lebanese-Palestinian context, especially the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. In this context too, the organization's analysis and discourse is not religious. It rather appeals to human rights, to the Arabism of both the Lebanese and Palestinian people, and to their pertinence to the *Muqawamah* camp.

The fifth part of the second chapter deals with Hizballah's attitude toward other Arab countries. It first alludes, however, to the precedence of Pan-Arabism over Pan-Islamism. Hizballah provides nationalist justifications for Lebanon's integration into the Arab surrounding, and for its active involvement in the national Israeli-Arab conflict, as defined by the organization. This attitude is utterly different to the decrying discourse of the "Open Letter", in which the organization referred to the "so-called Israeli-Arab conflict", because it regarded it as a religious rather than a national conflict.

In the sixth part, Hizballah defines the organizing principles of Lebanon's attitude towards the Islamic world. This is another significant difference from the "Open Letter", on which Lebanon is an integral part of the Islamic world, and which adopted an "Islamic nationhood" approach that rejects national borders as dividing the Islamic nation. Also in the sixth

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part, Hizballah refers to the need to maintain pluralism in the "Arab Orient" (al-Mashriq al-ʿArabi) and to stop the ongoing immigration called "Nazeef" (bleeding) of Christians from this orient to the West. The organization emphasizes that this minority is an integral part of the Arab Orient in Lebanon, Syria, Iraq and Palestine.

Another key difference is Hizballah's approach to Iran. While the Open Letter's aggressive and enthusiastic tone hardly differentiates between Lebanon and Iran, treating them as two regions in the broader Islamic nation and as an integral part of true Islam, about a quarter of a century later, the organization's approach to Iran in "al-Wathiqa" is not religious. Iran is considered a partner to the resistance movement against global and imperialist hegemony. Such a position could be adopted by any moderate Lebanese citizen; or, at the very least, this non-religious approach to Iran is unlikely to arouse essentialist religious or sectarian objections". Indeed, such non-religious discourse demonstrates very clearly Hizballah's rejection not merely of fundamentalist-Jihadist movements, but also a rejection of its own earlier approach.

Conclusion

I have argued above that there are two major ideological trends within the Islamic movements currently operating in the middle-east. The first trend, *Jihad*, is based on the modernist approach that was developed by thinkers such as Qutb and al-Mawdoudi. According to this approach, the "Islamic pagan societies" must be overthrown by a revolution. This kind of approach does not tolerate other views or any other interpretations of the true belief, which is Islam. It also rejects any kind of compromise with other religions and sects within Islamic societies.

The other trend, *Muqawamah*, has been led by Hizballah in Lebanon in the last two decades. *Muqawamah* seeks to synthesize defensive *Jihad* as it was interpreted by some of the Shiite Scholars (Foqaha) with secular *Muqawamah,* in the patriotic-leftist tradition. Hizballah provides us with an example of an Islamic *Muqawamah* movement, that claims to defend the Lebanese spirit and the Arab and Islamic spirit. Hizballah's interpretation of Islamic spirit, however, is a pluralistic and tolerant one.

By emphasizing the *Muqawamah* discourse over the discourse of Jihad, Hizballah seeks to bridge over the gaps between different organizations, political-religious movements and other parties and sects in Lebanon in particular, and in the region in general. The *Muqawamah* discourse thus serves to unite different groups, sects and ideologies in Lebanon and the middle east against common outside enemies.

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