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Divine Resistance: Hezbollah's Theocratic Duality of Politics and Military Power

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ABSTRACT

Backing Hezbollah and deterring Israel," shields are viewed as protecting Lebanon's interests and security. The "Resistance's Arms" Discourse: Hezbollah has effectively positioned its armed faction not as an uncontrolled militia, but as an essential national defense entity against Israel. This study examines how Hezbollah's actions, influenced by Iran's Wilayat al-Faqih doctrine, shape Lebanon's security and political landscape. By aligning with Iran's regional goals, Hezbollah defends Lebanon while promoting Shiite interests, including military activities near Beirut. The research explores Hezbollah's multifaceted role as both a political party and an armed organization supported by Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), and its impact on Lebanon's sovereignty and regional stability. It also looks at Hezbollah's evolution from a resistance movement to a significant political force. This study also discusses Hezbollah's dual role and how Iran's leadership influences its actions, aiming to protect Lebanon and support the broader Shiite cause. Theocratic political theory is used as a framework to analyze Hezbollah's connection with Iran and its influence on Lebanon's internal stability. Ultimately, the study recommends including Hezbollah in Lebanon's political and military structures to reduce potential instability while balancing national unity and regional interests.

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1. Introduction

The Islamic Revolution in Iran induced regional fluctuations and influenced the resistance movements across the Middle East. Hezbollah is one of those defiance movements that evolved in 1982 primarily as a Shiite protest movement and was

Divine Resistance: Hezbollah's Theocratic Duality of Politics and Military Power inclined to establish an Islamic state in Lebanon under the influence of Iran's theocratic ideology, "Wilayat al-Faqih doctrine." In subsequent years, this loyalty to Iran turned out to be a critical part of Hezbollah's identity, and its connection with Iran shifted focus from opposing Israel to a political force, and started influencing the internal politics of Lebanon with the support of Iran (Wimberly, 2015). This conversion from a semi-democratic political faction into a significant force within Lebanon's parliamentary framework, obtaining representation in the government and impacting important policy choices, depicts the duality of Hezbollah (Zreik et al., 2024). However, Hezbollah's military and political success is closely tied to its social services, which help maintain popular support (Bitton, 2019). Therefore, the group has secured positions in Lebanon's parliament and managed areas in the nation's southern and eastern parts. The political agenda highlights social justice, anti-corruption measures, and safeguarding Lebanese sovereignty, especially in response to Israeli occupation. However, multiple fault lines have engulfed this group, and the financial crisis is one of those fault lines (Proudfoot & Zoughaib, 2025).

However, the organization's capacity to harmonize its theocratic roots with practical political and military approaches has been vital to its endurance and achievements. In contrast, the organization's divine beliefs are profoundly shaped by the ideology of Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. Hezbollah, known as the "Party of God," is one of the major and most contentious non-state entities in modern geopolitics (Jumaa, 2025). Syria has been an important ally, which also offered logistical assistance and a secure base for Hezbollah's activities during the Assad regime, even positioning its defiance against Israel and its resistance to Western influence in the area as a sacred obligation (Wimberly, 2015).

The partnership with Iran and Syria has allowed Hezbollah to maintain its military strength and political power. The political agenda is influenced by its religious beliefs; however, it also shows a practical method of governing, frequently building coalitions with other political groups to promote its objectives, whereas the military faction functions autonomously from the Lebanese government, enabling Hezbollah to advance its resistance objectives without being limited by state policies therefore, The military strengths of the organization boost its political power, allowing it to affect governmental choices and mold national security strategies due to consociationalism democracy system of Lebanon (Zafar & Iqra, 2025).

Then, how does Hezbollah balance its religious ideology with its political and military strategy to maintain its dual identity? In contrast, duality strengthens Hezbollah's ability to withstand internal and external pressures, positioning it as a distinct non-state actor in the current geopolitical landscape. Meanwhile, the group's religious basis offers ideological support for its military actions, whereas its political involvement ensures sustainability and legitimacy within Lebanon's political framework and regional multipolarity (A. R. Norton, 2007). Therefore, what are the ramifications of divine resistance for the Middle East and the global arena? The party's designation as a terrorist organization by Western countries, contrasted with its view as a legitimate resistance movement in the Arab and Muslim regions, underscores the complexity of its identity (BBC News, 2025).

This research employs a qualitative methodology to explore Hezbollah's theocratic duality through textual analysis of the organization's statements and addresses, as well as case studies on significant events, such as the 2006 Lebanon War and the

Syrian intervention. Simultaneously, its military actions frequently incite domestic and global criticism, complicating its political status; therefore, the capability to adjust to these alterations will be essential for its ongoing survival and impact. The research investigates how Hezbollah reconciles its religious beliefs with practical strategies. Thematic and discourse analysis uncover persistent themes and rhetorical techniques, whereas comparative analysis situates Hezbollah within larger Islamist movements.

2. Application of Theocracy

Theocracy, as a political and ideological structure, denotes a governance system where religious leaders or organizations wield political influence and divine authority underpins the state's legitimacy. Theocratic systems frequently mix religious and political authority, establishing a distinct interaction between spiritual and secular powers (Hirschl, 2021).

A strong theoretical framework is essential to examine Hezbollah's theocratic duality, how it merges religious ideology with political and military authority. The state obtains its legitimacy from a divine origin, frequently interpreted and upheld by spiritual leaders. The political and legal frameworks are grounded in religious scriptures, teachings, or interpretations; religious authorities and institutions often have significant influence in governance, frequently occupying important political roles, while authority is perceived as holy, and leaders are often regarded as embodiments or representatives of divine intent (Lawson, n.d.); therefore, in the context of Hezbollah, for Shiite Islam, its dependence on religious authorities for direction and its portrayal of political and military actions as sanctioned by divine authority. From its founding in the early 1980s to its present form as a hybrid political-military organization, Hezbollah's path has been influenced by its religious ideology, which acts as a foundation of legitimacy and a guiding structure for its strategies (Farida, 2019).

Schmitt's concept of political theology suggests that contemporary political concepts derive from secularized theological notions. However, the state's power reflects divine authority in a theocratic system, and political choices are presented as ethical or religious obligations. Hezbollah describes its struggle against Israel as a "divine mission," which corresponds with this idea, as it sanctifies its political and military activities (Skum et al., 2024).

Wilayat al-Faqih (Guardianship of the Jurist) originated from Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, and this Shiite political doctrine serves as the ideological foundation of Hezbollah. It states that a competent Islamic jurist or Faqih should hold supreme authority over the state and society, guaranteeing that governance is consistent with Islamic principles (O'Leary, 2009). Hezbollah's commitment to this theory connects its political and military tactics to religious power, forming a theocratic duality. Hezbollah's leadership comprises clerics who act as both political and military leaders, ensuring that religious ideology informs their decision-making (Abdul-Hussain, 2009).

Theocratic regimes depend on religious language to rally support and legitimize their actions. Hezbollah's talks, writings, and propaganda are filled with religious imagery, presenting its fight as a holy obligation. Hezbollah's religious beliefs, founded on Shiite Islam and Wilayat al-Faqih, create a cohesive structure for its

Divine Resistance: Hezbollah's Theocratic Duality of Politics and Military Power political and military actions. This belief system guarantees that all activities are consistent with religious values, fostering a unified organizational framework (Olsson, 2022).

Whereas this study seeks to offer a detailed understanding of Hezbollah's theocratic duality, illuminating how it manages the intricate relationship among religion, politics, and military strength; moreover, it evaluates the difficulties and criticisms encountered by Hezbollah, encompassing allegations of terrorism, sectarianism, and its ties to Iran.

3. Historical Context: Evolution of Hezbollah

The rise and development of Hezbollah, known as the "Party of God," is fundamentally linked to the intricate socio-political and religious context of Lebanon and the wider Middle East. Hezbollah originated in the early 1980s during the Lebanese Civil War (1975–1990), a time characterized by foreign interventions and the sidelining of Lebanon's Shiite community. To understand Hezbollah's historical context, it is essential to examine the interplay of internal Lebanese factors, regional tensions, and the influence of external players, particularly Iran. Hence, the Lebanese Civil War, which began in 1975, was a complex conflict fueled by sectarian divides, political disputes, and external involvement. Lebanon's political framework, rooted in a confessional power-sharing agreement set during the French Mandate, divided authority among the nation's religious groups, placing the presidency in the hands of Maronite Christians, the premiership with Sunni Muslims, and the speakership of parliament with Shiite Muslims. Nevertheless, this system marginalized the Shiite community, which, despite being one of the biggest religious groups in Lebanon, faced economic and political disadvantages. Therefore, the complaints of the Shiite community were further intensified by the Israeli invasion of southern Lebanon in 1978 and subsequently in 1982 (A. Norton, 2014).

The Israeli control over southern Lebanon, along with the existence of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), exposed the mainly Shiite community to violence, displacement, and economic difficulties (el-Khazen, 1987). These circumstances created an ideal environment for the emergence of a Shiite resistance group that would eventually unite as Hezbollah, even though the Iranian Revolution of 1979, spearheaded by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, was a crucial occurrence that shaped the establishment of Hezbollah (DeVore & Stähli, 2015).

The revolution led to the creation of the Islamic State of Iran, a theocratic government founded on the conception of Wilayat al-Faqih (Guardianship of the Jurist), which asserts that Islamic jurists ought to rule when the Twelfth Imam is absent. This groundbreaking ideology appealed to Lebanon's Shiite community, especially its religious leaders, who recognized a chance to confront their marginalization and reinforce their political and religious identity. By the early 1980s, multiple Shiite factions, such as the Amal Movement, were involved in resistance efforts against Israeli troops.

Nonetheless, the Amal Movement's view of moderation and readiness to engage in negotiations with Israel resulted in a division among the Shiite community. Discontent with Amal's methods, a more extreme group, motivated by Khomeini's revolutionary ideals, arose and ultimately established Hezbollah. The manifesto from 1985 asserted Hezbollah's dedication to establishing an Islamic state in Lebanon, liberating Jerusalem, and removing Western influence from the area. It

portrayed Hezbollah's fight as a sacred task, highlighting the religious obligation to combat injustice and protect the downtrodden (mustad'afeen) (Alrebh, 2020).

The manifesto also conveyed steadfast allegiance to Ayatollah Khomeini and the Islamic Republic of Iran, reinforcing Hezbollah's ideological connection with Tehran. This ideological foundation would shape Hezbollah's path in the years ahead, guiding its political and military strategies. During the 1980s and 1990s, Hezbollah emerged as a powerful militant group, executing many assaults on Israeli and Western targets. Its most prominent actions comprised the 1983 bomb attacks on the U.S. Marine barracks and the French paratrooper headquarters in Beirut, leading to considerable casualties and highlighting Hezbollah's effectiveness as a guerrilla group (Levitt, 2023).

Hezbollah significantly contributed to the defiance against Israeli occupation in southern Lebanon, resulting in Israel's withdrawal in 2000, when the war was at its peak. At the request of its ally, Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, Hezbollah sent thousands of soldiers to aid the Syrian government in its fight against rebel forces (Frankel, 2012). Hezbollah characterized its presence in Syria as a religious obligation, highlighting the necessity to safeguard Shiite sacred sites, like the Sayyida Zainab shrine in Damascus, and to fight against Sunni extremism. This spiritual rationale enabled Hezbollah to align its local political duties with its regional military activities. By depicting its activities in Syria as part of a larger fight against terrorism and sectarian strife, Hezbollah bolstered its identity as a protector of Shiite Islam and a supporter of the downtrodden (Levitt, 2014).

4. Iranian Influence: Ideological Foundations of Hezbollah's

Hezbollah, a Lebanese Shia Islamist group, is strongly affected by Iranian ideology, which has influenced its core beliefs and strategic goals. Hezbollah's ideological foundations are entrenched in the teachings of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the founder of the Iranian revolution. However, the idea of Wilayat al-Faqih arose as a transformative reinterpretation of conventional Shiite political ideology, which traditionally highlighted quietism and refrained from direct political involvement until the Twelfth Imam's (Mahdi) return. Khomeini's novel idea was to assert that, in the Mahdi's absence, religious scholars (ulama) had the power to rule and implement Islamic law (Sharia). Then the group's rise in the early 1980s was supported by Iran's Revolutionary Guard, which offered training, funding, and ideological support following Israel's invasion of Lebanon in 1982 (Farida, 2019).

From the perspective of theocratic theory, Hezbollah's connection with Iran goes beyond just a political or military partnership; it is a mutually beneficial relationship based on common religious beliefs and a collective understanding of Islamic leadership whereas, a strong partnership between Iran and Hezbollah, where Iran utilizes Hezbollah as an essential proxy to enhance its regional power and advance its Islamic beliefs (Al-Aloosy, 2023). This ideological connection with Iran has enabled Hezbollah to serve as a critical tool for Tehran's strategic goals, broadening Iran's influence outside its territory without direct military involvement moreover, For Hezbollah, Wilayat al-Faqih is not simply a theoretical idea but a tangible experience, as the group openly recognizes the power of Iran's Supreme Leader, currently Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, as its spiritual and political leader. This loyalty is embedded in Hezbollah's original manifesto: We follow the commands of a single leader, wise and fair, namely our Faqih and leader, Ruhollah Khomeini (Dabashi,

Divine Resistance: Hezbollah's Theocratic Duality of Politics and Military Power 2017). Furthermore, Iran's impact on Hezbollah is most apparent in how the latter frames resistance (Muqawama) as a sacred duty. Hezbollah's story of resistance is profoundly steeped in Shiite symbolism, especially the martyrdom of Imam Hussein during the Battle of Karbala in 680 CE. This significant occurrence, symbolizing the greatest sacrifice against oppression, provides a theological and ethical basis for Hezbollah's armed conflict against its perceived oppressors, particularly Israel and the United States (Koss, 2018). Hence, by way of Hezbollah, Iran has effectively broadened its regional impact, advanced its Islamic beliefs, and opposed its enemies.

5. Political Tactics: Hezbollah's Role in Lebanese Governance

Hezbollah, a Shia Islamist political organization and paramilitary group from Lebanon, has grown into a significant political power in Lebanon since the 1990s. Its political faction, the Loyalty to Resistance Bloc, possesses seats in the Lebanese Parliament, reinforcing its role as an essential participant in the nation's administration. Hezbollah's strategic method includes sustaining a role in Lebanon's political framework while adapting to its regulations, advancing via coalitions, creating political turmoil, and using political aggression and military power to reach its objectives and enhance its influence. The group's revised manifesto in 2009 indicated a change, as it challenged political sectarianism, attracted non-Islamic movements, and advocated for a government of national unity (Knio, 2013).

Hezbollah operates as a hybrid entity, preserving its legitimacy in the Lebanese state while functioning without the complete accountability typically required of a state institution. This enables the group to exercise authority without assuming complete accountability to the Lebanese populace. Hezbollah's ability to maintain authority without accountability is beneficial, as it theoretically has the military power to take control by force but finds it more advantageous to function within the current system. Even with anti-corruption rhetoric, Hezbollah's politicians have refrained from advocating reforms to tackle the corruption in the state system, as it serves their interests (Al-Chaer, 2020).

The ability of the group to gain veto power in the government by obtaining control over a "blocking third" of cabinet roles, combined with the parliament's permission for Hezbollah to maintain its arms, adds to the uncertainty regarding Lebanon's political future. Although many Lebanese wish for a normalized Lebanon that is not a client state and free from private militia threats, substantial backing for Hezbollah continues in certain segments of Lebanese society. Members of Hezbollah have occupied cabinet positions and parliamentary roles, influencing decisions for the Lebanese populace that frequently benefit its interests and those of Iran, independent of the Lebanese Armed Forces and the national government (Ibrahim, n.d.). The organization maintains a strong presence in predominantly Shia municipalities, controlling about two-thirds, including the Beirut suburbs of Bourj al-Barajnah and Ghobeirre. Hezbollah's leaders have stated that their members are obligated to back the party, prompting criticism that it misuses religion. However, questions remain as to whether it can relinquish its monopoly over decisions regarding war and peace (Ghaddar, 2022).

Hezbollah's connections with other political parties are crucial to its governing role, enabling it to exert considerable influence on Lebanese politics via strategic partnerships and its capacity to influence policy choices. Despite difficulties and critiques, Hezbollah remains a formidable player in Lebanon's governance

framework. The highest decision-making entities of Hezbollah, including the Majlis al-Shura (Consultative Assembly), are led by senior clerics who manage both strategic and tactical choices. This guarantees that religious principles direct the group's political activities. Hezbollah's initial political platform featured the creation of an Islamic republic in Lebanon. Although it has softened its position over time, its actions continue to be shaped by Islamic values and its loyalty to Iran's Supreme Leader (Ranstorp, 1994).

In 2025, the arrival of a new president and prime minister in Lebanon has generated optimism that Hezbollah's power might be lessened. The group helped Joseph Aoun attain the presidency but refrained from voting for the prime minister, suggesting a possible change in its influence (Nassar, 2025). Hezbollah is often referred to as a "state within a state" because of its significant dominance in regions where both the military and federal government struggle to challenge its power. At times, the group has attempted to prevent cabinet decisions, causing the government to collapse twice by stepping away from the cabinet with its political partners. Hezbollah is a member of the March 8 political alliance, which comprises the Free Patriotic Movement and the Amal Movement (Abdul-Hussain, 2009). Hezbollah engages with political leaders from different religious communities, including former Foreign Minister Gebran Bassil, to present itself as a national entity instead of just an Iranian representative (Reuters, 2020). This strategy allows Hezbollah to sustain widespread backing and credibility among various Lebanese communities. In parliamentary elections, Hezbollah's slates frequently feature Sunni and Christian candidates, thereby broadening its political influence (Simbar & Zibaei, 2011).

6. Military Capabilities and Strategies: Divine Resistance

Hezbollah, referred to as the "Divine Resistance," has evolved into one of the world's most powerful non-state military entities, with military capabilities and tactics closely tied to its ideological and religious foundations. Hezbollah has built an advanced military structure that matches numerous traditional armies. Its stockpile consists of more than 150,000 rockets and missiles, featuring capabilities that range from short-range artillery projectiles to precision-guided missiles able to target deep within Israel (Deterrence by insurgents, 2022). Its armed branch, the Islamic Resistance, integrates guerrilla strategies, traditional military operations, and sophisticated technological skills, all supported by a religious narrative that glorifies martyrdom and positions resistance as a sacred duty. This distinct combination of ideology and military practicality has allowed Hezbollah to secure notable victories, particularly the 2006 conflict with Israel, and to extend its influence beyond Lebanon. Hezbollah's military power is enhanced by its strategic partnerships with Iran, which offers considerable financial and logistical assistance, enabling the organization to sustain a strong military presence in Lebanon and elsewhere (Gabrielsen, 2014).

The group's missile stockpile presents a major danger to Israel, featuring long-range rockets that can target key cities such as Tel Aviv and Haifa, which can be deadly. Hezbollah's military framework, comprising subterranean tunnels, command posts, and armament storage, is intricately integrated into populated regions, making it difficult for opponents to target and reducing the efficacy of aerial assaults. This tactic, commonly known as "human shielding," is debated but has shown success in preventing extensive Israeli military actions; therefore, an extensive arsenal and

Divine Resistance: Hezbollah’s Theocratic Duality of Politics and Military Power strategic positioning in southern Lebanon pose a substantial threat to Israel, leading to periodic conflicts and heightened tensions (Byman et al., 2024).

Moreover, Hezbollah’s participation in the Syrian Civil War has equipped its fighters with crucial combat experience, turning them into a seasoned force able to carry out intricate operations. This experience has enabled Hezbollah to export its resistance model by training and equipping allied militias in Iraq, Yemen, and Palestine. The notion of "Divine Resistance" embodies Hezbollah's ideological dedication to protecting Lebanon and the larger Shia community from perceived dangers. This story is deeply anchored in Islamic values and is employed to validate its military operations as a religious obligation. Hezbollah's military tactics aim to enhance its influence while reducing the likelihood of direct conflict with stronger foes (Sip, 2024). By sustaining a robust military presence and forming strategic alliances, Hezbollah secures its role as an important factor in regional geopolitics.

7. Hezbollah's Theocratic Duality in Politics and War

Table 1: *Hezbollah’s Military Capabilities and Strategies – Divine Resistance*

Tier	Fact	Doctrinal
Theoretical Basis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rooted in Wilayat al-Faqih (Guardianship of the Jurist) Resistance, “Muqawama,” is presented as a holy duty. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourages combatants using religious stories of martyrdom and sacrifice (e.g., Imam Hussein’s martyrdom at Karbala). Validates military resistance as a sacred obligation under the leadership of Iran’s Supreme Leader.
Military Structure	An estimated 40,000–50,000 combat troops, along with backup units.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preserves a decentralized command system to guarantee robustness against focused attacks. Functions as a hybrid force, merging guerrilla strategies, traditional combat, and cutting-edge technology.
Strategic Advancements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilization of subterranean passages, shelters, and concealed armament storage. Widespread utilization of rockets and missiles (e.g., Katyusha, Fajr, and precision-guided missiles) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keeps a decentralized command framework to guarantee endurance against focused attacks.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Utilization of drones and cyber combat abilities.	
Essential Military Tactics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Military infrastructure installations in civilian areas.• Hybrid approach, conventional and unconventional tactics.• Proxy warfare tactics, training, and equipping allied militias in Syria, Iraq, Yemen, and Palestine.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enables Hezbollah to adjust to evolving battlefield scenarios and retain strategic agility.• Hinders enemy actions and earns global sympathy by portraying assaults as aimed at civilians.
Foreign Assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Iranian Funding, training, and munitions from the IRGC & Quds Force.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enables Hezbollah to adjust to evolving battlefield situations and preserve tactical adaptability.
Combat Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lebanon War: Effectively endured Israeli military actions.• Syrian Civil War: Played a crucial part in maintaining the Assad regime.• Gaza Wars: Delivered logistical, financial, and military assistance to Hamas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Changed Hezbollah into a seasoned force skilled in traditional combat.• Bolstered connections with Palestinian resistance organizations and enhanced Hezbollah's regional power.

Role in Gaza Wars	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2008–2009 Gaza War: Provided missiles and instructed Hamas militants.• 2014 Gaza War: Offered specialized knowledge for tunnel building and missile strikes.• 2021 Gaza Conflict: Collaborated with Hamas to initiate combined actions targeting Israel.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strengthened Hezbollah’s strategic partnership with Hamas and its involvement in regional resistance efforts.• Showcased Hezbollah’s dedication to the Palestinian issue and its capability to influence beyond Lebanon’s borders.
Religious Mobilization	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Exaltation of shuhada (martyrs) as champions of the resistance.• Religious leaders draw upon Shiite theology to motivate soldiers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bolsters internal unity and enhances the sacred essence of the resistance.• Inspires combatants and justifies sacrifices via spiritual stories.

Source: *Adapted by researcher*

8. The Dual Theocracy of Hezbollah: Regional & International Implications

8.1. A Theocratic Structure of Repercussions

Implications that validate the power of Iran’s Supreme Leader over the worldwide Shiite populace while simultaneously implementing practical governance and military tactics both in Lebanon and elsewhere. This dual theocracy significantly influences regional and global politics, as Hezbollah’s behavior and partnerships are determined by its religious beliefs and its function as a representative for Iranian interests (Dolatabadi et al., 2020). As time passed, it transformed into a twofold entity: a cross-border Shi’a movement driven by theocratic ideals and a politically established party operating within Lebanon’s sectarian democracy while maintaining credibility as a Lebanese resistance group, establishing a complicated interaction of religious power, governance, and asymmetric conflict. As an essential figure in the Axis of Resistance, Hezbollah has aided in strengthening Iranian influence in the Levant, contesting the historical supremacy of Sunni-led countries like Saudi Arabia and Turkey (Wahab, 2021). This has heightened sectarian tensions and proxy wars, especially in Syria and Yemen, where Hezbollah’s participation has worsened regional instability.

8.2. Regional Proxy Conflicts and Sectarian Division

At the regional scale, Hezbollah’s dual theocracy has established it as an important factor in the geopolitical environment of the Middle East, such as a group of state and non-state entities against Western and Israeli dominance in the area. Hezbollah’s dual function has made it a key player in Iran’s “Axis of Resistance,” broadening

Tehran's impact throughout the Middle East, facilitating land routes for Iranian weapon transfers, and setting up training camps for militias from Iraq and Yemen. For example, Hezbollah's participation in the Syrian Civil War, where it aimed to maintain the Assad regime, was presented as a protective measure for the Shiite community and the larger Axis of Resistance against Sunni radicalism and Western imperialism. So, an account based on theocratic principles has enabled Hezbollah to rationalize its actions as a sacred duty to safeguard the Ummah (worldwide Muslim community) under the guidance of the Faqih. Nonetheless, this dual role has further intensified sectarian tensions in Lebanon, as critics of Hezbollah allege that it favors Iranian interests over the nation's sovereignty (Celso, 2024).

8.3. Global Sanctions and Geopolitical Tensions

Hezbollah's dual theocracy has positioned it as a central target in global counterterrorism operations and geopolitical conflicts (Wahab, 2021). The US and its partners have labeled Hezbollah a terrorist group, referencing its participation in assaults on Western sites, such as the 2012 bombing of a tourist bus in Burgas, Bulgaria (Euractiv, 2020). These activities, positioned within Hezbollah's religious narrative of resistance, have attracted global criticism and resulted in penalties aimed at its funding systems and leadership. Simultaneously, Hezbollah's connection with Iran has positioned it at the core of the larger U.S.-Iran conflict, as its operations in Syria, Iraq, and Yemen are seen as components of Tehran's plan to increase its dominance in the area. This has escalated tensions between Iran and the global community, especially regarding nuclear talks and regional proxy wars (Abdul-Hussain, 2009).

The Gulf Cooperation Council and the European Union classify its military wing as a terrorist entity, implementing sanctions aimed at its financial systems and political agents. However, these actions have achieved only modest success because of Hezbollah's fragmented revenue sources, such as drug trafficking, donations from the diaspora, and financial support from Iran. Hezbollah's dual identity reveals the constraints of theocratic governance, as it must manage the conflicts between religious beliefs and practical politics. For instance, Hezbollah's partnerships with secular groups in Lebanon and its engagement in a diverse political framework have resulted in allegations of hypocrisy and opportunism, weakening its assertions of ideological integrity (Zanetti, 2024). The group's involvement in global illegal finance has escalated tensions between Iran and Western nations, especially as Hezbollah's precision missile stockpile, provided by Iran, poses a risk to Israeli security and may lead to a wider conflict.

Conclusion

The theocratic aspect of Hezbollah's dual identity is arguably its most unique characteristic, setting it apart from other political and military groups in the region. The group's commitment to the principle of Wilayat al-Faqih tightly aligns it with Iran, providing ideological, financial, and military support while reinforcing its self-perception as a leading force of Islamic resistance. Hezbollah's combination of political and military authority within a theocratic framework reflects a distinctive and complex phenomenon that defies simple classification. As a political entity, it has demonstrated remarkable flexibility, navigating Lebanon's sectarian landscape to secure a prominent position in its administration. The group's ability to harmonize its religious beliefs with political practicality and military strategy will

Divine Resistance: Hezbollah's Theocratic Duality of Politics and Military Power continue to shape its trajectory alongside broader geopolitical factors in the Middle East. Hezbollah's alliance with Iran and its support for Palestinian groups opposing U.S. allies have further solidified its role as a counterbalance to U.S. influence in the region. The requirement to uphold a credible threat toward Israel to strengthen Tehran's stance in any renewed nuclear talks or to shift focus from domestic Iranian turmoil has constrained Hezbollah's ability to de-escalate. Nevertheless, this proxy function intensifies the gap between Iranian geopolitical objectives and the strong need of the Lebanese people for stability and economic revitalization. Hezbollah's dual identity faces challenges from internal sectarian conflict, external pressures due to global sanctions and regional disputes, as well as ideological commitments that complicate its political and military operations. These factors complicate its interactions with other Lebanese political parties and necessitate strategic oversight to effectively maintain its political and military capabilities.

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